

CONSTITUTION FOR THE RICHARD S. FOWLER CATHOLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

Section 17 of the Province of Alberta School Act states that, "A School Council shall be established in accordance with the regulations for each school operated by the board."

On September 18, 1995 our school Division' Board of Trustees adopted policy 2110 on School Councils. This policy is attached as an appendix to this constitution.

NAME

The name of the School Council shall be the Fowler School Council (hereinafter referred to as the School Council).

MISSION STATEMENT

We the members of the School Council at Richard S. Fowler Catholic Junior High School are committed to the Catholic education of our students in an atmosphere of Christian fellowship, we serve the students, parents, staff, church and community of our school by:

- offering advice and consultation to the principal on any matter relating to the school
- representing parents, staff and students in order to foster a collaborative working relationship for the benefit of the school
- maintaining a liaison role with the Board of Trustees
- providing a mechanism for communication between the home and school
- monitoring relevant issues, problems, and concerns within the school, church and community, and explore possible involvement by the School Council
- lobbying and being an advocate of the school with respect to the evolving needs of the school and the School Division
- collaborating with the church and community in meeting the needs of our students and/or the community at large
- encouraging parents to support the school by volunteering.

MEMBERSHIP

The School Council shall be comprised of the following:

Parent Representatives

The majority of the members of the School Council shall be parents of students attending Richard S. Fowler Catholic Junior High School.

All parents and staff of Richard S. Fowler Catholic Junior High School are members of this association and are welcome at all meetings.

Staff Representatives - Ex-officio Members

- There shall be at least one staff representative from the school, and
- The Principal and Vice-Principal
- An effort will be made to appoint one community representative to sit on the School Council.

Elected Officials - The Executive

Elected officials shall be composed of a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, 2 Members-at-Large and a Secretary. Elections will be held at the first meeting of the School Council each year.

- It is expected that the Vice-Chairperson will let their name stand for the Chairperson position for the next year.

DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE

Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson:

- The Chairperson shall call all meetings and preside over them. In the event of the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall call and preside over all meetings.
- The Chairperson shall act as an ex-officio member of all committees.
- The Chairperson shall prepare an agenda for all meetings.
- The Chairperson or designate may attend meetings of the Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional Division No. 29, as a representative of the School Council.

- The Chairperson shall ensure the accurate recording of the proceedings of all meetings and the distribution of minutes to each member of the School Council prior to the next meeting.
- The Chairperson shall be responsible for all correspondence.

Secretary:

- Shall be responsible for the recording and distribution of minutes.

Two Members-at-Large:

- Shall serve as a fourth and fifth member of the executive and may be assigned duties as required.

MEETINGS (A minimum of eight)

- School Council meetings shall be held on a specified day of each month of the school term, as identified by the school calendar.
- The quorum for general meetings shall be one staff representative and four parent representatives, in addition to the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson.
- Meetings will be run informally and operate by consensus under Town Hall Structure. The Chairperson will use their discretion as to when formal options are required.

GENERAL MEETINGS

The Chairperson shall give reasonable notice to the parents of all students of Richard S. Fowler Catholic Junior High School regarding the School Council's general meeting. This notice shall include an agenda of the first meeting indicating that an election of an executive will take place. If a vacancy in the executive occurs during the school year an election will be held at the discretion of the executive.

At this first meeting of the year the Principal shall advise the School Council of constraints in Legislation regarding personnel matters and where to seek advice before dealing with such matters.

INTERNAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

The School Council will abide by the conflict resolution procedures outlined by the local school board. Every effort shall be made to resolve issues at the School Council level. Should an important source of conflict remain unresolved, it may be taken to the next high level for consideration.

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Background

Section 22 of the School Act requires the formation of a school council in each school in accordance with the regulations.

School Council revision (113/2007) states that a school is to provide advice on the development of the school's mission, vision and philosophy, policies, annual education plans, annual results reports and budget and to access information on these topics. School councils must also be provided provincial testing program results for the school, and a reasonable interpretation of those results and measures.

A school council may make bylaws governing its meetings and the conduct of its affairs and, at its discretion, may:

- ♦ Advise the Principal and Board respecting any matter relating to the school.
- ♦ Perform any duty or function delegated to it by the Board.

The Division believes school councils have the potential to serve as an effective mechanism for utilizing parental input in the operation of schools and to enhance communication among schools, the Board and the community.

The Division supports the establishment of a school council for a school in accordance with statutory requirements, Board policies and administrative procedures.

Guidelines

1. Primary and Deciding Role

School councils have a primary role in:

- 1.1 Determining their internal bylaws, finances and methods of operation.
- 1.2 Planning inservice programs for its members.
- 1.3 Reporting to the Board on the results achieved by the school council.

2. Advisory Role

A school council may, at its discretion:

- 2.1 Advise the Principal and the Board respecting any matter relating to the school.
- 2.2 Perform any duty or function delegated to it by the Board in accordance with the delegation.

- 2.3 Consult with the Principal so that the Principal may ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister.
- 2.4 Consult with the Principal so that the Principal may ensure that the fiscal management of the school is in accordance with the requirements of the Board and the Superintendent.
- 2.5 Do anything it is authorized under the regulations to do.

NOTE: There are a number of ways to organize and operate a school council. The general assembly model is generally preferred because it is more inclusive. This has been the outcome wherever a collaborative process involving trustees, central and school-based administrators, teachers and parents has been utilized.

3. Establishment of School Councils

- 3.1 Where a new school council comes into existence, the Principal will call an establishment meeting of the parents of students attending the school within a reasonable period of time but not later than February 15.
- 3.2 When a school is unsuccessful in establishing a school council in any year, an information meeting must be called by the Principal within sixty (60) days of the subsequent school year.
- 3.3 The primary purpose of the meeting will be to:
 - 3.3.1 Inform the parents about school councils outlining the statutory and Board policy parameters.
 - 3.3.2 Elect and appoint or establish the processes for appointment of a school council executive.
- 3.4 If there are insufficient parents in attendance to elect the parent members of the school council executive, the Principal shall select parents to serve on an advisory committee.
- 3.5 Where a school council or equivalent is in existence, the chair or past chair will call a meeting of parents not later than seventy (70) days after the start of the school year as specified in the bylaws for the purpose of:
 - 3.5.1 Informing parents about the school council.
 - 3.5.2 Electing and appointing or determining the process for appointing a school council executive according to the bylaws.
- 3.6 If there are insufficient parents in attendance to elect the parents of the new school council executive, the chair, past chair, or Principal, where neither the chair or past chair is available, will select the parent members to serve on the school advisory committee.

4. Membership

- 4.1 It is recommended that the school council executive be composed of:
 - 4.1.1 Parents/Guardians of students attending the school (parents/guardians shall form the majority on the executive).
 - 4.1.2 A chair to be a parent, or a member who is not a parent may be elected chair of the executive if no parent is willing to be nominated as chair.
 - 4.1.3 A vice-chair, a secretary, a treasurer, or combination of these executive officers deemed suitable by the membership.
 - 4.1.4 At least one teacher.
 - 4.1.5 At least one age-appropriate student.
 - 4.1.6 Other representation as determined by the membership including school support staff and/or community.
 - 4.1.7 The Principal, as an ex-officio member.
- 4.2 The term of membership on the school council executive is to be determined by the bylaws. (It is recommended that it be one year with re-election eligibility.)
- 4.3 All parents/guardians of students attending the school are eligible members of the school council.
- 4.4 All eligible members have voting rights to be exercised through attendance or in a manner determined by the bylaws.

5. Dissolution of a School Council

- 5.1 The Minister, on the request of the Board, may dissolve a school council without notice at any time if the Minister is of the opinion that the school council is not carrying out its responsibilities in accordance with the School Act and the regulations.
- 5.2 Prior to requesting that the Minister dissolve a school council, the Board will provide the school council with the opportunity to be heard on the dissolution.

Procedures

1. Constitution and Bylaws

- 1.1 The school council may draft or adopt a constitution and/or bylaws containing provisions for name, membership, frequency of meetings, functions, etc., that is within statutory and Board policy parameters.
- 1.2 The constitution should be filed with the Board as information.

2. Liaison With the Board

- 2.1 A Board member shall be designated to act as a liaison between the school council and the Board.

- 2.2 The Board member shall meet with the school council at least twice annually to discuss items of mutual interest.
- 2.3 The Board member appointed as liaison shall act as the channel of communication between the Board and the school council; however, an elected member of the council executive and the Principal may jointly present reports and/or recommendations to the Board on behalf of the school council.
- 2.4 The Board will refer the school council reports and/or recommendations to the Superintendent. (The Superintendent shall prepare his recommendations considering Division policies, needs and priorities.)

3. Operational Procedures

Each school council will establish its own operating procedures within statutory and Board policy parameters which are to be submitted by the Principal to the Superintendent.

4. Record Keeping

Where applicable, each school council should establish methods of keeping records for the purpose of annually supplying the Board with:

- 4.1 A report setting out the activities of the school council.
- 4.2 A financial statement.
- 4.3 A copy of the minutes of each meeting.

5. Conflict Resolution (Section 22, School Act)

The Principal or the school council will apply the following procedures to resolve disputes on policies proposed or adopted for the school:

- 5.1 Either party may submit the dispute, not sooner than five (5) days or later than ten (10) days from the date of the dispute, to the Superintendent for mediation of the dispute.
- 5.2 The submission of the dispute shall be by letter that outlines the nature of the dispute, the issues involved, and the preferred resolution.
- 5.3 A copy of the letter shall be simultaneously submitted to the other party who should submit a defense of its position to the Superintendent within five (5) days.
- 5.4 The Superintendent shall attempt to mediate the dispute between the parties as soon as practicable.
- 5.5 If the mediation by the Superintendent is not successful, the dispute will be submitted by the Superintendent to the Board or committee of the Board delegated with the responsibility to settle the disputes between the parties.
- 5.6 At the next Board or committee meeting, the disputants will be permitted to appear and state the rationale for their positions.

- 5.7 The Board or committee will make a decision that is final and binding on both parties.

Reference: Section 22, School Act
School Council Legislation 171/98 (cons. 176/2003)
School Council policy 1.8.3
School Council Regulation 113/2007

CODE OF ETHICS

for school council members

- A member shall be guided by the mission statement of his or her school district.
- A member shall endeavour to be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- A member shall practise the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth.
- A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- A member shall encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- A member shall apply democratic principles.
- A member shall consider the best interests of *all* students above those of individual students or groups of students.
- A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- A member shall not disclose confidential information.
- A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- A member shall use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- A member shall accept accountability for decisions.
- A member shall declare any conflict of interest.
- A member shall accept no payment for school council activities.