

**Adrienne Clarkson Elementary School
Council Constitution**

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Adrienne Clarkson Elementary School Council Constitution

1. Name and Definitions

- 1.1. The organization shall be called the Adrienne Clarkson Elementary School Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council.
- 1.2. Any reference to the “School” herein shall mean Adrienne Clarkson Elementary School
- 1.3. Any reference to the “Board” herein shall mean the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 1.4. Any reference to the “School Community” herein shall mean collectively 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 guests invited by the Council.

2. Purpose of the Council

- 2.1. The purpose of the Council is to act in an advisory capacity to the principal and to the Board and/or senior staff in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Board and the *Education Act* and Regulations.
- 2.2. The Council provides assistance and support to all members of the School Community with the aim of facilitating communication among all stakeholders, enhancing the learning environment, and helping to create a positive school climate.

3. Objectives of the Council

- 3.1. The objectives of the Council are to:
 - Effectively promote the interests of the School’s students
 - Actively support the School in meeting its students’ educational, social, and recreational needs (e.g., through fund raising, communication, support for volunteers, etc.)
 - Seek and represent the views and opinions of the School Community on the operation of the School and the programs and services it provides
 - Develop and maintain a strong relationship between home, School, and the School Community
 - Advise the principal and, as appropriate, the Board on the development and implementation of policies, programs, and services affecting the School

4. Responsibilities of the Council

- 4.1. The Council is an advisory body. Subject to maintaining a school-wide focus as stipulated in 4.2 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:
 - The local School-year calendar
 - School code of student conduct
 - Curriculum and program goals and priorities

- The responses of the School or Board to achievement in provincial and Board assessment programs
 - Preparation of the School profile
 - 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
 - School budget priorities, including local capital-improvement plans
 - School Community communication strategies
 - Methods of reporting to parents/guardians and the School Community
 - Extra-curricular activities in the School
 - School-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational, and nutrition programs
 - Community use of School facilities
 - Local co-ordination of services for children and youth
 - Development, implementation and review of Board policies at the local level
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the Council:
- Shall establish its goals, priorities, and procedures
 - May organize information and training sessions to enable members of the Council to develop their skills as Council members
 - Shall promote the best interests of the School Community
- 4.4. The Council shall communicate regularly with parents/guardians and other 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 to the School Community.
- 4.5. The Council should 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. Council Composition

- 5.1. Members of the Council shall include:
- Parents/guardians of students currently enrolled in the School (minimum 8, maximum 14)
 - The School Principal
 - Teaching staff (minimum 1, maximum 2)
 - Non-teaching staff (maximum 1)
 - Community representative(s) (minimum 1, maximum 2)
- 5.2. All members of the Council who are not School staff members should be Board ratepayers.
- 5.3. Parent/guardian members must form the majority of Council members. The minimum Council size is twelve (12) members. The maximum Council size is fourteen (14).

- 5.4. The community representatives shall not be parents/guardians of students currently attending the School or employees of the Board.
- 5.5. The term of office for all Council positions shall be one year. Council members may seek additional terms of office.
- 5.6. No remuneration or honorarium shall be paid to members of the Council.
- 5.7. 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.
- 5.8. Board Policy P.014.SCO governs the eligibility of Board employees and trustees to serve as Council members.

6. Voting Rights

- 6.1. Each parent/guardian member of the Council has one vote.
- 6.2. The School Principal is a non-voting member of the Council.
- 6.3. Each teaching staff member of the Council has one vote.
- 6.4. Each non-teaching staff member of the Council has one vote.
- 6.5. Each community representative has one vote.
- 6.6. Past Chair is a non-voting member of Council.

7. Member Selection

- 7.1. Parent/guardian members shall be elected by parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school.
- 7.2. The teaching staff shall elect the teaching staff members.
- 7.3. The non-teaching staff shall elect the non-teaching staff member.
- 7.4. The members of the Council as a whole shall appoint the community representatives annually.
- 7.5. Elections/appointments of members to the Council shall be held annually within 30 calendar days of the beginning of each school year.

8. Election of Parent/Guardian Members

- 8.1. The election of parent/guardian members of the Council shall be in accordance with Board Procedure PR.509.SCO: "School Council Elections, Constitution and By-Laws."
- 8.2. The Council may appoint an Election Chair no later than the final Council meeting of the School year. The Election Chair should not be running for election as a parent/guardian member, but may be a member of the out-going Council. If the Council does not appoint an Election Chair, the Principal will fulfill the responsibilities of the Election Chair as defined herein.
- 8.3. 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.

- 8.4. Elections will be conducted by secret ballot.
- 8.5. By-law #1 to this Constitution contains more details on the conduct of elections for parent/guardian members.

9. Acclamations

- 9.1. If there fewer than eight (8) 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.
- 9.2. The principal will ensure that election/acclamation of teaching and non-teaching staff to the Council is carried out in the fall.

10. Election of School Staff Members

- 10.1. The principal will ensure that election/acclamation of teaching and non-teaching staff to the Council is carried out in the fall.

11. Election of Officers

- 11.1. The Officers of the Council shall be the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. The duties of the Officers and members of the Council are set forth in Article 13 herein.
- 11.2. The term of office for Officers shall be one year.
- 11.3. Elected or appointed Officers may seek additional terms of office, with the limitation that all Officers may not hold such position for more than three consecutive terms of office.
- 11.4. Immediately following the election meeting, the new Council will meet to elects its Officers. If no general election is required, the election of Officers will be held in place of the scheduled election meeting.
- 11.5. The Council will elect Officers in a manner consistent with Board Procedure PR.509.SCO: "School Council Elections, Constitutions and By-Laws."
- 11.6. The Chair must be a 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.
- 11.7. 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.
- 11.8. 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.
- 11.9. Voting will be done on a show-of-hands basis, unless a Council member requests a secret ballot.

12. Vacancies

- 12.1. 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.

13. Responsibilities of Members

- 13.1. Council Members shall participate in Council meetings.
- 13.2. Failure by any Council member to attend three (3) consecutive Council meetings, without advance notice to the Chair, will automatically terminate the Councillor's position for the current term.
- 13.3. Members shall act as links between the Council and the School Community.
- 13.4. Members shall encourage the participation of parents/guardians from all groups and of other people within the School Community.

14. Responsibilities of Officers

- 14.1. The responsibilities of the Chair are as follows:
 - Call Council meetings
 - Prepare the agenda for Council meetings
 - Chair Council meetings
 - Ensure that the minutes of Council meetings are recorded and maintained (minutes should include, or have attached to them, any advice provided in writing to the principal, Board and/or senior staff by the Council, and the written response or responses in reply)
 - Ensure that accurate minutes and records, including records of all financial transactions, are kept available for at least four years at the School for examination without charge by any person, and that an annual Council year-end report including, where applicable, a financial report, are prepared and presented to the Council
 - Ensure that the minutes and records of the Council during his/her tenure are passed on to his/her successor
 - Ensure that a current principal profile is on file with the Board by 31 October of each year
 - May participate or assign an alternate to participate in information and training program
 - Communicate with the School principal
 - Ensure that there is regular communication with the School Community
 - Endeavour to consult with parents/guardians of all students enrolled in the School about matters under consideration by the Council
 - Ensure that the constitution and by-laws of the Council are maintained up to date and are reviewed annually by the Council
 - Consult with senior Board staff and trustees, as required
 - Prepare the annual report of the Council to the School principal and the Director of Education including, if the Council engages in fund-raising activities, a report on those activities
- 14.2. The responsibilities of the Vice Chair are as follows:
 - Fulfill the responsibilities of the Chair during Council meetings when the Chair is absent
 - Assist the Chair in the fulfillment of the Chair's responsibilities as the Chair may direct from time to time.
- 14.3. The responsibilities of the Treasurer are as follows:

- Be responsible for any finances of the Council, and ensures safekeeping and the transition to their successor of the Council financial records in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Board
 - Prepare the annual budget in consultation with Council and submit it to the Council for approval
 - Oversee the financial requirements of all fundraising activities
 - Have co-signing authority for banking purposes
 - Provide a written annual financial report to Council
- 14.4. The responsibilities of the Secretary are as follows:
- Ensure that adequate notice of meetings, the agenda and the previous minutes are circulated to all Council members
 - Maintain full and accurate account of all Council meetings and ensure that minutes and records of decision are signed by the Chair / Co-Chair following their adoption by Council
 - Prepare correspondence as required
 - Ensure the safekeeping and the transition to their successor of the Council records
 - Provide for inspection the minute books and records of the Council to any members of Council or members of the School Community on request
 - If the Council owns a bank account in its name, every cheque issued by the Council against this account shall require at least two signatures. Only Officers of the Council may have signing authority for this purpose.

15. Responsibilities of the Principal

- 15.1. The responsibilities of the principal shall be in accordance with Board Policy P.014.SCO: “School Councils.”

16. Meetings

- 16.1. Meetings of the Council shall be held at least four times each year, and shall be open to the general public. The first meeting each year shall be held within 35 calendar days of the beginning of the School year. Meetings shall normally be held at the School. If a meeting is to be held elsewhere, the location shall be accessible to the public.
- 16.2. Notice of Council meetings will be posted on the School’s notice boards and circulated to parents/guardians in the School’s newsletter.
- 16.3. 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 50% of the Councillors.
- 16.4. The Council is responsible for the proper conduct of its members, including a requirement for attendance at meetings. The rules contained in Robert’s Rules of Order, 1990 (USA) (Modern Version) shall govern the conduct of Council and General meetings.
- 16.5. To form a quorum as required for each meeting of the Council:
- A majority of the current members of the Council shall be present at the meeting
 - A majority of the members present shall be parent/guardian members
- 16.6. The preferable decision-making model for the school 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 as defined in article 6. A vote is defeated on a tie.

- 16.7. 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.
- 16.8. Officers can vote on expenditures at any time. The cumulative total of such expenditures between consecutive Council meetings shall not exceed \$500.
- 16.9. Once Council approves the annual budget, the Treasurer may issue payments in accordance with that budget without a further vote.
- 16.10. Votes shall not be taken at a meeting where a new motion is put forward for a proposed expenditure of \$4,000 and over, but at the next following meeting, to allow Council members time to consider the motion. This requirement may be waived by unanimous vote of the Councillors present at the meeting at which the motion is put forward.
- 16.11. Council shall vote on all proposed fundraising activities sponsored by the Council and such votes shall be recorded in the minutes.

17. Committees

- 17.1. The Council may establish committees to make recommendations to the Council, subject to the following:
 - Each committee shall include at least one parent/guardian member of the Council
 - Such committees may include persons who are not members of the Council

18. Conflict of Interest

- 18.1. There is a potential for a conflict of interest if a Council member is or becomes an employee of the Board. Please refer to Board Policy P.014.SCO for more information.
- 18.2. A Council Member shall inform the Council if they are, or if they become, a Board Employee.
- 18.3. 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 either directly or indirectly by decisions of the Council.
- 18.4. Should an issue or agenda item arise during a Council meeting where a Council member is in a conflict of interest situation, he or she shall declare a conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.

19. Conflict Resolution Process

- 19.1. The Council should resolve disagreements collaboratively and through consensus or voting. In the event that a resolution is not attained at the local level, the Chair or principal will request the appropriate Superintendent of Schools to mediate the disagreement. If a resolution is not attained through the Superintendent of Schools, the Chair or principal will refer the matter to the Director of Education.

20. Fundraising

- 20.1. School Council fund-raising activities shall be governed by Board policies and procedures, including:
- Policy P.052.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools and accompanying Board Procedures
 - PR.540.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools
 - PR.616.FIN: Accounting for School-Generated Funds
 - Policy P.012.CON: Community Use of Schools.

21. Affiliations

- 21.1. The Council may seek affiliations with other organizations that have similar purposes, including any organization of the Board's Councils (e.g., Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC)).
- 21.2. Affiliations with other organization, including any umbrella organization of the Board's school councils, or any subsequent changes in such affiliation, shall require a majority of votes at a meeting for which proper notice has been given to Council members.
- 21.3. If the Council votes to be affiliated with OCASC, it may appoint a Council member to represent it to OCASC. The duties of the OCASC representative are as follows:
- Represent the Council at OCASC meetings
 - Report back to Council about topics discussed at OCASC meetings
 - Act as a liaison between OCASC and the Council
 - Seek input from Council on issues raised at OCASC.

22. Constitutional By-Laws and Amendments

- 22.1. The Council may create and publish by-laws and amendments to this Constitution.
- 22.2. 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. Twenty one (21) days notice is to be given to all Council members that amendments to the Constitution are being proposed.
- 22.3. All by-laws and amendments to by-laws will require a simple 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. Twenty one (21) days notice is to be given to all Council members that by-laws or amendments to by-laws are being proposed.

23. References

- 23.1. 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

By-Law #1 – Elections for Parent/Guardian Members of the Council

1. Election Chair Responsibilities

- 1.1. The Election Chair (appointed in accordance with Article 8.2 of the Constitution) or the person responsible for the conduct of the election shall:
 - If possible, appoint a nominating committee to be responsible for seeking parent/guardian nominations to the Council for the following year. Committee members cannot be running for election, but may be members of the current, outgoing Council.
 - Ensure that a date for the election is set in accordance with Board Policy P.014.SCO
 - Ensure that nomination papers are available to any interested parents/guardians
 - Confirm with the principal, who is responsible for giving notice, that a minimum of two weeks' notice will be given to the various electoral groups
 - Ensure that a sufficient number of accurate ballots are prepared in advance of the election meeting
 - Ensure that a sufficient number of volunteers are available to assist with the various duties at the election meeting
 - Chair the election meeting
 - Oversee the voting and the counting of ballots
 - Create a tally sheet for the counting of ballots
 - Welcome those in attendance and outline the evening's purpose and process
 - Introduce the candidates and invite them to speak (in alphabetical order) for up to three minutes before voting begins
 - Announce the results of the voting by listing only the names of the successful candidates in alphabetical order and the total number of votes cast

2. Nomination Papers

- 2.1. Nomination papers will include:
 - The date and time of the election meeting
 - The name, address, and phone number of the nominee
 - A brief profile of the nominee, including a short explanation of why the nominee wants to serve on the Council
 - Two signatures of parents/guardians of students currently enrolled at the School who support the nomination of the nominee

3. Acceptance of Nominations

- 3.1. Nominations will be accepted until the time voting begins, provided the person nominated is present and agrees, or if the person is not present his/her written consent is delivered to the Chair of the election meeting.

4. Determining the Outcome of Voting

- 4.1. The Election Chair, the principal, and volunteers (who are not running for election) appointed by the Election Chair will count the ballots in a private area.

- 4.2. Completed ballots where the choice of candidates is deemed unclear or where there is a greater number of candidates selected than there are positions to fill will be disqualified. Completed ballots with fewer candidates selected than the number of positions available will be counted.
- 4.3. In the event of a tie for the last position(s) available, votes will be recounted. If a tie still exists, the tied candidates' names will be placed in the empty ballot box and the required number of names will be drawn to fill the final position(s).