

# **École Publique Rideau Public School Advisory Council Constitution and Bylaws**

This organization shall be called “ **École Publique Rideau Public School Advisory Council**” (hereafter referred to as the **Council** ).

## **Vision Statement**

At École Rideau Public School, we believe in the power of our community to nurture, support and inspire limitless learning for all, en français.

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to create a safe, caring, and inclusive French Immersion learning community where we challenge the physical and intellectual abilities of all our learners.

We strive to promote language learning, innovation, collaboration, creativity, and personal wellbeing, while engaging our sense of optimism and wonder.

We are committed to revealing and celebrating the strengths of all learners.

**Our beliefs are reflected in our school motto.**

“Si On Veut On Peut”  
“They Can Who Think They Can”

# Code of Ethics

A member shall...

- ✓ ...consider the best interests of all students.
- ✓ ...be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
- ✓ ...act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board<sup>1</sup>, and the Ontario Ministry of Education<sup>2</sup>.
- ✓ ...become familiar with the school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- ✓ ...maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- ✓ ...recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- ✓ ...treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- ✓ ...encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- ✓ ...acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
- ✓ ...respect the confidential nature of school business by not sharing sensitive information outside council meetings, and adhering to privacy policies.
- ✓ ...respect the limitations the confidential nature of business may place on the operation of the school council.
- ✓ ...not disclose confidential information, including publishing aspects of the council meetings without explicit consent from those involved.
- ✓ ...limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- ✓ ...use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- ✓ ...promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- ✓ ...declare any conflict of interest, such as financial ties to vendors or personal relationships with staff members.
- ✓ ...not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.limestone.on.ca/school-council>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/page/school-councils-guide-members>

# Mandate

The Council exists primarily for the purpose of contributing to the ongoing improvement of the learning environment. As an advisory body, the Council may provide advice to the Principal and/or the **Limestone District School Board** (hereafter referred to as the **Board**) on any matters it identifies as priorities, including but not limited to the following:

1. School-related activities
2. Rideau Public School Year Calendar
3. Rideau Public School code of student behaviour
4. Curriculum and program goals and priorities
5. Extra-curricular activities
6. Local coordination of services for children and youth
7. Community-related activities
8. Rideau Public School community communication strategies
9. Methods of reporting to parents and the community
10. Rideau-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational and nutrition programs
11. Board-related activities
12. The responses of Rideau or Board to results in provincial and board assessment programs
13. Criteria for selection of Principals

## Collaborative Activities

In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the Council Executive should collaborate with the Principal and the Board to:

- Establish its goals, priorities and procedures.
- Organize information, training and orientation sessions for members of the Council as needed.
- Hold a minimum of four meetings per year in addition to an Annual General Meeting held within 30 days of the beginning of the school year to elect parents/guardians to the Council.
- Communicate regularly with parents and the community.
- Promote the best interests of the Rideau community.
- Participate in the development of the Rideau School Profile.

When a possible change in the Principal is known or anticipated, the Council will validate the Board's description of unique needs in the Rideau School Profile and to offer suggestions for selection criteria.

The Council may **not** be involved in issues relating to the performance of individual staff members, as this is covered in collective agreements, Board policies and legislation.

The Council shall **not** engage in fundraising activities unless,

- The activities are approved by the Principal and aligned with school policies; and

- The activities are to raise funds for a purpose approved by the Principal or authorized by any policies established by the Principal.

### **Use of Funds**

The Council shall ensure that the funds raised by it are used in accordance with any applicable policies established by the Board.

- The Council shall observe the Fund-raising/Charitable Donation Policy<sup>3</sup>.
  - The Council shall consult with the Principal prior to initiating a fundraising activity.
  - The Council shall evaluate the appropriateness of offering prizes/incentives to students for fundraising on a case-by-case basis.
  - Prizes/incentives shall not exceed five percent of the anticipated profit, or up to a maximum of \$500.00 (five hundred dollars).
  - Funds raised by the Council shall be used to benefit the school as a whole or by fairly distributing them between the grades/divisions.
  - Council funds shall not be used to subsidize individual class field trips.
  - Council shall operate with a balanced budget, and shall not run a deficit in any year unless approved by a two thirds majority of Council. Council shall also endeavor to set aside approximately \$1000.00 (one thousand dollars) per year for schoolyard upkeep and other major projects.
1. An amount of up to \$500.00 (five hundred dollars) will be donated to Grade 6 transition activities.
  2. The School, through the Principal, Teachers or a special interest group may request funds from the Council and will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
  3. Gift purchases of approximately \$50-100 for any school employee (e.g., teachers, admin, janitorial EAs, etc.) who is retiring or moving to another school.

### **Council Meetings**

1. Council shall offer babysitting by an appropriate number of qualified babysitters. The babysitters shall be paid fairly by Council.
2. The Council shall conduct a survey of parents/guardians every year to obtain input as to the direction/initiatives they wish the Council to pursue.
3. The Council shall conduct a survey of Rideau teachers every 2 years to obtain input as to the direction/initiatives they wish the Council to pursue.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://limestone.on.ca/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=32146722>

# Council Membership

## General

All parents or guardians of students enrolled at Rideau, the Principal, students, teaching and support staff, plus appointed community members, are eligible members of this Council, and the Council encourages membership from diverse socio-cultural groups. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend Council meetings. There will be no honorarium paid to members of the Council.

## Council Executive

The Council Executive shall have a minimum of the following members (herein simply referred to as “members”):

- 6 parents or guardians of students enrolled at Rideau, who shall be elected by parents or guardians of students enrolled at Rideau. Parent members are normally encouraged to serve for 2 one-year terms.
- The Rideau Principal (Ex Officio, no voting privileges).
- A member of the teaching staff of Rideau (elected by the teaching staff).
- At least one member of the broader Rideau school community, appointed by the Council Executive. It is hoped that this representative will not be a parent or guardian, but that need not necessarily be the case.

Specific roles can be found in Appendix 1.

## Terms of Office

The Chair of the Council shall be an elected member who is a parent/guardian and shall be elected annually by the Council.

The term of office for all Council members is one year; however, parent members are normally encouraged to serve for 2 one-year terms in any specific role. Members of the Executive may be re-elected for additional terms as long as they remain eligible.

Council Executive members in a role other than Member-at-Large who retire mid-term will be replaced. Parent members shall be appointed by the remaining parent members to serve until the next election.

## Liability

The Board recognizes that Council members are volunteers, and as such, are covered by the Board's liability insurance policy as long as they are acting within the scope of their duties on behalf of the Board.

# **Council Meetings**

## **General Procedures**

The Council shall have a minimum of four (4) regular meetings per school year, in addition to an Annual General Meeting (AGM) held each September to elect parents/guardians to the Council and to schedule the dates for Council meetings.

All Council meetings shall be open to all parents/guardians of students enrolled at École Publique Rideau Public School, as well as teacher and support staff of École Publique Rideau Public School. All Council meetings will begin promptly as scheduled.

At the AGM in September, the Council shall elect the Council Executive Officers (Chair, Vice or Co-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer), and other Council Executive members.

The Council Executive may replace members who fail to attend three consecutive meetings during the school year without providing a reason acceptable to the Council Executive. A member who will be absent must notify the Chair or leave a message at the school. A member who does not attend three consecutive meetings will have a voice on issues, but will not have a right to vote on the issues.

## **Meeting Procedures**

All meetings shall be conducted as follows:

- The Chair, in consultation with the Principal, shall establish the agenda for each meeting.
- The written agenda shall be distributed to all members of the Council Executive and made available to the School community.
- All members of the Council Executive shall receive a copy of the minutes.
- Minutes shall also be made available at all Council meetings and upon request to other interested members of the school community.

## **Annual General Meeting**

### **Elections**

Parent/Guardian candidates for the Council Executive may be nominated prior to the AGM, where an election must take place by secret ballot.

## **Amendments to the Constitution**

The Council Executive shall review its constitution every two years, in those school years starting on an even year. If there are any amendments to this constitution, a Notice of Motion to Amend, together with a Draft Copy of the Amendment(s) must be submitted in writing to all Council Members one month prior to the Motion being addressed. Ideally, this is done through the formation of a review

committee that solicits feedback on the existing bylaws from Council and consolidates the recommended changes. Any amendment passed must be ratified at the next AGM.

The Council Executive shall evaluate its activities and set goals annually to ensure they reflect the needs of students, community views and the school growth or improvement plans.

## **Executive Decisions**

The Council shall operate in a non-judgmental manner, respecting individual rights and confidentiality, employing no-fault discussions and reaching consensus through compromise.

The Chair shall allow for participation in discussion by all members of Council in attendance.

A quorum for official Executive decisions, by consensus or voting shall consist of at least 6 Executive Council members, parents/guardians, and include the Chair, Co-Chair or their delegate, the Principal or delegate and the teaching representative or delegate.

When the Chair decides that a matter should be resolved by vote rather than by consensus, all members of the Council Executive, except the Principal, may vote, provided that quorum is met.

In the case of a controversial issue at a meeting with many parents in attendance, Council Executive will take guidance, but not necessarily their decision, from a parental vote.

## **Advice and Requests**

The Council provides advice to the Principal through discussions and collaboration within the Council Executive. Advice to the School Board or Director of Education may be provided through existing Board procedures -- cf. Section 14 of Administrative Procedure 110.<sup>4</sup>

## **Committees**

Committees shall be governed by the following:

- Committees shall inform the Chair of dates, times, and locations of all meetings
- Committees cannot allocate expenditures or commit human resources without the approval of the Council Executive.
- Committees can consist of both parents/guardians of Rideau students and school council members, as well as general community members, but they must be chaired by a member of school council.
- Committees can be formed in an ad-hoc manner at any school council meeting.

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.limestone.on.ca/documents/022d25c3-c3e9-47a4-985f-692e97f84af3/administrative%20procedure%20110%20school%20councils.pdf>

## **Conflict of Interest**

Anytime the Council does business with the potential for monetary gain/loss with any person, agency, or company and a member of the Council has a vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency, or company, that member shall declare a conflict of interest and shall not vote on any such resolution relating to the matter.

## **Conflict Resolution Procedures**

From the Ministry of Education Handbook, we have adopted the following:

- Council members are elected to serve the community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on the Council at all times.
- If a Council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the Chair shall ask for order.
- 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 removal of a member for one meeting does not prevent the Council member from participating in future meetings.
- When the Chair has requested the removal of a member or members from a meeting, the Chair shall request that the disrupting members of Council participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which is to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting may be private and shall not be construed as a meeting of the Council.
- The Chair may request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.
- An independent third party may be a Board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
- Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all the parties to the agreement.

## **Filling Vacancies**

If any school council positions become vacant because of resignation, inability of a member to fulfil their roles and responsibilities, or other cause, the remaining members shall constitute the Council, unless the parent/guardian majority is not maintained. If the majority of parent/guardian members on the council is not maintained, the Council shall instruct its nominating committee to send home nomination forms through the school communications (e.g., newsletter) for the vacant position(s) for parent/guardians on the Council and to hold an election for the purpose of filling the vacancy. Vacant positions, other than for parent/guardian representatives, may be filled by appointment of the council for the remaining term of office, from among members of the school community who meet the requirements set for the vacant positions.

Ratified by Council on 20 September 2017.

Jennifer MacDaid – Co-Chair Jordan Morelli – Co-Chair

# **Appendix 1**

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Council Executive**

### **Executive Members**

Council Executive includes a slate of elected Officers with specific responsibilities. The Officer positions and procedures shall be described in the Council's constitution and shall consist of the Chair, Vice or Co-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Additional Executive Members may include a Fundraising Chair, Special Events Coordinator, etc. (examples described below).

Executive Members shall

- Attend and participate in Council meetings.
- Serve on Council committees.
- Act as links between Rideau and the community.
- Encourage the participation and involvement of all parents and students within Rideau.
- Encourage the support of the community for Rideau.
- Ensure the Council is governed by the terms of the Constitution.

Only Executive Members (including Parent Members-at-Large) of the Council have voting privileges.

### **Principal**

As a designated member of the Council Executive, the Principal shall:

- Facilitate the establishment and operation of the Council.
- Support, facilitate and promote the Council's activities.
- Act as a resource to the Council respecting laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements as required in order to facilitate the operation and business of the Council.
- Seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibilities.
- Obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions and provide appropriate advice.
- Communicate regularly with the Chair of the Council.
- Keep the appropriate supervisory officer informed of the activities of the Council.

### **Teacher Representative**

The Teacher Representative shall:

- Facilitate communication between the teaching staff and the Council.

## **Chair**

The Chair shall:

- Schedule Council meetings in consultation with the Principal.
- Prepare the agenda for meetings in consultation with the Principal and chair meetings.
- Put out a call for new agenda items prior to upcoming meetings.
- Ensure that minutes of the meetings are recorded by the secretary and maintained.
- Participate in information and training sessions.
- Communicate regularly with the Principal.
- Consult, on behalf of the Council, with senior Board staff and trustees as needed, and arrange for the Council to be represented at related functions and meetings.
- Provide for regular communication among the Council members, parents, the community, and existing organizations within the school, as well as with other School Councils.

## **Vice-Chair/Co-Chair**

The Vice-Chair shall:

- Assume the duties of the Chair in their absence.

## **Secretary**

The Secretary shall:

- Take minutes of the meetings and coordinate with the Communications Chair to share them with the Council and the general public.

## **Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall:

- Keep a record of all monies received and paid out.
- Provide monthly statements at Council meetings.
- Generate a yearly budget for the Council in consultation with Council.
- Provide advice, upon request, on available funds for initiatives raised at Council.
- Communicate to Rideau families, ideally monthly, what the parent council funds were used for.

## **Fundraising Chair**

The Fundraising Chair shall:

- Follow the Fundraising and Charitable Donations Policy for Rideau.
- Research possible fundraising ideas and profits gained from these activities.
- Report to the School Council and advise on the best choices for fundraising in the upcoming year.
- Propose a fundraising schedule in consultation with the Council.
- Submit an annual fundraising report to the School Council.

- Coordinate volunteers when needed for various fundraising projects.
- Communicate with the Principal and Communications Officer to inform the community.

## **Special Events Coordinator**

To offer families the opportunity to build a strong community at Rideau, the Special Events Coordinator shall:

- Plan and organizes family functions for the Rideau families.
- Strive to ensure that 2 major functions are held each year, such as a Halloween Dance (i.e., Boo Bash) and June Fun Fair.
- Communicate with the newsletter writing team and Communications Officer to inform the community.

## **Environmental Chair**

The Environmental Chair shall:

- Be responsible for any environmental issues deemed necessary (e.g., impacts on schoolyard activities to the trees and gardens in the space).
- Report updates on upcoming projects.
- Set up a schedule for the summer months to tend to all of the gardens, the bushes and trees.
- Coordinate volunteers as needed for projects.
- Communicate with the newsletter writing team and Communications Officer to inform the community.
- Help coordinate schoolyard improvement issues along with school staff and Council.

## **Communications Officer(s):**

The Communications Officer(s) shall:

- Assist the Chair with creating and disseminating polls and documents for consideration by the Council
- Ensure that the links to minutes and other pertinent information are shared with the Council.

## **Volunteer Coordinator/Support Person**

The Volunteer Coordinator/Support Person shall:

- Collect all volunteer forms.
- Contact all volunteers for orientation
- Distribute the volunteer handbook.
- Maintain a database of volunteers.
- Ask each class to try to acquire two parent/guardians to be class representatives responsible for making phone calls if Council, teachers, or administration are looking for volunteers for various projects.

## **Parent Member(s)-at-Large**

The Parent Member(s) at large shall:

- Be encouraged to attend and/or participate in Council meetings.
- Be encouraged to participate in any Council committees.

## **Community Representative**

The Community Representative shall:

- Act as a liaison between the School and the community at large.
- Be invited to assist the Council in achieving specific and well-defined mandates on an expert, consultative basis.

## **Kinder-Committee Representative**

The Kinder-Committee exists to assist Kindergarten students and their families with the transition to school by:

- Building relationships and encouraging involvement of parents within the Rideau Public School Kindergarten community (students, parents/guardians, and teachers) through activities on the school premises.
- Advocating for Kindergarten community issues or interests at Council.

The Kinder-Committee is a subcommittee of Council. The Kinder-Committee is represented on Council by a member of the Kinder-Committee who is elected by the Kinder-Committee.