

St. Johns High School
Parent & Community Advisory Council

Constitution & By-Laws

Article I

1.0 Name:

The name of this organization is the “St. Johns Parent and Community Advisory Council” or “PCAC”

Article II

2.0 Mission

The purpose of the St. Johns PCAC (the Council) is to have the parents, caregivers, school team and community working together for the sake of the students. The council is committed to assisting the school in providing all students with opportunities to achieve academic excellence, self esteem, and social responsibility in a safe, supportive environment.

Article III

3.0 Purpose of organization

- To promote community interest, understanding and involvement in the school and in the governance of the school
- To establish a means of regular accountability to the school and community for involvement, activities, council expenditures and recommendations
- To initiate activities within the school which promote a positive school environment
- To enhance school resources needed for the support of student learning
- To organize special educational events for the parents and guardians in consultation with the administration

Article IV

4.0 Code of Conduct

4.1 Business is conducted collaboratively in a respectful and welcoming environment

4.2 All meetings of the Council to be conducted in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order or with an appropriate adaptation thereof – see attachment A & B

4.3 The Council is not a forum for: discussion of individual school personnel, students, parents or other members of the school community. It is not a problem solving process for individuals. Problems should be addressed via the proper channels as per school and divisional policies that are in place

Article VI

6.0 Meetings

6.1 The Council shall hold up to 8 meetings in the school year. A meeting will take place within a week of the school open house to orientate potential members to the Council. The first official meeting will be held on the first Wednesday of October. At the first meeting the following will be determined:

- Elections of the Executive
- The yearly meeting schedule to be established

6.2 Extension of time might be negotiated at the will of the Council by a motion and vote

Article VII

7.0 Membership

- The membership is open to all within St. Johns High School catchment
- The principal, administrators and teachers are nonvoting members
- Student Council president is represented on the Council
- Quorum - Shall consist of a minimum of fifty percent plus one of the voting Council members
- Voting – to be considered a voting member an individual must attend two consecutive meetings. At the second meeting they may participate in any voting. If an individual is absent from the Council for three consecutive meetings without sending regrets, their voting privileges are withdrawn
- Subcommittees can be established at the discretion of the Advisory Council and can include parents, teachers, students, community representatives and individuals with special expertise to help in developing an informed decision

Article VIII

8.0 Member Roles & Responsibilities as per Robert's Rules **[still need to find information on Robert's Rules for this section – if needed]**

8.1 Chair

- Shall ensure that an agenda is prepared and presented in conjunction with the council and other representative members
- Shall appoint committees where authorized to do so by the Council
- Will supervise and act on activities of the PCAC in consultation with the principal and the executive
- Does not hold a vote except in the case of a tie
- Cannot make or second a motion
- Chair cannot speak to an issue as a chair – if they wish to speak on an issue the chair will transfer their responsibility for the duration of that issue to another Council member

8.2 Vice-Chair – at the first meeting it will be determined if this position is necessary for the upcoming school year. They assume Chairs responsibilities in their absence

8.3 Secretary

- Will assume the responsibility for recording all minutes of regularly scheduled meetings of the Council
- Will be responsible for distributing the minutes prior to the next meeting
- Will establish a process for distribution of minutes to all members attending meetings
- Shall assist the chair in correspondence and business as deemed necessary
- Shall keep a current copy of the Constitution and By-Laws and be responsible for recording any changes in these documents
- Shall keep a current roll of the years membership
- Secretary takes chair if chair is unavailable and if there is no Vice-Chair

Article IX

9.0 Nominations & Elections

- Voting for Executive positions to be held in October
- Voting will be by ballot.
- Any ties to be broken by the administration
- A representative from the administration shall conduct nominations & elections
- Person nominated must be asked if they “agree to let their name stand”

- A nomination must be supported by a mover and a seconder
- Terms of office – for the duration of the school year
- Candidates to have an opportunity to speak in regards to the position being nominated for

Article X

10.0 Constitutional Amendments

Constitutional changes can be brought forth at any time throughout the year. Any change needs to be added to the agenda. A change has to have a supporting motion and a seconder. Discussion on the matter is commenced. At the following meeting the change is brought forth again. Any changes or additions are made at that time. At the third meeting a vote is held to adopt any changes

Article XI

11.0 Vacancies on Council

- In the event that an officer is unable to complete their term, the duties of that position will be taken over temporarily by the rest of the current Executive until the vacancy can be filled. A bi-election can be called at the discretion of the Executive
- Any Executive member who misses 3 consecutive meetings shall relinquish their position on the Council

Article XII

12.0 Dissolution

- In the event of dissolution either by decision, dispute or by the natural consequence of no interest; all records of the Council shall be placed under the jurisdiction of the administration.

Article XIII

13.0 Minutes

- Needs to have a motion and a seconder to have minutes approved – the names of these individuals must be listed and the exact wording of the motion must be entered
- Constitute the content of the meeting, not exact wording that was used. Except in the case of motions
- Should include the following:
 - The name of the organization
 - Time and place of meeting
 - Who was in attendance
 - Who sent regrets
- If there are changes that need to be made to the minutes; those changes are noted and approval of minutes is deferred to the next meeting
- Minutes need to be approved by consensus by those in attendance
- Not a verbatim transcription of the meeting

Article XIV

14.0 Basic Motions – See Attachment C

Attachment A – Meeting Guidelines

1. Respect each other
2. All members shall be treated fairly
3. Confidentiality must be maintained – this needs to be adhered to specifically in the case of any communication outside the parameters of the meetings. If sending any emails, ensure that those that are included are in agreement with being included on any correspondence
4. Discuss issues, not people
5. Listen respectfully
6. Focus on the issues
7. Refrain from personal attacks
8. Refrain from dominating the discussions
9. Cell phones are to be turned to mute/vibrate during the meeting. Be respectful of its use during meetings. Return calls when appropriate.
10. Dispute resolution – if a dispute should arise and there is no resolution the chair will proceed with:
 - a) Reiterate the issue
 - b) State that this is not the time or place for this conversation and move on with the agenda
 - c) If issue not resolved, chair will call a short recess where the chair and an administrator take the said individual(s) aside and attempt to find a more appropriate venue to resolve issues
 - d) If said behaviour continues after the recess said individual(s) may be asked to leave the meeting
 - e) Should issues continue on a meeting by meeting basis with said individual(s) they may be asked to leave and not return for the remainder of the school year

Attachment B – Robert’s Rules of Order – Basic Meeting Etiquette

- Obtain the floor (the right to speak) by being the first to raise your hand when the person speaking has finished. Must be recognized by the Chair before speaking
- Debate cannot begin until the Chair has stated the motion or resolution. If there is no debate, then the Chair calls the question (asking for a vote)
- Before the motion is stated by the Chair (the question) members may suggest modification of the motion; the mover can modify as he pleases, or even withdraw the motion without consent of the seconder; if mover modifies, the seconder can withdraw the second
- The “immediately pending question” is the last question stated by the Chair. Motion/Resolution – Amendment – Motion to Postpone
- The member moving the “immediately pending question” is entitled to preference to the floor
- No member can speak twice to the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once
- All remarks must be directed to the Chair. Remarks must be courteous in language and deportment – avoid all personalities, never allude to others by name or to motives
- The agenda and all committee reports are merely recommendations. When presented to the assembly and the question is stated, debate begins and changes occur

Attachment C – Basic Motions

Point of Privilege – pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc – may interrupt only if necessary

Parliamentary Inquiry – inquire as to the correct motion – to accomplish a desired result, or raise a point of order

Point of Information – generally applies to a question to the contents of the motion not a statement or rhetorical statement about the motion

Orders of the Day (Agenda) – a call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires Suspending the Rules)

Point of Order – infraction of the rules or improper decorum in speaking must be raised immediately after the error is made

Main Motion – brings new business (the next item on the agenda) before the assembly

Divide the Question – divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand on their own)

Consider by Paragraph – adoption of paper is held until all paragraphs/parts are debated and amended and entire paper is satisfactory; after all paragraphs/parts are considered, the entire paper is then open to amendment and paragraphs/parts may be further amended

Amend – inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions

Withdraw/Modify Motion – applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor

Commit/Refer/Recommit to Committee – state the committee to receive the question or resolution; if no committee exists include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment)

Extend Debate – applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time or for a certain period of time

Limit Debate – closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time

Postpone to a Certain Time – state the time the motion or agenda item will be resumed

Object to Consideration – objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated

Lay on the Table – temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending

Take from the Table – resumes consideration of item previously “laid on the table” – state the motion to take

from the table

Reconsider – can be made only by one of the prevailing side who has changed position or view

Previous Question – closes debate if successful – may be moved to “close debate” if preferred

Appeal Decision of the Chair – appeal for the assembly to decide – must be made before other business is resumed; NOT debatable if relates to decorum, violation of rules or order of business

Suspend the Rules – allows a violation of the assembly’s own rules (except Constitution); the object of the suspension must be specified

Glossary

By law – is a rule or law established by an organization or community to regulate itself, as allowed or provided for by some higher authority. The higher authority establishes the degree of control that the by-laws may exercise

Constitution – a set of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which an organization is governed. These rules together make up what the entity is. When these principles are written down into a single document or set of legal documents, those documents may be said to embody a *written* constitution; if they are written down in a single comprehensive document, it is said to embody a *codified* constitution