

KATE S. DURDAN SCHOOL

SCHOOL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION



Our Kate S. Durdan School Mission Statement:

“Our Mission is Learning. Our Commitment is a Lifetime.”

Revised: MAY, 2010

Kate S. Durdan School School Council Constitution

Kate S. Durdan *School Council* Mission Statement: *“To support an effective social and academic partnership among students, parents, teachers and the community in their quest to maximize the overall potential of the student.”*

Article I

1.0 Name of Organization

1.1 The name of this organization will be Kate S. Durdan School Council. (Hereafter referred to as “the Council”)

Article II

2.0 Mandate of the Council

2.1 Working within the policies, mission statement and goals of the District School Board of Niagara, the Council will:

- provide opportunities for parents to be more directly involved in the education of their children
- develop a mission statement for the school
- provide advice to the principal and the District School Board of Niagara regarding key matters in developing school programs, services that affect students such as: the Code of Conduct, Safe Schools Policy, School Growth Plans, matters that impact on the improvement of student learning, use of volunteers in the school and the allocation of school fundraising monies
- have a continuing and foremost focus of supporting and improving the academic achievement of students
- foster good relations among parents, staff and the local community
- be a voice for public education in the community
- cooperate with, and provide assistance to, other related groups
- report on the Council’s activities as requested by the Board

2.2 The Council will not have any of the powers and duties reserved by law or regulation for the local school board, the school principal or collective agreements.

Article III

3.0 Representation and Membership

3.1 The Council will be composed of the following members:

- the school principal
- parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school (who have submitted a *Self Nomination Candidate Form*) The Ontario Regulations 612-00 states that the number of parent members on a School Council shall be at least six. **Parents and Guardians must form the majority of members on the School Council.** If we have less than six parent members, we do not have a working council per se however we can still hold ‘information evenings’ to inform parents of happenings within our school. Minutes are not taken, and School Council funds may not be disbursed through School Council but through the school at the Principal’s and staff’s discretion. A written report will be available on our website.
- one teacher from the school (a teacher who works at the school his/her child attends is *not* eligible to serve as a parent member on the Council but may be elected as a teacher/non teaching representative)
- one non-teaching member of the school staff
- one member of the community
- although not mandated, the Council may choose to have additional people serve in an advisory capacity only

•Article IV

4.0 Elections and Appointment Procedures

4.1 Parent/Guardian representatives will be elected according to the following process:

- in September, parents/guardians will be notified during the first week of school by receiving a *Self Nomination Candidate Form* for an elected position on the Council for the new school year. (See APPENDIX for a sample of the *Self Nomination Candidate Form*)
- only one parent per household/family is eligible for an elected position on Council
- a candidate must declare if he/she is employed by the District School Board of Niagara
- the Chair/Vice Chair are elected by the council members and must be a parent who is *not* employed by the school board

4.2 A self nominated teacher representative or one teacher determined by the teaching staff of the school.

4.3 A non-teaching, self nominated staff representative will be determined by the non-teaching staff of the school.

4.4 A community representative may be selected and appointed by the voting Council members. Any member of the Council may recommend the names of the persons to be considered for the appointment. *The community representative cannot be an employee at Kate S. Durdan School.* If the community representative is an employee elsewhere within the District School Board of Niagara, then this must be disclosed at the first Council meeting.

4.5 *Self-Nomination Candidacy Forms* may be received at the school before or on the day of the September meeting which will be held during the last week of September. However, parents/guardians attending the September School Council meeting will have one week **after** the first meeting to decide whether to submit a Self-Nomination Candidacy Form to the office in order to be a VOTING member on the School Council. The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary will be elected during the September meeting. The term for School Council membership will be from September to June of any school year.

Article V

5.0 Terms of Office

5.1 An elected parent/guardian may submit their Self-Nomination Candidacy Form annually.

5.2 Teaching and non teaching staff members will be determined annually from their respective groups. This will occur as soon as possible in the new school year.

5.3 The principal is appointed by the District School Board of Niagara.

5.4 The Council may establish committees made up of teachers, parents, business leaders, advisors and other citizens to carry out specific functions, to study specific issues and to make recommendations to the Council. The Council will seek widespread participation in these activities. These committees will have no responsibilities beyond those outlined by the Council when the committee is established.

5.5 Appointed community members will be asked to become the community representative at the beginning of each school year, (or sometime throughout the year, should there not be a candidate who comes forward at the beginning of the school year).

5.6 Membership will be terminated when the member

- no longer has a child enrolled in the school (parent/guardian)
- no longer is employed at Kate S. Durdan School (teacher, support staff)
- has missed three scheduled meetings without proper notice or regrets to the chairperson

or the school and is recorded as absent in the minutes

- submits a letter of resignation to the chairperson

5.7 Vacancies that occur during the term will be determined by the Council members and will be appointed by consensus if it is necessary. Nominations for this appointment may be made by any member of the Council.

5.8 The names of Council members *only* will be published in the November school newsletter and Council members may be contacted through the school. Individual phone/cell numbers, email address will not be provided in the Newsletter.

5.9 The name, e mail/city address and phone/cell number of the Chairperson will be forwarded, as requested, to the District School Board of Niagara.

Article VI

6.0 Council Procedures

6.1 All Council meetings and committee meetings shall be open to the public.

6.2 Generally the means of decision making shall be through **consensus** (see APPENDIX). As compared to a democratic vote where most people support a decision, consensus would have all members willing to accept a decision as reasonable. If consensus is not forthcoming, each member of Council may give a short summation of their feelings on the issue. If this is a matter of urgency then the Chairperson will call for a simple majority to determine the validity of that urgency. If this motion is carried, the Chairperson would follow this motion by a secret ballot. Otherwise the Chairperson may choose to accept a motion to table this issue to the next School Council meeting for a Council vote.

6.3 The Council has the responsibility to regularly inform the parent community of their activities either through the School Newsletter **or** by informing that parents have access to present and previous minutes which are kept in the school office. A request for such information may be made at the office. All School Council Minutes are kept at the school for four years before they are discarded.

Article VII

7.0 Executive Members of Council

7.1 At the September meeting, members of the incoming Council shall elect from the parent/guardian *Self Nomination Candidate Forms* only to fulfill each of the following positions for the new school year:

I. Chair

II. Vice-Chair

III. Secretary

Article VIII

8.0 Duties of the Officers

8.1 The Chair is responsible for:

- presiding at all meetings and provide leadership to the Council and general supervision of activities of the Council
- working in cooperation with the principal to prepare a written agenda for all Council meetings
- distributing the agenda to Council members prior to the beginning of each meeting
- appointing temporary or standing committees as needed, in consultation with the Council
- expressing consensus or accepting a motion from the floor, as reached by Council
- serving as the spokesperson for the Council
 - recognizing and promoting our unique relationship as a shared facility with Loretto Catholic School
- monitoring the implementations of Council decisions

8.2 The Vice-Chair is responsible for:

- assisting the chair as needed and exercise all functions in the absence of the chair
- updating the Constitution, through an ad hoc committee, and other relevant Council protocol documents

8.3 The secretary is responsible for:

- keeping a full and accurate account of the proceedings and transactions of Council meetings
- providing to the principal and all voting Council members a copy of the complete minutes of the meeting no later than 7 days following the meeting
- maintaining a Council file in the school's administration office containing copies of all minutes, Council correspondence, current bylaws, current reports which is kept on file for **four** years
 - maintaining a list of the Council membership with current telephone numbers/ addresses and email addresses

- producing an executive summary of the Council’s activity, as required by the school board, after the final school council meeting of the academic year and communicate the executive summary in its entirety to the Kate S. Durdan School in the June School newsletter which is usually send out the second or third week of June.

8.4 The Principal/Vice Principal is responsible for:

- planning programs and providing materials that will assist the Council to fulfill its responsibilities
 - notifying the school community regarding the dates, times and location of all regular School Council meeting through the Kate S. Durdan School sign, the Kate S. Durdan School Calendar or Newsletter
 - providing a school profile which may include: student demographics; enrolment trends; languages spoken in the home and the ethnic composition of the school; the school and District School Board of Niagara’s Mission statement; the school program priorities; programs offered at the school (library, Special Education, ESL); school facilities, class sizes; the rate of student transfer; relationship/shared activities with Loretto Catholic School
 - providing the Council with an on going financial report/summary of fund raising monies at each Council meeting and a summary report of all fundraising activities is provided to every parent in June through the Executive Summary
- will share information on school activities, successes and concerns with the Council members on a variety of matters
- sending a copy of the full minutes to all voting council members (hard copy or via email) 7 days after the last Council meeting
- assisting, advising, supporting, cooperating and consulting (seeking advice, with the Council) and inform Council on how their recommendations have been taken into account when decisions related to their recommendation have been made
 - share the school plan providing for co-instructional activities at Kate S. Durdan School
- providing administrative assistance and clerical/secretarial support for Council activities
- attending the meetings of the Council
- cooperatively setting the agenda with the chair of the Council
 - maintaining the authority, responsibilities and obligations of the principalship as mandated by Board Policy and the Acts and Regulations of the Province of Ontario.

Article IX

9.0 Meetings

9.1 Although normal decision making will be achieved through consensus, at times a voting process will be required. Absentee ballots or proxy voting **will not** be permitted. Members of Council having one vote each are:

- I. Parent/Guardian members
- II. Teaching staff representative
- III. Non teaching staff representative
- IV. Community member (voting privilege is decided by Council)

9.2 The Council will meet in the months of September, November, January, March and May (five months). The day for the meetings for each school year will be determined during the previous May Council meeting in order to be included in the school calendar.

9.3 The above Council scheduled meetings will be held as required at the discretion of Council.

9.4 A simple majority will carry a vote. Two thirds of the voting Council members constitute a quorum. Although normal decision making will be achieved through consensus, at times, a voting process will be required. If voting becomes necessary, a simple majority will be sufficient for a vote on any issue.

9.5 Persons interested in presenting at a Council meeting may request, in writing, to the Chair/Principal to be put on the Agenda no later than seven (7) days before the next Council meeting date.

9.6 Council meetings will be held at Kate S. Durdan School and shall be open to the public.

9.7 The first Council meeting shall be no later than September 30.

9.8 The agenda of each Council meeting shall include:

- Attendance of Members (Present, Regrets Absent (without notifying the school))
- Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
 - Business arising from previous minutes
 - Chair's report
- Committee reports
- Principal's report
- Agenda items for next meeting

- Around the Table or It's Your Minute
- Adjournment

Article X

10.0 Constitutional Change

10.1 The constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two thirds majority vote of those present, provided there is advance notice to the stakeholders. Specific amendments must have been introduced at a prior meeting and have been published in the Council minutes and are listed on the agenda for the current meeting. Council members may do this by serving a Notice of Motion at the Council meeting.

10.2 A copy of the constitution will be made available to any person upon request and distributed at the September/October School Council meeting and/or inserted at the front of each binder called **“School Councils: A Guide for Members” Revised 2002.**

10.3 A copy of the constitution will be available in the Council minutes book, which maintains the School Council minutes for the previous four years.

Article XI

11.0 Training

11.1 An orientation package will be distributed annually to all council voting members in September/October which includes information about council roles, responsibilities and functions as determined by **“School Councils: A Guide for Members” Revised 2002**, published by the Ontario Ministry of Education and available on the website <http://www.gov.on.ca>. A copy of the Ontario Regulations 612/00 and 298, which set out the legal requirements for and responsibilities of school councils are also included in SECTION 12 of this handbook.

11.2 The orientation package is requested to be returned at the June Council meeting of each school year to the principal.

11.3 Council members are also encouraged to attend any School Council training workshops sponsored by the District School Board of Niagara/School Council Liaison Committee.

Article XII

12.0 Conflict of Interest/Conflict Resolution

12.1 A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived or potential. 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 the decision of the council.

12.2 A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organization or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

12.3 Every school council member will be given an opportunity to express his/her concern or opinion about an issue.

12.4 Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.

12.5 Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.

12.6 The chair's responsibility is to clarify statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among points of view raised and to set out the joint interests of all members.

12.7 If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.

12.8 If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the chair shall request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.

12.9 An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.

12.10 Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

APPENDIX

Self Nomination CANDIDATE FORM
Kate. S. Durdan School Council
September, 2010 - June, 2011

I wish to declare my candidacy for an *elected position* as a parent/guardian voting representative on the **Kate S. Durdan School Council** . This form entitles you to voting privileges, not necessarily an executive position (Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary). Even though you may not be interested in an executive position or being a member of School Council , everyone is welcome to our meetings.

Your Name: _____ Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ E-MAIL _____

I am the parent/guardian of _____ (*child(ren)'s name(s)*), who will be attending Kate S. Durdan School in September, 2010.

I am an employee of the District School Board of Niagara. Yes No

Candidate's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The Kate S. Durdan School Council is an advisory group of members (Principal, voting parents/guardians, one teacher, one non teaching member of the school staff, and one member of the community). The School Council is involved in: the establishment/annual review of the school Code of Conduct, School Growth Plan, fundraising, developing the mission statement/constitution, supporting the Safe School Policy, supporting the District School Board of Niagara or Ministry of Education and Training Initiatives as well as matters impacting the school operation.

Please return this form to the Office at Kate S. Durdan School before or on September 27, 2010.

We hope to see you at our School Council Meeting on September 28 , 2010, at 6:30 p.m. Candidates may choose to attend this School Council Meeting and have until October 5, 2010 before deciding whether or not to put their name forward as a voting member of the Kate S. Durdan School Council. The submission of this *Self Nomination Candidate Form* at that time, indicates your interest in becoming a voting member of the Kate S. Durdan School Council.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS by CONSENSUS

1. The Council makes decisions through consensus.

2. Consensus means that:

- I can live with the decision.
- I will support my colleagues in implementing this decision .
- I will do absolutely nothing to impede the implementation of this decision.

Each Council member supports the decision as the best choice for the entire school community.

3. After the Council members fully explore a proposal, all concerns and questions have been resolved, and it appears that consensus has been reached (using the Chair who double-checks for consensus) by asking.

- Are there any other questions, issues, or concerns?

If no one speaks, then the Chair calls for an affirmation of the consensus to indicate that a decision has been made.

4. Once consensus is reached on a decision the group will determine:

- What the next steps are, who will take them, and by when
- Who needs to know, who is going to tell them, and by when.

5. If individual members of the group cannot support consensus, they are invited to the next meeting of the presenting group to work through their differences and decide upon a vote.