

# John Young School Council Constitution

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## **ARTICLE 1- NAME**

The name of the association shall be John Young School Council (JYSC).

## **ARTICLE 2-PURPOSE OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The purpose of the constitution is to outline the way in which JYSC will conduct its business. It is based on principles outlined in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board policy P.014.SCO for School Councils.

## **ARTICLE 3- PURPOSE OF JOHN YOUNG SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The purpose of JYSC is to:

- a) help each student develop to his or her full potential by ensuring a quality education for each child, and promoting parent/guardian engagement;
- b) enhance communication between the school and the school community; and
- c) enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

## **ARTICLE 4-OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of JYSC are to:

- a) observe the policies of the Ottawa Carleton District School Board;
- b) provide advice and communicate the views of the parents and guardians to the principal and to the Board and/or senior staff on significant educational issues, and issues affecting the daily life of the children at school, including the school's overall performance, school improvement planning, school communication strategies, school based services and community partnerships, school budget priorities, local school calendar, community use of school facilities, policy development and parental engagement etc.;
- c) communicate regularly with parent's/guardians and other members of the community to:
  - a. foster co-operation and meaningful consultation (for example through the holding of open forums);
  - b. obtain parent/guardian views and preferences with regard to advice being provided by the council (for example through the conduct of surveys);
  - c. report on the activities of the council; and
  - d. ensure transparency and accountability of the council and school.

- d) plan activities that support the active participation of parents/guardians in their child's education, including the organization and/or promotion of workshops/seminars for parents/guardians on topics relevant to the needs of students and their families (for example parenting and marriage skills, supporting a child with homework, or supporting a child with learning disabilities etc.);
- e) raise funds to be used for providing educational tools and equipment, or for extracurricular activities that enhances the lives of the students at John Young Elementary School; and
- f) work with the community to ensure the existence of a safe environment for the students;

#### **ARTICLE 5-ANNUAL GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

School council is responsible for establishing annual goals and priorities in order to meet its objectives. These goals and priorities are to be established following the election of school council and should be approved by school council within the first two months of the school year. Annual goals and priorities are to be communicated to parents/guardians following their approval and are to be used as the basis to establish priorities for the allocation of school council funds;

#### **ARTICLE 6-Council Positions**

JYSC positions are open to parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school, as well as community members, the school principal (non-voting), teachers and non-teaching staff. The majority of the council positions are to be held by parents/guardians, and the council should reflect the diversity of the John Young School community. All parent positions may be filled by one or more parents as a co-position.

JYSC shall have a minimum of nine (9) members comprised of a combination of the following:

- at least five (5) are parents/guardians of students who attend the school, who are elected by their peers, and who make up the council executive (see section 6.1);
- at least one (1) teacher, who is elected by his/her peers;
- at least one (1) non-teaching staff, who is elected by his/her peers;
- the principal (non-voting); and
- a minimum of one (1) community representative who is appointed by the school council;
- a food day/popcorn day coordinator, who are parents/guardians of students who attend the school and are elected by their peers
- a fundraising coordinator, who are parents/guardians of students who attend the school and are elected by their peers

## **6.1 The Executive Committee of the JYSC**

The executive committee of the JYSC shall be composed of parent members in the following positions: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC) Representative.

## **ARTICLE 7-TERMS OF OFFICE**

The term of office for all members of the School Council shall be from the date he or she is elected/appointed until the date of the next school council elections in the following school year;

Elected members can be re-elected to serve a subsequent term of office, if eligible.

## **ARTICLE 8-TERMINATION**

An elected members' position on school council shall terminate:

- a) at the time of the next election;
- b) when the elected member has been absent for three or more consecutive meetings without due cause;
- c) when a parent/guardian member no longer has a child enrolled at John Young Elementary School;
- d) in the case of the principal, when he/she no longer holds the office of Principal at John Young Elementary School;
- e) in the case of the teacher and non-teaching staff, when they are no longer an employee of John Young Elementary School;
- f) in the case of the community representative, when he/she is no longer an Ottawa-Carleton ratepayer;
- g) when a council member has sent a letter of resignation to the Executive Committee;

## **ARTICLE 9-VACANCIES**

### **9.1 Vacancies at the start of the school year**

If every reasonable attempt has been made to hold elections and there are not sufficient members elected, then the school principal working with the school superintendent and interested parents/guardians may develop an interim structure for a school council for the current school year only.

### **9.2 Vacancies during the school year**

Vacancies on school council shall be filled in a manner agreed upon at the school council meeting where the vacancy is announced. It may take the form of election (following rules of election Article 13), or having an existing council member fulfill that role (for example when there is limited time left in the term of office, or when no one steps forward).

## **ARTICLE 10-MEETINGS**

- a.) The council shall hold meetings at least 4 times a year, the times and dates of which will be posted on the JYSC notice board, and be publicized to parents/guardians in the school newsletter and/or by separate notice;
- b.) The first school council meeting must be held within the first 35 days of the first day of the school year, but following the election of the new council. To facilitate scheduling, it is acceptable to hold the elections and the first council meeting on the same date, however, under this scenario the election of the new school council should be the first item of business following any unfinished business of the current school council.
- c.) Council meetings shall be open to the general public, including parents/guardians and staff. Anyone present can participate in discussions and, if desired, bring forward an item for discussion;
- d.) Conduct of meetings is to be consistent with Canadian principles of fairness and democracy;
- e.) In order for there to be quorum at a meeting, the majority of the current membership of the school council must be present. Of the members who are present, the majority must be parents/guardians. For example, if the council size is 9, a minimum of 5 council members, at least 3 of which must be parent members, is required in order to achieve quorum;
- f.) Decisions taken at JYSC meetings will generally be made by consensus with all those present at the meeting. If, however, after discussions, it becomes obvious that a decision cannot be reached by consensus, then the Chair will call for a motion. Each council position is entitled to one vote, with the exception of the principal. The Chair's vote shall only be counted in the case of a tie vote;
- g.) Emergency decisions that must be made between monthly meetings or during the holiday months will be made by a unanimous vote by voting JYSC members where there is quorum. The vote may be done by electronically or at a physical meeting. If a unanimous vote is not reached the issue must be presented to the next regular council meeting for decision;
- h.) The executive committee members of the council are entitled to meet outside of scheduled council meetings for planning purposes only. No commitment of finances nor major changes in policies, procedures or activities decisions are to be made at these meetings. Items identified for discussion/decision are to be brought forward to the next regular council meeting. These planning meetings do not need to be open to the JYSC community and the times and dates do not need to be published;

## **ARTICLE 11-REPORTING**

School council records including meeting agendas, minutes, annual reports, and newsletters must be available to the public at the school or on the school's website. The most recent versions of each document will be posted on the JYSC bulletin board for the duration of the school year.

### **11.1 Minutes from JYSC meetings will:**

- a.) be prepared after each meeting and distributed electronically within a reasonable timeframe to all interested parties for comment;
- b.) be finalized and approved at the next JYSC meeting;
- c.) be posted on the bulletin board and website, and made available in the office once final;
- d.) include financial transactions;
- e.) include as an attachment any advice provided in writing to the principal, and any written response back; and
- f.) be available for examination at the Board's office by any person without charge for 4 years;

### **11.2 The Annual Report**

The annual report is to be prepared at the end of the fiscal year and is to include a summary of the activities of the JYSC for that school year, and must include financial statements.

The annual report is to be submitted to:

- a.) The principal for posting and distribution in the following September to all parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school; and
- b.) the Ottawa Carleton District School Board's Chief Financial Officer in accordance with Ministry requirements for financial reporting.

### **11.3 Transfer of school council records**

Electronic versions of all school council records for a given school year are to be transferred to the new school council at the first council meeting of the following school year. A second electronic copy is to be stored in the school office for a period of 4 years.

## **ARTICLE 12-EXPENDITURES**

### **12.1 Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the council shall be September 1 to August 31.

### **12.2 Types of expenditures and their approval**

School council is permitted to issue cheques for the following without prior approval at a school council meeting:

- a.) any direct costs associated with items purchased by the John Young School Community through school council sanctioned fundraisers such as the cost for pizza or subs on food

- days, popcorn and supplies for popcorn days or other fundraising items ordered by parents/guardians such as chocolate bars, cookie dough or wrapping paper.
- b.) to reimburse John Young Elementary School for items the school purchases but for which JYSC has collected the funds from parents/guardians, such as milk for lunches;
  - c.) to reimburse John Young Elementary School for photocopies used by JYSC to carry out its objectives;
  - d.) to reimburse routine operational expenses valued at less than \$100.00 (for a single item) which are necessary for JYSC to carry out its objectives such as tickets for JYSC events, binders, food day tubs, cheques etc.;

All other operational expenses valued at \$100.00 or more (for a single item), and expenditures associated with JYSC activities (for example popsicles for outdoor fun days, educational tools or equipment, extracurricular expenses) are to be approved at a school council meeting and issued a purchase order number by the treasurer.

### **12.3 Transparency**

School council will adhere to the principles of transparency, accountability, and sound financial practice in the management of school council funds by:

- a.) adhering to District policies and procedures, legislation, associated directives and guidelines;
- b.) maintaining detailed records of all financial transactions and completing reconciliations monthly;
- c.) reporting at each school council meeting and annually through a report to the District which will be distributed to all parents/guardians of the school each September;
- d.) maintaining funds in a designated account, used exclusively for school council purposes;
- e.) appointing the treasurer plus a minimum of two other executive members with signing authority for school council finances;
- f.) having reimbursable expenditures signed off by the Chair and verified by the Treasurer prior to issuing the cheque;
- g.) ensuring that cheques are:
  - signed by two executive members with signing authority;
  - never signed by two members of the same household/family;

-never signed by the same person to whom it is payable, unless urgent and necessary due to an unavailability of a member with signing authority;

h.) creating a plan (budget) for each year by addressing any carry-over funds from the previous year, fundraising activities and potential expenditures for the current year based on the annual goals and priorities; The council shall vote on the draft budget at a regular meeting early in the school year;

#### **12.4 Account**

Annually, prior to every June, school council shall render a decision about whether the account used to maintain the school council funds will be held:

- a) In a special purpose account at the school managed through the school district's financial system (where the account is held by the school, the principal shall be a designated signing officer, as per board policy); or
- b) Through a recognized financial institution.

Upon making this decision, the school council shall provide notice in writing of the decision to the Board's, Chief Financial Officer;

At the start of its term, JYSC may review its decision about the management of school council funds and if a decision to change the practice is made, the Chief Financial Officer of the District shall be notified.

#### **12.5 Audit**

JYSC accounts may be subject to audit by the District through internal review and/or an external auditor;

### **ARTICLE 13-ELECTION OF SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS**

#### **13.1 Election of Parent Members**

a) In order to ensure fairness, transparency and the opportunity for new parents/guardians to participate and become part of school council, elections must be held annually within the first 30 calendar days of the first day of the school year.

b) Any parent/guardian of a student enrolled in JYES can vote to elect the parent members of the school council. Each parent/guardian is entitled to one vote for each vacant position on the council.

#### **13.2 Election of Non-Parent Members**

a) The school principal, with the assistance of the school council, shall ensure the annual election of teaching and non-teaching representatives within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the school year.

b) The teaching and non-teaching staff members of council must be elected by their peers. Each person is entitled to one vote for each vacant position on the council within their peer group.

### **13.3 Notice of Elections**

a) At least 2 weeks in advance of the elections, the school principal will send out a notice of the date, time and location of the election to each student for delivery to his/her parent/guardian. He/she will also ensure it is posted in a location that is accessible by parents/guardians and delivered to all teaching and non-teaching staff. The notice of election shall:

i) identify the parent, teaching and non-teaching staff positions open for nomination and the deadline for receipt of nominations; Where parent elections are held during a meeting, nominations will be accepted until the time voting begins, provided the person nominated is present and accepts the nomination;

ii) include the nomination form;

b) Nominations by candidates are to be made in person or in writing and received at the school office;

c) Candidates will be required to introduce themselves and must be prepared with a short profile (verbal or written) at the time of election;

### **13.4 Voting**

a) All elections will be conducted by secret ballot. Ballots are prepared for election;

b) In the event that one or more nominations are received at the election, the names of the additional nominees shall be added to the ballot;

c) Elections will be held at the school on the date/time previously publicized in the notice of election. Voting by proxy is not allowed;

d) Candidates securing a plurality of the votes cast shall be declared elected; Only the name of the successful candidate and the total number of votes cast is announced;

e) For any positions for which the exact number of candidates required, or fewer are nominated, the election will be declared by acclamation;

f) In case of a tie vote, the tie may be broken or decided as follows:

i) where 3 or more candidates are nominated, and only two candidates are tied, a new vote is taken between the two tied candidates; or

ii) the two tied candidates may choose to jointly serve in the position; or



iii) the candidates draw lots;

## **ARTICLE 14-DUTIES OF THE MEMBERS OF SCHOOL COUNCIL**

### **14.1 General Duties of the School Council Executive**

School council executive members will:

- a) ensure that minutes and records of the council during the council's tenure are passed on to the successor council;
- b) ensure that a current principal profile is on file with the Board by October 31 of each year;
- c) ensure that there is regular communication with the school community;
- d) ensure that parents/guardians of all students are consulted about matters under consideration by the council;
- e) ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the council are maintained up to date, are reviewed annually by council and are followed;
- f) arrange for meetings and prepare agendas;
- g) participate on council sub-committees;
- h) abide by the council's constitution and OCDSB policies;
- i) encourage parents/guardians and community members to participate in events and programs;

### **14.2 Duties of the Chair**

The Chair shall:

- a) act as a Chairperson at all JYSC meetings;
- b) be an ex-officio member of all sub-committees of JYSC;
- c) be the official spokesperson for and on behalf of JYSC;
- d) be, or designate someone to be, the sole liaison between the JYSC and JYES in respect to general council matters;
- e) communicate with the school principal on behalf of JYSC;
- f) consult with senior board staff and trustees as required;
- g) sign-off on all expenditures prior to reimbursement, and may authenticate with his or her signature, with that of the Treasurer, Vice Chair or Secretary, cheques and other documents;
- h) ensure that meeting minutes are recorded and kept in a safe place for a minimum of 4 years;

- i) prepare an annual report and financial statements with the Secretary and Treasurer, and submit to the principal for distribution to the school community and to the OCDSB each September; and
- j) facilitate the resolution of conflict;

### **14.3 Duties of the Vice Chair**

The Vice Chair shall:

- a) perform the duties of the Chair in his or her absence;
- b) assist the Chair in the conduct of the Chair's office; and
- c) authenticate with his or her signature, with that of the Treasurer, Secretary or Chair, cheques and other documents;

### **14.4 Duties of the Secretary**

The Secretary shall:

- a) record the minutes for all JYSC meetings;
- b) distribute minutes to all attendees of meetings who have expressed interest in receiving them;
- c) maintain all JYSC documents and reports;
- d) authenticate with his/her signature, with that of the Chair, Treasurer or Vice Chair, cheques and other documents;

### **14.5 Duties of the Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall:

- a) maintain a bank account in the name of JYSC;
- b) receive and deposit promptly all JYSC funds into the JYSC bank account;
- c) write all cheques for purchases that have been signed-off by the Chair, and may authenticate them with his/her signature, with that of the Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary;
- d) maintain a record of all financial transactions; and
- e) prepare an annual financial statement;

### **14.6 Duties of the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC) Representative;**

The OCASC Rep shall:

- a) represent JYSC at meetings of the OCASC, raising issues on our behalf;
- b) present a report of OCASC meetings at each JYSC meeting;
- c) keep fellow executive members aware of upcoming issues to be discussed at the OCASC meetings; and
- d) act as a voting delegate for JYSC;

### **14.7 Duties of the Community Representative**

The Community Representative shall:

- a) encourage parents/guardians and community members to participate in JYSC events and programs;
- b) attend school council meetings and contribute to council discussions;
- c) represent the community's perspective and help build partnerships and links between JYES and the community;
- d) participate on JYSC sub-committees as interested;
- e) abide by the JYSC constitution;

#### **14.8 Duties of school staff representatives (teaching and non-teaching)**

School staff representatives shall:

- a) attend school council meetings;
- b) solicit views from their peer group to share with the council;
- c) participate on council sub-committees, as interested;
- d) abide by the JYSC constitution; and
- e) communicate with their peer group on behalf of JYSC;

#### **14.9 Duties of the principal**

The Principal shall:

- a) attend school council meetings or appoint a vice-principal delegate when required;
- b) participate on JYSC sub-committees, as interested;
- c) support and promote JYSC activities;
- d) distribute JYSC communications to parents/guardians including the annual report;
- e) encourage parents/guardians and the community to participate in JYSC events and programs;
- f) abide by the JYSC constitution and act as a resource on by-laws, regulations and policies;
- g) facilitate annual school council elections;
- h) seek the input of JYSC, as appropriate, on important educational issues including:
  - a. school improvement planning,
  - b. school budgets,
  - c. community partnerships,
  - d. the development of school policies and guidelines,
  - e. the accountability of the education system to parents, and
  - f. school code of conduct, including dress code;
- i) consider each recommendation made by JYSC and advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation; When the recommendation is not accepted, shall provide JYSC with the reasons;
- j) communicate with the JYSC Chair;

- k) provide JYSC with existing non-confidential information necessary to carry out its responsibilities;
- l) forward relevant information from the OCDSB and the Ministry to JYSC;
- m) permit JYSC to raise funds to be used for the benefit of JYSC in carrying out its duties and/or to benefit JYES;
- n) ensure copies of the minutes of JYSC are kept at the school and are made available on request;

## **ARTICLE 15-AD HOC COMMITTEES**

In order to address specific issues that may be too time consuming or complicated to discuss at a council meeting, JYSC may form ad hoc committees. These committees should be formed after initial discussion at a JYSC meeting concerning the scope of the ad hoc committee and a consensus or vote to create a committee to look into the matter.

### **15.1 Composition of ad hoc committees**

Ad hoc committees shall consist of a minimum of 3 individuals, including one executive parent member and two other parent/guardians or JYES staff. The JYSC chair shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Council. Individuals on the ad hoc committee need not be individuals who attend regular council meetings, but must be willing to serve on the ad hoc committee on a short-term basis and be willing to participate individually and as part of a team.

### **15.2 Responsibilities of ad hoc committees**

Ad hoc committees are responsible for:

- a) organizing meetings as necessary and ensuring they are held in a public place with adequate written notice of their date, time and location provided to the parents/guardians of all students enrolled in the school;
- b) setting priorities and making decisions or recommendations according to the mandate given by JYSC;
- c) working towards consensus;
- d) providing advice/decisions in the form of a report, presented at a regular JYSC meeting for discussion and decision (see Article 10).

## **ARTICLE 16-STANDING COMMITTEES**

Standing Committees are established to execute specific on-going tasks such as fundraising, food days, recruiting volunteers, etc. throughout the school year.

Standing Committees are responsible for organizing planning meetings as necessary and reporting developments back to school council at regular JYSC meetings. Any actions taken by a standing committee must be authorized first by JYSC at a regular JYSC meeting (see Article 10).

## **ARTICLE 17-RESOLUTION**

JYSC will resolve disagreements collaboratively and through consensus or voting at the local level. 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.

## **ARTICLE 18-ENACTMENT, REPEAL AND AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION**

- a.) JYSC shall enact and maintain the Constitution for the purpose of governing the conduct and affairs of the Council;
- b.) Should JYSC wish to amend or repeal the Constitution, they must give written notice of this intent to all parents/guardians and JYES staff, fifteen days in advance of the meeting where the constitution is to be repealed or amended;
- c.) Changes or amendments to the constitution must be available on the JYSC bulletin board, on the website and/or electronically by request at the time the notice of intent is given;
- d.) Repeal or amendment to the Constitution shall require a majority of the votes cast.

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