



Bessborough School Council Bylaws

As at January 2018

Name

The name of this association shall be Bessborough School Council, representing Bessborough Elementary & Middle School, in the city of Toronto, in the province of Ontario, hereafter referred to as School Council (SC).

Mission Statement

Bessborough School Council supports student success in our school and community.

Purpose

To improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system by encouraging parents to actively participate in the education of their children.

Objectives

To follow the regulations, policies and guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Toronto District School Board concerning school councils:

- to place the interests of the school and its students first
- to act as an advisory body and resource to the school principal and, when appropriate, to the board
- to share responsibility and accountability for the success of all students
- to enhance parent and community involvement in the school
- to promote effective consultation, collaboration and communication among home, school and community
- to provide a forum for dialogue and collaboration concerning the school success plan, to meet shared educational goals
- to facilitate fundraising initiatives that will augment the school's annual operating budget



Role of School Council

The school council is accountable to the school community. The role of the school council shall be to:

- operate within the Education Act and its regulations, the Ministry of Education guidelines and the Toronto District School Board policies, operating procedures and contractual agreements.
- act as an advisory body by providing ideas and suggestions to assist the principal and, where appropriate, the school board trustees, in making decisions on educational issues. Advice provided shall be based on the general views of the school council and in the best interests of the students.

Advisory responsibilities

School council may be asked to provide advice to the principal or school board trustees on decisions that include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- determining the school activity calendar for the board calendar year
- the school code of behaviour and dress codes
- school program goals, priorities and curriculum delivery
- the responses of the school or school board to achievement in provincial and boards assessment programs
- school budget priorities
- allocation of funding for school councils
- strategies for communication and reporting between the school and the community
- selection criteria and placement of principals and vice-principals
- extracurricular activities in the school
- school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreation and nutritional programs
- fundraising policies
- conflict resolution policies
- reimbursement of expenses for school council members



- community use of school facilities
- local coordination of services for children and youth
- development, implementation and review of board policies at the local level
- the establishment or amendment of board policies and guidelines that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents
- development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents
- board action plans for improvement based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of students and the communication of those plans to the public
- development of the school profile

Council Requirements

- hold a minimum of four meetings each year
- establish goals, objectives, action plans and a school success support plan, and review them annually
- organize information and training sessions to help members of council improve their skills as council members
- communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community to gather their views and preferences on matters of interest to the school council
- report on the activities of the school council to the school community
- submit an annual report to the superintendent of education and the trustee(s), no later than June 15th of each school year
- submit a financial statement for the accounting period September 1st to August 31st to the Finance Department, no later than September 30th of each school year



Membership

Parents/guardians shall form the majority of the school council. All council members are equal partners and have equal rights. It is expected that the membership of the council will reflect the diversity of the school community.

Membership in the school council is governed by the *Education Act* **School Council Regulation 612/00 Section 3: Composition**. Membership shall include, but not be limited to:

- parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school
- one community representative, who shall be a public school supporter
- the school principal
- one teacher
- one support (non-teaching) staff member
- one person appointed by the school's Parent Teacher Association or by an association in the school that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, if applicable
- one student (mandatory in secondary schools – in elementary schools, a student may be appointed at the discretion of the principal and in consultation with other members of the school council)

The school council may not be less than 9 members, or 11 members if there is a student representative. If council positions are vacant, the council may continue to function while efforts are made to fill the vacancies.

A person may **not** be a parent member of the council if he/she is:

- trustee of the Toronto District School Board or a local MPP
- employed at the school
- is not employed at the school but is employed elsewhere by the Toronto District School Board, unless he/she informs other council members of the employment status before the council election

A person may **not** be appointed to council as a community representative if he/she is employed by the Toronto board unless:

- he/she is not employed at the school, **and**
- the other members of the school council are informed of the person's employment before the appointment



A person may not serve as chair or co-chair of council if he/she is employed by the Toronto District School Board.

Meetings

A minimum of four meetings will be held during the school year. Additional meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the chair.

The school council must meet within the first 35 days of the school year, after the council elections, on a date chosen by the principal of the school.

All school council meetings are open to the public and will be advertised in the school newsletter, school website and special flyers. On behalf of the school council, the principal will give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the council meetings to every parent of a student enrolled at the school.

Meetings must be held at a location accessible to the public and may be held at the school.

Every council meeting shall include a public question period.

Quorum

A quorum is necessary to pass any motions made at the school council meetings. Without a quorum, motions may not be considered or approved. However, if the majority of parents would like the meeting to proceed without a quorum, the council may continue to discuss other topics.

A quorum exists when:

- the majority of the current members of council are present at the meeting **and**
- a majority of the members of council who are present at the meeting are parent members



School Council Representatives

Executive

Council executive shall include:

- chair
- principal
- secretary

The chair of council must be a parent member and must be elected by the council. A person employed by the Toronto District School Board may not be the chair of council.

The chair shall be elected at the first meeting following the general elections for school council.

The council shall have the following additional executive members, vice-chair, treasurer, and secretary. These executive members shall be elected on the first meeting after the general council election.

Committees

Committees shall be appointed as required. Committee chairs shall be appointed as required.

Every council committee must include at least one parent member of the council. Committees may include people who are not members of council.

Committees shall submit reports and recommendations to the council executive and shall follow directions from the executive and the school principal to implement the recommendations.

Committee chairs shall make reports to meetings of council, as required.

Term of office

The term of office for elected and appointed positions is normally for two years. However, some one-year terms may be permitted to allow for council continuity. The term of office for parents shall be staggered so that approximately half of the members are elected each year. Members of school council may be re-elected or re-appointed for more than one term.



Voting

- A person is qualified to run for a position on school council or vote in a school council election if he/she is a parent or guardian of a student enrolled at the school.
- Elections for school council will be conducted by secret ballot. All eligible voters may cast one vote for each of the candidate positions.
- If there is a tie for a position on council, the vote will be decided by drawing lots.
- If the number of candidates is less than, or equal to, the number of positions available, the candidates will be acclaimed.

Election of non-parent council members

- The principal, in consultation with the Election Planning Committee, will make arrangements for the election of all non-parent members of the school council.
- Any full or part-time teachers may be candidates for the teacher representative position.
- Any full or part-time business employee at the school may be a candidate for the support staff representative position.
- Any student enrolled in the school may be a candidate for the student representative position. (for elementary schools: The principal shall decide if a student representative shall be elected.)

Appointments to School Council

Community representatives are appointed to council. Appointments are made by a consensus of the members at the meeting. Appointments shall be made at a public meeting with appropriate public notice of the meeting.

Vacancies

A vacancy in the school council can be filled by holding an election or council can choose to appoint an eligible member. School council may continue to operate with a vacancy.



If a member does not attend three consecutive regular council meetings and does not provide a reason that is acceptable to council, that position shall be declared vacant by the council.

Duties and Responsibilities

The members of school council shall:

- attend and participate in council meetings
- attend and participate in information and training sessions
- encourage participation of parents and representatives from all groups in the school community
- act as a link between the school council and the community
- support and promote the decisions reached by council
- act in the best interests of the school and students
- ensure that executive positions on the council are filled

Decision-making Process

The council will make every effort to arrive at a consensus for all decisions. Consensus is reached when all or most of the council members can accept or support the idea, concept or course of action being proposed.

Where consensus cannot be reached, council issues may be resolved through a formal vote. The vote may be by secret ballot or show of hands. The vote will be decided by a majority of 50 percent of the council members plus one person. Only elected or appointed members have a vote. The chair may vote only if there is a tie. The principal does not have a vote in any decisions of school council or committees of school council.

Accounting and Auditing

Minutes must be taken at all council meetings. A copy of meeting minutes and financial transaction records must be made available at the school office for the parents and guardians of every child enrolled in the school. Records must be kept for all council financial transactions.



Annual report

By September 30th of each school year, the chair of the school council shall submit an annual report to the superintendent of education. The annual report shall include:

- a list of members
- a summary of meeting dates
- a summary of council's activities over the past year
- a report of any fundraising activities
- other information which council feels is appropriate

Financial statements

By September 30th of each school year, the chair of the school council shall submit a financial statement to the Finance Department. The financial statement shall document fundraising revenue and expenses for the previous year, for the accounting period of September 1st to August 31st and shall be reconciled to council bank statements. The financial statements shall include:

- the opening balance (cash on hand at the beginning of the year)
- revenue collected during the year
- expenses incurred during the year
- the closing balance (cash on hand at the end of the year)



Procedure for Amendments

The Bessborough H&S Bylaws may be amended by submitting a proposed amendment to the executive or to any regular council meeting. The amendment shall be recorded by the secretary as new business and publicized in the minutes.

The amendment shall be voted on at the next regular council meeting. The amendment shall become part of the constitution if it is approved by a majority vote of all members present.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential. Members of the council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decisions of the council.

In the event that a member has a conflict of interest with respect to a matter under consideration at a meeting of the Council, the member shall:

- a. declare the conflict of interest at the beginning of the meeting and before the matter is discussed.
- b. refrain from participating in the discussion of the matter.
- c. refrain from voting on the matter; and
- d. refrain from attempting to influence another member of the School Council before, during or after the consideration of the matter.

The declaration of the conflict of interest shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The School Council may, by vote, waive compliance where the declared conflict of interest is deemed trivial. A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking new or continued business contracts with the School or the School Council.

Examples of conflicts of interest include but are not limited to: Employment by the TDSB, Financial or business interests, Political interests



Conflict Resolution

Every Bessborough School Council Member will be given an opportunity to express concerns or opinions about any issue or item being considered by the School Council. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times. Speakers will be allowed to speak for a reasonable period of time without interruption.

The Chair's responsibility is to:

- a. clarify the statements made by all speakers;
- b. identify common ground among the points of view raised, if possible;
- c. to set out the joint interests of all members;
- d. where an additional topic area arises during the discussion, the Chair shall consider the applicability of that topic to the current discussion and either ask for the agenda to be revised, or alternatively, ask for the new topic to be tabled for discussion at the next meeting.
- e. If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further and may defer to a future meeting while more information is collected.

If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the chair shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator such as the Parent and Community Engagement Office to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.