

Elgin Avenue Public School

School Council

Constitution

September, 2014

Article 1: Name and Address

The organization will be known as Elgin Avenue School Council. The members of the school Council shall be responsible for maintaining the constitution.

Elgin Avenue Public School
80 Elgin Ave.
Simcoe ON N3Y 4A8
Phone: (519) 426-4628

Note: within this document:

Elgin Avenue School Council shall be referred to as “**Council**”
Grand Erie District School Board shall be referred to as “**GEDSB**”

Article 2: Mission Statement

Elgin Avenue School Council recognizes the vital role community can play in public education. The Council solicits and facilitates the participation of parents, guardians, and community members. The Council is an advisory committee to the staff and administration of Elgin Avenue Public School, as well as the GEDSB. Finally, the Council supports the staff and students to create the best possible learning environment for all children.

Article 3: Purpose and Objectives

1. Represent the views of the Elgin Avenue parent population.
2. Review the following policies and procedures on a regular basis:
 - a. School Profile
 - b. Code of Student Behavior, Dress Code
 - c. School Plan for Continuous Improvement
 - d. Policies and Procedures of the GEDSB as per amendment schedule
3. Formulate yearly fundraising objectives based on feedback from school administration regarding school needs.
4. Facilitate the execution of school fund-raising programs.
5. Utilize fundraising money to enhance the learning environment at Elgin Avenue in a fair and equitable manner.
6. Collaborate with the school Principal on any communications issued to parents or the community.
7. Support the Plan for Continuous Improvement within the school.
8. Support the Character Initiative within the school.
9. Support the Mission, Vision, and Values of the GEDSB.

Notwithstanding the forgoing, Council’s mandate is subject to any rules and restrictions as set by the GEDSB and the Ministry of Education.

Article 4: Procedures and Operating Guidelines

The operational procedures of this Council are outlined in the GEDSB Policy and Procedure #S02, available on the Board’s web site. All recommendations and activities of the Council shall comply with all Ministry Acts and Regulations, GEDSB Policies and Procedures and Staff Collective Agreements.

Article 5: Membership

There shall be no more than one member of Council from any one household. The term of office shall extend from the first meeting following the annual election until the last scheduled meeting prior to the next annual election.

5.1: Number of Parent/Guardian Members

The number of parents/guardians on the Council will be seven (7), and shall form the majority of Council. Each parent/guardian member shall be entitled to one vote on Council.

5.2: Number of Community Representatives

The number of community representatives will be one (1). The community representative shall be entitled to one vote on Council.

5.3: Other Members

- The Principal who will not be entitled to voting privileges on Council.
- One teaching representative who will not be entitled to voting privileges on Council.
- One non-teaching representative who will not be entitled to voting privileges on Council.

Article 6: Elections

6.1: Acclamations

Parent elections shall be by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to, or less than the number of parent member positions on the Council.

6.2: Election Procedures for Parent Members

1. Each parent/guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at the school, have a valid police-check on file at the school and must declare if he or she is employed by the Board.
2. Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent/guardian membership position on the Council.
3. The School Council shall strike an election committee in June, to help plan the election process, the gathering of nominations, and the running of the election. No one standing for election or the spouse of anyone standing for election shall be a member of the election committee.

4. The election committee shall:
 - Provide nomination forms
 - Ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date(s), location, and time, at least seven (7) days in advance of election
 - Request a profile for all candidates and make these available to the electorate
 - Conduct the elections by secret ballot
 - Count the ballots
 - Help the Principal notify all candidates of the results
 - Keep all the results and related information confidential
 - Release only the names of successful candidates. A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file for use in the event of vacancy on the Council.
 - Shall notify all individuals standing for election of the results before the results are released to the school community.

6.3: Terms of Office

Elected and appointed will serve a one year term of office and may seek additional terms of office.

6.4: Vacancies in Membership

1. A vacancy in the membership of a school Council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority.
2. If parent member positions remain vacant on Council after the election, the Council may appoint parent members.
3. Positions that become vacant due to resignation or removal shall be filled as soon as possible by:
 - a) Offering the person with the next largest number of votes who was not elected, the opportunity to accept the position.
 - b) Where there are not enough candidates to fill the vacancies, notice will be sent to all parents informing them of the vacancies and application by interested volunteers sought.
 - c) If there are more applications than positions, an election will be called
 - d) When no more candidates are available, Council may appoint parent members.
4. Vacancies will only be filled until April of the current year, at which time the vacant positions will be filled through September elections.

6.5: Resignations

1. Anyone who is a Council member, except the Principal, may resign his or her position by writing a letter of resignation to the Chair/Co-Chairs.
2. If a member resigns, the position vacated will be filled according to **section 6.4 “Vacancies in Membership”** within this document.

6.6: Removal

The Council **may** choose to remove from Council any member who misses three (3) meetings **or** who fails to uphold the “values, ethical standards and confidentiality” expected of Council members and shall undertake to replace that person according to **section 6.4 “Vacancies in Membership”** within this document.

Article 7: Executive

7.1: Chair/Co-Chairs

1. At the first meeting after the elections, Council will elect a Chair or Co-Chairs.
2. An employee of the GEDSB cannot be Chair or Co-Chair.

7.2: Other Officers

At the first meeting of the school year, Council will elect or appoint the following officers:

- Fundraising Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer.

7.3: Vacancies in Office

Officer vacancies will be filled as soon as possible.

Article 8: Roles and Responsibilities of Council Members

8.1: The Council Chair/Co-Chairs

It is preferable but not required that a person **have** served as a council member for at least the last full year prior to being elected or appointed Chair/Co-Chair of the Council

The Chair/Co-Chairs shall

- Prepare agendas for Council meetings in consultation with the Principal & share with the Council members 1 week prior to the meeting, when possible.
- Communicate with the Principal as required
- Chair meetings
- Participate in information and training programs where possible and appropriate

- Ensure the establishment of procedures whereby consensus and/or voting may occur during Council Meetings.
- Ensure any written reports required as a result of Council business are prepared
- Consult with senior board staff and trustees as required
- Support and promote the activities of the school
- Have one vote on Council each.

8.2: The Treasurer shall:

- Provide financial reports at each Council meeting
- Ensure that fundraising money is stored in a locked location in the office
- Ensure that fundraising money does not leave the school premises
- Ensure at least 1 other person is present when money is counted
- Have one vote on Council.

8.3: The Secretary shall:

- Ensure minutes of meetings are recorded and maintained in the office
- Ensure that the names of parents and guests attending meetings are recorded
- Ensure that he or she has an alternate in the event of absence from any meeting
- Have one vote on Council

8.4: The Fundraising Chair shall:

- Provide Council with a schedule of fundraising events, to be passed by 2/3 majority of Council after consultation and approval of the Principal
- Provide a Fundraising report at each monthly meeting detailing minutes of fundraising meetings which occur outside of Council meetings
- Reviews of the past months' fundraising drives
- Plans for the upcoming months fundraising drives
- Facilitate the execution of school fund-raising programs
- Have one vote on Council

8.5: The Sub-committee chairs shall:

- Submit updates at each Council meeting outlining the following:
 - Dates and minutes of meetings held outside of regular Council meetings
 - Results of any voting which occurred during aforementioned meetings
 - Overview of progress made according to objectives of said sub-committee
- Present updates at Council meetings, as required.

8.6: The Principal and/or Vice Principal shall:

- Attend Council meetings
- Facilitate the establishment of the Council and assist in its operations
- Seek input from Council in areas for which Council has been assigned advisory responsibility
- Obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions within the framework of Ministry and Board guidelines, policies, procedures and memoranda
- Communicate with the Chair/Co-Chairs of Council as required
- Ensure that copies of minutes of Council meetings are kept at the school
- Encourage the participation of staff and parents from all groups and of other people within the school community when appropriate
- Support and promote activities of Council
- Act as a resource on legislation, policies, procedures, memoranda and collective agreements of the GEDSB
- Prepare school profile in collaboration with Council
- Not have a vote on Council.

8.7: The Parent/Guardian Representatives shall:

- Seek to understand and abide by the rules and regulations of Council as set by the Ministry and Board
- Provide the Chair/Co-Chairs with advanced notice of absence from any meeting
- Suggest agenda items to the Chair/Co-Chairs at least one week prior to the meeting
- Attend and actively participate in all meetings
- Work to promote the objectives of Council outside of meetings
- Represent the perspective of all parent/guardian's in the school community

- Communicate Council activities to the parent/guardian community
- Encourage parents/guardians who are not members of Council to become involved in Council sub-committees
- Have one vote per parent/guardian representative.

8.8: The Teaching Staff Representative shall:

- Attend and actively participate in all meetings
- Represent the teaching staff's perspective
- Solicit views from their staff groups to share with Council
- Communicate information back to their staff colleagues (and student council as appropriate)
- Will not have a vote on Council.

8.9: The Community Representative shall:

- Attend and actively participate in all meetings
- Represent the community's perspective
- Build partnerships and links between the school and the community.
- Have one vote on Council

Article 9: Sub-committees

9.1: Establishment

At the first meeting of the school year, sub-committees may be formed to:

- Conduct more detailed or in-depth work than is possible during Council meetings
- Make recommendations to Council
- Keep Council informed of issues and developments in its particular area.

Sub-committees will be formed based on the priorities identified by Council and may change throughout the year as the need arises.

9.2: Sub-Committee Membership

- Must contain at least one parent/guardian member of Council.
- Persons, who are not members of Council, may be members of sub-committees.

9.3: Chairs of Sub-Committees

Council will appoint a chair for each sub-committee it forms.

9.4: Voting

Each member of a sub-committee shall be entitled to one vote in votes taken by the sub-committee.

Article 10: Meetings

10.1: Timetable of General Council Meetings

- Council shall meet 4 times during the school calendar year.
- A copy of these dates and times will be included in communications(s) to the families of the school.
- It is recognized that the timetable may change at any time.
- A copy of the list of dates and times of meetings will be sent to the local trustee.

10.2: Quorum

- The meeting will have quorum if the majority of voting Council members are present.
- A meeting of Council can be held if there is no quorum but all voting will be deferred.

10.3: Decision Making

The preferred method to resolve issues on Council is by consensus. Consensus is a collective opinion or general agreement by all the Council members, including non-voting members. In the case where a decision cannot be reached through consensus, the Chair/Co-Chairs may decide on one of the following:

1. To have a vote by way of a show of hands, or a silent vote by those present in which a 51% majority shall carry the vote.
2. To defer the issue to the next meeting.
3. To defer the issue to a sub-committee to gather more information.

10.4: Conflict of Interest

- If individual Council members perceive themselves to be in conflict of interest, they are honor-bound to declare their conflict at the earliest possible opportunity and at the time of the meeting, so the minutes may reflect this declaration.
- Council members cannot receive any remuneration for their work as a member of Council.

10.5: Conflict Resolution

The Council will undertake to resolve all internal conflicts within its mandate in a timely manner. A full conflict resolution bylaw is detailed in Appendix 1. **The Council will abide by any conflict resolution policy issued by the Board.**

10.6: Meeting Code of Ethics

All Council and sub-committee meetings will begin with a review of the Council Meeting Code of Ethics (see Appendix 4 – Meeting Code of Ethics).

Article 11: Financial Records

11.1: Disbursement and Allocation of Money

All money must be collected by the end of the year. Funds should be dispersed or allocated to a specific purpose by the end of the year.

11.2: Annual Audit

Each year, there may be an independent audit of the Council books performed by an accountant.

Article 12: Agendas and Minutes

12.1: Agendas

Agenda items should be submitted to the Chair/Co-Chairs one week prior to Council's next meeting. The Chair/Co-Chairs will set the agenda with the Principal prior to the meeting.

12.2: Minutes

- Minutes shall include motions, decisions and actions to be taken.
- Members of the Council must inform the Chair/Co-Chairs if they are going to be absent from a Council meeting.

Article 13: Constitutional Amendments

- Council will review the constitution every two years or as the need arises. A sub-committee can perform the review and bring proposed amendments to Council for voting after consultation with the Principal.
- Amendments to the constitution must be presented to Council, at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- Constitutional amendments need 2/3 majority to be passed.

Appendix 1 – Conflict Resolution Bylaw

- 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/Co-Chair's responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members.
- If no common ground can be identified, the Chair/Co-Chairs will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
- If the School Council cannot resolve a matter, the situation will be brought to the Principal in a confidential manner for discussion/decision and next steps.
- If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair/Co-Chairs shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict

Appendix 2 – Code of Ethics

- 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 statement:

Engage, support and inspire all learners to achieve and succeed

- 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 Government.
- A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- 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.
- A member shall declare any conflict of interest.
- A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.

Appendix 3 - REQUEST FOR FUNDS

Name of Requester (s):	
Phone number of above:	
Date of Request:	Date funds will be required:
Total amount requested:	
How will these funds be used:	
How will this spending benefit the children, teachers, and/or school?	
<i>In the space provided below, please provide a breakdown of expense items and the approximate cost for each item including taxes)</i>	
Expense Details	
Amount	Description:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
Total:	

Requests for funds:

- Requests for Funds must be submitted, and approved, prior to spending funds.
- Once request is approved, all spending must fall within approved request.
- Any expenses outside of approved budget will not be reimbursed.
- All receipts must be provided for reimbursement.

Appendix 4 – Council Meeting Code of Ethics

Guiding Vision: keeping the best interests of Elgin students our focus and endeavouring to make Elgin a school where students, teachers, parents and community members feel welcomed, respected, valued and viewed as contributing participants

- Meeting will run 6:00pm to 7:00pm (unless otherwise stated)
- Please be respectful of other’s ideas and/or concerns. No cross talk. One person speaking at a time.
- Stick to the Agenda.
- Time frame will be decided upon by Council Chair prior to the meeting for each agenda item.
- Open forum will be added to the end of each meeting agenda, where time permits.
- Be considerate: send regrets (to the Chair) if you cannot make a meeting or if you will be late.
- Be prepared: bring a copy of the minutes from the previous meeting and have read them.
- Be punctual. Please arrive by 6:00pm whenever possible.