Halton District School Board

TRAIL CONSTITUTION AND BY-

Ratified November 2026

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PURPOSE

This document is intended to serve as a constitution/by-law that is compliant with Ontario Regulation 612/00: School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees.

REGULATIONS

School Councils are not required to develop lengthy constitutions since O. Reg. 612/00 sets out the mandate and roles and responsibilities for School Councils. In effect, the regulation serves as the constitution for the School Council (it is therefore the bulk of this document in friendly language).

School Councils must develop certain by-laws to provide them with direction for the operation of council business and to help School Councils work effectively. Regulation 612/00 requires School Councils to develop by-laws to address election procedures (Article IV in this document), filling vacancies (Article V), conflict of interest (Article XII), and conflict resolution procedures (Article XII).

Titles of Sections and Mandatory features of Regulation 612 are **bolded.**

FOREST TRAIL CONSTITUTION/BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – NAME OF ORGANIZATION

1.1 The name of this organization will be Forest Trail School Council (hereafter referred to as "the Council")

ARTICLE II – MANDATE OF THE COUNCIL

The purpose of School Councils is, through the active participation of parents/guardians, to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians. (Reg 612/00 s 2 (1).

A School Council may make recommendations to the Principal of the school or to the Board that established the Council on any matter (Reg. 612/00 s.20).

2.1 Working within the policies, mission statement and goals of the Halton District School Board, the Council will:

- Provide advice to the Principal and the Halton District School Board regarding key matters pertaining to student achievement and well-being
- Provide opportunities for parents/guardians to be more directly involved in the education of their children (such as volunteering)
- Foster good relations among parents/guardians, staff and the local community
- Be a voice for public education within the community
- Fundraise to support the objectives of the school improvement plan
- Report on the Council's activities as requested by the Board

2.2 The Council will not have any of the powers and duties reserved by law or regulation for the local school board, the school Principal or collective agreements.

ARTICLE III – REPRESENTATION AND MEMBERSHIP

3.1 The Council will be composed of the following members:

- The school Principal
- A minimum of five to a maximum of 15 parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school
- A teacher at the school (when a teacher volunteers)

3.2 Quorum (a simple majority) shall be established with half of the voting/elected members plus one.

ARTICLE IV – ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES

4.1 TIMELINES AND VOTING

- An election of parent/guardian members of a School Council shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year on a date that is fixed by the Chair or Co-Chairs of the School Council after consulting with the Principal of the school.
- The Principal of a school shall, at least **14 days before the date** of the election of parent/guardian members, on behalf of the School Council should issue a notice of election. The notice should include the following details:
    - The school council positions to be filled
    - Nomination form access (Google doc or form)
    - The due date for nominations
    - Vote date (if required)
- The election of parent/guardian members shall be by secret ballot, if needed

4.2 ELIGIBILITY

Parent/guardian representatives will be elected according to the following process (Reg 612 s.4)

- A person is qualified to be a parent/guardian member of a School Council if they are a parent/guardian of a pupil enrolled at the school.
- A person is **not qualified to be a parent/guardian member** of a School Council if they are employed at the school or a Trustee of the Board
- A candidate **must declare if they are employed by the Halton District School Board** elsewhere in the Board.
- A person is **qualified to vote** in an election of parent/guardian members of a School Council if they are a **parent/guardian of a pupil** enrolled at the school.

4.3 TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE

A teacher representative will be determined by the teaching staff of the school. This process is determined by the Principal and staff.

4.4 NOMINATION

Self-Nomination Candidacy Forms will be distributed/posted by the Principal via Google form. The Chair or Co-Chairs, Secretary, and Treasurer will be elected during the first meeting of the new Council.

Persons who wish to hold an Executive position will be asked to put their name forward for the position on the Self-Nomination Candidacy Form with their qualifications for the role.

ARTICLE V – TERMS OF OFFICE

5.1 A person elected or appointed holds office from the first meeting of the year they are elected until the date of the first meeting of the Council in the following year.

5.2 An elected parent/guardian must submit their Self-Nomination Candidacy Form annually.

5.3 Teaching and non-teaching staff members will be determined annually from their respective groups. This will occur as soon as possible in the new school year.

5.4 The Principal is appointed by the Halton District School Board.

5.5 The Council may establish committees made up of teachers and/or parents/guardians to carry out specific functions. The Council will seek widespread participation in these activities. These committees will have no responsibilities beyond those outlined by the Council when the committee is established.

5.6. Membership will be terminated when:

- For parents/guardians: When the member no longer has a child enrolled in the school.
- For teacher/support staff: When the member is no longer employed at Forest Trail Public School.
- When the member has missed two scheduled meetings without proper notice or regrets to the Chair or Co-Chairs or the school and is recorded as absent in the minutes.
- When the member submits a letter of resignation to the Chairperson.

5.7 **Vacancies** ***(A by-law addressing the filling of vacancies is required. Reg.612 s. 15)*** that occur during the term will be determined by Council members. In the event of a vacancy, the position shall go to the person with the second highest number of votes received during the election. If second place is tied, those names will go to election to fill the vacancy. If the person(s) with the second highest number of votes received is unable or unwilling to fill the vacancy, a general election will be held following self-nominations.

5.8 The names of Council members will be published within one week of the election.

5.9 The name, email/city address and phone/cell number of the Chair or Co-Chairs will be forwarded, as requested, to the Halton District School Board.

5.10 Vulnerable Sector Screening or Annual Offence Declaration will be provided to the school and records maintained as required by the Board

ARTICLE VI – EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

6.1 Members of the incoming Council shall elect executives from the parent/guardian members:

I. Chair *(the only officer required under Reg. 612)*
II. Co-Chair
III. Secretary
IV. Treasurer
V. Parent Involvement Committee Representative

ARTICLE VII – DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

7.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR OR CO-CHAIRS

- Arrange for meetings, minimum of four per school year
- Prepare meeting agenda in consultation with the principal
- Chair council meetings
- Regularly keep up-to-date with information on the HDSB website and share at council meetings
- Use technology effectively, e.g. establish email distribution list, etc. to stay connected with council members
- Ensure that minutes of council meetings are recorded and kept for four years and posted to the school website once they have been approved
- Report regularly on the status of council recommendations
- Communicate regularly with school principal, council members, school community
- Facilitate the resolution of conflict
- Participate as ex-officio member of all school council committees
- Communicate with school principal on behalf of the council

7.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

- Keeping a full and accurate account of the proceedings and transactions of Council meetings
- Providing a copy of the complete minutes of the meeting to the Principal and all voting Council members and the school secretary in an uneditable PDF format no later than seven days following the meeting
- Maintaining a Council file in the school's administration office containing copies of all minutes, Council correspondence, current by-laws, and current reports
- Maintaining a list of the Council membership with current contact information

7.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TREASURER

- The Treasure will submit a Criminal Background Check and Annual Offence Declaration as required by the Board
- Working with the Chair or Co-Chairs and Principal to prepare an annual budget of projected revenues and expenditures that support the School Improvement Plan
- Obtain monthly transaction reports from the head secretary for presentation at School Council Meetings
- Monitor the revenues and expenditures of the School Council.
- Prepare and provide a monthly Financial Summary to all members of the Council
- Attend the HDSB School Council Financial Training Session

7.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE

- Act as a link between school council and the HDSB regional Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)
- Actively promotes parent engagement within their school community and promotes home and school partnerships
- Attend one to two regional meetings specifically for School Council PIC Representatives to meet with the regional PIC team to share school perspectives and develop strategies to support parent engagement
- Provide updates to school council meetings, as appropriate (e.g., PIC Annual Conference, Parent Reaching Out Grant application information, etc.) and shares regional communication with the school (e.g., PIC News)

7.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL

- Planning programs and providing materials that will assist the Council in fulfilling its responsibilities.
- Notifying the school community regarding the dates, times and location of all regular Council meetings through the Forest Trail Public School sign, the Forest Trail website and/or newsletter.

- Sharing information on school activities, successes and concerns with the Council members on a variety of matters.
- Assisting, advising, supporting, cooperating and consulting (seeking advice, with the Council) and informing Council on how their recommendations have been considered when decisions related to their recommendation have been made.
- Sharing the school plan providing for co-curricular/co-instructional activities at Forest Trail Public School.
- Providing administrative support and clerical/secretarial support for Council activities.
- Attending the meetings of the Council.
- Cooperatively setting the agenda with the Chair or Co-Chairs of the Council.
- Maintaining the authority, responsibilities and obligations of the principalship as mandated by Board Policy and the Acts and Regulations of the Province of Ontario.

7.6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

- Bring a wealth of experience and diversity to council and help create a culture of sharing, communicating and dealing with issues and challenges
- Participate on any committees established by the school council
- Contribute to the discussions of the council
- Maintain a school-wide perspective on school council issues and seek to achieve consensus
- Solicit views of other parents and members of the community to share with council
- Observe the council's Code of Conduct and established by-laws

7.7 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

- Contribute to the discussions of council

- Solicit views from their staff groups to share with council
- May participate on any committees established by council
- Communicate information back to their colleagues

ARTICLE VIII – COUNCIL PROCEDURES AND MEETINGS

8.1 The Council has the responsibility to regularly inform the parent/guardian community of their activities, either through the School Newsletter or *(Website/email etc.).* Parents/guardians have access to present and previous minutes which are kept in the school office *(and/or posted on website)*. A request for such information may be made at the office. **All Council minutes are kept at the school for four years before they are discarded.**

8.2 **All Council meetings shall be open to the public.**

8.3 **A Council meeting cannot be held unless:**

- **a majority of the current members of the Council are present**
- **a majority of the members of the Council who are present at the meeting are parent/guardian** members (Reg 612/00 s.12).

8.4 The Council will meet **within 30 days of the start of the school year on a date fixed by the Principal** and at least three other times per year (Reg 612/00 s. 12).

8.5 The agenda of each Council meeting *(set by the Chair or Co-Chairs and Principal)* shall include:

- Welcome, introductions and attendance of members (present, regrets)
- Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
- Business arising from previous minutes
- Treasurer's report
- Committee reports
- Principal's report
- Agenda items for next meeting
- New business/presentations
- Adjournment

8.6 Persons interested in presenting at a Council meeting may request, in writing, to the Chair or Co-Chairs and Principal to be put on the agenda no later than seven (7) days before the next Council meeting date. Request will be discussed by the Principal and Chair or Co-Chairs at the agenda meeting.

8.7 Although normal decision making will be achieved through consensus, at times a voting process will be required. This may include items such as:

- Disbursement of funds to support student achievement and well-being
- Seed money in support of fundraisers
- Approval of meeting minutes

Members of the Council having one vote each are:

- Parent/guardian members
- Teaching staff representative

8.8 Electronic voting may be used only as a provisional procedure for time-sensitive issues that must be voted on between scheduled council meetings. Electronic voting shall be

conducted via email or Google form and shall follow all of the guidelines as a regular in-person vote.

8.9 If any person in attendance wants to discuss a topic or has questions about something that has been presented the Chair or Co-Chairs opens the debate. Each participant may speak to the question twice, but no one may speak the second time until everyone has had a chance to speak once.

8.10 Questions regarding an agenda item are to be held until the end of that section of the presentation.

8.11 Quorum (simple majority) will carry a vote. The Council may not vote unless the meeting conditions of section 8.3 are met and quorum is achieved.

ARTICLE IX - CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

9.1 The constitution and/or by-laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council provided that the meeting conditions of section 8.3 are met and quorum is achieved, provided there is advance notice to the stakeholders. Specific amendments must have been introduced at a prior meeting and have been published in the Council minutes and listed on the agenda for the current meeting. Council members may do this by bringing a motion forward at the Council meeting.

9.2 A copy of the constitution and by-laws will be made available on the Forest Trail Public School website or to any person upon request.

9.3 A copy of the most current constitution and by-laws will be available in the Council minutes binder

ARTICLE X - FINANCIAL PRACTICES

10.1 The Board is required to ensure that School Council funds are properly administered, and transactions are accurately recorded. These obligations are met by:

- Administrative guidelines for the collection, recording and control of student funds

- Annual financial reporting requirements for each fund, and
- Financial review of funds by central Board staff.

10.2 School Councils shall adhere to the following Halton District School Board Administrative Procedures when fundraising:

- Fundraising in Schools
- School Generated Funds and School Council Funds
- Student Fees
- Donations and Charitable Receipts

10.3 School Council funds refers to funds raised by members of the School Council to benefit students in the school. School Council funds are governed by the Education Act, Board Policies and Procedures, and donor requests. Revenue and expenses can come from different sources including fundraising and donations.

These funds are under the direction and control of the Principal (HDSB Administrative Procedures School Generated Funds and School Council Funds and Reg. 612/00 s.22).

The School Council should prepare an annual budget. Surplus funds not specifically earmarked should be applied to other school priorities as identified in the school's improvement plan.

10.4 The School Council funds are part of School-Generated Funds, however, separate categories in *School Accounting Software* are used to keep track of the funds. Record keeping is done by the *Senior Secretary/Manager of School Administrative Operations* and monthly transaction reports are provided to the School Council Treasurer for presentation at School Council Meetings. Signing authorities are any two of the following people: Principal, Vice-principal, or Senior Secretary. School Council Funds are included as part of School-Generated Funds on the annual report prepared by the ***Senior Secretary/Manager of School Administrative Operations.***

10.5 Theft of funds is covered by the Board's insurance policy if the funds are in the school in a locked safe. Parents/guardians and staff may not take School Council funds home as these funds would not be covered by the Board's insurance policy. The HDSB forms should be accessed from the Board's internal website by the school Principal or designated for use by the School Council when handling funds.

ARTICLE XI – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

11.1 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 the decision of the Council.

11.2 A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organization or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

11.3 A member who declares a conflict of interest shall remove themselves from the discussion and, if necessary, abstain from voting.

ARTICLE XII – DISPUTE RESOLUTION

12.1 Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express their concern or opinion about an issue.

12.2 Speakers to an issue will always maintain a calm and respectful tone.

12.3 Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.

12.4 The Chair or Co-Chairs' responsibility is to clarify statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among points of view raised and to set out the joint interest of all members.

12.5 If no common ground can be identified, the Chair or Co-Chairs will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.

12.6 If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair or Co-Chairs shall request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.

12.7 An independent third party may be a Board official or another individual mutually agreed upon by the parties involved in the dispute.

12.8 Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be respected in full by all parties to the agreement.