

CONSTITUTION

OTTAWA CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION (CSPA)

1. Mission Statement

The Mission of the Ottawa Catholic School Parents' Association (CSPA) is,

to seek an education of the highest quality for each child in the Ottawa Catholic School Board, and to foster and support Catholic education -

by providing a focus point for communication between education decision-makers and Catholic School Councils, and by assisting in the dissemination to School Council parents of information on a full range of complex educational issues, thereby acting as an agent for parents on School Councils, assisting them in becoming active partners in education and effective advocates for their children.

2. Governing Values

CSPA believes that:

- 2.1 All students are of equal value;
- 2.2 Students have the right to a safe school environment;
- 2.3 All actions and decisions should be based on Gospel Values;
- 2.4 The Catholic tradition/story should be passed on through the school curriculum and activities;
- 2.5 Catholic Education is a co-operative partnership between home, school and parish - within a supportive community;
- 2.6 All actions and decisions must provide value or benefit to the student community;
- 2.7 All students have a right to a Catholic Education.

3. Role

The Role of the Catholic School Parents' Association (hereafter referred to as "The Parent Association" or "The Association") is to:

- 3.1 be the coordinated voice representing and communicating the views and concerns of Catholic School Councils (hereafter referred to as "Councils"), and in particular the parents on such Councils, of the Ottawa Catholic School Board (hereafter referred to as "The Board");
- 3.2 provide a forum for the discussion of issues of general concern to Councils;
- 3.3 make appropriate recommendations to the Board;

3.4 communicate parents' perspectives to both the Board and the Ministry of Education and Training (hereafter referred to as "the Ministry");

3.5 be a focus for two-way communication on educational issues;

3.6 reflect the partnership between home, school, parish, Board and community;

3.7 provide advice and consideration on all educational matters (except salaries and personnel), including communications and liaison between parents, students, school, church, ratepayers, community, the Board and the Ministry.

4. Membership

4.1 The Parent Association shall include a parent representative (hereafter referred to as "Members") from each council elected by the Council on an annual basis.

4.2 Councils may also elect an Alternate Member to the Parent Association. The Alternate Member is encouraged to attend the regular meetings.

4.3 The Parent Association Alternate Member will be eligible for nomination to any position on the Parent Association Executive.

4.4 The Alternate Member will only vote at Parent Association meetings if the Member is absent.

4.5 Catholic School Council Chairs may perform the duties of the Member in the absence of the Member and the Alternate member.

4.6 Notwithstanding the number of school attendees at Parent Association meetings, each school has only one vote.

4.7 Trustees and those holding management positions with the Board are not eligible to serve as Members or Alternate members of the Parent Association.

5. Elections/Term of Office - General Membership

5.1 Elections of Parent Association Representatives (Members) take place annually at each school within the first thirty (30) days of the start of the school year, as required under Provincial Regulation.

5.2 Members and Alternates are elected to serve for one school year.

5.3 Members and Alternates may seek additional terms.

6. Elections/Term of Office - Executive Members

6.1 The election of the Parent Association Executive shall normally take place at the Annual General Meeting, which will be scheduled more than thirty (30) days but no more than sixty (60) days after the start of the school year, by which time Councils are required to have had their elections.

6.2 Elected by the membership at large, the Parent Association Executive will be comprised of the following positions:

Chair or Co-chairs;
Vice-Chair or Co-chair;
Treasurer;
Recording Secretary;
Administrative Officer;
Communications Officer;
Up to ten (10) Liaison Officers, which may include a liaison for the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and a liaison for the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE).

* Past Chair Position - elected by CSPA Executive

The Roles and Responsibilities of each of these positions are outlined in the Appendix.

6.3 The person intending to be considered for the Chair's position MUST stand as Member or Alternate for their School Council the year in which they wish to run AND must have previously held a position on the CSPA Executive.

6.4 The term of office for all Parent Association Executive members is from election to election. Executive members intending to seek election MUST stand as Members or Alternates for their School Council the year in which they wish to run for an Executive position.

6.5 Members elected to the Executive may either continue to serve as the voting member for their individual School Council, or:

6.5.1 they may ask the School Council to elect/appoint another voting member to the Parent Association;
6.5.2 they may ask the Alternate member (if applicable) to assume the responsibilities of Member and ask the School Council to elect or appoint a new Alternate member.

6.6 Since the Chair of the Parent Association only votes in the event of a tie, the School Council whose Member or Alternate is elected Chair must elect or appoint a new voting Member, or ask the Alternate (if applicable) to become the Member and elect or appoint an Alternate.

6.7 Should vacancies occur on the Executive during the year, such vacancies will be filled on appointment by vote of the Executive. The result of such a vote will be ratified by the General Membership at the next Association meeting.

7. Nominations Administrator

7.1 At the last meeting during any given school year, the Executive Committee shall ask for no fewer than one (1) and no more than three (3) Member volunteers to administer the next year's Association election.

7.2 The first order of business at the Inaugural Meeting of the Parent Association will be for the Nominations Administrator(s) to:

7.2.1 inform the membership of the terms of reference for all Executive positions; (Reference: "Catholic School Parents' Association - Roles and Responsibilities" document)

7.2.2 invite nominations for Executive positions;

7.3 The Nominations Administrator(s) shall, to the best of their ability, solicit nominations that represent a cross-section of the Parent Association membership.

7.4 The election of Parent Association Executive shall be the first order of business at the Annual General Meeting, and will be conducted by a Nominations Administrator, who shall present the nominations received and invite additional nominations from the floor for each position.

7.5 If any Executive position is contested, voting for the position will be by secret ballot and the votes will be counted by two (2) non-candidate volunteers from the Members present.

7.6 Successful candidates shall be announced and the newly-elected Chair will lead the remainder of the meeting.

8. Associations/Affiliations

8.1 The Parent Association welcomes affiliation with other organizations that have similar or complementary purposes.

8.2 Organizations qualified for such affiliation include, but are not limited to:

8.2.1 The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC);

8.2.2 The Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE);

9. Committees

9.1 Ad Hoc Association committees may be established at any time by the Executive to action specific subjects or issues.

9.1.1 Such committees will have at least one member of the Executive.

9.1.2 The Chair of Ad Hoc Association committees must be a Member of the Association, but the committee itself may have members who do not participate in regular meetings of the Association or School Councils.

9.1.3 Ad hoc Parent Association Committee Chairs are responsible for reporting back to the membership of the Parent Association.

9.2 The Association Executive is responsible for providing parent representation on Board Committees.

9.2.1 Such representation may be an Executive Member of the Association, a Member of the Association, or any member of a School Council.

9.2.2 Parent representatives on any Board Committee are responsible for reporting back to the Association membership through the Executive.

10. Operating Procedures

10.1 Meetings

10.1.1 The modern edition of "Robert's Rules of Order", revised by Darwin Patnode, Ph.D., published by Berkeley Books, New York, ISBN 0-425-13928-X, shall govern all procedural matters not specifically referenced in this Constitution.

10.1.2 An Inaugural Meeting shall be held prior to the Annual General Meeting to:

10.1.2.1 orient new members to the purpose and functions of the Association;

10.1.2.2 update the Parent Association Membership List;

10.1.2.3 allow the Nominations Administrator(s) to review Executive positions and invite nominations;

10.1.2.4 have the outgoing Executive set the date for the Annual General Meeting;

10.1.2.5 establish a plan to communicate meeting dates, times and agendas to Members, School Councils, the Board and interested observers;

10.1.2.6 receive reports on business arising during July and August.

10.1.3 The Annual General Meeting shall be held more than thirty (30) days but no later than sixty (60) days after the beginning of the school year to:

10.1.3.1 elect the Parent Association Executive;

10.1.3.2 receive the previous year's financial statement, which has been reviewed by a qualified person unaffiliated with the Executive;

10.1.3.3 approve a budget, if applicable;

10.1.3.4 action other business, as required.

10.1.4 The Parent Association shall hold a minimum of four (4) regular meetings in addition to the Inaugural and Annual General meetings.

10.1.5 Special meetings may be called as needed by the Parent Association Executive or on the basis of a request by two-thirds of the member Councils.

10.1.6 Meeting quorum will consist of twenty-five percent (25%) of total membership.

10.1.6.1 Quorum is not required to approve agenda, approve minutes, hear presentations from the Board or invited speakers, or adjourn the meeting.

10.1.7 General meetings of the Parent Association are open to members of the general public who wish to attend as observers. Observers may be recognized for purposes of discussion at the discretion of the Chair.

10.1.8 Councils or individual parents who wish to refer an item of general interest or concern to the Parent Association should notify an Executive Member of the Parent Association at least two (2) weeks prior to a Meeting.

10.2 Agenda

10.2.1 The Agenda will be established, published and communicated at least 48 hours prior to a scheduled meeting.

10.3 Action/Decisions

10.3.1 The Chair may, by a show of hands, poll the Members present to determine consensus on any issue under discussion at the meeting.

10.3.2 When there is a recorded vote on Tabled Motions, each Council has the right to one vote only.

10.3.3 When voting takes place on Tabled Motions, the motion carries on simple majority of Members present if quorum requirements have been met.

10.3.4 When voting takes place to amend the Association Constitution, the motion carries on a vote of more than fifty percent (50% +) of the total Association membership. (* REFER TO SECTION 11 BELOW)

10.3.5 When discussions take place on an ad hoc basis at a General Meeting, it is understood that Members are representing, to the best of their knowledge, the opinion of the parents from their school community.

10.3.6 When voting takes place as a result of a prior Motion, it is understood that Members have consulted with their Council, and that the vote represents the official view of that Council. Members are responsible for communicating (in written or oral form) any minority opinion that Councils may have expressed.

10.3.7 The Parent Association Chairperson only votes in the event of a tie.

10.4 Minutes

10.4.1 Minutes will summarize major items/issues and indicate Parent Association action required, if applicable.

10.4.2 Minutes will be circulated to all Members of record as soon as possible, but no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the next meeting.

10.4.3 Minutes will be approved, subject to amendment, at the next Parent Association meeting.

11. Amendment of the Constitution

11.1 Draft amendments to the Constitution must be circulated to the entire membership at least one month prior to the Notice of Motion of Amendment.

11.2 Circulate Notice of a Motion to Amend the Constitution to the entire membership at least one month prior to a vote.

11.3 Substantive changes will not be entertained after the Notice of Motion of Amendment has been circulated .

11.4 The Constitution may be amended only at a regular Parent Association meeting.

11.5 If a Council is unable to send a delegate to the meeting at which an amendment to the Constitution is to be voted on, that Council's vote with respect to a Motion of Amendment to the Constitution may be cast by written notification (email is acceptable for notification) to the Association Chair, no later than twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting.

Appendix

CSPA Executive

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Candidates standing for election to the CSPA Executive are advised to review the Roles and Responsibilities of each position:

Members/Alternates

The duties of the Member/Alternate of a delegate school in good standing are to: attend and participate in School Council meetings and other activities; report to, and consult with, School Councils on issues referred to it by the Board and/or the Catholic School Parents' Association; and vote at Catholic School Parents' Association Meetings. (These duties may be filled by the School Council Chair or by another delegate of the School Council in the absence of the Member and Alternate.) When voting, Members/Alternates will be asked to represent, to the best of their knowledge, the opinions of parents in their school community. On issues with sufficient lead time, Members/Alternates are responsible for voting to express the majority view of the School Council they represent. It is expected that any significant minority opinions will also be communicated to the Catholic School Parents' Association either in writing or orally, during the discussions that precede a vote.

CSPA Chair/ Co-Chairs

The Chair shall administer the affairs of the Catholic School Parents' Association and ensure that all decisions and actions approved by the general membership are implemented. The Chair heads meetings of the Catholic School Parents' Association and prepares the agenda for such meetings with advice from the other Executive Members and Committee representatives. The Chair shall also represent the views of the Catholic School Parents' Association to the Board, the Ministry of Education and Training, the media and elsewhere, as required. These responsibilities may be shared equally with a Co-Chair or Vice-Chair. Such determinations are to be made by the individuals standing for election each year.

Past Chair

Having held the position of Chairperson during the previous term, the person provides continuity to the organization. The Past Chair, through previous experience has a historical overview of its activities. They shall smooth the transition if required; assist, advise and support as required; provide information about resources, and other essential information and act as a consultant if requested by the Association. This is a one year term without voting privileges. The appointment of the Past Chair position will be voted on by CSPA Executive .

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for: the collection of all voluntary fees; the preparation and reporting of expenditures; the collection of monies; and the reporting of the financial balance at each Meeting. In addition, the Treasurer also prepares on an annual basis, a written financial statement and prepares, as required, cheques for signature of appropriate signing officers.

Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary is responsible for the general correspondence of the Catholic School Parents' Association and for liaison with both existing and potential members. The Recording Secretary issues notices and agenda on behalf of the Chair or the Executive Committee, and prepares and distributes Minutes of all General and Executive Committee meetings.

Administrative Officer

The Administrative Officer is responsible for maintaining a current list of member School Councils that shall include the names and contact information of Catholic School Parents' Association Members/Alternates and School Council Chairs/delegates. The Administrative Officer is also responsible for the logistics of organizing meetings and for encouraging regular meeting attendance.

Communications Officer

The Communications Officer is responsible for coordinating, in consultation with the Chair, the preparation of folio materials to be distributed along with the agenda prior to each Catholic School Parents' Association Meeting. The Communications Officer also prepares and distributes a monthly Catholic School Parents' Association Newsletter and posts Catholic School Parents' Association information on the CSPA (or Board) website.

Ottawa-Carleton Regional Director of the Ontario Association of Parents In Catholic Education

The OAPCE is a provincial voice for Catholic School Parents' The Regional Director, by working closely with local parent groups, raises educational issues at the provincial level by ensuring that these issues are addressed and dealt with by the Association. The elected/appointed Regional Director for Ottawa-Carleton is invited to sit on the Executive until the end of their term as the Liaison/Advocate for Catholic Education.

Parent Representative - OCSB Special Education Advisory Committee

The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee is invited to elect/appoint a parent representative from their Committee to act as Liaison/Advocate for Special Education on the Executive of the Catholic School Parents' Association.

Liaison Officers

Liaison Officers act as a point of contact for a certain number of School Councils, as determined by the Executive, and collectively represent a cross-section of educational interests as determined by the Executive. Liaison Officers attend and participate in Executive and Catholic School Parents' Association Meetings and may choose areas of specialization with the agreement of the Executive as a whole. Such areas may include, but are not limited to - Secondary School Issues, Elementary Panel Issues, Safe Schools, Budgets and Finance, and Facilities. As outlined above, the Special Education Advisory Committee Parent Representative and the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Director of the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education are invited to participate on the Executive.

Approval date: 26 October 2012