

EARL HAIG SECONDARY SCHOOL

CONSTITUTION OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

**(Amendments proposed: September 9, 2008 – changes: underlined in large bold italics
1) Change of date, pgs 1 & 10; 2) Change of “Chair” to “Chair or 2 Co-Chairs” pg 2)**

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1. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The unincorporated council shall be named **THE EARL HAIG S.S. SCHOOL COUNCIL**, hereafter referred to as the School Council, with its Head Office at Earl Haig Secondary School in the City of Toronto in the Province of Ontario.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Council are:

- a) To provide parents and/or guardians and/or caregivers (hereafter referred to simply as “parents”) with a forum for the discussion of educational issues related to Earl Haig Secondary School;
- b) To provide advice to the school administration, staff, Toronto District School Board (hereafter referred to as the “TDSB”), and government on matters that will lead to improved student learning;
- c) To interact with school administration and staff in planning joint action which will benefit students, parents and staff of the school;
- d) To be responsive to the needs of the students, the parents, the staff and the community;
- e) To communicate regularly with parents;
- f) To communicate with and advise the Toronto District School Board and government on matters of concern; and

- g) To assist and encourage all members of the Earl Haig Secondary School community to communicate effectively with the school and The Toronto District School Board (and where appropriate, Province of Ontario – Ministry of Education) on matters of concern.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL AND ITS ELECTED EXECUTIVE

- a) Membership of the **School Council** shall include:
 - (i) Every person who is a parent or guardian or caregiver legally recognized as acting in the place of a parent of a student enrolled at Earl Haig Secondary School
 - (ii) School principal
 - (iii) Teaching staff representative
 - (iv) Non-teaching staff representative
 - (v) Student
 - (vi) Community representative

Parents shall form the majority of the School Council.

- b) The elected, acclaimed and/or appointed members of the School Council as listed below shall form the **School Council's Executive** and shall include:
 - (i) Chair *(or 2 Co-Chairs) hereafter referred to as the Chair**
 - (ii) Vice-Chairs* (one representing each of the school's two main programs, Collegiate Program & Claude Watson Arts Program)
 - (iii) Secretary*
 - (iv) Treasurer*
 - (v) School Ward Forum representatives* (two)
 - (vi) Members-at-large* (Maximum of ten)
 - (vii) School principal
 - (viii) Teaching representative
 - (ix) Non-teaching staff representative
 - (x) Student representative
 - (xi) Community representative

*To be parents elected or appointed from the parents of a student currently enrolled at Earl Haig Secondary School.

Parents will form the majority of the Executive.

The Executive shall manage the affairs of the School Council.

4. TERM OF OFFICE FOR EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

The term of each office will be one year subject to re-election.

5. ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE

- a) Parent Executive members shall be elected by parents of students currently enrolled in the school. Parents shall cease to be members when their child is no longer enrolled in the school,
- b) Teaching staff shall elect a teaching staff representative.
- c) Support staff/education workers shall elect a non-teaching staff representative.
- d) Students' Council shall appoint a student representative.
- e) The school principal shall be the current Earl Haig S. S. school principal.
- f) The School Council Executive shall appoint a community representative.

Election of the School Council's Executive is defined as any process of selection based on nominations or volunteering to serve, which takes place at an Annual General Meeting advertised to the school community (or to the staff or student group where applicable). This process only involves the casting of votes or ballots when the number of parents, teaching or non-teaching staff nominated or volunteering to serve exceeds the number of positions available within that category of membership, so that there are two or more candidates agreeing to stand for the same position. Eligible nominees or volunteers who stand unopposed for School Council Executive positions are said to be "acclaimed" to those positions. The fact that some of, or all the members of the School Council Executive are acclaimed, does not make the process invalid as long as this occurs at a meeting advertised to the school or staff community, respectively. Any vacancy shall be filled as soon as possible.

Where the community member is appointed as a representative of their community group (program, agency or business), the group itself is invited to choose that member.

The chair must be a parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in the school and shall not be a member of the school's teaching, administrative or support staff or a TDSB employee.

6. RESIGNATION/REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

- a) Any Executive member except the principal, may resign their position by writing a letter of resignation to the Chair.
- b) Any Executive member (except the principal), or School Council committee member, may be removed from the Executive for failing to abide by the Code of Ethics or the requirement to disclose a conflict of interest, for consistently behaving in a rude or disruptive manner, for refusing to comply with the School Council's Constitution, rules or procedures, or for failing to attend 70% of the Executive and School Council Meetings held during the school year. On determining that one of the above conditions has occurred, a member of the Executive or any committee may be removed by means of a resolution passed by 66% of the votes cast at an Executive meeting. The person in question shall be given the reason for the proposed removal from membership on the Executive or committee, at least five days prior to the meeting, and the person shall have an opportunity to be heard by the Executive at the meeting. Similarly, those representing other groups on the Executive (teaching and non-teaching staff, students, and community representative) may petition the Executive to have their representative's status as a member reviewed by the Executive.
- c) If any individual refuses, upon request to resign, then it is incumbent upon the TDSB to ensure that the said individual is not entitled to participate, or is removed from participation.
- d) Any vacancy shall be filled at the next meeting or the earliest possible opportunity.

7. TIME OF ELECTION

- a) The Annual General Meeting, during which the annual election of the School Council Executive will occur, will take place within thirty (30) days of the commencement of the academic year, with at least fourteen (14) days notice from the principal of the date, time, and location of the meeting. The election process shall be by nomination and/or self-nomination, with a formal election if the number of those nominated exceeds the number of positions available; otherwise the principal shall declare those nominated to have been acclaimed to the School Council Executive.

8. MEETINGS

- a) Frequency, Notice and Quorum:
 - (i) Notices of meetings or a schedule of meeting dates, shall be distributed to all parents and if possible shall also be included in the Parent/Student Handbook.
 - (ii) The General Meetings shall be open to all members of the School Council and members of the school staff and community.
 - (iii) The School Council shall hold a minimum of four (4) General Meetings per year, one of which shall be the Annual General Meeting and the Executive shall hold a minimum of four (4) meetings per year. The Multi-faith calendar will be consulted when setting meeting dates. Special Meetings of the Executive to deal with urgent matters, may be called at the request of any Executive Member to the Chair, who shall call a meeting within fourteen (14) days at the latest.
 - (iv) At General Meetings, Executive Meetings, and the Annual General Meeting a quorum is required. A quorum is the attendance at a meeting of twelve (12) members of the School Council or its Executive, respectively, of which the majority represent parent members. Meetings shall be chaired by the Chair, or in his/her absence, a Vice-Chair, or in their absence, an Executive Member appointed at the meeting.
- b) Decision Making:
 - (i) Consensus shall be the preferred method of making decisions, but it may be necessary at times to vote. The Chair may decide to hold the vote after discussion at the same meeting, or may decide to defer the issue until either the next meeting or a Special Meeting, for which notice is given, at which time the vote may be held. The intervening time may be used to acquire additional information and to receive feedback from the Community. The Chair shall be cognizant of the fact that the purpose of decision-making shall be to expedite the business of the Council, assure legality of decisions, protect the rights of the minorities to be heard regarding the motion, and assure the rule of the majority regarding the motion.
 - (ii) Each Executive member is entitled to one (1) vote on any question for which a vote is called at a School Council General or Annual General Meeting. While all parents, guardians and caregivers of students in the school are members of the School Council, voting membership is limited to the members of the School Council Executive.
 - (iii) At Executive meetings each Executive member present shall have one (1) vote on any question that is put for vote. In all meetings where voting occurs, votes may be determined by a show of hands or by a written ballot. School Council Executive members are entitled to vote at Executive meetings by written proxy.
 - (iv) All votes (including votes for, against, and abstentions), shall be recorded
 - (vi) The meeting shall be bound by 66% of the votes as counted and recorded.

- (vii) Decisions regarding School Council access to/use of the synervoice system and broadcast email system in communicating with parents, shall be made by the principal and Chair, or in the absence of the Chair then by the principal and Vice-Chairs.
- (viii) A request to amend the constitution/bylaws can only be resolved at the Annual General Meeting provided the written request is submitted to the Executive of the School Council no later than sixty (60) days prior to the Annual General Meeting. This period of time will allow the Executive members to notify the members of the School Council. Amendments to the constitution/bylaws will be presented and voted on at the Annual General Meeting. A recorded affirmative vote of 66% of those Executive members present is required to enact the amendment. Amendments to the constitution/bylaws, which arise at the Annual General Meeting, for which prior notice has not been given, can be adopted by a ninety percent (90%) vote of the Executive members present.
- (ix) An appeal of any decision of the School Council, its Executive or Committees may be made within twenty (20) days of the posting of the minutes of the meeting at which the decision was made. The appeal shall be given to the Chair and shall be in the form of a petition signed by the parents of twenty-five students, who wish to appeal the decision. The appeal shall be dealt with at a Special Meeting within fourteen (14) days.

c) Conflict Resolution

In the event that school council members are not able to find common ground in making decisions or resolving disputes, the following procedures will be adhered to:

- (i) Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her opinion about the issue in dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.
- (ii) Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- (iii) Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- (iv) The Chair's responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members.
- (v) If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
- (vi) If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the chair shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

9. COMMUNICATIONS

- a) At the Annual General Meeting, the School Council shall present its annual report and financial statement, deal with any Constitution/bylaw changes and shall inform the school community of:
 - (i) The names of School Council Executive candidates and thereafter of elected and appointed members (phone numbers are optional);
 - (ii) The dates of all general meetings of the school council including Parent Information Nights;
 - (iii) The mandate and operating procedures of the School Council;
 - (iv) The work of the School Council including major decisions or achievements.
- b) The School Council shall inform the school community on an ongoing basis of:
 - (i) Notices, agenda items and minutes of the meetings (including posting of same on the school bulletin board);

- (ii) Any changes in meeting dates including special meetings of School Council;
- (iii) Decisions or recommendations of the School Council, and of the TDSB where relevant;
- (iv) Dates of relevant Ward Forum meetings and TDSB meetings.

10. FUNCTIONS AND MANDATE

- a) The School Council and its Executive will advise the school principal, and, where appropriate, the local trustee and the Board, on matters of interest including any of the following:
 - (i) Equity issues affecting students and parents such as school and curriculum activities including those reflecting the diversity of the community;
 - (ii) School-parent-community communication strategies;
 - (iii) School planning committees, (e.g. safety, budget, curriculum);
 - (iv) Participation in the ward community forums;
 - (v) School building and renovation plans;
 - (vi) Co-curricular activities;
 - (vii) Selection of principals and vice-principals;
 - (viii) School-community relations review;
 - (ix) School staffing process;
 - (x) Development, implementation and review of TDSB policies;
 - (xi) Curriculum and program goals and priorities;
 - (xii) Student achievement results and follow-up plans of the school and the TDSB related to provincial and TDSB assessment programs;
 - (xiii) Methods of reporting to parents and the community;
 - (xiv) School budget priorities including local capital-improvement plans;
 - (xv) School-based services and community partnerships (child care, social, health, recreation, nutrition);
 - (xvi) School policies and procedures such as Code of Behaviour for students, staff and parents/guardians
 - (xvii) School safety and security issues;
 - (xviii) Local school year calendar;
 - (xix) Preparation of school profiles, school plan, and school improvement plans;
 - (xx) Community use of school buildings;
 - (xxi) Fundraising;
 - (xxii) Other items as determined by the school, the community, the TDSB, or government

- b) In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the School Council, including its Executive, shall:
 - (i) establish and update its goals, priorities, committee structure, constitution, and procedures;
 - (ii) communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by the School Council and to report on the activities of the Council to the school community;
 - (iii) not endorse candidates for election to political office; and
 - (iv) promote the best interests of the school community.

11. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

The School Council Executive shall choose from amongst themselves a Chair, two Vice Chairs, a Secretary and a Treasurer, with said Officers having the following responsibilities. The Executive will also choose two Ward Forum representatives and Chairs for its committees. The Executive will appoint a Community representative from the community.

a) The Chair:

- (i) Calls and chairs School Council meetings,
- (ii) Prepares agendas in consultation with members of the School Council,
- (iii) Ensures that minutes of School Council meetings are recorded, and maintained, and that the School Council Annual Report is prepared, approved by the School Council, and distributed to parents,
- (iv) Communicates with the principal on matters relating to the business of the School Council,
- (v) Ensures regular two-way communication between the School Council Executive, its committees, and the rest of the school community,
- (vi) Ensures democratic procedures for decision making and for the overall conduct of the business of the School Council,
- (vii) Consults with TDSB staff members and trustees, as required and takes information back to the School Council for discussion and action, where necessary,
- (viii) Represents or speaks on behalf of the School Council on committees, networks or forums beyond the school, except where that responsibility is delegated to other School Council members,
- (ix) Ensures that the operation of the School Council is consistent with the guiding principles for School Councils as established by the TDSB and the Province, and ensures representation at School Council information/training sessions,
- (x) Encourages maximum involvement of the entire School Council, and
- (xi) Ensures School Council provides representation at the TDSB Ward Forum.

b) The Vice-Chairs:

- (i) Assist with the arrangements and preparations for Executive Meetings, General Meetings and the Annual General Meeting, as needed,
- (ii) Record and process the Minutes in the absence of the Secretary, and
- (iii) Assist the Chair and School Council, as needed.

c) The Treasurer:

- (i) Keeps full and accurate accounts, receipts, disbursements and books belonging to the School Council and reconciles financial records, with all remittances and receipts being verified, co-signed by any two of the authorized signing officers of Chair, Vice-Chairs, Secretary and Treasurer,
- (ii) Provides a refund to members for expenses incurred within thirty (30) days of submission of expense receipts, prepares an accounting balance statement for all Executive and General Meetings,
- (iii) Prepares a detailed written financial statement for the Annual General Meeting, and
- (iv) Prepares annual payment of insurance premium.

d) The Secretary:

- (i) Keeps accurate records of all Executive and General Meetings,
- (ii) Submits draft minutes for review by the Chair and Principal, then distributes minutes by the next General or Executive Meeting, respectively, for adoption,
- (iii) Posts adopted minutes within 10 school days after the meeting in which the minutes are approved in a prominent public location within the school and with the office, and provides the school with a copy of the minutes for official records, and

(iv) Ensures all notices are given in accordance with the constitution.

e) The School Principal:

- (i) Ensures teaching and non-teaching staff representation on the School Council,
- (ii) Helps to establish the School Council and assists in its operation,
- (iii) Regularly consults with and assists the Chair in his/her responsibilities
- (iv) Supports and promotes the School Council's activities within the school and community,
- (v) Provides such information about the school, its programs and the Board as is required to (A) facilitate the business of the School Council and (B) inform parents,
- (vi) Actively seeks the advice of the School Council on school related issues including areas affecting the education of the students and the relationship between the school and the local neighbourhood/community,
- (vii) Acts as a resource to the School Council as needed including on matters such as laws, regulations, TDSB and government policies, and collective agreements,
- (viii) Encourages the participation of all members reflecting the diversity of the school community,
- (ix) Helps the School Council communicate effectively with the school community,
- (x) Ensures that copies of minutes of School Council meetings and reports of the School Council are kept at the school and are accessible to members of the school community through the office,
- (xi) Arranges for the provision of available school resources to support the operation of the School Council, e.g. access to typing, fax machine, photocopier, email, school mail box, filing cabinet, storage and meeting space,
- (xii) Arranges, through the school superintendent and the TDSB, for the provision of other Board resources and Board reports e.g. translators and interpreters,
- (xiii) Maintains the authority, responsibility and obligations of the principalship as mandated by Board policy, and by the appropriate legislation and regulations of the Province of Ontario.

f) All School Council Executive Members

- (i) Attend and participate in at least 70% of Executive and School Council meetings and if possible, in optional information and training programs, where offered.
- (ii) Act as a link between the School Council and the school community by consulting and reporting back, where appropriate,
- (iii) Encourage others within the school community to participate in the activities of the School Council,
- (iv) Follow the operating rules or guidelines as agreed upon by the School Council, including complying with the Constitution, TDSB and provincial policies, and the guidelines for resolving differences of opinion.
- (v) Communicate as effectively as possible with the various communities in the school and work towards removing any barriers to the participation of all members of the school community.

12. COMMITTEES

The School Council Executive may establish and support its committees to assist with the activities of the School Council. These committees will report to the School Council. School Council Committee members have the same obligations and are subject to the same expectations and standards as Executive members, with respect to the Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest, other provisions of this Constitution and the relevant TDSB and provincial government policies, legislation and regulations.

Permanent committees are established by passing a by-law to the Constitution at the Annual General Meeting to create these committees, and when no longer needed they may be dissolved by passing a subsequent by-law at another Annual General Meeting. Once formed, Permanent Committees consist of members appointed from amongst the School Council Executive Members-At-Large, and they are chaired by a member of the School Council Executive. Permanent committees report to the School Council Executive.

13. CODE OF ETHICS

The School Council, its Executive, Committees and members:

- a) shall represent the best interests of students and families, keeping in mind a school-wide perspective on issues, and examining all aspects of issues before arriving at informed decisions;
- b) shall perform their duties conscientiously, honestly and in good faith, exercising the care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances;
- c) shall focus efforts on the purpose of the School Council and not on personal goals;
- d) shall accept responsibility for decisions made at legally convened meetings of the School Council Executive and Annual General Meetings, regardless of whether the member was in attendance;
- e) shall not use School Council membership for personal advantage nor for the individual advantage of another person;
- f) shall not use School Council meetings as a forum for discussion of individual issues between students, teachers and/or parents, nor on personal goals;
- g) shall not receive remuneration related to School Council membership or work;
- h) shall not disclose confidential information to anyone other than fellow Executive members during and after their term of office;
- i) shall abide by this Constitution, and operate in accordance with the Education Act as amended, other relevant legislation and regulations, and TDSB policies.

14. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In the event that a School Council, Executive or committee member is in conflict of interest with respect to any matter which is before the Council or relates to the operations of the School Council, the conflict shall be declared at the beginning of the meeting. The member can participate in the discussion with respect to the matter in conflict but cannot vote on the matter.

15. PROTECTION OF SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Every School Council member, Executive member and Committee member, and his or her heirs, executors, administrators, estates and representatives who in good faith undertakes, has undertaken or is about to undertake School Council business shall be indemnified and saved harmless from and against any and all liabilities, losses, damages, costs, charges and expenses, which such person sustains or incurs in any action, suit or proceeding which is brought, commenced or prosecuted against him or her in respect of any act, deed, matter, error, omission, negligence made, done or permitted by him or her with respect to his or her School Council, Executive or committee duties, actions or responsibilities, or in relation to any other liabilities, losses, damages, costs, charges and expenses arising from the affairs of the School Council, its Executive or committees, nor shall any School Council member, Executive member or Committee member be liable for the acts, omissions or negligence of another member, unless the same shall happen by or through his or her own willful act, neglect or default, with such indemnification and hold harmless provided by the School Council, the school and the TDSB.

APPENDIX I – DEFINITIONS

- a) “Earl Haig Secondary School Community” or “community”, shall include the following:
 - (i) The students enrolled in the school;
 - (ii) The parents, guardians, and caregivers of students enrolled in the school
 - (iii) The staff of the school, and
 - (iv) Any person residing within the school’s attendance area, as defined by the TDSB, and supportive of school activities
- b) “The Toronto District School Board”, “TDSB”, “Board” and “board” are used interchangeably and mean one and the same.
- c) The term “parent” or “parents” throughout this document shall be read as including the words “guardian, guardians, care giver and caregivers”.

CONSTITUTION INCLUDING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS,

APPROVED BY MOTION PASSED

BY THE MEMBERS OF THE EARL HAIG S.S. SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

AT AN EARL HAIG S.S. SCHOOL COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Earl Haig Secondary School this 9th day of September, 2008

CHAIR: _____

SECRETARY: _____

PRINCIPAL: _____