

Alta Vista School Council Constitution

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Constitution

1. Name

The organization shall be called the Alta Vista School Council, hereinafter referred to as “the Council”.

2. Interpretation

1. “Board” means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) or its successor.
2. “Chair” includes co-Chair, if applicable.
3. “School community” means persons living or working within the attendance boundaries of the school, parents/guardians with children attending the school, school staff, students and guests invited by the Council.
4. “School Principal” includes vice-principal(s), if applicable.
5. “School” refers to Alta Vista Public School, including all its students, staff, programs, and facilities, as governed by the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB).

3. Purpose

1. The purpose of Council is, through the active participation of parents/guardians, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians. Council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations to the principal of the school and the Board.
2. The objectives of the Council are:
 - a. to foster the relationship between the parent/guardians, the school and the wider community served by the school, and to enhance educational opportunities for all students within the school;
 - b. to seek the views and opinions of the school community on the operation of the school and the programs and services provided;
 - c. to provide advice to the principal and, as appropriate, to the Board and/or its senior staff, on the development and implementation of policies, programs and services affecting the school; and
 - d. to be an effective voice for promoting the interests of the school, and to actively support the school in meeting the educational, social and recreational needs of students

4. Affiliations

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1. The Alta Vista School Council may establish relationships with, but not limited to, community organizations, educational institutions, or parent councils from other schools to further the goals and objectives of the Council.
2. These affiliations shall not compromise the Council's autonomy and must align with the values and mission of Alta Vista Public School. Any formal affiliations must be approved by a majority vote of Council members

5. Members

1. The Council must consist of the following voting members who shall have equal privileges and voting rights:
 - a. a minimum of nine (9) and no more than twenty (20) parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school;
 - b. A minimum of one (1) and no more than three (3), teacher(s) employed in the school, other than the principal or vice-principal, elected by members of the teaching staff with one vote shared amongst all.
2. The Council may include the following voting members who shall have equal privileges and voting rights:
 - a. No more than two community representative(s) who do(es) not have children attending the school;
 - b. one administrative/support staff member(s) of the school elected by the administrative/support staff; and,
3. The Council must include the following non-voting member(s):
 - a. the school principal.
4. At the discretion of the principal, a student representative may be appointed to attend Council meetings and provide input. The student representative shall not hold voting privileges.
5. To ensure fair representation, best efforts shall be made that each major program (i.e. French immersion, Extended English, etc.) within the school be represented by a number of members on Council in proportion to the proportion of students in the program in the school.
6. A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority.
7. Membership in the Council shall be determined in the following ways:
 - a. parents/guardians shall be elected by parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school and
 - b. parent/guardian members must form the majority of Council members;
 - c. the community representative shall be appointed by the Council after self-identifying their interest in participating on Council;
 - d. the school principal shall be a designated non-voting member of the Council;
 - e. the teacher representative(s) shall be elected/acclaimed by the members of the teaching staff, and;
 - f. the non-teaching staff member shall be elected/acclaimed by the members of the non-teaching staff.
8. Council members shall be elected/appointed within thirty (30) calendar days of the beginning of the current school year.
9. If fewer individuals stand for election than there are spaces available, all those standing for election shall be acclaimed. Council elections shall be conducted pursuant to OCDSB Procedure PR.509.SCO.

10. All elections will be conducted by secret ballot and only the name of the successful candidate and the total number of votes cast will be announced.
11. In the case of a tie vote, the tied candidates will draw lots to determine the election.
12. The term of office for elected and appointed positions shall be one year.
13. Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms of office.
14. Board employees are eligible for election to a position as a parent/guardian representative on any school council at a school where their children are enrolled or registered at unless they are employed in that school.
15. Board employees who are eligible to run for election as parent/guardian representatives must take reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent/guardian members of their employment.
16. Election of Board employees who are eligible under this provision entitles them to express their views as any other parent/guardian on a school council.
17. The composition of the school council should reflect the diversity of the community or communities serviced by the school.
18. There shall be no honoraria paid to members of the Council.

6. Executive Officers

1. Executive officers shall be elected or acclaimed by the members of the Council.
2. The election and/or appointment of executive officers shall normally take place at the first meeting of the Council.
3. Members shall remain in office until their successors are elected or appointed.
4. The executive officers shall be:
 - a. Chair;
 - b. Vice-Chair (under mutual agreement the Chair and Vice Chair may operate equally as Co-Chairs);
 - c. Treasurer; and
 - d. Secretary
5. The Chair of the Council must be a parent/guardian Council member.
6. A Board employee elected as a parent/guardian member of a school council may not serve as a chair/co-chair of the Council.
7. In the event that a Chair/Co-Chair cannot be identified from parent/guardian members of the Council, a community member may hold the position.
8. Two voting members may share any officer's position (i.e. Chair and Vice/Co-Chair, Treasurer and Associate/Co-Treasurer, etc.)
9. Council shall search actively to fill any vacant mandatory officer's position. At the start of each meeting such vacancies shall be announced. Any vacancy can be filled at an open council meeting, either by election or by acclamation.

7. Meetings

1. Council may adopt its own rules of procedure for the conduct of meetings which are consistent with Canadian principles of fairness and democracy.
2. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held in person at the school or virtually, at least six times in each school year. The first meeting shall be held within thirty (30) calendar days of the beginning of the school year, after the election of members.

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3. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Chair or another executive officer, if requested/demanded, by no less than half (1/2) of the Council.
4. In the event that the Chair is unable to perform their duties, the duties of the Chair shall be assumed by the Vice Chair. If the Vice-Chair is unable to perform these duties, or if the position is vacant, then it shall cascade as follows:
 - a. Treasurer;
 - b. Secretary; and,
 - c. if no executive officer is able to assume the duties, an available member of Council shall suffice.
5. Meetings of the Council shall be open to members of the public and guests of Council members. No such person may be excluded from the meeting with the exception being disruptive behaviour caused by said person. Members of the public may be permitted to speak, at the discretion of the Chair.
6. Commercial representations shall not be permitted without prior approval of the executive officers.
7. Members of Council shall make reasonable efforts to attend all Council meetings.
8. For purposes of achieving a quorum and in order to ensure an effective Council, any member is deemed to have resigned their position if absent with or without notice for three consecutive Council meetings; however, they may be reinstated by a majority vote by Council.
9. A non-staff Council member may be removed from Council by a two-thirds vote for behaviour that:
 - a. is inappropriate or detrimental to the school or Council;
 - b. for failure to perform their duty;
 - c. for misrepresentation of, or to Council; and
 - d. for ignoring Council direction.

8. Voting

1. Consensus is the preferred decision-making model; however, it is recognized that voting may be required from time to time.
2. When a vote is taken, each member of the Council, excluding the principal, is entitled to one vote.
3. Unless otherwise provided, a majority of votes of those voting is required to pass a motion.
4. Voting by proxy is not permitted.
5. Voting will primarily take place at a meeting.
6. In the instance of a time sensitive request or decision, a vote can be taken via email at the discretion of the Chair.
7. Motions may not be passed in the absence of a quorum of Council members with the exception of motions to progress the meeting (i.e. motion to approve the agenda, motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes, etc.).

9. Quorum

1. To form a quorum as required for a meeting of the Council:
 - a. a majority of the current elected and appointed members of the school Council must be present at the meeting.

2. If quorum is not achieved, Council may proceed with the meeting at the discretion of the Chair, but may not vote on motions, outside of motions to progress the meeting as outlined in Section 8: Voting, Item 7, until quorum is achieved.

10. Committees

1. The Council may establish committees as necessary.
2. Committees are established by a motion at a Council meeting. The motion shall set out the committee's mandate.
3. Membership on such committees shall not be restricted to members of the Council, although each committee shall include at least one parent/guardian member from the Council.
4. Each committee shall have a Chair or spokesperson, to be elected by the committee or appointed by Council, who shall act as the first contact for people outside the committee.
5. Committees may be terminated by Council vote, and shall be deemed to expire at the end of each Council term.
6. Committees act independently and do not speak on behalf of the Council unless specifically authorized. They shall seek Council approval for communications, actions, or public representations
7. Committees may receive money from Council through procedures set by Council.
8. Committees shall report to Council at a frequency agreed to by the committee chair and Council upon formation of the committee.
9. Committee meetings shall be open to the school community and written notice of the dates, times and locations of such meetings is provided to the parent/guardians of all students enrolled in the school.

11. Council Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Council, while maintaining a school-wide focus:
 - a. shall establish its goals, priorities, and procedures;
 - b. may organize information and training sessions to enable members of the Council to develop their skills as Council members; and
 - c. shall promote the best interests of the school community as a whole.
2. In particular, the Council shall:
 - a. ensure that the minutes of Council meetings are recorded and maintained. The minutes should include, or have attached to them:
 - i. any advice provided in writing to the Principal, Board and/or senior staff by the Council; and
 - ii. the written response or responses in reply
 - b. ensure that accurate minutes and records be retained on their website or otherwise for six (6) years.
 - c. ensure that financial records must be:
 - i. retained for seven (7) years in accordance with District guidelines, and,
 - ii. be made available for examination upon request.
 - d. ensure that the minutes and records of the Council during the Council's tenure are passed on to the successor Council;
 - e. ensure that a current Principal Profile is on file with the Board by 31 October of each year, and,

- f. ensure that the new executive of the school council is on file with the Board by 31 October of each school year.
3. Maintain regular and effective communication with the school Principal to ensure alignment on goals, priorities, and activities related to the school community.
4. Ensure that there is regular communication with the school community;
5. Ensure that parents/guardians of all students enrolled in the school are consulted about matters under consideration by the Council, particularly regarding significant issues or decisions being discussed.
6. Ensure that the constitution and by-laws of the Council are maintained, up to date, and are reviewed every three (3) years by the Council,
7. Consult with senior Board staff and trustees, as required,
8. Prepare the annual report of the school Council, including, if the Council engages in fund-raising activities, a report on these activities, for submission to the Principal and the Board
9. The duties of the Officers, and Principal in relation to the Council, and members of the Council at large, are set forth in Appendix A of this Constitution.

12. Conduct

1. Members of the Council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters where they, members of their families, or business entities in which they have an interest, stand to benefit financially or otherwise, either directly or indirectly by decisions of the Council.
2. Should an issue or agenda item arise during a Council meeting where a Council member is in a conflict of interest situation, they shall declare the conflict immediately. Once declared, the member may be invited to speak to the issue at the discretion of the Chair; however, the member deemed to be in a conflict of interest shall not vote if the issue is the subject of a motion.
3. A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.
4. The Council should resolve disagreements collaboratively and through consensus or voting at the Council level.
5. In the event that a resolution cannot be attained by Council, the Chair or Principal shall request the appropriate Superintendent of Schools to mediate the disagreement. If a resolution cannot be attained by the Superintendent of Schools, the Chair or Principal shall refer the matter to the Director of Education.

13. Signing Authorities

1. Any formal communication from Council or its officers, or a Council committee, where that communication advances a position on any school or Board or Ministry policy or procedure or action, actual or proposed, must be co-signed by the Chair or the Chair's designate.

14. Date of Entry into Force

1. This Constitution and By-laws shall come into effect immediately upon approval by Council.

15. Constitutional Amendments

1. The Constitution may be amended by approval of a motion by a two-thirds majority of voting members of Council present at a meeting called for that purpose, provided that at least two weeks' notice is given for such a motion and details of the proposed amendments are circulated to all members with that notice.

Bylaws

1. Fundraising

1. Council is permitted to raise funds consistent with Board Policies as outlined on the Fundraising and Grants webpage.
2. As of the writing of this document, the fundraising activities are governed by OCDSB policy P.133.FIN Management of School Council Funds and procedure PR.580.FIN Management of School Council Funds.

2. Disbursement of Funds

1. Any disbursement of money or money commitment on behalf of Council must be formally approved by Council vote.
2. In the event that the Chair and the Treasurer decide, on consultation with others, that an expenditure cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting and is a small amount of up to \$100 CAD, the Treasurer and the Chair, or their designates, may disburse money.
3. All spending must be reported and formally approved at the next available Council meeting.
4. Spending authority may be pre-authorized by Council-voted budget or float.
5. Cheques shall be signed by two (2) Executive Officers with signing authority.
6. Council shall develop equitable procedures for the disbursement of funds.

Appendix A

Duties of Executive Officers and Members of Council

1. Chair

The Chair shall:

- a. call Council meetings;
- b. prepare the agenda for Council meetings;
- c. chair Council meetings;
- d. work collaboratively with Council members to assign and delegate the roles and responsibilities of the Council as outlined herein; and
- e. act as a signing officer for Council.

2. Vice Chair

The Vice-Chair shall:

- a. perform the duties of the Chair in the absence or disability of the Chair; and,
- b. act as a signing officer for the Council, if needed.

3. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

- a. take charge of any finances of the Council, to ensure the safe keeping of Council finances in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Board, and provide an accounting thereof as may be required from time to time;
- b. provide an annual financial report to the Council and the membership at large;
- c. ensure there is an annual audit performed by a member of the school community on the financial report(s);
- d. perform such other related duties as may be assigned by the Chair from time to time; and,
- e. act as signing officer for the Council.

4. Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- a. ensure that adequate notice of the meetings, along with the agenda and previous meeting minutes, are circulated to all members in a timely manner.
- b. maintain a full and accurate account of all Council meetings;
- c. prepare correspondence as required; and,
- d. ensure that a copy of all meeting minutes for the current school year are maintained on the Council website, and,
- e. act as a signing officer for the Council, if needed.

5. Council Members

Council Members shall:

- a. attend and participate in Council meetings;
- b. endeavor to participate in information and training programs, as applicable;
- c. act as a link between the Council and the community; and.
- d. encourage the participation of parents/guardians from all groups and of other people within the school community.

6. Principal

The Principal shall:

- a. facilitate the establishment of the Council and assist in its' operation;
- b. on behalf of the Council, provide written notice of the dates, times and locations of annual elections and meetings of the Council and of committees of the Council to the parents / guardians of all students enrolled in the school. Methods include but are not limited to giving the notice to the student for delivery to their parent / guardian and by posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents / guardians.
- c. support and promote the Council's activities;
- d. on behalf of the Council, provide a copy, if requested, of the annual Council report in the fall of each school year to:
 - i. the parents / guardians of all students enrolled in the school; and
 - ii. the Director of Education.
- e. in accordance with The Education Act, and Ontario regulations, seek input from the Council by:
 - i. providing for the prompt distribution to each member of the Council, and for the posting in a location accessible to parents /guardians, of Ministry materials identified by the Ministry for such distribution;
 - ii. attending all meetings of the Council or, when unable to do so, designating a staff member to attend on their behalf;
 - iii. acting as a resource to the Council, and assisting the Council in obtaining information relating to relevant legislation, regulations and policies, and the budgets for the school and for school-generated funds, required by the Council to enable it to provide informed advice;
 - iv. considering each recommendation made by the Council to the Principal, and advising the Council of the action taken in response to the recommendation;
 - v. soliciting the views of the Council with respect to:
 - (1) the establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines relating to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents /guardians, such as the Board and school code of conduct and dress code;
 - (2) the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives relating to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians, for example the Board and school code of conduct and dress code;
 - (3) school action plans for improvement based on EQAO reports, and the communication of these plans to the public; and all Board policies on which consultation is required, and
 - (4) any other matter for which the Board has directed that school councils be consulted.

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- f. act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies, and collective agreements;
- g. communicate with the Chair, as required;
- h. ensure that copies of the minutes of the Council's meetings are kept in the school and are available to the public on request;
- i. assist the Council in communicating with the school community; and,
- j. encourage the participation of parents / guardians from all groups and of other people within the school community in the life of the school and the activities of the Council.

7. External Representative

The External Representative (OCASC Rep) shall:

- a. attend OCASC and/or other meetings on behalf of the Council and speak for the Council at such meetings (when necessary or applicable);
- b. provide to Council an oral and/or written report of OCASC and/or other meetings; and,
- c. act as the Council's link to OCASC and to other organizations with purposes similar to the Council's.

References and Resources

1. [The Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E-2](#)
2. [O. Reg. 612/00](#): School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees
3. [O. Reg. 613/00](#): Operation of Schools - General
4. [OCDSB Policy P.014.SCO](#): School Councils
5. [OCDSB Procedure PR.509.SCO](#): School Council Elections, Constitution and Bylaws
6. [School Council Funds Management Guide 2024](#)
7. [OCDSB Policy P.133.FIN](#): Management of School Council Funds
8. [OCDSB Procedure PR.580.FIN](#): Management of School Council Funds
9. Province of Ontario: School Councils [webpage](#)
10. OCDSB School Councils [webpage](#)