

ACTON DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Established: February 7, 2012

1. Historical Background

The Acton District High School Council was established on February 7, 2012 in accordance with Ministry Memorandum No. 122 and the Policy and Procedures and Ontario Regulations 612/00 of the Halton District School Board (formerly Halton Board of Education).

2. Name / Address

The name of the organization will be the “Acton High School Council”, hereinafter referred to as the “Council”.

The mailing address will be in care of Acton District High School, 21 Cedar Road, Acton, Ontario L7J2V2

3. Role of the Council

The advisory role of the Council will be to provide ideas and opinions to assist the principal and, where appropriate, school board and its trustees in their decision-making on educational issues. The advice will be based on the general views of the school community and the best interest of all students. The Council will operate within the policies and procedures of the Ministry of Education and Training and Halton District School Board, hereinafter referred to as the “Board”.

4. Operational Principles

- The Council will:
- function as an advisory body
- promote a positive learning environment which enhances the achievement and well-being of our students and school community
- embrace the unique culture of Acton District High School
- work together as a team to create an atmosphere of mutual trust, openness and collaboration both within itself and the Acton District High School community
- promote and create partnerships in and out of the school community
- provide an opportunity for an equitable representation of all constituents within Acton District High School community
- demonstrate accountability to the Acton District High School community
- operate without financial gain for its members. Any profit to the organization will be used in promoting its purposes.

5. Activities of the Council

Opportunities for Council involvement include items in the list below.

- a) school code of student behaviour
- b) school program goals and priorities
- c) responses of the school or Board to achievement in provincial and Board assessment programs
- d) developing criteria for the selection of principals
- e) local co-ordination of youth services
- f) development, implementation and review of Board policies
- g) communication between parents/school/community/other school councils/Board
- h) methods of reporting to parents
- i) school budget priorities
- j) extra-curricular activities in the school
- k) school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health and safety, recreational and nutrition programs
- l) community use of facilities
- m) organization of social events for students/parents
- n) organization of parental involvement in a wide range of school programs
- o) development of support systems for students/parents/staff
- p) seeking resources for school programs
- q) input into school year calendar
- r) the previous year's Council will communicate to the incoming council.

Each year, the Council will participate in a goal-setting process to establish its priority areas of focus. Council shall annually submit a written report on its activities to the principal and the Board. The principal shall, on behalf of the Council, give a copy of the report to every parent/guardian of a student in the school and post this report in the school.

6. Sub-Committees

- Sub-committees may be struck when needed to perform a certain task, by motion of the Council.
- Sub-committees shall report to the Council.
- Non-members of the Council, e.g. concerned parents, teachers or community members, may be requested to assist sub-committees in their deliberations.
- Chair of the sub-committee must be a parent member of the Council.

7. Council Membership

A person elected or appointed as a member of council holds office from the date he/she is elected or appointed until the date of the first meeting of the Council after the elections are held in the next school year. School councillors may stand for re-election for additional terms.

A person is not qualified to be a parent member of Council if he/she is employed at Acton District High School. Board employees who do not work at Acton District High School may be elected as parent members as long as they notify the other parents of their employment prior to their elections.

The members of the Council shall include, but not be limited to:
a minimum of 4 parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school, who cannot be an employee at Acton District High School (elected by parents/guardians of students of the school)
the school principal, the school vice-principal (as ex-official unless filling in for principal) a teaching staff member (elected by teachers), a non-teaching staff member (elected by non-teaching staff), a community representative, who cannot be an employee at Acton District High School (appointed by the Council)

The majority of Council members must be parents/guardians – one of whom will be the Chair. It is expected that the membership of the Council will reflect the diversity of the school community.

The positions of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer will be held by and elected by parent member of the Council.

The Council will fill all vacancies, which occur on the Council during the period between the Annual Elections. This will be done by Council appointment, through an interview process.

Regular attendance at council meetings is required of voting members; upon a council member missing their third, or more, council meetings within the current school year, that council member's position shall become subject to review;

A review of a council member's position on council will become subject to a review upon

- ii. passing of a motion tabled at a regularly scheduled council meeting, where a quorum exists,
- iii. and passed by the majority of members present. Said review may lead to a motion and vote, which if carried by a majority of the council present, may lead to the member's position on council being revoked;
- iii. In the event a council member's position is revoked, that position may be replaced in accordance with sub-section 7 f).

8. Roles and Role Descriptions – Council Members

Council Members shall:

- Endeavour to be present at every meeting of Council
- Be an advisory body to the school and the Board. Its activities must fall within the scope of Ministry of Education Policy Memorandum 122, Part 2, Roles and Responsibilities of the School Councils.
- Recognizes and respect the person integrity of each member of the school community and encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- Be limited to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- Use the appropriate communications channels when questions or concerns arise.
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the Council. A member shall not disclose confidential information.
- Not deal with personnel matters or matters that are dealt with under collective agreements.

9. Chair:

- co-ordinates day-to-day activities of the Council
- acts as Council spokesperson
- chairs all executive and general meeting of the Council
- receives agenda items at least ten days prior to any meeting
- sets agenda for all meetings, distributes and posts said agenda seven days prior to meeting
- ensures that minutes are recorded and maintained
- passes on relevant material to the school administration to be communicated to the school community through the school newsletter
- communicates regularly with the school principal
- consults with senior Board staff and trustees as required
- will sign all instruments which require his/her signature
- will prepare an Annual Report for the school year for September distribution
- is one of 3 officers who may approve Request for School Council Funds forms
- a board employee cannot be a chair or co-chair of a council

10. Vice-Chair:

- assists with all aspects of the role of Chair as outlined above
- assists Chair with representation of the Council at meetings involving the Board or other groups and associations
- takes over leadership role of the Council in the absence of the Chair
- a board employee cannot be a chair or co-chair of a council

11. Secretary:

- records minutes and action points of meetings
- submits action points and minutes to Chair for distribution/publication with the next agenda

12. Treasurer:

- helps develop Council budget for the school year
- processes Request for School Council Funds and School Activities Receipts Forms and forwards to the Manager of School Administrative Operations for payment or for deposit of school council funds
- keeps accurate records, compiles financial reports given by Council groups and members operating events involving money
- seeks operating costs from school groups
- will present the Financial Statement for the school year at each June General Meeting
- is one of 3 officers who may approve Request for School Council Funds forms

13. Past-Chair:

- may sit on Council to keep continuity from last year's Council and acts as an advisor

14. Principal:

- facilitates the establishment of the school Council and assist in its operation
- supports and promotes the Council's activities
- seeks input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned responsibilities
- acts as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements
- obtains and provides information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions
- communicates with the Chair of the Council as required
- submits agenda items to Chair at least ten days prior to meeting
- ensures that copies of the minutes of all meetings and financial transactions of the Council are kept at the school and available at the school for examination for four years
- assists the Council in communicating with the school community
- encourages the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community
- at least fourteen days prior to election date, will ensure that all names and profiles of candidates are to be communicated to all eligible voters
- notifies Acton District High School community of the results of the election (names of members elected) no later than thirty days following election
- notifies Acton District High School community of the dates, times and locations of all regular Council meetings

- communicates annual Council report, including fundraising activities and financial statements
- is one of 3 officers who may approve Request for School Council Funds forms
- is not entitled to vote on any matters being discussed by the Council or by a committee of the Council
- has right to veto

15. Vice-Principal:

- ex-officio role
- takes over role of Principal in his/her absence
- assists with all aspects of the role of the Principal
- assists Principal with representation on Council at meetings involving the Board or other groups and associations

16. Teaching Staff Representative:

- represents teachers in Council planning and discussions
- brings information regarding classroom and school program to Council discussions
- provides input to Council decisions which represents student needs
- communicates school needs from the standpoint of teachers and students
- reports to staff on Council initiatives and decisions

17. Non-teaching Staff Representative:

- represents non-teaching staff in Council planning and discussions
- provides input regarding school, staff and student needs from the perspective of non-teaching staff

18. Community Representative:

- represents community pertinent to school and Council operation
- acts as liaison with the community to broaden Council and school understanding
- assists Council in finding and securing community support for Acton District High School, financial or otherwise

19. Student Council Representative:

- represents the study community pertinent to school
- helps build partnerships and links between the student council, student body and council.
- provides input regarding student needs from the perspective of the student.
- Communicates information back to the student council.
- May participate on committees established by the council.

20. Nominations and Elections Procedures

Nominations:

- all parents/guardian of students, who will be attending Acton District High School for the school year, are eligible to put their names forward for election to be on the Council
- candidates may be self-nominated or nominated by another parent/guardian
- all nomination forms must be signed by the candidate
- the principal shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of the parent members, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent/guardian of a student registered at Acton District High School for the school year and post this notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents
- nomination forms will be distributed by the principal at the beginning of the school year
- nomination forms are to be completed and forwarded to the principal at least two weeks prior to the election

21. Election Process/Time Lines:

- election for parents shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the Chair after consulting with the principal
- each Acton District High School parent/guardian has the right to one vote
- each parent/guardian must vote in person (no proxy votes)
- names of candidates are to be communicated to all eligible voters, by the principal, prior to the election date
- if more than 4 parent/guardian candidates come forward, a ballot process will be used
- the ballot process will be carried out on two consecutive school days and the dates and times will be communicated to all eligible voters by the principal
- if 4 or fewer parent/guardian candidates come forward, the slate of candidates will be acclaimed and the Council will fill all vacancies by the end of October the Acton District High School staff will oversee ballot casting

22. Meeting Procedures and Conduct

- A minimum of four general meetings of the school Council will be held each school year. (September to June)
- Council shall meet within the first 35 days of the school year, after the elections.
- A meeting schedule will be established and published by the Council each September.
- All Council general meetings are open to the school community. Any person wishing to address the Council must notify the Chair prior to publication of the agenda.
- The Principal, Chair and Vice-Chair will meet as necessary on behalf of the Council.
- Minutes must be recorded for all meetings involving Council members and these minutes will be circulated with the agenda to the Council members prior to the next Council meeting.
- The following “Rules of Play” will be used at all Council meetings:

- i. Everyone will have an opportunity to speak.
 - ii. Please do not interrupt anyone who is voicing his/her thoughts.
 - iii. If something comes to mind while a discussion is taking place, write it down, then raise your hand to the Chair.
- Year End Reports will be presented at the June Council meeting.

23. Decision-Making Procedures

- In Council General Meetings, motions will be passed by a simple majority of the Council members present.
- A quorum for all meetings of the Council will be 50% plus one of Council members in attendance at the time of the vote. This includes all members of the Council (parents/guardians, principal, teaching and non-teaching staff, community representative, student council representative). At least one staff member must be present and a majority of parent members of the Council, in order for quorum to exist.

24. Amending Constitution and Operating Procedures

- This Constitution may be amended at any general meeting of the Council.
- An amendment to the Constitution must be proposed at one general meeting of the Council and voted on at the next general meeting.
- The proposed Constitutional amendment must be published in a newsletter prior to the general meeting at which the vote will occur.
- A quorum of Council members must be present.
- A motion to amend the Constitution must be carried by a 2/3 majority of eligible Council voters at the general meeting.

24. Availability of the Constitution

- This Constitution and operating procedures document is available to all.