

RTU *Riverside Teachers' Union*
Syndicat de l'enseignement de Riverside

SCHOOL COUNCIL GUIDE



2013-2014

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps one of the most important tools for ensuring that teachers' voices are heard is the School Council. This group can influence to a great extent both the policies of the school and the working atmosphere which exists for the year.

It is hoped that teachers will use this guide and find it of assistance in promoting effective use of the School Council.

COMPOSITION

MEMBERS: A representative of the school administration and one union delegate are automatically members of the Council. The number of other teachers to be elected is determined by the teaching staff. The total membership is no less than 3 nor greater than 10 members.

ELECTION: The elected members are chosen by secret ballot by their colleagues at a meeting convened by the school administration. The meeting should take place no later than September 15th.

VACANCY: Filled by secret ballot election.

OBSERVERS: Any member of the pedagogical staff.

INVITED PERSONS: Any member of the Council or school administration may invite a person, at no cost to the board, to be heard by the council. Prior notice must be given to the school administration and the chair. Normally such notice shall be two (2) days.

SUGGESTIONS

1. When electing the members try to have a representative sample of the school.
2. In a small school you do not have to elect eight (8) members. Don't be bullied into electing the whole staff. It tends to become a staff meeting.
3. We recommend that the Chair not be the school administration member. There could be a conflict in roles.
4. Do not be afraid to invite people to meetings so that you have sufficient information with which to make your decision.
5. We would recommend that the Chair not be the RTU Delegate. You may lose a valuable source of information and make it more difficult for the Delegate to ensure the contract is followed.
6. We would recommend that the Chair be a member of the RTU

PROCEDURES

1. A Chair and a Secretary shall be elected at the first meeting. Also, at the first meeting, the Council shall be informed, in writing, who the school administration representative will be.
2. The Council shall meet at least once a month.
3. Simple majority vote is required for decisions. All members of the Council have the right to vote.
4. Meetings shall not interrupt the pupil timetable.
5. Minutes shall be distributed to all members of the pedagogical staff. Copies of the minutes shall also be sent to both the union and the school board.
6. The Council shall adopt own rules of internal procedure.
7. Consultation must take place at least seven (7) days prior to policy changes (4-4.07).

AGENDA

Drawn up by the Chair in consultation with the school administration.

Distributed to involved personnel at least twenty-four (24) hours before meeting.

SUGGESTIONS

1. We recommend that a clear set of rules of procedures be established and distributed to all staff, with a copy to the RTU (See Annex I for suggested rules of procedure.)
2. We recommend that the rules of procedure be followed at all times and that there be motions properly moved and seconded. By sticking to procedures you can avoid personality conflicts and individual confrontations. Although it may seem silly in a small school, it is here that most problems occur. If you don't follow procedures at all times, when you need them you won't have them.
3. Since no changes can be made until consultation has taken place, you should insist on School Council meetings when changes are proposed.
4. A staff meeting is not consultation. There must be a school council meeting.
5. We recommend that teacher members of a school council meet before the council meeting to discuss the items on the agenda.
6. Do not permit additions to the agenda at the meeting. Insist on a new meeting to discuss new items just introduced.
7. Set deadlines for yourselves for dealing with items, e.g. equitable distribution of workload = September - October.

CONSULTATION

The school administration shall consult the School Council prior to establishing or modifying the policy on the pedagogical or disciplinary organization of the school. In particular, the school administration shall consult the School Council on:

- a) Normally prior to March 7 of each school year, the school administration shall consult the School Council on:
 - a) the educational objectives and organization of the school in relation to the community which it serves as well as the needs in teaching staff in accordance with clause 5-3.10 and,
 - b) the *disciplines* in 4-2.05 g) for the subsequent school year. The provisions of 4-4.02 b) shall apply to this consultation;
- b) the general organization of student activities, both integrated into the school programme and extra-curricular;
- c) the integration of teachers new to the staff and particularly those who have not taught before.
- d) the orientation of student teachers;
- e) the intent and application of new school regulations including those emanating from the Ministry of Education of Quebec, the board and the school administration;
- f) the application in the school of changes in teaching methods;

- g) the in-school activities organized by the school administration for days in the school calendar on which pupils are not required to be in class, excepting those prior to the commencement of classes in the fall;
- h) the parent-teacher relations and liaison with the school committee and the orientation committee;
- i) the emergency substitution plan as per Clause 8-8.05 Section I (d);
- j) the apportionment of budgetary amounts which are available to the school and this by the dates necessary to fulfill board deadlines;
- k) the use of clerical and secretarial help for teachers;
- l) the selection of instructional materials and textbooks;
- m) the number of teachers on the occasional substitute list for the school;
- n) the equitable distribution of teachers' duties and responsibilities;
- o) the application within the school of the policy on report cards, measurement and evaluation;
- p) the criteria which will be used by the school administration in deciding to recommend to the board the temporary closure of the school (see Annex II);
- q) the use of computers;

- r) the responsibilities resulting from the application of board policies established after consultation with the appropriate consultative body;
- s) the collection, sale or distribution of materials for a school fund raising activity or to benefit outside, profit, non-profit or service organizations and in which teachers are expected to participate actively;
- t) the placement of pedagogical days to be fixed by the school;
- u) the operation of the ad-hoc committee provided for in Clause 8-9.06.
- v) the recognition of certain extracurricular activities for the purposes of appendix H of the local agreement and for the Value Added in Appendix XXVI of the 2010-2015 CA
- w) The school administration shall also consult the teachers in accordance with clause 4-2.04 and 4-2.05 unless the teachers decide otherwise.
 - a) the overall approach for the enrichment or adaptation of the objectives and contents of the program of studies and for the development of local programs of studies to meet the specific needs of the students (85);
 - b) the time allocation for each compulsory and elective subject (86);
 - c) the implementation of the program of studies of the centre (110.2 (2));

- d) the local programs of studies to meet the specific needs of the students (96.15 (1));
- e) the criteria for the introduction of new instructional methods (96.15 (2) and 110.12 (1));
- f) the textbooks and instructional material required for teaching the programs of studies (96.15 (3) and 110.12 (2));
- g) the standards and procedures for the evaluation of student achievement (96.15 (4) & 110.12 (3)).

The numbers in the brackets refer to the sections of the Education Act (R.S.Q. c. I-13.3) as in force on October 1, 2008.

The School Council may be increased by the addition of representatives from other staff groups for consultation on the items listed in 4-2.05 of the local agreement.

- a) the student supervision policy (75);
- b) the rules of conduct and safety measures (76);
- c) the approach for the implementation of the basic school regulation (84 & 110.2 (1));
- d) the programming of educational activities entailing changes in the arrival and departure times or requiring the students to leave school premises (87);
- e) the approach for the implementation of student services and special educational services programs (88);
- f) the rules governing the placement of students and their promotion from one cycle to another at the elementary level (96.15 (5));
- g) the needs of the school in respect to each staff category and the professional development needs of the staff (96.20 & 110.13);

- h) the implementation of the programs relating to student services and popular education (110.2 (3));
- i) the operating rules of the centre (110.2 (4)).

The numbers in the brackets refer to the sections of the Education Act (R.S.Q. c. I-13.3) as in force on October 1, 2008.

Consultation must take place no later than seven (7) working days prior to the implementation of any new policy or modification of a policy. In extenuating circumstances the school council, following consultation with the school administration, can agree, by majority vote, to waive the seven (7) working day period.

PARENT MEETINGS

Clause **8-8.04 Section II** requires the participation of the Council in setting the dates and hours for the parent meetings. The Council must agree if a meeting is to last more than 2 hours or if there are to be more than three meetings. For example, with the Council's agreement, work and time might be transferred from the day to the evening, and the evening parent meeting could then be 3 or 4 hours.

EXPENDITURE OF PIC GRANTS

Whenever the PIC grants some money to the individual schools for the payment of expenses, then these funds may be used only for programmes approved by the School Council.

STUDENT TEACHERS

The school administration shall develop a plan for the use of the funds distributed to the school in conjunction with the assisting teachers of the school. This plan must be approved by the School Council prior to its implementation.

ANNEX I

Suggested Rules of Procedure

GENERAL

Implementing and, where necessary, interpreting the rules of procedure is the responsibility of the Chair.

RULES GOVERNING DEBATE

1. Speeches must be relevant, non-repetitive, and be delivered courteously.
2. Speakers are to avoid personal attacks.
3. No one may interrupt the speaker, except on a point of order or privilege.
4. Only the mover of a substantive motion may speak to the motion more than once - one who has spoken to a motion may subsequently speak once to an amendment.

MOTIONS

1. The preamble is not part of the motion but shall be recorded in the minutes.
2. A motion that has been moved and seconded can be withdrawn only by a majority of those voting yea or nay.
3. An adopted motion is known as a resolution.

SPECIAL MOTIONS

1. Motion to reconsider a Resolution

- a) It is in order at any time during the meeting but reconsideration must be moved by a member of the prevailing side by giving reasons for doing so.
- b) Not debatable.
- c) If adopted, the main question is re-opened to debate, to amendment, and to a majority vote of those voting yea or nay.
- d) Not applicable to:
 - i. votes to adjourn
 - ii. affirmative votes to table and to lift from table
 - iii. otherwise subject to rules governing all other motions
- e) A resolution can be reconsidered only once.
- f) A motion to reconsider cannot be reconsidered.

2. Motion to Rescind a Resolution

- may be passed at a subsequent meeting

3. Motion to Challenge the Chair's Ruling

- is a point of order
- must be seconded
- mover must state concisely reasons for challenge
- brief relevant debate permissible

4. Motion to Put the Question

- effect is to end the debate with a right to reply by mover of the question before vote
- permissible on recognition at any time
- can be moved only by one who has not spoken on the question being discussed
- Chair has discretion to refuse to entertain the motion
- not debatable
- once adopted, takes precedence over all procedures except points of order and privilege

5. Motion to Adjourn

- permissible at any time when there is no question before the meeting
- must yield to a point of order or privilege
- not debatable
- if defeated, cannot be revived until after another matter has been considered

6. Motion to Table or to Lift from the Table

- neither is debatable
- neither can be reconsidered

- neither can be interrupted except by points of order or privilege
- motion to table can be moved only by one who has not spoken on the question being discussed

6a. Motion to Table to a Certain Day

- can be amended as to the day
- debatable as to advisability
- yields to motion to put question by one who has not spoken on question
- if adopted, question cannot be further debated
- when certain day is reached, question takes priority

AMENDMENTS

1. Any substantive motion may be amended.
2. An amendment may be amended. No further amendment to the amendment allowed until vote taken on the amendment being considered.
3. An amendment does not require previous notice.
4. An amendment must be relevant
 - to omit certain words
 - to insert certain words
 - to add certain words
5. An amendment cannot
 - alter the spirit or intent of the motion
 - negate the motion

6. A subject already disposed of cannot later be urged as an amendment.
7. The mover of an amendment may speak only once.
8. An amendment must be adopted by the meeting before it becomes part of the substantive motion.
9. The debate then resumes on the motion as amended.

VOTING

1. The vote will be by a simple majority of those voting yea or nay.
2. Generally an abstention is not a vote and will not be counted.
3. The Chair is entitled to vote only in case of a tie, and in all secret ballot votes.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

1. A motion to consider a question in the Committee of the Whole may be made at any time upon recognition. Such motion is not debatable.
2. Rule No. 4 governing debate is suspended.
3. Procedure is informal and at the discretion of the Chair.
4. No minutes are kept.

5. No resolutions can be proposed nor dealt with during the Committee of the Whole, but notice of motion may be given. The only motion permissible is that of requesting to resume the formal sitting.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT PROCEDURES

1. Order of Precedence
 - point of order may interrupt speaker
 - point of privilege may interrupt speaker
 - motion to table
 - motion to put the question
 - motion to amend
 - motion to adjourn
 - all other proceedings may be raised only on recognition
 - when there is no question before meeting

2. Permissible at any time
(Subject, if necessary, to above order of precedence)
 - request for a standing vote
 - point of information or clarification, when recognized by Chair

3. Motions that can be moved only by one who has not taken part in debate
 - to table
 - to put the question
 - to adjourn (see above)

4. Motions that are not debatable
 - to reconsider
 - to table
 - to lift from the table
 - to adjourn
 - to put the question
 - to enter into Committee of the Whole

ANNEX II

Possible Reasons for Closure

One of the areas for consultation of the School Council is the reason for closure of the schools. The following list contains possible reasons which may be useful in Council deliberations.

1. Structural damage such as collapse of ceilings or walls
2. Flooding
3. Absence of functional toilet facilities if the toilet facilities cannot be restored to service within one hour of the loss
4. Loss or pollution of water supply if a safe water supply cannot be restored within one hour of the loss or notification of pollution
5. If the temperature drops below 20 degrees C and cannot be restored within one hour
6. Fire hazards, pests and communicable diseases based upon reports from the appropriate authorities
7. Loss of air conditioning if the air conditioning cannot be restored within one hour of the loss
8. Loss of electrical power if the electrical power cannot be restored within one hour of the loss.

ANNEX III

Ad hoc Committee

This committee's composition and mandate are set forth in clause 8-9.06, and listed here for your convenience. The committee must be formed when a teacher reports the case of a pupil to the school administration, in accordance with Clause 8-9.04.

The principal is responsible for forming an ad hoc committee including an administrator, a professional (e.g. Social Worker) and the teachers concerned to make sure each case is studied and the follow up for Special Ed youngsters is done whether they are integrated or not.

Mandate of Committee:

1. Study each case submitted
2. Request pertinent testing and evaluation from competent personnel
3. Receive the report as soon as possible
4. Advise the principal on the pupil's classification, on integration if done, and on support services to the student
5. Assist the principal in establishing an IEP by making recommendations
6. Oversee the implementation of the measures adopted concerning the IEP

Any measures taken as a result of the advice given by virtue of #4 are to be applied within the fifteen (15) days following the receipt of the advice by the principal.

The committee may use additional resources and also meet with the student if it deems this necessary.

If the administration decides not to implement a recommendation from the committee, the committee must be informed as to why.

While the principal can decide who will be members of this committee, the School Council has the right to be consulted on the operation of this committee. The Council should recommend who should be on the committee and from time to time inquire about how the committee is functioning.

ANNEX IV

Hygiene, Health and Safety Committee

The details for this committee are found in clauses 10-8.08 to 10-8.12.

It is composed of two people, a delegate and a representative of the school administration. The committee has two areas of responsibility:

- a) to draft a procedure for dealing with inquiries or complaints concerning the workplace and to inform the staff of this procedure;
- b) to determine whether or not a particular inquiry or complaint may be dealt with at the level of the school, and this within one week of the receipt of the inquiry or complaint;
- c) to refer the matter immediately to the Director of Human Resources if the circumstances are such that the inquiry or complaint cannot be dealt with at the school level;
- d) to ensure, when necessary, that corrective measures are taken;
- e) to inform the staff of progress in this matter.

This committee is concerned with major or chronic problems which endanger the health and safety of the teachers. However, since the School Council must be consulted about the criteria for temporary school closure, there is a natural link between the Council and this Committee. The involvement of the Council could make the Committee's work easier.