

Meadowlands Public School Council Constitution

Effective date of this Constitution: Passed with Quorum June 9, 2015

Terms/References Used in Constitution

Meadowlands Public School may be referred to as “MPS.”

MPS School Community may include: parent community, MPS administration and staff, members from neighbourhood associations, members from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), and members from Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC).

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Role and Objectives

The main purpose of the MPS School Council is to help improve student achievement and to enhance communication and accountability between the school and its community of parents, legal guardians, neighbours, community associations, groups and businesses. Council also aids in identifying the needs of the MPS school community and addresses them in the best interest of our students.

As an advisory body, Council achieves its goals by maintaining a school-wide focus and providing advice to the principal and school board on significant education issues, and by planning activities that support the active participation of parents/guardians and MPS’s School Community.

The Council is charged with:

- Establishing and maintaining a liaison between the school and its community;
- Working to actively engage MPS’s parent community;
- Collaborating with the school and its community on issues;
- Focusing on the best interests of all students;
- Providing a forum where parents, community representatives and school staff can meet to discuss issues related to the student’s school experience;
- Identifying needs of the MPS School Community and provide appropriate solutions where possible;
- Operating without financial gain to its members – all profits and/or funds raised are for the sole purposes of achieving Council’s objectives;
- Responding to requests from both the Parents and School Community, including the Board, for advice and participation; and
- Raising funds for the benefit of Meadowlands Public School.

Meetings

The Annual General Meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the first meeting of the school calendar year. At this time, finances and other outstanding business from the previous year’s council will be closed and the elections for the current council positions will be held.

MPS School Council holds a minimum of four meetings per year. All meetings are open to members of the general public. There must be a quorum for School Council meetings to qualify as a meeting. A quorum for all meetings shall be:

- A majority of the current members of the Executive Committee must be present;
- Of all the members who are present, the majority must be parents/guardians; and
- The Principal or designate must be in attendance.

Meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of each month of the school year, except March. Notice of the meeting is communicated through Council's website and Council's communications. An agenda is provided prior to the meeting. Any person may request to add an item to the agenda by notifying the Chair/Co-Chair(s) and providing relevant information.

Membership

Membership of the MPS School Council is open to all parents/legal guardians of students, as well as any community representatives appointed by Council. Other members include the Principal and a teacher representative. The majority of members must be comprised of parents/legal guardians and be no fewer than nine members.

Elections

Elections for Council Executive positions are held on an annual basis. The Election is to be held within the first 30 days of the school year. Notice is to be provided to all parents regarding the date and location of the election at least 14 days prior to the election date.

Nominations can be sought before the date of the election. The new members assume office immediately upon election. A position can be filled by acclamation if there is only one parent interested in a position.

Council has the authority to appoint through a vote a person to a position that remains vacant following the Election, and at any point during the year if a vacancy arises.

If no one from the parent community is willing to run for the position of Chair/Co-chair, the remaining Council members will determine how best to carry out the Chair's responsibilities.

Each position has a term of one year. Members can seek multiple terms of office. Members elected for position of Chair/Co-Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary must have been a member of council for a minimum of one term previously. The Chair/Co-Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer are eligible to serve for three consecutive terms in the same position, or if no one from the parent community is willing to run for the position of Chair/Co-Chair, Vice-Chair or Treasurer, a vote can be held to approve the election for a subsequent term. There are no limits on the number of consecutive terms of the other officers.

Membership is complete at the end of the term or when the member has submitted a letter of resignation to Council.

Executive Committee

MPS School Council must, at a minimum, be comprised of a Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Other possible roles on the Executive Committee can include, but are not limited to: Vice-Chair, Co-Chair, Fundraising Coordinator, Communication Coordinator, Curriculum and Student Achievement Coordinator, Nutrition Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Movie Night Coordinator, Special Events Coordinator and OCASC Representative.

On an annual basis, the Executive Committee for each School Year will be posted on the School Council's website. The duties of these positions are defined in Appendix A.

Parent Representatives

Parent representatives, also known as members at large, will be voted in at the Annual General Meeting. They will be expected to attend the majority of meetings and are eligible to vote at all meetings. On the third consecutive meeting missed without notice to the Chair/Co-Chair and/or Vice-Chair, a members will have their voting rights rescinded but are still invited to come to any subsequent meetings as a non-voting member.

The duties of this position are defined in Appendix B.

Ad-hoc Committees

If an issue needs to be explored further or is deemed too time-consuming to discuss at Council, an ad-hoc committee may be formed as the need arises. Depending on their specific mandates, these committees will operate either at specific times during each school year, or throughout the entire school year.

The Council can appoint any parent as Chair of an ad-hoc Committee. For committee meetings, at least one member must be a parent member of the School Council (either on Executive Committee or Parent Representative).

Decision-Making Process

Decision-making will be done firstly through consensus. Consensus will allow all MPS School Council members to contribute to the solution.

If a vote is required, all members are entitled to vote. No vote will be permitted by the principal, vice-principal or teaching staff. There must be a minimum of 50% of the Executive Committee of Council in attendance for the vote (i.e., quorum). A simple majority of 50% + 1 will carry the vote.

Vote by proxy must be submitted to an executive council member prior to the council meeting in writing.

Accountability

MPS School Council is accountable to the parent community and the public. School Council records, including minutes, newsletters and financial reports will be made available in the office. Newsletters will be sent electronically to parents/guardians, with notice given in advance for registering for the subscription. Copies of minutes, financial reports and newsletters may also be requested by contacting the Secretary and must be maintained for four years.

Conflict of Interest

Individuals employed at MPS or those serving as Board Trustees cannot serve as 'parent' members of the Council.

Employees of the Board whose children attend MPS are permitted to serve as an Executive Committee member, but must inform the members of School Council of their employment.

Any individual with a conflict of interest with respect to any issue will immediately notify the Council. Council will determine further participation on the issue from the individual.

5 Code of Conduct

All members of the MPS School Council will adhere to the following code of conduct:

A member shall consider the best interests of all students.

A member shall be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.

A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.

A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.

A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.

A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.

A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.

A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.

A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the School Council.

A member shall not disclose confidential information.

A member shall limit discussions at School Council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.

A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.

A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.

Finances

The fiscal year for MPS School Council is from September 1 to August 31.

In addition to the beginning of the year and the end of year report, the Treasurer will provide a report on a monthly basis when there are significant changes to the financial position.

Cheques require two signatures to disburse funds, and shall be signed by any two of the Treasurer, Chair/Co-Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary. At any given time, there must be three signing authorities registered with the Bank. If an unintentional mistake is made with respect to Council funds, those with signing authority will not be held accountable.

Financial records and accompanying minutes of explanation of fund disbursements and acquisition must be kept for eight years.

No member of MPS's School Council shall be paid for duties performed on behalf of the Council.

Amendment to Constitution

The Constitution may be amended at any School Council meeting, by a simple majority as outlined in the Decision-Making Process.

When changes to the Constitution are required notice will be given to the members of Council in advance of the next meeting.

Appendix A: Executive Committee Roles Defined

Chairperson/Co-Chairpersons

- Call and preside over Council meetings
- Prepare the agenda for Council meetings
- Liaise and consult with School Administration, the school community, parents/guardians and staff as required
- Prepare and provide reports on School Council activities
- Responsible for grant applications and reporting to the providing body (i.e., Ministry of Education, School board, City, Banks, etc.) and council or as delegated to another volunteer or council member
- Prepare and provide reports required by the OCDSB
- Owner of Constitution
- Act as a signing officer
- Work with Council Members and assist with activities as required
- Ensure that all council members have a copy of the constitution and are informed of their duties and responsibilities therein and uphold the code of conduct

Vice-Chairperson

- Call and preside over Council meetings in the absence of the Chair/Co-Chair
- Assist the Chair/Co-Chair in any of his/her other roles and responsibilities as may be delegated from time to time
- Act as a signing officer
- Work with Council Members and assist with activities as required

Treasurer

- Manage, document and report on all financial-related School Council activities, including, but not limited to, bank accounts, fundraising, and invoices
- Provide an annual financial report to the Council, as well as monthly updates as needed
- Act as a signing officer

Secretary

- Record and distribute minutes of School Council meetings
- Maintain a file of minutes
- Maintain online and e-copies of all MPS School council created documents

Fundraising Coordinator(s)

- Oversee and manage fundraising committee and activities
- Develop, maintain and report on fundraising activities

Communications Coordinator(s)

- Manage and distribute all communications for School Council including, but not limited to, newsletters, social media, website and advertising

Curriculum and Student Achievement Coordinator

- Plan and implement reading week activities (ie. Read-a-Thon)
- Provide a forum for discussion related to enhancing the curriculum
- Promote and recognize student achievements

Nutrition Coordinator

- Oversee and manage nutrition committee and activities, including the food programs
- Develop, maintain and report on nutrition activities
- Liaise with and coordinate volunteers for food programs

Volunteer Coordinator(s)

- Seek and manage volunteers for large school events (i.e. Winter Carnival, FFN)
- Maintain volunteer database of previous volunteers and contact information
- Day of leadership and coordination of volunteers and duties

Movie Night Coordinator(s)

- Leads a subcommittee as needed to coordinate, manage and execute Movie Nights as planned by School Council
- Manages AV bookings, volunteers, concessions and admissions
- Ensures copyright regulations are followed
- Coordinates and oversees advertising and volunteer recruitment

Special Events Coordinator(s)

- Lead a subcommittee as needed, to coordinate, manage and execute special events planned by School Council
- Events include, but are not limited to, the Hallowe'en dance, Winter carnival, Family Fun Night

OCASC Representative

- Attend monthly OCASC meetings
- Report information from OCASC back to School Council

Teacher Representative

- Represents the teachers at School Council meetings
- A member of the teaching staff at Meadowlands
- Teacher Representative can change monthly

Principal/Vice-Principal

- Provides information on both MPS and OCDSB activities
- Supports and promotes the School Council's activities
- Attends and actively participates at all School Council meetings and provides a Principal's Report
- Actively seeks input from the School Council on issues affecting the school
- Actively helps to distribute Council messages and announcements
- Acts as a resource on regulations, Board policies and collective agreements

Appendix B: Parent Representative/Member at Large

- Attends all School Council meetings
- Acts as a liaison between council and the community
- Supports and promotes School Council activities
- Commitment to volunteer at minimum two activities per school year
- Vote for items that are for the best of all MPS students and not only their own
- Participate in council discussions, share ideas and opinions and ask for clarification as needed
- Bring new ideas to council to help implement and begin new initiatives