

VANKLEEK HILL COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE SCHOOL COUNCIL BY-LAWS (Reviewed: 2012)

1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 The size of the VCI Advisory Council, unless vacancies exist shall not be less than 11 with a student member.

1.2 VCI shall elect a VCI Advisory Council that has, at minimum, but not limited to the following members: a) Parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school (6) b) At least 1 community representative c) A student d) The school principal e) A member of the teaching staff f) A member of the school based support staff

1.3 A person who is employed by the Board cannot be appointed as a community representative on the VCI Advisory Council unless,

1 He or she is not employed at the school; and

2 The other members of the VCI Advisory Council are informed of the person's employment before appointment.

1.4 A member of the Board cannot be a member of the VCI Advisory Council established by the board.

1.5 If fewer than the required number of parents are willing and able to stand for election, the VCI Advisory Council will maintain vacant positions as it begins its work and continue to seek involvement of parents through outreach strategies.

2. QUORUM

2.1 Legislation states that there must always be a majority of members at a meeting.

2.2 While all members of the VCI Advisory Council are equal partners, parents shall form the majority at each meeting.

3. ELECTION PROCEDURES

3.1 School council election committee. The current VCI Advisory Council will establish a school council elections 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 and students.

3.2 Consideration for the school council election process. In any given year, the term of office for all VCI Advisory Council positions is one year. Appeals related to the school council election process or results, shall be resolved by the school council elections committee. If the situation is not resolved, the school principal and the chair of the outgoing VCI Advisory Council shall jointly make a ruling.

3.3 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 summarize their reasons for running for the school council. They must also declare if they are employed by the school board. U.C.D.S.B. employees cannot serve as chair or co-chair.
- b) Nomination forms shall be filed by all parent-candidates for elected positions on the VCI Advisory 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 proceeding 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) The principal shall conduct a lottery to determine the ballot position for each candidate.
- j) Elections for the VCI Advisory 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).
- k) 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.
- l) Ballots shall be counted by the principal in the presence of at least two parents who are not election candidates.
- m) If there is a tie for the final position for the representative on the school council, the winner shall be determined by lot.

3.4 Election of the teaching staff representative a) The principal, in consultation with the elections 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 vice-principal may be a candidate.

3.5 Election of the non-teaching staff representative

- a) The principal, in consultation with the elections 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.

3.6 Appointment or election of the student representative The principal will consult with other members of the VCI Advisory 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.

3.7 Selection of community representative All appointments of the community representative to the VCI School Council are to be by majority vote at a meeting of the school council.

4. OFFICERS

4.1 Chair: -consults with the principal to set the date of the annual elections; -calls meetings; -ensures meeting dates and times are established; -sets the agenda in consultation with the principal and community; -distributes the agenda prior to the meeting; -runs the meeting in a democratic manner; -ensures that the constitution and by-laws are followed; -ensures that the annual report to the parents and Board is prepared; -insures that meetings with parents and community are concluded on matters within the council's responsibility; -works with the principal in communicating with the Board; -communicates as required with other school councils and organizations; -carries out other duties assigned to the chair by the council.

4.2 Secretary: -records and transcribes minutes of the meetings; -publishes and distributes minutes within one week of the meeting date; -maintains an archive of minutes and pertinent correspondence for at least four years.

4.3 Treasurer: -responsible for all monies raised by the council in accordance with Board Policy and Procedures; -provides the council with a financial report at each meeting; -provides parents with a financial report for the year as part of the annual report.

5. VACANCIES

5.1 Should an elected parent/guardian council position become vacant before the next election, the VCI Advisory Council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.

5.2 If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming a councilmember, the VCI Advisory Council may request that interested parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. The VCI Advisory Council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.

5.3 When a vacant spot on the VCI Advisory Council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election.

6. COMMITTEES

6.1 The VCI Advisory Council may specify particular committees as required.

6.2 Every committee of the VCI Advisory Council must include at least one parent member of the VCI Advisory Council.

6.3 A committee of the VCI Advisory Council may include persons who are not members of the VCI Advisory Council.

6.4 All meetings of the committee shall be open to the public.

6.5 The committee is entitled to hold its meetings at the school.

6.6 All meetings of the committee shall be held at a location that is accessible to all the public.

6.7 The principal of the school shall on behalf of the committee, give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the committee to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.

6.8 The notice may be given by; 1) a notice to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent; and 2) posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

7. MEETINGS

7.1 There shall be a minimum of four scheduled meetings during the school year.

7.2 The first meeting shall be within the first 35 days of the school year, after the elections on a date fixed by the principal of the school in consultation with the chair.

7.3 A meeting of the VCI Advisory Council cannot be held unless, 1) a majority of the current members of the VCI Advisory Council are present at the meeting; and 2) a majority of the members of the VCI Advisory Council who are present at the meeting are parent members.

7.4 All meetings of the VCI Advisory Council shall be open to the public.

7.5 The VCI Advisory Council is entitled to hold its meetings at the school.

7.6 All meetings of the VCI Advisory Council shall be held at a location that is accessible to all the public.

7.7 The principal of the school shall, on behalf of the VCI Advisory Council, give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the council to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.

7.8 The notice required may be given by,

- 1) a notice to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent; and
- 2) posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

8. FUNDRAISING

8.1 The VCI Advisory Council may engage in fundraising activities to raise funds to benefit the school.

8.2 The VCI Advisory Council shall not engage in fundraising activities unless the activities are conducted in accordance with any applicable policies and procedures established by the Board; and

8.3 The VCI Advisory Council shall ensure that the funds raised by it are used in accordance with any applicable policies and procedures established by the Board.

9. DUTIES OF MEMBERS

9.1 Code of Ethics

- A member shall consider the best interests of all students.
- A member shall be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
- A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
- A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.

9.2 A member of the VCI Advisory Council may be removed from council for:

- A member shall consider the best interests of all students.
- A member shall be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
- A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
- A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
- A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- A member shall not disclose confidential information.
- A member shall limit discussion at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.

-behaviour that regularly prevents the council from carrying out its responsibilities; -habitually failing in performing the duties of a member; -failing to uphold the Constitution or comply with the By-laws of the council; -engaging in activities deemed to be detrimental to the interest or contrary to the purpose of the Council.

9.3 The permanent removal of a member of the VCI Advisory Council requires 2/3 of the votes cast by members of the council at a council meeting attended by not less than 80% of the council.

10. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

10.1 Decisions shall be made as follows: 1) The Chair shall allow for participation in discussion by all members of council in attendance.

2) The VCI Advisory Council shall operate in a non-judgemental manner, respecting individual rights and confidentiality, employing no-fault discussions. In the event that consensus cannot be achieved, the decision may be reached by taking a vote.

10.2 Subject to section 101.2, each member of the VCI Advisory Council is entitled to one vote.

10.3 Subject to Section 10.1.2, each member of a committee of the VCI Advisory Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee. Majority rules.

10.4 The principal of the school is not entitled to vote.

10.5 The VCI Advisory Council members will identify all agenda items and/or issues with which they have a conflict of interest.

10.6 The VCI Advisory Council members will focus on school-wide issues and on what is best for the school and its students.

11. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

11.1 The VCI Advisory Council members are elected to serve the school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on council at all times.

11.2 Every VCI Advisory Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.

11.3 Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.

11.4 The chair's responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised and to set out the joint interests of all members.

11.5 If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.

11.6 If a council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the chair shall ask for order.

11.7 If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the chair may direct the individual council member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.

11.8 The removal of a member for one meeting does not prevent the council member from participating in future meetings of the council.

11.9 The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools within one week of the meeting.

11.10 When the chair has requested the removal of a member or members from a meeting, the chair shall request the disputing members of council participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting may be a private meeting, and shall not be construed as a meeting of the council.

11.11 The chair may request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.

11.12 An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.

11.13 Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

12. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

12.1 A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived or potential.

12.2 Members of the VCI Advisory Council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decisions of the council.

12.3 A member shall exclude him-or herself from discussions in which: 1) a conflict of interest is likely to result; 2) the member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the school council may be jeopardized; 3) the VCI Advisory Council member, his or her relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit either directly or indirectly as a result of actions that may be taken by the principal or board in response to advice that the council provides to the principal or to the board.

12.4 A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

13. AMENDING PROCESS

13.1 Any proposed change or addition to the VCI Advisory Council Constitution, or the By-laws, must be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least two weeks prior to a general meeting and placed on the agenda. The change must be presented in motion form and agreement must be reached by consensus of the VCI Advisory Council.