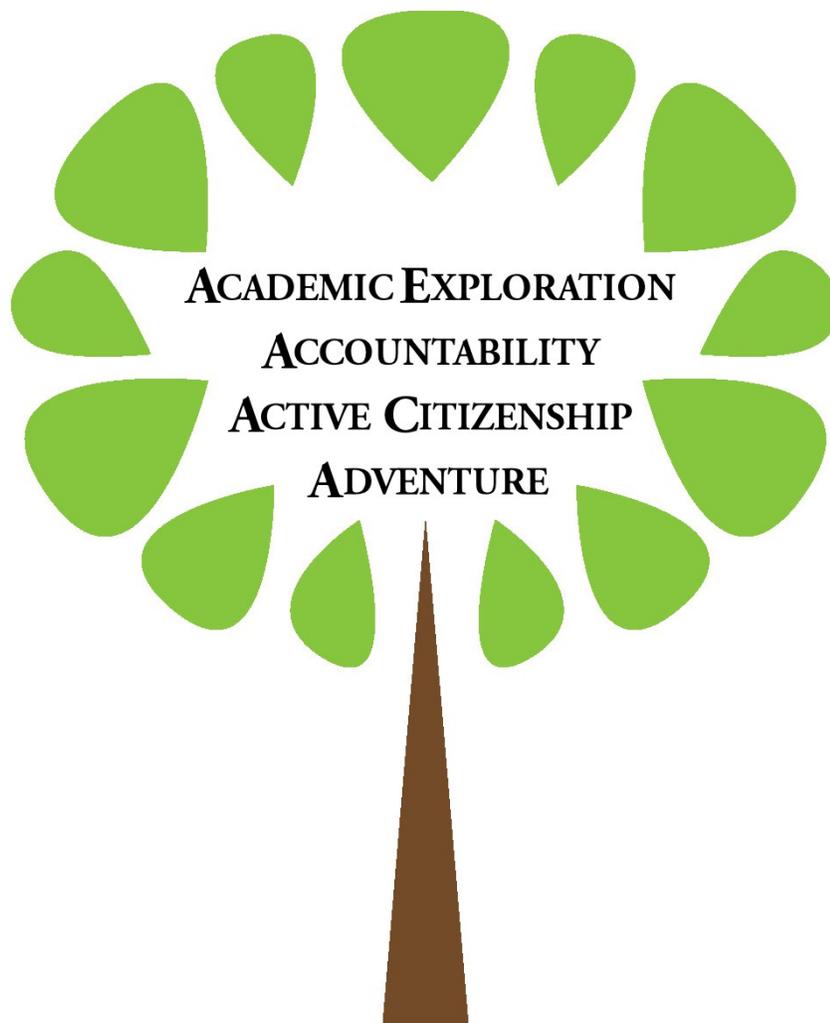


School Council Election of Parent Representatives



HIGH PARK ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL
since 1981

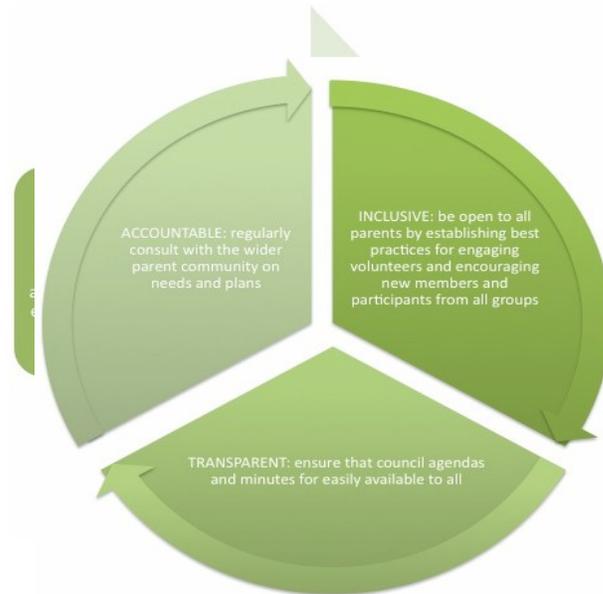
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Article I. Overview of Effective School Councils¹

Parent engagement in education takes many forms. One of those is decision-making and one element of that is the school council. This vital body was mandated by the Ontario government in 1995 and yet many schools continue to struggle with creating an effective, enduring parent body that answers the needs of parents, students and staff.

To be effective, a council must operate within the framework of **inclusiveness, accountability, and transparency**. As parents, we cannot demand these qualities from our school staff if we are



not prepared to offer them ourselves. Therefore, councils must be:

Article II. Election Timelines²

According to Ontario Regulation 612/00, elections must take place at the same time each year – within the first thirty days of each school year. They **may not** take place in May or June. While this approach may seem logical for a sense of continuity, the risk of excluding new parents from the process is too great. Since September is a busy time for parents and educators, the elections plan below shows the timelines leading up to election.

Timelines for the School Council Election

1 From TDSB PIAC website <http://www.torontopiac.com/index.php/parent-engagement>

2 Article II-IV forms part of [HPAS Parent Council Bylaws June 5, 2013](#)

May/June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A committee is established to deal with the school council election of parent members. The co-chairs must forward the election information package (<i>School Council Election of Parent Representatives</i>) to the principal well in advance of the election
Mid-August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the welcome-back-to-school package, the principal includes in the school mailing the <i>School Council Election of Parent Representatives</i> which includes election forms, deadline for submitting nominations to the school, who is eligible, the election date and other election information
Early September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the help of the Communications Committee, the Principal posts election information on the parent website and in an accessible area in the school • Parents return nomination forms to schools
Early to Mid-September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of parent nominees with brief biographies is published on the school's website, e-mailed out via the e-newsletter or sent home, with a reminder of the election date and information on the election process.
Mid- to end September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ballot box is prepared for the election of parent representatives, and arrangements are made for volunteers to help voters at the voting areas. • The election of the teacher, non-teacher and student representatives may take place at the same time or shortly after the election of parent representatives.
Late September to early October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first meeting of the new school council takes place and meeting dates, times, and locations for the upcoming year are determined. (The first meeting of the new school council must take place within thirty-five days of the start of school.) • The names of the new school council members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election, as are the dates, times and locations of future meetings.

Article III. Election Bylaws

School council election committee.

The current school council will establish a school council election committee. The committee must ensure that a new council is in place within thirty days of the start of the school year in September. The committee should have representation from parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, students and community representatives.

Considerations for the school council election process.

In any given year, the term of office for all parent-elected positions is two years. Appeals related to the school council election process or results shall be resolved by the school council election committee. If the situation is not resolved, the school principal and the co-chairs of the outgoing council shall jointly make a ruling.

Election of parent/guardian representatives

- a. Parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school are eligible both to vote for and to run as parent candidates. Self-nomination will suffice. No additional qualifiers or quotas may restrict eligibility either to vote for or to run as a parent candidate (e.g., child's program, grade, location of home). Candidates should be prepared to provide a brief biography and must declare if they are employed by the school board.
- b. Nomination forms shall be filed by all parent-candidates for elected positions on the school council. Parents may nominate themselves or other parents.
- c. Information about candidates shall be made available to the school community at least one week before the election.
- d. If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed.
- e. No individual campaign literature for school council elections may be distributed or posted in the school.
- f. School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
- g. The Election Day proceedings shall be publicized by the principal at least fourteen days prior to the election.
- h. The Election Day proceedings shall be supervised by the principal.
- i. Elections for school council shall be conducted by secret ballot. Voters must be present at the school on the election day(s) during the preset hours for voting (to include both daytime and evening hours).
- j. All eligible voters shall be entitled to cast one vote for each of the

candidate positions available. Casting more than the maximum number of votes permitted in the category spoils the ballot.

- k. Ballots shall be counted by the principal in the presence of at least two parents who are not election candidates.
- l. If there is a tie, the winner shall be determined by lot.

Election of the teaching staff representative

- a. The principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the teaching staff representative to be elected.
- b. Anyone assigned to the teaching staff of the school (full- or part-time) other than the principal or a vice-principal may be a candidate.

Election of the non-teaching staff representative

- a. The principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the non-teaching staff representative to be elected.
- b. Anyone assigned to the non-teaching staff of the school (full- or part-time) may be a candidate.

Appointment or election of the student representative (for elementary schools)

The principal will consult with other members of the school council to determine if there is to be a student representative on the council. If a positive decision is reached, the principal appoints a student representative to the council.

Selection of community representatives

All appointments of community representatives to the school council are to be by majority vote at a meeting of the school council.

Adapted from the "Thames Valley District School Board School Council Handbook"

Section III.1 Filling Vacancies

A vacancy in the Parent Executive Council may be filled by election or by appointment. Should a vacancy occur on the Parent Executive Council, the council is not prevented from exercising its authority; it can continue to operate as long as there is a quorum and the majority of council members are parents.

QUORUM: The majority of parent-members of the Executive Committee, including Co-chairs, Secretary, Treasurer and all active committee chairs/co-chairs must be present to have a duly constituted meeting of the Parent Council.

Participation by teleconference will be considered full presence and Parent Council may vote to allow for business to occur via electronic participation (i.e. email voting). Non-voting members are not counted for deciding if there is a quorum.

The council members should be aware that a majority of parents must be present when a vote is taken or if decisions are made. Should the number of parent members on the council fall below a majority, the council will need to take steps to fill those vacancies.

If a vacancy occurs in the office of the co-chairs or any other officer of the council, it is to be filled in accordance with this bylaw.

Vacancies occur in school council membership for various reasons:

- Not all positions on the school council were filled after an election
- A member resigns
- A member is unable to fulfil the roles and responsibilities (e.g., due to illness)

Section III.2 Term of Office

The term of office for parent members shall be **two years** and must be followed by a **one year stay down** from the Parent Executive Committee before running for another voted position. All other members' term of office, i.e. Teaching staff, Non-teaching staff, Student Representative(s) and Community Representative(s), shall be for **one year**.

Article IV. Call for Nominations

Elections are open for the positions of two co-chairs, secretary, treasurer and ***vacant*** committee lead positions. Committee lead positions are either filled by acclamation or appointment. The election will be held on ***(insert date here)***. We encourage you to consider self-nomination or nominating another parent whom you think would be interested in representing the parent community for one of these positions. We encourage ALL parents to participate in this exercise whether you are considering running for this volunteer post or not.

Section IV.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Below is a list of roles and responsibilities for the elected positions.

Co-Chair positions: The Co-Chairs of the council are elected by the parent body and must be a parent or parents who are not employed by the Toronto District School Board. The Co-Chairs are voting members who, in addition to performing the same duties as other council members perform these specific duties:

1. Uphold the Council's purpose and mandate by serving as the liaison between parents, teachers and other stakeholders.
 - a. Brings education and community issues to parents for feedback
 - b. Regularly communicates with the principal and her appointee and seeks feedback on Council matters
 - c. Acknowledges receipt of mail, e-mail and phone messages; brings forward these messages to the appropriate committee or for Council's decision, if needed.
 - d. Helps set-up workshops for students and families
 - e. Communicates regularly with Annette St. PS Parent Council and Junction Daycare
 - f. Reviews Ward 7 updates and spearheads any actionable items at the school level
 - g. Reviews MOE and TDSB practices for school councils, ensures that the Council is compliant
2. Arranges, chairs and hosts council meetings
 - a. Prepares draft agendas for both Executive and General Meetings and forwards to Secretary for distribution
 - b. Reviews draft minutes and advises Secretary of changes
 - c. Ensures that all approved motions are communicated and enforced
 - d. Maintains Parent Council calendar, with the help of Communications Committee
 - e. Creates a year-end report for the school community about the current school year's accomplishments, requirements for upcoming school year, ongoing projects, etc.

3. Acts as one of the authorized signatory for the Council's bank account
 - a. With the help of the Treasurer, collates the financing goals for upcoming school year based on the school community needs, including soliciting budget items from teachers
 - b. Prepares and submits a written report outlining the Parent Council's goals, activities and achievements, including any fundraising activities. (The Principal, on behalf of the Parent Council, must ensure that a copy of this annual report is provided to every parent who has a child enrolled in the school.)
 - c. Reviews Council finances, ensuring Council funds are properly administered and accounted for
 - d. Seeks out available grants, manages the grant application process and ensures that applications are submitted in a timely manner
4. Provides guidance and support to the Committees
 - a. Follows-up with Committees on a regular basis and assists in its formation, if necessary
 - b. Works with Communications Committee ensuring information in the school website is current, immediate information is circulated in the weekly newsletter
 - c. Works with the Fundraising Committee in communicating to families about options on contributing to the school year's budget (Fundscrip, trip fees, blocked fees)
 - d. Works with the Recruitment Committee in the collection of new parent sign-up list
 - e. Acts as the alternate representative at the Safe Schools Committee (a joint committee with Annette St. PS)
5. Oversees resolution of any conflicts and any school issues that may arise.
 - a. Facilitates an unbiased forum for issues that require Council's attention
 - b. Holds people accountable, following-up on actionable items

Secretary: The Secretary is elected by the parent body and must be a parent or parents who are not employed by the Toronto District School Board. He/She is a voting member who, in addition to performing the same duties as other council members performs these specific duties:

1. Attends all Parent Council meetings.
2. Keeps written minutes of each meeting, outlining the major threads of discussion. The minutes should list those in attendance at meetings; detail any decisions that have been made, anyone who stands aside from a consensus decision and specific tasks that were assigned, including the name/s of the person/s who committed to performing a specific task/s.
3. Shows the written minutes to the Council for review and revision.
4. Distributes a copy of the final version to each of the members of the Parent Council.
5. Forwards a copy of the minutes on the Communication Committee lead so it is available for other members of the school community to read (website, newsletter, etc.).
6. Keeps files updated with agendas, minutes and other Parent Council documents in the school office.

Treasurer: The Treasurer is elected by the parent body and must be a parent or parents who are not employed by the Toronto District School Board. He/She is a voting member who, in addition to performing the same duties as other council members performs these specific duties:

1. Attends all Parent Council meetings.
2. Acts as one of the authorized signatory for the Parent Council's bank account.
3. Maintains detailed, written financial statements, including records of all receipts and disbursements on behalf of the Parent Council.
4. Keeps Parent Council funds deposited in financial institutions as approved by the Parent Executive Council.
5. Oversees a spending budget and recommends proposals for allocation of funds to the Parent Executive Council.

The Committees at HPAS are:

Arts Committee: Our Arts Committee is passionate about enriching our child's education through exposure to the arts. This includes but is not limited to music, drama, dance and tactile arts such as clay works, mosaics, painting, making musical instruments, etc. The Arts Committee organizes whole-school arts workshops, as well as several mini in-class arts injections throughout the year. The Arts Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Communications Committee: This committee's focus is on improving communication with parents and on welcoming new families to the HPAS community. This group is responsible for the HPAS Parent Council website (www.hpalt.org) and weekly e-newsletters. Parents experienced in Communications or have ideas on how to improve communication within the HPAS community are encouraged to join. The Communications Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Alternative Schools Advisory Council Rep: The Alternative School Advisory Council (ASAC) is made up of parents, teachers, and students from various alternative schools across the Toronto District School Board. ASAC meets on a regular basis to discuss issues related to alternative schools including policy, procedures, philosophy, and funding. ASAC works to represent the interests of alternative schools within the TDSB. The ASAC Rep, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Ward 7 Rep - Parents attend the Ward 7 meetings to get informed about the issues facing our school and the TDSB in order to communicate back to the HPAS community. Only the designated Ward 7 Rep/s can attend Ward 7 meetings. If you are interested in learning about the issues facing our schools and the TDSB or can help in mobilizing parents to take action on specific issues, the Ward 7 Rep/s would appreciate your ideas and involvement. The Ward 7 Rep, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Environment and Social Justice Committee - The committee will work to actualize the school's commitment to environmental and social justice locally and globally. This committee will strive to create a justice culture that works toward social and environmental sustainability. Committee members and subcommittees will support and enrich school initiatives actualizing the current school theme. The Environment and Social Justice Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Events - The Events Committee organizes and plans several whole-school events. The events include: Seasonal Celebration (mid-December), Skating Party (mid-February), Ghana OSU Book Sale (end of February), Spring Concert (end of May) and Play Day (mid-June). The Events Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Fundraising - The Fundraising Committee effectively plans and fundraises to meet the goals set by the Parent Council. The Fundraising Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Philosophy, Policy and Program - The Philosophy, Policy and Program Committee works to define and document the HPAS philosophy, its supporting policies and implementation. This committee works with the teachers at balancing traditional and progressive approaches to learning, providing a well-rounded and challenging academic experience in-class and as a whole school. Under teacher guidance and direction, we strive at enriching HPAS' programs, embedding the 4As in the school's culture while satisfying the curriculum requirements. The Philosophy, Policy and Program Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Recruitment - The Recruitment Committee works to attract new students to our school, sets and meets required recruiting targets and tracks why students are leaving the school and what attracts students to the school. The Principal, committee members responsible for specific areas of recruiting (Primary Recruiting Lead, Middle and Senior Recruiting Lead, School Open House Lead, etc.) and any interested parents are part of the Recruitment Committee. You can volunteer to help with Information Night for prospective parents or your family can be a buddy family to a new family joining the school. In the new school year you can also volunteer to help with New Families Orientation Night. The committee also works with the Philosophy, Policy and Program Committee and the Communications Committee to promote the school in the community, both in-person and online. The Recruitment Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Volunteer - The Volunteer Committee ensures that the opportunities for volunteering are well understood by the parent body and that the parent body understands that volunteerism is the cornerstone of HPAS. The committee collates a list of parent "skills" who we could tap into as required. The Volunteer Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Safe Schools Committee - The Safe Schools Committee works alongside Annette St. PS and Junction Daycare to ensure that our students are in a safe environment that encourages positive learning and provides a teaching environment that helps them succeed at school. Ontario's Code of Conduct sets out clear standards for behaviour for everyone involved as it applies on school property, on school buses, at school-authorized events or activities or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate. The Safe Schools Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Ad Hoc Committees - In addition to the above committees, various other committees will form as required. They will work as other committees do but will not necessarily have a representative on the Parent Executive Committee. Examples of Ad Hoc Committees: Special Education Committee and Teacher Allocation Working Committee. Any Ad Hoc Committee can be formed within the school by a parent, teacher or administrator. The formation of the committee should be approved via a motion at a parent meeting.

- **Special Education** - To champion the cause of obtaining TDSB funding for Special Education and Resource Support at HPAS and to strengthen the awareness, knowledge and opportunities for additional support for HPAS students, their families and the HPAS community as a whole.
- **Graduation** - Grade 8 parents are responsible for organizing a graduation ceremony for their children graduating from the school, in conjunction with their teacher and the school administration. They are also responsible for working with the students and their teacher to raise additional funds required covering costs associated with any activities not already covered by the budget. All students in the school attend this graduation. All parents and HPAS alumni are welcome to attend.
- **Yearbook** – A few parents, along with some teachers come together every year to organize the year’s memories from Kinder to Grade 8. The Yearbook Committee is a great way to contribute your time to the HPAS community.

Article V. Forms

This section is intended to be blank.

CANDIDATE NOMINATION FORM – HIGH PARK ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

- I wish to **NOMINATE** _____ for an elected position as a parent/guardian representative on the Parent Executive Council for the following positions:
- Co-Chair
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Committee lead (*specify committee*) _____

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

I am the parent/guardian of _____, who is currently registered at High Park Alternative School in Grade _____.

The **nominee** _____ is the parent/guardian of _____, who is currently registered at High Park Alternative School in Grade_____.

I am an employee of TDSB

I am not an employee of TDSB

Nominator's signature

Date

Please attach a brief autobiography that can be shared with the whole school.

Parent Council Election Guidelines | Overview of Effective School Councils

Return to HPAS Office by *insert date here* and the candidate will receive notification of your nomination.

NOMINATION FORM RECEIPT – HIGH PARK ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

The nomination form for parent/guardian representative on the Parent Executive Council for

(Parent nominee's name)

has been received by:

(Name of Principal or Chair of the Elections Committee)

(Date)

HIGH PARK ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL – SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTION BALLOT

Date: _____

For: Parent/Guardian Representatives

Vote for no more than ____ candidates on this ballot.

Place an X in the box before the name(s) of the candidate(s) of your choice. Note that persons whose names are marked with an asterisk are employees of the school board.

- Co-Chair _____
- Co-Chair _____
- Secretary _____
- Treasurer _____
- Committee lead (*specify committee*) _____