

BY-LAWS
LAURA SECORD SECONDARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL COUNCIL

Article 1 Name and Address

The organization will be known as Laura Secord Secondary School Council, within the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN). The members of the Laura Secord Secondary School Council, hereafter referred to as the School Council, shall be responsible for maintaining the by-laws.

Laura Secord Secondary School
349 Niagara Street, St. Catharines, ON, L2M 4V9
(905) 934-8501

Article 2 Mission Statement

It is our mission to ensure effective communication among all members of our learning community and work within a collaborative framework to improve student success through effective use of community resources.

Article 3 Purpose and Objectives

1. Encourage meaningful involvement of parents and all members of the school community in support of student learning by focussing on the following areas: parenting skills, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community.
2. Facilitate the building of a viable school community, which works together in the best interests of our students and their education.
3. Provide a means for regular communication and dialogue between all partners in education.
4. Help to co-ordinate the services for school, family and community partnerships related to social, health, safety, recreational and nutrition programs that assist in the education of children.
5. Provide input into decisions made by the school administration, the DSBN and the Ministry.
6. Participate in the school improvement planning process.

Article 4 Procedures and Operating Guidelines

All recommendations and activities of the School Council shall comply with all Ministry of Education Acts, District of Niagara School Board Policies and Procedures, Ontario Regulations 612/00 and 298, Staff Collective Agreements and the Ministry of Education’s “School Council: Guide for Members (Revised 2002)”, hereafter referred to as the “Guide”.

Article 5 Membership

5.1 The School Council is composed of up to 30 parent members, the principal (and vice principals) and representatives of community, students, teachers and support staff as outlined in

the Guide, Section 3. Each member of the School Council is considered a voting member, with the exception of the principal (and vice principals).

5.2 Members are expected to:

1. attend at least 3 monthly School Council meetings in school year;
2. participate in School Council supported events;
3. join and actively participate in sub-committee(s); and
4. inform the chair or the secretary if they are going to be absent from a School Council meeting.

5.3 The School Council may choose to remove from the School Council any member who misses three (3) consecutive meetings.

5.4 A vacancy on the School Council does not prevent the School Council from exercising its authority.

Article 6 Parent Member Elections

6.1 Election of parent members shall occur within the first thirty days of the start of each school year.

6.2 Each parent member of School Council seeking election must be nominated or self nominated in writing and must declare if he or she is employed by the DSBN.

6.3 Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to vote for parent members each position on the School Council. A vote will be needed when numbers seeking positions on council exceed 30.

6.4 An Election Committee shall be appointed by the School Council in May to prepare for the elections at the first School Council meeting in next school year.

6.5 The Election Committee shall:

1. provide nomination forms;
2. ensure that the school community is notified of nomination procedures and date, location and time of the election at least fourteen days in advance of the election;
3. receive nominations up to, and including, the day of the election;
4. present the slate of nominees to the School Council at the election;
5. conduct the elections by secret ballot, when voting is needed;
6. count the ballots;
7. help the principal notify all candidates of the results prior to publication of the results;
8. help the principal publicize the council members and offices of the newly elected Executive.

6.6 Only the names of the successful candidates shall be made public. A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file by the Executive for use in the event that a vacancy on the School Council occurs.

Article 7 Executive

7.1 Members of the Executive

The voting members of the Executive are the chair or two co-chairs as determined by the School Council (prior to the election of the executive), the treasurer and the secretary. The principal of Laura Secord Secondary School, or his or her designate, is an advisory member of the Executive. The parent/guardian majority on the executive must not fall below 50%+1.

7.2 Election of the Executive

1. Election of the members of the Executive shall take place at the first meeting of School Council.
2. Executive members will be elected from among the members of the School Council.
3. School Council at the first meeting will determine if it is led by a chair or two co-chairs.

7.3 Role of the Executive

1. Oversee the implementation of decisions of the School Council.
2. Act as the decision making body between School Council meetings.
3. Deal with administrative and financial matters for the School Council.
4. If needed, review and draft funding guidelines to the DSBN for final approval.
5. Draft a tentative budget as a guideline at the beginning of the school year which is to be approved by the November School Council meeting.
6. Draft the Annual Report for final approval for submission to the Principal and the DSBN by the applicable due date.
7. Submit a financial statement when it files its year-end report with the DSBN.

7.4 Chair/Co-Chairs

1. The chair or two Co-chairs must be parent members and cannot be employees of the DSBN.
2. The Chair or Co-chairs shall oversee the implementation of decisions of the Executive and School Council.
3. Duties include but are not limited to: arrange meetings, prepare agenda, chair meetings, ensure minutes are recorded and maintained, facilitate conflict resolution and communicate with the principal on behalf of council.

7.5 Secretary

The Secretary is to:

1. take School Council meeting minutes which are to be forwarded to the co-chairs for review prior to distribution to all School Council members;
2. post any communication to parents through appropriate means of communication; and
3. inform all members of upcoming School Council meetings or special events and forward relevant information.

7.6 Treasurer

The Treasurer is to

1. ensure the safe deposit of all funds of the School Council;

2. pay all approved expenditures of the School Council from said funds;
3. keep an accurate record of all deposits and expenditures; and
4. present regular financial reports to the School Council; and
5. complete any and all necessary applications with regard to finances and funding.

7.7 Terms of Office

Term of office will be from the date of elections of the current school year until the date of elections of the following school year. Executive members may seek additional terms of office.

7.8 Resignations

Any member of the Executive, except the principal, may resign their position by writing a letter of resignation to the Chair/Co-chairs and the principal.

7.9 Vacancies in Membership

1. A vacancy on the Executive does not prevent the Executive from exercising its authority.
2. Positions that become vacant due to resignation or removal shall be filled by the School Council by appointment.
3. The term of office for a member appointed to fill a vacancy will be until the elections at the beginning of the next school year.

Article 8 Fundraising and Bursaries

1. School Council will conduct fundraisers primarily to provide bursaries for graduating students at the end of each school year.
2. School Council will designate, at the request of the principal or other staff representative, 5 bursaries of \$250 each. as resources permit. Number and value of bursaries may be adjusted yearly at the discretion of council given available funds.
3. School Council does not have any say in the selection of awardees. The School Awards Committee selects the recipients of the bursaries.
4. School Council always reserves the right to direct funds not applied to bursaries for other purposes in keeping with the purposes and objectives of Article 3.

Article 9 Subcommittees

9.1 Event Volunteer Committee (EVC)

1. The EVC exists to help at school functions, events and activities as needed. Examples of such work are helping at a student fundraising event; set-up or clean-up at dances or banquets; serving cake at graduation, etc.
2. Parents of students can volunteer for the EVC even if they are not members of School Council.
3. At the first meeting of the school year, the School Council will appoint one or more members to serve as the Events Volunteer Co-ordinator(s) who will contact members of the EVC to see if and when they are available to volunteer for a particular function, event or activity.

9.2 Election Committee

See Article 6 Executive Election, sections 6.5 and 6.6.

Article 10 Meetings

10.1 Timetable of Meetings

1. At the last meeting of the school year, a tentative timetable will be created that proposes the meeting dates and times for the following year; and will be submitted to the School Secretary and Principal for approval.
2. At the first meeting of the new school year, the new School Council, upon consultation with School Principal shall review and approve the proposed meeting dates for that school year. A copy of these dates and times will be included in communication(s) to the families of the school.
3. A copy of the list of dates and times of meetings will be publicly posted on the school website.
4. The Executive may change the timetable as needed.

10.2 Quorum

A meeting will have quorum if:

1. the majority of the Executive members are present; and
2. the majority of those present are parents.

A meeting of School Council can be held if there is no quorum but all voting will be deferred.

10.3 Decision-making

The preferred method to resolve issues on School Council is by consensus. Consensus is a collective opinion or general agreement by ALL the School Council members.

In the case where a decision cannot be reached through consensus, the co-chairs may decide on one of the following:

1. To have a vote by way of a show of hands or a silent vote by those present in which a 50% +1 majority shall carry the vote
2. To defer the issue to the next meeting
3. To defer the issue to a special meeting
4. To refer the issue to a sub-committee

Article 11 Conflict of Interest

1. A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.
2. Members of the School 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 decisions of the School Council.
3. A member shall exclude him- or herself from discussions in which:
 1. a conflict of interest is likely to result;
 2. the member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the School Council may be jeopardized;
 3. the School Council member, his or her relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit either directly or indirectly as a result of actions that may be taken by the principal or DSBN in response to advice that the School Council provides to the principal or to the DSBN.
4. A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, or organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

Article 12 Conflict Resolution

1. Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.
2. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
3. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
4. The co-chairs' 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.
5. If no common ground can be identified, the co-chairs will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
6. If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the co-chairs shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

Article 13 Signing Authorities

The principal, the school secretary, the treasurer and the chair/co-chairs can be signing authorities for any documents or financial accounts. Two of three signatures will be required on any financial account, with a school representative being strongly advised as one of the signers.

Article 14 Agendas and Minutes

14.1 Agendas

1. Agenda items should be submitted to the co-chairs one week prior to the School Council's next meeting.
2. The co-chairs will set the agenda with the principal prior to the meeting.

14.2 Minutes

1. Minutes shall be approved by the co-chairs before publication.
2. Minutes shall be posted to the school community prior to the next meeting of the School Council.
3. The minutes shall include motions, decisions and actions to be taken.

Article 15 By-Law Amendments

1. The School Council will review the by-laws at least once every three years or as the need arises.
2. A sub-committee can perform the review and bring proposed amendments to the School Council for voting.
3. Amendments to the by-laws must be presented to the School Council, at a regularly scheduled meeting.
4. By-law amendments need a 2/3 majority to be passed.

* * *

Appendix A: CODE OF ETHICS

1. *A member shall* consider the best interests of all students.
2. *A member shall* be guided by the school's and the DSBN's mission statements.

3. **A member shall** act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of the School Council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the DSBN, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
4. **A member shall** become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
5. **A member shall** maintain the highest standards of integrity.
6. **A member shall** recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
7. **A member shall** treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
8. **A member shall** encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
9. **A member shall** acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the School Council.
10. **A member shall** respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the School Council.
11. **A member shall** not disclose confidential information.
12. **A member shall** limit discussions at School Council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
13. **A member shall** use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
14. **A member shall** promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
15. **A member shall** declare any conflict of interest.
16. **A member shall** not accept any payment or benefit financially through School Council involvement.

Source: Adapted from the bylaws of the Port Arthur Collegiate Institute School Council, Lakehead Board of Education, Thunder Bay, Ontario