

# Lancaster Drive Public School Council Constitution

## 1 Name

1.1. The name of the organization shall be the Lancaster Drive Public School (LDPS) Parent Council, hereinafter referred to as the “Council.”

## 2 Definitions

2.1. LDPS – Lancaster Drive Public School

2.2. Board – Limestone District School Board

2.3. Parent - Shall mean parent or guardian (as defined by Section 1 of the Act) with children attending LDPS.

2.4. Community Representative –

2.4.1. A person living or working within the boundaries of the School district as outlined by the Board

2.4.2. If employed by the Board

2.4.2.1. Is not employed at the school

2.4.2.2. All Council members know of this employment before appointment

2.4.3. Is not the parent or guardian of a child attending the school.

2.5. Parent Member – means a member of a school council who is elected to the Council in accordance with section 5.1 or who fills a vacancy created when a parent member ceases to hold office.

## 3 Objectives

3.1. The objectives of the Council shall be:

3.1.1. To increase parental involvement in the school in order to enhance student achievement

3.1.2. To encourage and promote excellence in education at LDPS

3.1.3. To encourage and foster the growth and development of partnerships amongst parents, teachers, staff, administrators and members of community

3.1.4. To provide parents, staff, students and community members with a forum to learn about education and community needs

3.1.5. To provide a meaningful advisory role for parents and representatives of the community

3.1.6. To ensure accountability of the education system to parents.

3.2. Council’s role shall include the provision of advice to the Principal and /or the Limestone District School Board, on any subject which is identified as a priority including the following subjects:

3.2.1. Preparation of the school profile

3.2.2. Extracurricular activities at the school

3.2.3. School-based services and community partnerships related to social health, recreational, and nutrition programs

3.2.4. Community use of school facilities

3.2.5. School-community communication strategies

3.2.6. Methods of reporting to parents and the community

3.2.7. Local coordination of services for children and youth

3.3. The Board and/or the Principal will utilize the Council as an advisory body, seeking input on policy and procedures related to:

3.3.1. School code of student behaviour

3.3.2. School dress code policy

3.3.3. Fund raising strategies

3.3.4. School year calendar

3.3.5. Conflict resolution processes for internal school Council disputes

3.3.6. Reimbursement by the Board of expenses incurred by members and officers of school councils

3.3.7. Curriculum and program goals and priorities

3.3.8. Criteria for the selection of Principals 1 of 7 Updated March 2016

3.3.9. The responses of the Board to results in provincial and Board assessment programs

3.3.10. School budget priorities, including local capital improvement plans

3.4. In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the Council shall collaborate with the Principal and Board to:

3.4.1. Establish its goals, priorities and procedures.

3.4.2. Organize information, training and orientation sessions for members of Council as needed.

3.4.3. Communicate regularly with parents and the community.

3.4.4. Promote the best interest of the school.

## 4 Composition

4.1. The Council shall be composed of the following positions:

4.1.1. Parent Members

4.1.1.1 Chair or Co Chair

4.1.1.2. Vice Chair or Co Chair

4.1.1.3. Secretary

4.1.1.4. Treasurer

4.1.1.5. Fundraising Coordinator

4.1.1.6. Volunteer Coordinator

4.1.1.7. Public Relations Coordinator

4.1.1.8. Program/Event Coordinator

4.1.1.9. Past Chair or Member at Large (see 4.2)

4.1.1.10. Active Member (see 4.8)

4.1.2. Board designated

4.1.2.1. Principal

4.1.2.2. Teacher Representative (elected by the teachers from amongst themselves)

4.1.2.3. School based support staff (elected by the school based support staff of LDPS)

4.1.3. Appointed

4.1.3.1. Two (2) Community Representatives

4.2. Past Chair or Member at Large

4.2.1. If a Chair or Co Chair is reelected as Chair or Co Chair for a second term, the Past Chair position will be an elected position and referred to as Member at Large.

4.2.2. If a minimum of 5 Parent Members of Council are returning members, the Past Chair position will be an elected position and referred to as Member at Large.

4.2.3. If neither 4.2.1 nor 4.2.2 occurs, the outgoing Chair or Co Chair will be offered the position of Past Chair. If they do not want to accept the position, an election will be held for a member at large.

4.3. A member of the Board (e.g. trustee) cannot be a member of the Council.

4.4. Parent members must be the majority of council, with at least 7 positions being voted upon.

4.5. Members of Council shall serve as such without remuneration.

4.6. The Ministry of Education may request names, mailing addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of Council members. They may disclose this information to the Ontario Parent's Council to use for consultation and direct communication.

4.7. Council may function with positions vacant as long as parent members make up the majority of positions on council.

4.8. There will up to and no more than five (5) "Active Member" elected positions available.

4.8.1. The person(s) that take these position(s) will be entitled to vote on any issue the school council votes on. 2 of 7 Updated March 2014

4.8.2. These position(s) will only become available once the following positions on the council (ie. Chairperson & Vice Chairperson/Co-Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Fund-raising Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, and Public Relations Coordinator) have been filled.

4.8.3. Any empty "Active Member" positions are no longer available after November with the following exceptions

4.8.3.1. Any parent whose child is new to the school that arrives after November 30<sup>th</sup>

4.8.3.2. If a present "Active Member" steps down from the position, then another person can be elected to replace the empty position.

## 5 Elections – General

5.1. A person is qualified to be a parent member if they are a parent of a pupil enrolled in the school.

5.1.1. Despite subsection 5.1, a person is not qualified to be a parent member of a Council if they are employed at the school; or

5.1.2. They are not employed at the school but are an employee of the Board at another school, unless they take reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment.

5.2. A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members of the Council if he or she is a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.

5.3. A person employed by the Board may not be the Chair or Co-Chair.

- 5.4. If a person is elected as a parent member and subsequently becomes employed by the school, that parent member will resign their position on the council.
- 5.5. Elections shall be held within the first 30 days of the new school year.
- 5.6. Written notice of the election shall be distributed by the principal to all parents at least 14 days before the date of the election and be posted in the school, and provide notice of the date, time and location of the election.
- 5.7. Elections shall be by secret ballot.
- 5.8. A vacancy in the membership of a School Council shall be filled by appointment.
- 5.9. A vacancy in the membership of a School Council does not prevent the School Council from exercising its authority.
- 5.10. Parents allowing their name to stand for positions on Council shall make every effort to attend the majority of meetings.

## 6 Elections – Procedure

- 6.1. The principal shall act as chair of the meeting during that portion of the meeting when the election is to occur. The principal shall ensure that the facility exists to hold a secret ballot for any position that is contested by two or more candidates.
- 6.2. Nominations for positions (in the order listed in 4.1) shall be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting, provided the nominee is present to give assent to his or her nomination or such assent has been given in writing in the absence of the candidate. The candidate must meet the criteria listed under section 5.1.
- 6.3. Candidates for election shall be nominated for specific offices. Candidates may be nominated for more than one office. (3 of 7 Updated March 2014)
- 6.4. In the event that there is no nomination for a position, the Chair, at the first meeting of the new council, will assign the position to one of the council members, and an ongoing effort will be made to fill the position.
- 6.5. Candidates shall be afforded the opportunity to speak for a maximum of three minutes prior to the vote being taken.
- 6.6. Advertising by candidates shall not be at the school's time or expense. School resources, both human and material, shall not be used to support any candidate or group of candidates. Distribution of candidate material shall be the sole responsibility of the candidate.
- 6.7. If after calling three times for any further nominations from the floor there is only one candidate for any one position, such candidate shall be declared acclaimed in that position.
- 6.8. Proxy voting shall not be permitted. Only those parents present at the meeting may vote.
- 6.9. Council shall use its best efforts to appoint the community representatives by the end of October.

6.10. If there is a tie for the final position for a representative on the Council, the winner shall be determined by lot.

## 7 Terms of Office

7.1. All officers shall hold their office for 1 year. The termination of office shall be the end of the meeting for the elections in September.

7.2. Any person may hold an office for more than two terms provided that the maximum number of consecutive terms any person holds for that office is four.

7.3. One individual may hold more than one office on a temporary basis (see 6.3) and is entitled to one vote.

7.4. More than one individual may hold one office, but only one individual will be allowed to vote.

## 8 Meetings of Council

8.1. A minimum of 4 meetings shall be held each school year, one of which will be the Annual Meeting.

8.2. The Council shall publish the agenda at least 7 calendar days before the next meeting.

8.3. All meetings are open to the public, however, only members of the Council may vote on an issue.

8.4. The Council is entitled to hold its meetings at the school.

8.5. The annual meeting will be the September meeting.

8.6. Minutes of each meeting of Council must be recorded and distributed to Council members before the next meeting. Minutes will also be posted in the school for other parents to view.

8.7. A quorum will exist only when:

8.7.1. A majority of the current members of Council are present at the meeting, and

8.7.2. Parent members make up a majority of those in attendance; and

8.7.3. The chair or delegate is in attendance; and

8.7.4. The Principal or delegate is in attendance. 4 of 7 Updated March 2014

8.8. At the first meeting of the new council, a vote will be conducted by the council to confirm the position of chair or co chair.

## 9 The Annual and Special Meeting

9.1. An Annual Meeting shall be held in September, and the newly elected Council elected at such meeting shall take office at the end of the Annual Meeting.

9.2. Parents shall be invited to the Annual Meeting for the purpose of electing parent members to the Council and to deal with any other business to be transacted thereat. Staff of the school are also welcome.

9.3. Every effort shall be made to encourage the attendance of parents at the Annual Meeting.

9.4. When the Council deems it necessary to do so, it may convene a Special Meeting to deal with constitutional amendments or any other special business requiring the urgent attention of Council.

9.5. An annual report will be presented at this meeting, and then submitted to the Board. This report will:

9.5.1. Outline the Council's activities of the previous school year

9.5.2. Report on fundraising activities, and list articles purchased

9.5.3. Be distributed to every parent with children enrolled at the school, on the date the copy is given. This may be achieved by giving the report to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent and posting the report in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

## 10 Procedures

10.1. Council shall operate in a non-judgmental manner, respecting individual rights and confidentiality, employing no fault discussions and reaching consensus through compromise whenever possible.

10.2. The Chair shall allow for participation in discussions by all parent members and parents who are in attendance at the meeting. Written items may be submitted to the Chair for discussion.

10.3. When the Chair determines that a matter should be resolved by vote rather than by consensus, only parent members will be allowed to vote, with the exception of the Principal. Parent members must be in the majority at the meeting. Questions that proceed to a vote shall be determined by a majority of votes. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

10.4. Any Council member may request that any matter not on the distributed agenda be postponed until the next regular meeting of Council. When such a request has been made, such item shall not be voted upon until the next regular meeting of Council.

10.5. The Council or a majority of parents present at a meeting may request that the principal bring its advice to the attention of appropriate administrative staff at the Board, or to the attention of the Board through such administrative staff.

10.6. The Council can put its advice in writing to the Chair through the Secretary (i.e. the Director) of the Board.

10.7. The Council, through its Chair or designate, may request in writing an opportunity to make a presentation to the Board.

10.8. The Council, through its Chair or designate, may communicate directly with a school trustee or school trustees.

10.9. The Board shall consider each recommendation made to the Board by the Council and shall advise the 5 of 7 Updated March 2014 Council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.

10.10. Funds raised by Council shall be used only for the advancement of Council's objectives.

10.11. Fundraising activities must be conducted in accordance with current Board policies.

10.12. The allocation of funds raised by Council shall occur at least once per year, but may occur more often, and only after consultations have been held with the principal. The Principal and staff shall identify school needs and requirements, shall prioritize such needs, and the principal shall convey such information to Council. Council shall take into account such information when making decisions related to funding allocations.

10.13. The Treasurer shall convene a Council budget meeting at least once per year to consider and make determinations regarding the allocation of funds raised by Council. The Treasurer shall prepare a report on the meeting describing the discussions held at the Council meeting, and ask for comments. This report will be distributed to all parents at least 7 days prior to the General Council meeting. The Treasurer shall move the adoption of the report containing such decisions, at the General Council meeting. If there are no major issues, the report will be voted upon at the General Council meeting.

## 11 Execution of Documents

11.1. All documents that require execution by Council shall be signed by two of the Chair; the Vice or Co-Chair, the Secretary or the Treasurer or any person from time to time designated by resolution of Council.

11.2. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary contained herein, Council may at any time by consensus or by resolution direct the manner in which, and the person or persons by whom, any particular document or instrument may or shall be executed.

11.3. The Council shall be carried on without purpose of financial gain for its members, and any surplus or accretions to the Council shall be used in promoting its objects and fulfilling its role.

11.4. In the event of the dissolution of the Council, all of its remaining assets, after the payment of any liabilities, shall be allocated to a school project or projects. In the event of the closure of LDPS, the remaining assets, after the payment of any liabilities, shall be distributed to one or more schools where LDPS students are to attend, or to the Board.

11.5. Minutes of all meetings shall be kept for 4 years and be available at the school for examination at no charge by anyone so requesting.

## 12 Constitutional Amendments

12.1. Only Council shall propose constitutional amendments.

12.2. Constitutional amendments shall be proposed, and typewritten copies shall be distributed at any regular meeting of Council. Such proposed amendments shall not be considered or voted upon until the next Annual Meeting or Special Meeting convened by the Council for such purpose.

12.3. A quorum of parent members as defined in Article 8.7 shall be present before any constitutional amendments are considered or voted upon at any Annual or Special Meeting.

12.4. Any parent member proposing a constitutional amendment shall be afforded a minimum of five minutes to speak about such proposed amendment at any Annual or Special Meeting at which such amendment is being considered and voted upon, in order to explain the basis for the proposal. 6 of 7 Updated March 2014

12.5. Any parent member proposing a constitutional amendment may be afforded more than the minimum time to speak about the basis for the proposed amendment by agreement of the members present at the Annual or Special Meeting.

12.6. Parents attending such meetings may speak to these constitutional amendments for a period of 3 minutes.

## 13 Conduct of Council

13.1. All members of council shall conduct themselves in a professional manner.

13.2. A parent member who willfully contravenes the spirit and/or integrity of the council, or willfully acts in a manner that is detrimental to the school or council (such as, but not limited to misappropriation of funds, unethical practices, using a position on council for personal gains, etc.) will be dealt with as follows:

13.2.1. When the incident is recognized, the chair and/or principal will issue a verbal warning, and request that the action not reoccur.

13.2.2. If a similar incident or a secondary incident occurs, the person will be removed from council for the remainder of the year.



13.2.3. If in subsequent years, the parent is re-elected, and another incident occurs, the parent will be removed from the council, and not allowed to stand for council as long as their child or children are in the school.

## 14 Dissolution of Council

14.1. If parent at large feel the council is not acting in the best interest of the school, there will be a means for review of the council.

14.2. Signature representing 35% of families from the school will be submitted to the principal along with a statement, outlining the problems(s).

14.3. The principal will discuss the petition with council, and if the problems outlined are legitimate, and not resolvable, the principal will ask for the council's resignation.

14.4. A special meeting will be called by the principal to elect a new council, utilizing the procedure outlined above.

## 15 Conflict of Interest

15.1. If an issue is brought to council, where one of the parent members, school members or community representatives stands to benefit financially from such discussions, that member will excuse themselves from the discussion and voting. This will be clearly marked in the minutes of that meeting. 7 of 7 Updated March 2014