Hillcrest Community School

School Council Bylaws

October 2014

**Section I**

**Election Procedures**

1. *School Council Elections Committee.* The current school council will establish a school council election committee. The committee must ensure that a new council is in place within thirty days of the start of the school year in September. The executive committee may be elected in the spring of the prior year. The committee should have representation from parents, teaching staff, and the community. Only non-returning council members shall form the elections committee.
2. *Considerations for the school council election process.* In any given year the term of office for all school council positions is one year. Appeals related to the school council election process or results should be resolved by the school council election committee.
3. *Election of parent/guardian representatives.*
   1. Parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school are eligible both to vote for and to run as parent candidates. Self-nominations will suffice. No additional qualifiers or quotas will restrict eligibility either to vote for or to run as a parent representative (e.g., a child’s grade, or location of home). Candidates should be prepared to summarize their reasons for running for the school council. They must also declare if they are employed by the TDSB.
   2. Nomination forms shall be filed by all parent candidates for elected positions on the school council. Parents may nominate themselves or other parents.
   3. Information about candidates shall be made available to the rest of the school community at least one week before the election.
   4. If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed.
   5. No individual campaign literature for school council elections may be distributed around the school.
   6. School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
   7. The election day proceedings shall be publicized by the principal at least fourteen days prior to the election.
   8. The election day proceedings shall be supervised by the principal.
   9. The principal shall conduct a lottery to determine the ballot position for each candidate.
   10. Elections of the school council shall be conducted by secret ballot. Voters must be present at the school on the election day(s) during preset hours for voting, which are to include both daytime and evening hours.
   11. All eligible voters shall be entitled to cast one vote for each of the candidate positions available. Casting more than one vote per category spoils the ballot.
   12. Ballots shall be counted by the principal in the presence of at least two parents who are not elected candidates.
   13. If there is a tie for the final position for a representative on the school council, the winner shall be determined by lot.
4. *Election/appointment of the teaching staff representative.*
   1. The principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the teaching-staff representative to be elected.
   2. Anyone assigned to the teaching staff of the school other than the principal may be a candidate.

**Section II**

**Filling Vacancies**

1. Should an elected parent/guardian council position become vacant before the next election, the council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.
2. If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming council members, the council may request that interested parent/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. The council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.
3. When a vacant spot on council is filled, the new member’s term shall expire at the time of the next election.

**Section III**

**Conflict of Interest.**

Each school council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and vision of the school council and a personal or vested interest, that arise in connection with his or her duties as a school council member.

Should an issue or agenda item arise during a council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest situation, he or she shall declare conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.

**Section IV**

**Conflict Resolution**

Every school council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.

The chair’s responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members. If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further. 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 to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

**Section V**

**Council Structure**

1. The school council executive committee consists of:
2. Chair A
3. Chair B
4. Co-chair A
5. Co-chair B
6. Treasurer
7. Secretary
8. Past Chair

The school council also consists of:

1. One Kindergarten Representative
2. One Diversity Representative
3. Parent/Guardian Representatives at Large
4. One Teaching Staff Representative
5. One Community Member
6. The Principal
7. A budget committee is mandatory and consists of the Treasurer, Principal, one Chair and one Co-chair.

**Section VI**

**Identifying and Approving Agenda Items**

The Chairs shall jointly or individually draft the agenda and publicize it for the school community, generally one week prior to a scheduled council meeting. Any member of council may ask that an agenda item be added to the agenda.

**Section VII**

**Conducting Council Affaires and Council Meetings**

1. Council will conduct consensus-based decisions. Only elected/appointed council members will participate in formal council decisions, and will make best efforts to represent the views of the parent community.
2. The chair of any meeting will make best efforts to ensure that each member of council has an opportunity to voice ideas and concerns.
3. Best efforts will be made to ensure that all major council decisions are agreed upon within the context of formal council meetings in the presence of the full council.
4. Quorum equals a majority of council members.
5. Attendance is mandatory at all council meetings for elected/appointed council members, excusing one meeting in the academic year. In extenuating circumstances a council member may appeal to council for additional absences to be excused.
6. Should more than one council meeting be missed and an appeal not be granted, the council member in question will be asked to give up their position on council.
7. All formal council meetings are open to the general school community to observe, provide feedback, and ask questions.

**Section VIII**

**Council Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of all council meetings shall be recorded by the Secretary and made available to the general community. Meeting minutes shall be kept on file in the school office for four years.

**Section IX**

**Expenditures**

1. Expenditures over $300 must be agreed upon within the context of council meetings and must have the agreement of council.
2. Any council expenditures paid out of pocket by individuals, including council members and teachers, require receipts for reimbursement.

**Section X**

**Annual Report**

1. Council is required to prepare and submit an annual report to the school and to the board outlining council’s goals, activities, and achievements, including any fundraising activities.
2. The principal, on behalf of the school council, must ensure that a copy of the annual report is provided to every parent/guardian who has a child enrolled in the school.
3. The annual report should be presented at the beginning of the academic year, referring to the previous year.