

St. Stephen's Elementary School Advisory Council

Bylaws

Membership

The membership of the St. Stephen's Elementary School Advisory Council (SAC) will have 12 voting members and the principal or designate:

- (a) The **Principal or Vice Principal (designate)** as non-voting members;
- (b) **4 parents/guardians** of child/ren attending the school, elected by the parents / guardians of the children attending the school;
- (c) **3 teachers** employed at the school elected by the teachers employed at the school;
- (d) **4 community members**
- (e) **1 support staff** employed at the school elected by the support staff employed at the school.

The SAC must not have more than 1/3 of its members from any single category of members.

Parents/guardians

- must have a child at St. Stephen's School and cannot be a Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) employee on staff at St. Stephen's School

Executive

- The executive will consist of a chair, vice chair, secretary, and principal. The selection of the chair, vice chair and secretary will be done annually at the October meeting. The chair, vice chair and secretary will be selected from those school advisory council members other than the principal and will serve no more than two consecutive years as chair, vice chair or secretary. The chair should not be an employee of the Halifax Regional Centre for Education.

The names of the members of the St. Stephen's Elementary SAC, and their respective terms are detailed in Appendix 1 to the SAC Bylaws. This list is to be updated by the SAC Secretary as membership changes and does not require approval by the HRCE or NSEECD.

Process of election for each category of membership:

Elections for vacant SAC positions will be held in November each year and are usually by secret ballot. Appointments of community members will occur in November each year.

Parent / Guardians:

Interested parent/guardian representatives shall respond to a call for self-nominations communicated by the school to parents / guardians and placed through newsletters sent home with the children with a day designated for voting in November. Self-nominations will be received by the school principal and forwarded to the SAC Chair. Self-nominations close one week prior to

the election date. An election event will be held if there are more self-nominations than vacant positions, which gives parents / guardians of the children attending the school an opportunity to vote. The ballots will be counted by scrutineers appointed by the SAC. If there are equal or less self-nominations than vacant positions, candidates will be elected by acclamation to the role. The results of any elections will be tabled and recorded in the SAC summaries and will be communicated to the parents / guardians through the school newsletter.

Teacher members and Support Staff members:

The above two groups of staff employed at St. Stephen's School will elect / choose representatives from their own group to fill vacant positions, by a method of their own choosing.

Community:

Community Members are individuals who do not have a student enrolled in the school, but who live, or provide a service in the St. Stephen's geographic area, or to the school, and are not employees of St. Stephen's School. They are representative of the community where the school is situated and are appointed to the SAC by the current SAC members. All applicants may be asked to submit, in writing, a brief resume and a letter which explains why the applicant is interested in being on the SAC.

Term of service:

Terms of service for each representative group are as follows:

- Parents/guardians are elected for a term of three years. Parents/guardians elected or appointed to fill a vacancy are elected or appointed for the remainder of the term.
- Teachers and support staff are elected/chosen for a term of three years. Teachers and support staff elected or appointed to fill a vacancy are elected or appointed for the remainder of the term.
- Community members are appointed for a term of two years. Community members appointed to fill a vacancy are appointed for the remainder of the term.
- All members can re-offer for election or appointment to the SAC at the end of their term, to a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- The principal position is permanent.
- A council member elected to an executive position may serve in that position for a maximum of two consecutive one-year terms.

Filling vacated positions during term

Should a vacancy arise during a term, it will be addressed as follows:

- Vacated positions must be filled by the same member category as the person leaving the position.
- Vacancies of less than six months may be filled by SAC appointment.

- Vacancies of longer than six months will be filled according to the bylaws governing elections or appointment of the appropriate membership groups to fill the remainder of the vacated term.

Election of SAC executive

Elections will be held in September and are usually by secret ballot. Scheduled elections will be held during Curriculum Night in any school year. Appointments of community members will occur at the first meeting of the elected members.

Conducting Meetings

Meetings will be conducted according to the following guidelines:

- There will be at least six regularly scheduled meetings held each year. Meetings will be A MAXIMUM OF 60 minutes in length unless the SAC agrees by consensus to go longer.
- The scheduled dates of the meetings will be advised to SAC members at the first meeting of the school year and notified to the school community.
- Members who are not able to attend a meeting will notify the SAC secretary or chair by noon of the meeting date.
- Members who are absent without cause for three consecutive meetings may be considered to have vacated their position at the discretion of the SAC. Vacancies will be filled as per these bylaws.
- Emergency meetings may be called by the Chair as required.
- Additional meetings may be scheduled as determined by the SAC.
- Members of the public who wish to address the SAC on a topic under the scope of the SAC are asked to inform the SAC through the chair or the principal in writing at least two-weeks prior to the SAC meeting.
- All meetings are open for the public to observe, and at the discretion of the Chair with SAC consensus, the public may be invited to input to discussion, although only the SAC members may vote in elections or on motions.
- Agendas will allow for a ten-minute period for input on the agenda items from the public in attendance at the council meeting.

Agendas

The SAC Chair will consult with the principal at least one week prior to each meeting to develop a meeting agenda. SAC members who would like to add an item to a meeting agenda should contact the SAC Chair at least one week prior to the meeting. The agendas will be distributed prior to the meetings to SAC members by electronic means, along with any other information that is relevant to the agenda items. The Agenda will be approved at SAC meetings. Agendas will be made available to the public upon request and posted on the school website.

Meeting Summary

The SAC Secretary will prepare a meeting summary for each SAC meeting which will include highlights of key decisions and actions. Once approved at the subsequent meeting, the meeting summaries will be given to the principal to be included in the school record, posted on the school website, and made available to the public upon request.

Decision-Making Process and Quorum

- All decisions will be made by consensus when possible.
- If a consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote is required of the quorum present for a proposal to be approved. It will be delayed to another meeting.
- A quorum will be established when the meeting is called to order. A quorum will consist of a minimum of 7 voting members, with at least one representative from at least three membership categories of the SAC.
- In addition, the Principal or designate shall be present. The Vice-Principal is the designate.
- If there is a timeline within which a decision must be reached, the SAC Chair may call an emergency meeting, or conduct an electronic vote of SAC members prior to the deadline and ratified at the next SAC meeting.

Principles of decision-making:

- All council members will be treated as equals and will have the right and responsibility to participate and have a voice as equal partners in all attempts to reach consensus and make decisions.
- The SAC will employ democratic approaches in its decision-making.
- Consultation will be carried out with parents/guardians, school staff, students, and community members as appropriate to gather information. The SAC will maintain effective communication among the partners by holding regular meetings open to the parents, staff and general public within the St. Stephen's school boundary.
- Topic and issues will be discussed in a structured way prior to decision making
- When appropriate, we will consult with other representatives of the respective partners and return for a second discussion and decision-making session.
- Vacancies on the SAC does not impair the authority of the remaining members to act.
- All members will publicly support SAC decisions once they have been made.

School Improvement Plan and Annual Report

The school improvement plan for St. Stephen's Elementary school will be developed by the principal and staff of the school and shared with the SAC. The SAC will work in collaboration

with the principal and participate in efforts to improve student achievement and student and community well-being by regularly receiving information on the school improvement plan and monitoring progress and improvements under the plan.

In addition, in accordance with the terms of the SAC agreement, the SAC will determine priorities for spending the funds allocated to support the mandate of the SAC including student achievement and report annually on the expenditures of funds to the Minister.

The SAC will prepare an annual report in the form and containing the information determined by the Minister. The report will be presented at the June SAC meeting and then submitted to the HRCE by the end of June.

Adopting and amending Bylaws

A notice of motion, given one meeting in advance, is required to amend the bylaws. By-laws will be amended by the SAC, following the decision-making process outlined in these bylaws.

Amended bylaws will be forwarded to the regional executive director of the HRCE for approval, and the bylaws or amendments become effective upon receipt of this approval.