

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SHERIDAN PUBLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL

Sheridan Public School

Halton District School Board

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The History of Sheridan Public School

Since Sheridan Public School received its first students in September of 1979, it has continued to provide a learning environment with a tremendous sense of community. Staff, parents and administrators continue to work together to provide the highest quality education possible for the students of this community. Special education needs are addressed with compassion, support and professionalism to ensure that all students remain safe and benefit from the inclusion of all others who attend.

The population fluctuates from year to year. In fact, in 1991, there were more than 400 students occupying the main building and 9 portables. As of May 11, 2010, there are 217 students attending Sheridan, from JK to Grade 5. Students at Sheridan are well-behaved and are known for their respectfulness, participation, encouragement of one another, leadership and audience skills. They attend a celebratory assembly at the end of each week to show appreciation for the many accomplishments of their peers.

Staff meets regularly to discuss student achievement, examine the most current data and plan for continuous improvement. Their dialogue is purposeful and respectful of students and colleagues. We are proud of working hard on behalf of students. Efforts are focused on making a positive difference for every student in the school.

Highlights of the building include a music room that doubles as a stage, a very modern computer lab complete with an LCD projector and screen for guided application of skills, and a huge multi-purpose room that we call "the mall". Upon entry into the building, many people acknowledge that they feel the positivity and sense of community immediately.

Current highlights are that we now have top-of-the-line Smartboard systems in two classrooms helping to keep our oldest and youngest students highly engaged in learning. We have abundant classroom libraries serving each student in each classroom at their own reading level. A school-wide home reading program assists our students in becoming the most proficient and fluent readers they can be.

Students at Sheridan show that they care about their environment every day. From Trashless Tuesdays and Walking Wednesdays to the end of the week when Green Carts are prepared for collection, our EcoMonitors and general population are hard at work. We have reduced our waste tremendously through our recycling, composting and optimal reuse of materials such as paper in our GOOS bins (Good On One Side). We have been learning a great deal and acting on our learning. As a result, we are hopeful that we will earn EcoSchools Gold Certification in the spring.

Sheridan parents help in a multitude of ways, from volunteering in classrooms to preparing healthy snacks and developing new ideas at our School Council meetings. We've lost count of the number of parent-generated ideas that have become beloved programs and events at Sheridan. This partnership continues to grow and develop on behalf of student learning.

Upon completion of their Grade 5 year, students move on to Falgarwood Public School for Grades 6 through 8. Iroquois Ridge is our local high school. We wish our former students all the best for their continued education and success in life.

Article 1: Name and Location

The name of this organization shall be Sheridan Public School Council, a not for profit organization, hereafter referred to as Council.

Office of this location shall be located in Oakville, Ontario.

Article 2: Non Profit Organization

Council is not carried on for the purposes of profit or gain to any member. Any profit to the organization will be used in promoting its mandate.

Council will operate any fund raising activities in strict accordance with the Halton District School Board Policy.

Article 3: Philosophy

Council supports the community building and peer leadership process known simply as "Tribes".

"Tribes" is a step-by-step process to achieve specific learning goals. Four agreements are honoured:

- attentive listening
- appreciation/no put downs
- mutual respect, and
- the right to pass

Council shall use the Tribes process as a means of promoting healthy and effective learning and leadership of the Council.

Article 4: Mandate

4.1 Sheridan Public School Council Vision

A community of parents, guardians, school staff and community members working collaboratively to achieve the objectives of the School Improvement Plan

4.2 Objectives

Activities Council may be involved in:

- Enhancing communications
- Sponsoring and conducting fundraising activities
- Making reports and recommendations to the school administration
- Supporting and facilitating the implementation of the School Improvement Plan
- Providing opportunities for parents to be involved in the education of their children

- Promoting and creating partnerships in and out of the school community
- Promoting a learning environment which enhances the achievements of our students
- Providing input to the Halton District School Board as required
- Working together as a team to create an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect, openness and collaboration within itself and the Sheridan community
- Provide input to the Principal on program issues, operation issues and budget priorities
- Demonstrate accountability to the school community

Article 5: Membership

The composition of Council will be consistent with the Education Act and Regulations. Members of Council may include representatives from each of the following five (5) categories:

5.1 Parent/Guardian

There shall be up to eleven (11) parent/guardian representatives who will be elected according to the inclusions in the Elections Section. The number of parent/guardian members specified for Council shall ensure that parent/guardian members constitute a majority of the total members of Council.

A person is qualified to be a parent/guardian member of Council if he or she is a parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school.

HDSB employees are eligible to run for Council as parent/guardian representatives if they are parent/guardian(s) of a student enrolled in the school, provided they do not work at the school. Employees must disclose their employment with HDSB on their nomination form prior to the election.

Four (4) executives of Council shall be elected from the successful parent incumbents to the new Council during the election held at the beginning of the school year.

- One (1) Chair
- One (1) Vice-Chair (or two (2) Co-Chairs for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions)
- One (1) Secretary
- One (1) Treasurer

Council shall have one (1) Chair and one (1) Vice-Chair or two (2) Co-Chairs. A Chair or Co-Chair(s) must be a parent/guardian member of Council and shall be elected by the voting members of Council. The Vice-Chair is to be elected by the voting members of Council only if a Chair is in place. Should there be more than one nomination; nominees shall be allowed to make a short (1-2 minute presentation) regarding their candidacy for the position. The executive election will be by ballot voting only.

5.2 Community Representative

Council may appoint one (1) Community Representative as a member of Council.

A person can be appointed a community representative only if,

- a) He or she is knowledgeable about the community
- b) He or she does not have a child/children attending the school

5.3 Principal

The Principal of the school will be designated a non-voting member of Council and participate in all meetings.

5.4 Teacher Representative

The teacher representative will be designated a voting member of Council. One or more teachers must attend all Council meetings. However, they may job-share this position, on a rotational basis. One (1) teacher may be nominated to be the main contact.

5.5 Non-Teaching Staff Representative

The Principal will select one (1) non-teaching staff representative as a voting member of Council. Non-teaching staff includes Secretaries, Educational Assistants, and Caretakers. He/she will attend all Council meetings and the election of the new Council.

Article 6: Committees

Council may establish committees, for specific or general purposes, as it deems appropriate to achieve its mandate and to make recommendations to Council.

A Committee may only act in accordance with the authority provided to them by Council. Every Committee must consist of one (1) or more Council member(s) and may include additional support from other parent/guardian(s). The Committee will report to Council as appropriate.

Committee reports are to be sent to Council electronically at least five (5) days before Council meeting. Each Council member will read the report prior to the meeting.

The Agenda time allotted to the Committee cannot be used to re-read or re-tell the report, however clarification can be made if necessary.

Article 7: Member Responsibilities

7.1 All Council members shall

- a) Promote the best interest of the students and the school community
- b) Maintain a school-wide perspective
- c) Regularly attend Council meetings
- d) Be willing to participate in information and training programs
- e) Act as a link between Council and the community
- f) Encourage the participation of all parents/guardians within the school community.

7.2 School Staff

Teaching/non-teaching staff members shall further:

- a) Communicate the activities of Council to their respective electorates
- b) Seek to represent the views of their respective electorates

7.3 Community Representatives

Community representatives shall further:

- a) Contribute to the discussions of Council
- b) Solicit views from their respective groups to share with Council
- c) May participate on any committees established by Council
- d) Communicate information back to their representative groups
- e) Help build partnerships and links between the school and the community, student body, and organizations, respectively.

Article 8: Executive Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the executive are:

8.1 The Principal

The School Principal facilitates the establishment of and assists in the operation of Council. The Principal supports, promotes and communicates Council activities, and obtains and provides information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions. The Principal communicates regularly with the Chair.

Thus, the Principal of the school will:

I) Communicate

- a) Notify each member of Council any materials that are received by the Principal from the Ministry of Education or HDSB for Council consideration
- b) Help Council communicate with the school community
- c) Give written notices of dates, times and locations of Council meetings to every parent/guardian at Sheridan Public School
- d) Ensure that copies of the minutes of Council meetings are kept at the school for a minimum of 4 years and are accessible to all parent/guardian(s)
- e) Forward a copy of the Council Annual Report to the Superintendent of Schools at HDSB
- f) Give written notice to every parent/guardian regarding the date, time, and location of the Council election at least fourteen (14) days prior to the election date
- g) Ensure that the Sheridan Public School Council Constitution is readily available to the school community
- h) Review all documentation from Council prior to distribution

II) Consult

- a) Facilitate the establishment of Council and assist in its operation
- b) Seek input from Council in areas for which it has been assigned responsibility, including but not limited to:
 - i. School policies and guidelines on school Code of Conduct, appropriate dress code for staff and students
 - ii. School Improvement Plan
- c) Consider recommendations made by Council
- d) Advise Council of the action taken in response to any recommendations including the rationale for such decisions
- e) Act as a resource and assist in obtaining information on laws, regulations, and policies
- f) Advise Council when they are not in compliance with HDSB policies and procedures
- g) Review and sign all financial reports in a timely fashion

III) Support

- a) Attend all Council meetings unless unable to do so due to illness, other priority commitment or cause beyond his/her control
- b) Support and promote Council activities
- c) Encourage the participation of parents/guardians and others in the school community
- d) Act as one (1) of the required signing authorities on the Council bank account along with a parent/guardian executive

The Principal will not have a vote at Council meetings.

The Principal may delegate any of his or her powers or duties as a member of Council to the Vice-Principal or designate of the school.

8.2 Chair or Co-Chairs

A Chair/Co-Chair must be a parent/guardian member of Council who will:

- a) Call Council meetings

- b) Prepare the Agenda for meetings in consultation with the Principal, ensuring the Agenda is issued at least one week prior to the meeting
- c) Chair the meeting
- d) Ensure that the minutes of the meeting are recorded, maintained and accessible
- e) Communicate with the Principal
- f) Facilitate collaborative decision-making within a democratic framework
- g) Facilitate the resolution of conflicts
- h) Ensure the community is regularly informed regarding the Council meetings through the monthly School Newsletter and/or school website
- i) Manage incoming and outgoing correspondence, ensuring appropriate communication to Council and provide copies to the Secretary for record keeping
- j) Consult with senior HDSB staff and trustees as required
- k) Ensure Council fundraising practices meet HDSB policies
- l) Ensure Council Constitution is reviewed annually with all Council members
- m) Co-ordinate the day-to-day activities of Council
- n) Prepare an annual report on the activities of Council
- o) In times of membership absence, make arrangements or assume the responsibility of absent members of Council
- p) Review and sign all financial reports in a timely fashion

8.3 Vice-Chair

Council shall have a Vice-Chair only when one Chair is elected. The Vice-Chair will:

- a) Attend and participate in Council meetings
- b) Chair the meeting in the absence of the Chair
- c) Assume other Council positions as appropriate and, as required, in times of absence of those members of Council.

8.4 Secretary

The Secretary will:

- a) Ensure activities of the Council meeting are documented and maintained in the form of minutes, with the minutes being distributed to all Council members, once completed and approved by a Chair and the Principal
- b) Ensure minutes from the preceding Council meeting are distributed to all Council members at least one week prior to the planned date for the next Council meeting
- c) Ensure approved minutes of all Council meetings are available to the school community
- d) Ensure all documents given out at a Council meeting are attached to the minutes
- e) Maintain a filing system recording correspondence, minutes, agendas, reports, constitution and by-laws. These records are to be available to the community if requested
- f) Maintain a current membership and contact list of all Council members
- g) Retains records of Council incoming/outgoing correspondence, resources, and minutes to be kept of the previous four (4) years

8.5 Treasurer

The Treasurer will:

- a) Comply with the financial guidelines set out by the HDSB in their "Financial Guidelines for School Councils" booklet
- b) Ensure that Council has a copy of the HDSB School Council Handbook Supplement
- c) Ensure financial transactions are documented and records maintained in a proper financial ledger
- d) Ensure all cheques have a minimum of two authorized signatures
- e) Ensure financial records are complete and kept up to date
- f) Ensure financial records are retained in the school for a period of four (4) years in accordance with Regulation 612/00 Section 16
- g) Prepare and present monthly and yearly financial reports and bank reconciliations to Council meetings
- h) Prepare an annual report and bank reconciliations to July 31st of each year. This report is to be available for perusal by all parents/guardians of the school. A copy of the report is to be forwarded to HDSB, by September 30th.

Article 9: Election and Appointing Procedures

9.1 Election and preparation for election

Within the first 10 days of the school year, the Principal shall ask for applications for Council. The notice shall ask for intent to sit on Council.

The election of Parent Members of Council shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year on a date fixed by the Chair or Co-Chairs of Council after consulting with the Principal.

No later than 14 days before the date of the election of Parent Members, the principal shall give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a pupil enrolled in the School on the date of notice.

If on the date and time of the election there are 11 applicants who have indicated their intent to sit on Council, those applicants shall be considered appointed to the Council. If there are more than 11 applicants, an election shall take place.

All parents/guardians of students attending Sheridan Public School are eligible to vote for a member of Council.

Candidates may nominate themselves or be nominated by another Sheridan Public School parent/guardian.

Voting shall be done by ballot.

The elections shall be organized by the Principal and the Chair, or Co-Chairs, from the previous Council.

No proxy votes shall be allowed.

Teaching and non-teaching representatives will be elected/acclaimed by their peers during the first 30 days of the school year.

9.2 Term of office

Council members shall serve a one (1) year term and are eligible for re-election or reappointment.

The officers of the Executive shall serve a one (1) year term, or until a successor is duly ratified. A member elected as officer of the Executive may serve consecutive terms in the position.

9.3 Resignation and/or Removal

Any member may resign by filing a written resignation with Council and executive.

Council as a whole may remove any member for cause, by a two-thirds vote. For any cause removal shall occur only after the member in question has been given at least 30 days notice of the proposed termination and reasons for it. That member will have at least 15 days to respond in writing to the Council Executive, which shall then make a final determination.

A member may also be removed if he or she has missed 3 consecutive meetings, or if he or she has missed half of the scheduled meetings for the year. This does not preclude a decision by consensus or vote of Council that extenuating circumstances experienced by a specific member make termination of that member's status unwarranted.

In the event of a vacancy on Council from a resignation or removal of a member, the position may be filled by a qualified individual in a by-election for the balance of the vacant position's term.

Article 10: Communication

Council shall communicate frequently with the Parents and Guardians, the school, the Halton District School Board, and the public as necessary to fulfill the vision.

As part of fulfilling the commitment to Ontario EcoSchools, Council should strive to minimize the impact on the environment. As such, electronic or written communication will be considered official, and electronic communication shall be used whenever possible to achieve the expected result.

The following is the expected communication by Council.

Item	Frequency	Medium	Delivered by	Expected Result
Financial Summary	At each Council meeting	Oral	Treasurer	Council is made aware of status of finances and expenses
Financial Statement	Annually	Written	Treasurer	Obligation to report to the HDSB the financial statements of Council
Meeting Announcement	At least 10 days prior to the meeting	Email	Chair	Council is made aware of all Council meetings
Meeting Schedules	Beginning of school year	Included in school calendar	Chair	Council is made aware of schedule of regular Council meetings
Council Minutes	Within seven days of a meeting	Email	Secretary	Council is informed of the outcomes of each meeting
Council Meetings	At least 4 a year	Meeting	Chair	Council discusses the issues and objectives and makes decisions to move the business of Council forward
Annual Report	September of each year	Written	Chair	Obligation to report to the HDSB the activities and outcomes of Council
Ad Hoc	As required	As required	As required	Communication as needed to fulfill Council's vision and objectives

Article 11: Meetings of Members and Voting

There should be at a minimum four (4) meetings of the entire Council in a school year.

The first meeting of Council must occur within the first thirty-five (35) instructional days of the school year, after the election has been held and on a date fixed by the Principal of the school.

On behalf of Council, the Principal shall give written notice of the dates, times, and location of Council meetings to every parent/guardian(s) of a student who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school. A posting of the date and time of the Council meeting will also be on display in a location that is accessible to parents/guardian(s).

All meetings of Council shall be open to the public and no individual shall be excluded from the meeting except for disruptive behaviour.

A meeting of Council cannot be held unless a quorum is present and the majority of the members of Council who are present at the meeting are parent/guardian members. A minimum number of parent/guardian(s) will be required for a quorum vote. This shall consist of a simple majority of members as long as the parents comprise at least half of the voting members. (E.g. If you had eleven (11) parent/guardian members on Council, you would need six (6) parent members to hold a vote in order to form a quorum).

Any vote at a meeting requires a quorum. All members of Council, excluding the Principal or his/her designate, have voting rights and may exercise them or abstain.

When voting on a motion, a tie vote result will be deferred to the next meeting. Agenda items for discussion will be established, published, and communicated by the Chair/Co-Chair at least seven (7) days prior to scheduled meeting.

New items raised which were not previously documented or communicated in the Agenda, may be introduced at the meeting and raised for information only. Such items must be recorded under new business and highlighted for action at the next meeting, unless otherwise determined by the members.

Article 12: Finance

The Treasurer is responsible to have reviewed and follow the most up to date copy of "Financial Policies and Procedures for School Councils" (Financial Policy) from the Halton District School Board.

In addition to the Financial Policy, Council will abide by the following:

- a) The executive shall have the responsibility over the receipts, expenditures and assets of Council.
- b) The fiscal year of Council shall be from September 1 to August 31.
- c) The Treasurer, in conjunction with the Chair, or the Chair's designate and the Principal may within the first calendar month of each fiscal year prepare an operating budget covering all activities of the association.
- d) Fund raising will conform to Board Policy. Council must approve all fund raising

- e) Funds received are for the purpose of bettering the education of school children through the administration of programs and purchase of items approved by Council. Said funds will be held in the bank account of Council until disbursement details are finalized.
- f) A financial statement must be presented at each Council meeting.
- g) Any special fund established with or supplemented by Council monies must have a detailed financial statement presented at each Council meeting
- h) All fundraising dollars are to be spent in the year generated with the exception of special funds, i.e. Back-to-School BBQ or a project that remains ongoing.
- i) If an emergency decision is required with regard to the expenditure of funds, and is consistent with Council long-term plans, a unanimous vote may be carried by the Executive plus (1) Council members.

Article 13: Conflict of Interest

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

When a Council member finds him/herself in a conflict of interest position regarding an issue under consideration by Council, the member must:

- a) Declare that he or she is in a conflict of interest situation.
- b) May not participate in any further discussion of the conflict issue and can, at the discretion of Council members, be requested to leave the meeting while the item is discussed/voted on.
- c) The member is not allowed to vote on the issue or be a part of the resolution on the issue.

Example:

Council is discussing the construction of a new playground and possible contractors. The brother of a parent member of Council is a building contractor, who intends to bid on the contract. The Council member could, therefore, find him or herself in a potential conflict of interest situation.

Article 14: Conflict Resolution

As Council may deal with internal conflict and other difficult matters, the following actions should be taken as best practice:

- a) Be proactive. Positive interpersonal relationships are critical to effective organization. Most issues can be resolved if they are brought forward and addressed early during the meeting.
- b) Gather as much information about the situation as possible.
- c) If the conflict is between two members of Council, the Chair/Co-Chair/Vice-Chair or Principal should encourage dialogue between the parties to determine their differences and act as facilitator as necessary. Most situations can be resolved at this point through co-operation amongst those involved. The Principal may also be able to clarify policy or legislation and offer other assistance or direction.
- d) If the conflict involves a number of members on Council, then the issue is placed on the Agenda and sufficient time is given for everyone to present their viewpoints in an effort to come to some resolution.
- e) When a Chair/Co-Chair is directed by a member of Council to obtain clarification from HDSB, a School Trustee or outside agency, they shall obtain the necessary information and report to Council to discuss before any further action or decision is made by Council.
- f) Speaking to a local HDSB School Trustee at any time should be encouraged, but not used in exclusion to the above-recommended process.

Article 15: Dissolution

Council shall use its funds only to accomplish the mission specified in this constitution and no part of said funds should be distributed to the members of the association. On dissolution of the association, any funds remaining shall be distributed to a Registered Charity as elected by the Executive.

Article 16: Amendments

This constitution may be amended by approval of Council members present at a regular Council meeting. A request for such an amendment should be identified at a regular Council meeting for Council members to consider, providing it is within the guidelines of Regulation 612/00. At the following Council meeting, a motion can be made to accept the change(s) to the constitution.

A majority vote of two-thirds (2/3) to accept the amendment is required from the parent members in order to make the change in the constitution. Should a consensus not be reached at this time, changes may be suggested to the motion for Council to consider at the following monthly meeting.

This constitution will be reviewed by Council every two (2) years and updated if necessary by a Committee of Council.

Revision History

<u>Date</u>	<u>Version</u>	<u>Description</u>
October 4, 2001	1.0	Document created
June 6, 2010	1.1	Document amended