

# Farley Mowat Public School Council

## Constitution and By-Laws

### ***Article I – Name and Definitions***

- 1.1 The organization shall be called the Farley Mowat Public School Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council.
- 1.2 Any reference to the “School” herein shall refer to Farley Mowat Public School.
- 1.3 Any reference to the “Board” herein shall refer to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 1.4 Any reference to the “School Community” herein shall refer collectively to students attending the School, parents/guardians of students attending the School, parents/guardians of children expected to attend the School during the next School year, School staff, and invited guests.
- 1.5 Member is a parent elected in accordance with Appendix A of this document.
- 1.6 Parent is the birth parent, adoptive parent or the legal guardian of one or more students at the school.

### ***Article 2 – Purpose of the Council***

- 2.1 To actively engage parents into a partnership with the School and the Board in order to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents
- 2.2 To act in an advisory capacity and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the principal and the Board on the development and implementation of policies, programs, and services affecting the School in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Board and the Education Act and Regulations.
- 2.3 Act as a communication forum between parents/guardians, the School, and the Board.

### ***Article 3 – Objectives of the Council***

- 3.1 Effectively promote the interests of the School's students to encourage an environment that helps all students reach their full potential.
- 3.2 Actively support the School in meeting the students' educational, social, and recreational needs by providing additional resources (human, material and financial) for the benefit of the school and its students.
- 3.3 Solicit and represent the views and opinions of the School Community on the operation of the School and programs and services it provides.
- 3.4 Promote the best interests of the School Community by making every effort to involve representation from the various ethnic, cultural, and religious groups represented within the School Community.
- 3.5 Develop and maintain a strong relationship between home, School, and the School Community.

### ***Article 4 – Council Affiliation***

- 4.1 To support its objectives, Council may seek affiliation with other organizations, including organizations comprised of other school councils such as the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils, herein referred to as OCASC.
- 4.2 Affiliations with other organizations or any subsequent changes in such affiliations shall require a majority of votes at a meeting for which proper notice has been given to Council members.

### ***Article 5 – Responsibilities of the Council***

- 5.1 The Council is an advisory body. Subject to maintaining a school-wide focus as stipulated in 5.2 below, and within the policy parameters established by the Board, the Council may advise the school principal, and, where appropriate, the Board on any matter, including (but not limited to) those listed below:
  - i) the local school-year calendar;
  - ii) School code of student conduct;
  - iii) curriculum and program goals and priorities;
  - iv) the responses of the School or Board to achievement in provincial and Board assessment programs;
  - v) preparation of the School profile;

- vi) principal profile: provision of input as to the qualities, skills, attitudes and training/education for the Board and administration to consider in the selection of the School principal;
  - vii) School budget priorities, including local capital-improvement plans;
  - viii) School Community communication strategies;
  - ix) methods of reporting to the School Community;
  - x) extra-curricular activities in the School;
  - xi) School-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational, and nutrition programs;
  - xii) community use of School facilities;
  - xiii) local co-ordination of services for children and youth;
  - xiv) development, implementation, and review of Board policies at the local level.
- 5.2 Council members shall maintain a school-wide focus on all issues. Council meetings are not a forum for discussion about individual parents/guardians, students, staff, trustees, or other Council members. Individual members of the School Community shall deal directly with the staff members and/or the principal to resolve specific concerns.
- 5.3 In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the Council:
- i) shall establish its goals, priorities and procedures;
  - ii) may organize information and training sessions to enable members of the Council to develop their skills as Council members.
- 5.4 The Council shall communicate regularly with members of the School Community to seek their views and preferences with regard to advice being provided by the Council and to report on the activities of the Council.
- 5.5 The Council shall be aware of the liability and insurance coverage issues outlined in Attachment 3 of Board Policy P.014.SCO and should review its activities annually based on this information.
- 5.6 The Council will prepare and submit a written annual report to the School and the Board outlining the Council's goals, activities, and achievements, including any fundraising activities. A copy of this report must be made available to every parent/guardian who has a child enrolled in the School.

### ***Article 6 – Council Composition***

- 6.1 Council shall consist of the following members:
- i) Parents/guardians of students currently enrolled in the School (minimum 8, maximum 12)
  - ii) the School Principal
  - iii) Teaching staff (minimum 1, maximum 2)
  - iv) Non-teaching staff (maximum 1)

- v) Community representative (maximum 1)
- 6.2 The positions of Chair and Co-Chair must be filled by a parent member.
- 6.3 All members of the Council who are not School staff members should be Board ratepayers.
- 6.4 Parent/guardian members must form the majority of Council members.
- 6.5 The community representative shall not be a parent/guardian of students currently enrolled in the School or an employee of the Board.
- 6.6 The term of office for all Council positions shall be one year. Council members may seek additional terms of office.
- 6.7 No remuneration or honorarium shall be paid to members of the Council.
- 6.8 Members of the Council shall be protected by the Board's liability insurance policy while they are acting within the scope of their duties on behalf of the Board, as sanctioned by the principal.

***Article 7 – Voting Rights***

- 7.1 Each parent/guardian member of the elected Council has one vote.
- 7.2 The School Principal is a non-voting member of the Council.
- 7.3 Each teaching staff member of the Council has one vote.
- 7.4 Each non-teaching staff member of the Council has one vote.
- 7.5 Each community representative has one vote.
- 7.6 Voting rights shall be limited to the elected members of the council as indicated above.

***Article 8 – Member Selection***

- 8.1 Parent/guardian members shall be elected by parents and guardians of students enrolled in the School.
- 8.2 The teaching staff shall elect the teaching staff members.
- 8.3 The teaching staff positions cannot be filled by the Principal or Vice-Principal.

- 8.4 The non-teaching staff shall elect the non-teaching staff member.
- 8.5 A non-teaching staff member is anyone employed at the School who does not have teaching duties such as Office Administrator, Secretary, an Educational Assistant, a Library Technician, or a member of the Custodial staff.
- 8.6 Membership requirements for Board employees and trustees are as follows:
- i) One whose child is enrolled at the School **and** who works at the School is not eligible to serve as a parent member; he/she may be elected as either a teaching or non-teaching member.
  - ii) One whose child **does not** attend the School but who works at the School may be elected as a teaching or non-teaching member.
  - iii) One whose child **does** attend the School but who works for the board at a different school may be elected provided that he/she notifies the other parents that he/she is a Board member prior to the election.
  - iv) A Board trustee is ineligible for Council membership if he/she is the trustee for the zone in which the School is represented.
- 8.7 Membership Requirements for the Community member are as follows:
- i) Community representatives cannot be employees of the school.
  - ii) If a Community representative is employed elsewhere by the Board, he/she must inform the other members of said employment prior to his/her appointment.
- 8.8 The process for elections is set out in Appendix A – Elections.

***Article 9 – Responsibilities of Members***

- 9.1 Council members shall attend and participate in all meetings.
- 9.2 Observe the code of ethics.
- 9.3 Participate on any committees/sub-committees established by the Council;
- 9.4 Contribute to the Council;
- 9.5 Solicit views of other parents and School Community members to share with the Council;

- 9.6 Failure by any Council member to attend three Council meetings without advance notice to the Chair, will automatically terminate the Councillor's position for the current term.
- 9.7 Members shall act as links between the Council and the School Community.
- 9.8 Members shall encourage the participation of parents/guardians from all groups and of other people within the School Community.

**Article 10 – Meetings**

- 10.1 Meetings of the Council shall be held every month for the duration of the school year. Meetings shall normally be held in the School's library. If the date, time, and/or location of the meeting is amended, this information shall be made accessible to the public.
- 10.2 Notice of Council meetings will be posted on the School's notice boards and circulated to parents/guardians in the School's and Principal's newsletters.
- 10.3 Additional Council meetings may be held at the call of the Chair and must be convened if a written request is given to the secretary by fifty per cent of the Councillors.
- 10.4 The Council is responsible for the proper conduct of its members, including a requirement for attendance at meetings.
- 10.5 To form a quorum as required for each meeting of the Council:
  - i) a majority of the current members of the Council shall be present at the meeting;
  - ii) a majority of the members present shall be parent/guardian members.
- 10.6 The preferable decision-making model for the Council is consensus. However, it is recognized that voting may be required from time to time. Quorum, as defined in article 16.5, is required for any vote to be taken. Voting rights are defined in Article 7. A vote is defeated on a tie.

All matters regarding expenditures must be put to a vote.

- 10.7 In the event of an issue/item that must be addressed before the next scheduled Council meeting, all Council members will be polled as to their stand on the issue. An emergency meeting may be called and a vote taken if a quorum is established.

- 10.8 Officers can vote on expenditures at any time. The cumulative total of such expenditures between consecutive Council meetings shall not exceed \$300.
- 10.9 Once Council approves the annual budget, the Treasurer may issue payments in accordance with that budget without a further vote.

**Article 11 – Committees**

- 11.1 The Council may establish committees to make recommendations to the Council subject to the following:
  - i) each committee shall include at least one parent/guardian member
  - ii) such committees may include persons who are not members of the Council;
  - iii) each committee shall appoint a Chair who will make the presentation to the Council and communicate with the Chair as required.

**Article 12 – Conflict of Interest**

- 12.1 There is a potential for a conflict of interest if a Council member is or becomes an employee of the Board. For more information, refer to Board Policy P.014.SCO.
- 12.2 A Council member shall inform the Council if he/she is, or becomes, a Board employee.
- 12.3 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 from, or be personally affected by, a decision.
- 12.4 Should an agenda item arise during a meeting where a member is in a conflict of interest situation, he/she shall declare a conflict of interest immediately and recuse him/herself from further discussion. This declaration and subsequent abstention from discussion and/or vote will be noted in the minutes.

**Article 13 – Conflict Resolution Process**

- 13.1 Council members are elected to serve the School Community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on Council at all times.
- 13.2 Speakers on an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.

- 13.3 Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- 13.4 The 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.
- 13.5 Every 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/her.
- 13.6 If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
- 13.7 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.
- 13.8 If a Council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the Chair shall ask for order.
- 13.9 If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the Chair may direct the individual Council member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request. The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools within one week of the meeting.
- 13.10 The removal of a member for one meeting does not prevent the member from participating in future meetings.
- 13.11 When the Chair has requested the removal of a member of members of a meeting, the Chair shall request that the disputing members of Council participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting may be a private meeting, and shall not be construed as a Council meeting.
- 13.12 The Chair may request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.
- 13.13 An independent third party may be a Board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
- 13.14 Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

***Article 14 - Constitutional By-Laws and Amendments***



- 14.1 The Council may create and publish by-laws and amendments to this Constitution.
- 14.2 All amendments to the Constitution will require two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes by the Council members in attendance at the meeting at which such amendments are proposed. Thirty days notice is to be given to all Council members that amendments to the Constitution are being proposed.
- 14.3 All by-laws and amendments to by-laws will require a simply majority (50% +1) of the votes by the Council members in attendance at the meeting at which such by-laws or amendments are being proposed. Thirty days notice is to be given to all Council members that by-laws or amendments to by-laws are being proposed.

***Article 15 - References***

- 15.1 The following Board policies and procedures govern the operation and activities of school councils and are listed here for reference purposes:
  - Policy P.012.CON: Community Use of Schools
  - Policy P.014.SCO: School Councils
  - Policy P.052.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools and accompanying Board Procedures
  - Procedure PR.509.SCO: School Council Elections, Constitution and By-Laws
  - Procedure PR.540.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools
  - Procedure PR.616.FIN: Accounting for School-Generated Funds

## ***Appendix A - Elections***

### ***Article 1 – Elections and Term of Office***

- 1.1. Elections must take place at the same time every year and must be held annually within the first thirty days of the start of the school year, in accordance with Board Procedure PR.509.SCO: “School Council Elections, Constitution and By-Laws.”
- 1.2. The Council may appoint an Election Chair no later than the final Council meeting of the current School year. The Election Chair should not be running for election as a parent/guardian member, but may be a member of the outgoing Council. If the Council does not appoint an Election Chair, the Principal will fulfill the responsibilities of the Election Chair defined herein.
- 1.3. All legal parents/guardians of students currently enrolled at the School are eligible to vote. In cases of questionable voter eligibility, the Principal will verify eligibility. No voting by proxy is permitted.
- 1.4. The current Council Chair or Co-Chairs shall give notice of the candidate nomination deadline, election date, time, and location to the parents of students enrolled in the school at least fourteen days in advance of the election and solicit nominations of parent members.
- 1.5. Nomination forms will be made available at the School’s administrative office or by other means as determined by the Election Chair.
- 1.6. Elections will be conducted by secret ballot unless in the case of acclamation.
- 1.7. A maximum of 12 parent/guardians will be elected to the council. Elected council members will then vote to fill the positions identified in Article 3 – Election of Officers.
- 1.8. Executive officers will be determined by the new Council immediately following the election if no specific roles were identified with the submitted nomination forms.
- 1.9. Terms of office are for a one year period (except for the Chair – see Article 11, subsection 11.4) or until the new Council is formed, whichever is sooner.
- 1.10. A member may be re-elected or re-appointed to Council without limit.

### ***Article 2 – Acclamations***

- 2.1. If there are fewer than 12 parent/guardian member nominees, all eligible nominees will be acclaimed and no general election will be held, although the election of Officers will still take place.

### ***Article 3 – Election of Officers***

- 3.1 The Officers of the Council shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. The duties of the Officers and Council members are set forth in Appendix B – Roles and Responsibilities.
- 3.2 The Council will elect Officers in a manner consistent with Board Procedure PR.509.SCO: “School Council Elections, Constitutions and By-Laws.”
- 3.3 The Chair and Vice-Chair must be the parent/guardian of a student currently enrolled at the School, and should have served as a member of the Council in the previous School year. The Council must elect the Chair and Vice-Chair from amongst the parent/guardian representatives.
- 3.4 Ideally, and for the purposes of continuity, the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair would overlap. That is, the term of office for the Chair would end in the middle of the term of office for the Vice-Chair.
- 3.5 The position of Treasurer can be filled by any member of the Council and can be voted on by all voting members of the newly elected Council.
- 3.6 The position of Secretary can be filled by any member of the Council and can be voted on by all voting members of the newly elected Council.
- 3.7 Voting will be done on a show-of-hands basis, unless a Council member requests a secret ballot.

### ***Article 4 – Optional Elected Officers***

- 4.1 Elections can be held to elect representatives to the following Officer positions:
  - i) Fundraising Co-Ordinator;
  - ii) Volunteer Co-Ordinator;
  - iii) Lunch Program Co-Ordinator;
  - iv) Communications Co-Ordinator; and,
  - v) Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils Delegate.
- 5.3 The responsibilities of these optional positions may be amended by a majority vote of Council.

5.3 In addition to the optional elected officers, 3 Member-at-Large positions may be filled in the event there are a sufficient number of candidates. Candidates for Member-at-Large positions shall not be accepted until all Officer and Executive positions have been filled.

***Article 5 – Vacancies***

5.1 For any positions that remain unfilled or become vacant following the elections, the Council shall continue to seek qualified persons to fill such seats. The Council may fill vacancies by acclamation. If the Council has vacancies, it shall be allowed to function provided every attempt has been made to fill all positions.

## ***Appendix B – Roles and Responsibilities***

### ***Article 1 – Responsibilities of Officers***

- 1.1 The responsibilities of the Chair include:
- i) call Council meetings;
  - ii) prepare agendas (with input from Council members);
  - iii) chair Council meetings;
  - iv) ensure that minutes of Council meetings are recorded and maintained;
  - v) ensure that accurate minutes and records, including all financial transactions, are kept available for at least four years at the School for examination without charge by any person;
  - vi) prepare and present an annual financial report to Council, the Principal, and the Board;
  - vii) ensure minutes and records of Council during his/her tenure are passed on to his/her successor;
  - viii) ensure a current Principal profile is on file with the Board by October 31 of each year;
  - ix) participate or assign an alternate to participate in information and training programs;
  - x) communicate with the School Principal on behalf of the Council;
  - xi) ensure regular communication with the School Community;
  - xii) endeavour to consult with parents/guardians of all students enrolled in the School about matters under consideration by the Council;
  - xiii) ensure the constitution and by-laws of the Council are maintained up to date and are reviewed annually by the Council;
  - xiv) facilitate conflict resolution;
  - xv) participate as ex-officio members of all committees established by the Council.
- 1.2 The responsibilities of the Vice-Chair include:
- i) Fulfill the responsibilities of the Chair during Council meetings when the Chair is absent;
  - ii) Assist the Chair in the fulfillment of the Chair's responsibilities as the Chair may direct from time to time.
- 1.3 The responsibilities of the Treasurer include:
- i) ensure safekeeping and the transition to his/her successor all financial records in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Board;
  - ii) provide a financial report at meetings as may be required from time to time;
  - iii) prepare an annual budget in consultation with Council and submit it to Council for approval;
  - iv) record all transactions of the Council;

- v) perform other related duties assign by the Chair.
  - vi) If the Council owns a bank account in its name, every cheque issued by the Council against the account shall require two signatures. Only Officers of the Council have signing authority for this purpose.
- 1.4 The responsibilities of the Secretary include:
- i) ensure adequate notice of meetings, the agenda and previous minutes are circulated to all Council members;
  - ii) maintain a full and accurate account of all Council meetings and ensure the minutes and records of decision are signed by the Chair following their adoption by Council;
  - iii) prepare Council correspondence as required;
  - iv) ensure safekeeping and the transition to their successor the Council records;
  - v) maintain the database of parent contact information (telephone and email);
  - vi) act as central contact person for the School Community;
  - vii) provide for inspection the minute records of the Council to any Council member or School Community member upon request.
- 1.5 The responsibilities of the Principal include:
- i) distribution of material identified by the ministry for distribution to Council members and post material in accessible location to parents;
  - ii) act as a resource to the Council on by-laws, regulations and Board policies and procedures;
  - iii) attend all Council meetings (a meeting cannot be considered a Council meeting unless the Principal, or delegated Vice-Principal is in attendance);
  - iv) consider each recommendation made by Council and return to the Council with the action plan taken in response to recommendation;
  - v) solicit views on matters pertaining to the establishment or amendment of the School's policies and guidelines (in accordance with Board policies and procedures) relating to student achievement, accountability of the education system to parents, and the communication of those plans to the public;
  - vi) may participate on any committees established b the Council;
  - vii) may solicit the views of the Council on any matter;
  - viii) provide a copy of the Council's annual report to the Director of Education and the parents of students enrolled in the School;
  - ix) give written notice of dates, times, and locations of Council meetings to every parent of a student enrolled in the School;
  - x) communicate with the Council's Chair;
  - xi) ensure that copies of the Council's minutes are kept at the school and are accessible to the public;

- xii) encourage the participation of members of the School Community in the activities of the School and the Council;
  - xiii) report to Council on the action taken in response to any recommendation made by the Council;
  - xiv) report back to Council in all cases where its advice was not acted upon.
- 1.6 The responsibilities of Teaching, Non-Teaching and Community members include:
- i) in advance of the Council meeting, consult with their respective groups on agenda items;
  - ii) express to Council the views and opinions of their respective groups;
  - iii) cast a representative vote on agenda items for decision.
- 1.7 The responsibilities of the Optional Fundraising Co-Ordinator include:
- i) invite the School Community to participate on the ad hoc fundraising committee;
  - ii) co-ordinate fundraising activities in accordance with the Board's policies and procedures;
  - iii) ensure the recognition of volunteer contributions to the work of the fundraising committee.
- 1.8 The responsibilities of the Optional Volunteer Co-Ordinator include:
- i) in cooperation with the Council, determine what the volunteer needs of the School are;
  - ii) solicit volunteers from the School Community with the appropriate skills and experience;
  - iii) promote the use of volunteers in the School;
  - iv) arrange for volunteers to receive any information, training, or other preparation necessary to their role at the school;
  - v) arrange for volunteer screening where necessary;
  - vi) maintain regular communication with the school's volunteers
  - vii) in cooperation with the Principal and Chair, resolve any conflicts relating to the use of volunteers;
  - viii) ensure that volunteers are recognized for their contributions to the School.
- 1.9 The responsibilities of the Optional Lunch Program Co-Ordinator include:
- i) liaise with the Fundraising Co-Ordinator and Volunteer Co-Ordinator to acquire services from food vendors and adequate volunteers to deliver the program;
  - ii) oversee the delivery of the program;
  - iii) prepare notices and forms to inform parents regarding the program;
  - iv) receive, count, and transfer the money to the Treasurer;
  - v) provide a report for Council meetings as appropriate.

- 1.10 The responsibilities of the Optional Communications Co-ordinator include:
- i) prepare all other correspondence not covered by other Officer positions;
  - ii) prepare replies and other communications as directed by the Chair.
  - iii) prepare a monthly newsletter to the parents/guardians of students currently enrolled to advise of past achievements, and present and future initiatives;
  - i) communicate with the Secretary to include pertinent information in the upcoming newsletter;
  - ii) write, proofread, and receive approval from the Chair before sending draft newsletter to Principal for final approval;
  - iii) oversee the production and distribution of the newsletter;
  - iv) post relevant materials and maintain the council's website.
- 1.11 The responsibilities of the Optional Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils representative include:
- i) function as a representative for the School and its Council;
  - ii) attend and participate in the meetings and other activities of the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils;
  - iii) report to and consult with Council on matters under consideration by the Assembly;
  - iv) convey the views and opinions of the Council to the Assembly;
  - v) vote at Assembly meetings in accordance with the Council's position, or, where no distinct position is known, abstain from the vote.