

**St. Louis Catholic School  
Catholic School Advisory Council (CSAC)  
Bylaws**

Original: January 14, 2006  
PUBLISHED: MARCH 23, 2006  
Updated: October 27, 2006

*Prepared by:*

St. Louis Catholic School CSAC

## REVISION LIST

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
01/14/2006	St. Louis CSAC Chair and Principal	Initial Draft	St. Louis Catholic School
03/23/2006	St. Louis CSAC	Updated with input from CSAC	St. Louis Catholic School
09/26/2006	St. Louis CSAC	Changes to “New Council Formation and Election Procedures” section – to increase number of council members	St. Louis Catholic School
10/27/2006	St. Louis CSAC	Changes to format of document for easy reference. Added: Cover Page, Revision List, Table of Contents and Page numbers	St. Louis Catholic School

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Purpose.....	4
Council Code of Ethics .....	4
New Council Formation and Election Procedures.....	5
Filling Vacancies .....	6
Number and Scheduling of Meetings .....	6
Decision-Making , Quorums and Communication .....	7
Committees .....	7
Budget and Disbursement of Funds.....	8
Fundraising .....	8
Conflict and Conflict Resolution .....	9
Bylaw Amendments.....	9

## Purpose

This document is compiled to fulfill the mandate provided to C.S.A.C. by the Ministry of education as documented in the *Catholic School Advisory Council Policies and Regulations (2004; revised 10/05)* as well as in *School Councils A Guide for Members (2001)*. In accordance with these foundation documents:

School councils must develop certain bylaws to provide them with direction for the operation of Council business and to help the Council work effectively. The development of operating bylaws should begin as soon as possible after a council meets for the first time. At a minimum, the regulation requires councils to develop bylaws to address the following areas:

- Election procedures
- Filling vacancies
- Conflict of interest
- Conflict resolution procedures

Bylaws governing other areas of operation may also be developed.

Once bylaws have been developed, school councils may want to review them from time to time, although they do not need to be rewritten each year. Ideally the bylaws should be reviewed and adopted yearly. Conflict resolution bylaws must be established in accordance with any applicable policies established by the board.

The purpose of the Catholic School Advisory Council is two-fold: (1) to improve student achievement and (2) to make the education system more accountable to parents.

## Council Code of Ethics

The St. Louis School Catholic School Council shall abide by the Code of Ethics as set out below. At all times a member shall:

- consider the best interests of all students.
- endeavor at all times to be mindful of the views of the community which he or she is representing through his or her position on council.
- be mindful of the need to welcome and accommodate parents and members of the community to council and subcommittee meetings.
- be guided by the schools and the school boards mission statements.
- 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.
- become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.

- encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
- respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- declare any conflict or potential conflict of interest.
- not accept any payment or benefit financially through School Council involvement.

## **New Council Formation and Election Procedures**

The St. Louis Catholic School Council shall not exceed **ten (10)** parent members excluding the Principal, the teaching and non-teaching staff members, and any appointed community members, provided that the number of parent members on the Council forms the majority of the Council.

Formal election procedures for parent members on Council will not be deemed necessary if the number of parent nominees put forward does not exceed **ten (10)**. So long as the number of parent nominees remains at or below **ten (10)**, any parent nominee who has expressed orally, or in writing, his or her willingness to serve on the Council, shall be considered acclaimed to membership on Council. The expression of willingness to serve shall include nominations from the floor at the Annual General Meeting in which a nominated parent expresses a willingness to serve on Council. Members of Council from the previous year shall, at their last meeting of the school year, convene an Elections Committee to help gather nominations and encourage membership in the new Council for the upcoming school year. This group will assist the School Principal in the organization and conduct of an election in the new school year, if an election is deemed necessary.

Elections, if required, shall occur on the date of the first scheduled Council meeting of the school year (within 30 days of the commencement of the school year). This meeting shall be designated as the Elections Meeting and its business shall be limited to forming the School Council for the current school year.

The Elections Committee shall, if an election is required, work with the School Principal to:

- outline the number of parent member vacancies
- provide nomination forms and ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures, date and time and the like, no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the Elections Meeting

- ensure that the elections are conducted by secret ballot
- count the ballots
- notify all candidates of the results
- keep all results and related information confidential

All those standing for election shall be notified of the results before they are publicized to the School Community. The Elections Committee shall assist the School Principal in ensuring that the names of new Council members are publicized to the School Community within three (3) business days of the elections.

The first meeting of the newly elected Council may be held immediately following the Elections Meeting or may be scheduled as a separate meeting. In the first case the Elections Meeting will be adjourned and the newly elected Council members will remain behind for the first meeting of the newly formed Council. In either case, at the first meeting of the newly formed Council, the Council shall elect from among its members, an executive body, consisting normally of Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. At its discretion, the new Council may choose instead to elect two (2) Co-Chairs in place of a single Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. It is recommended that the Chair or in the Case of two Co-Chairs, one of the Co-Chairs have at least one year of previous experience on the Council.

At the first meeting of the newly elected Council, dates, times and locations shall be set for CSAC meetings throughout the remainder of the school year.

## **Filling Vacancies**

If any parent member positions should become vacant during the school year for whatever reason, the remaining members shall constitute the School Council, unless the parent member majority is no longer maintained. In the case that a parent member majority cannot be maintained then an Elections/Appointment Committee shall be convened and the vacant position filled either by due election process or if the Council chooses, by appointment. The number of individuals permitted to join the Council will be limited to the number of vacancies created. Vacant positions for non-parent member positions may be filled by appointment of the Council for the remaining term of office.

## **Number and Scheduling of Meetings**

The School Council shall meet no less than four (4) times during the School Year. The Council may decide, at its discretion that additional meetings are required and so schedule them. Meetings will generally be held weekday evenings from 7:00 - 8:30 in a suitable meeting location at St. Louis School.

A tentative meeting schedule will be drafted at the first CSAC meeting following elections to the Council and that schedule will be publicized.

## **Decision-Making , Quorums and Communication**

At each School Council meeting the Council must consist of not less than five (5) Council members, the majority of which must always be parent members. If an issue is made subject to a vote, then a simple majority will constitute a quorum for decision-making purposes. The only exception to this rule is that decisions regarding amendments to these bylaws are subject to a two-thirds requirement in which fully two-thirds of the Council members present must be in agreement in order to pass a resolution.

The School Council shall strive wherever possible to reach decisions regarding issues that it must resolve, by consensus. If consensus can not be achieved after appropriate discussion and debate, then issues may be resolved by putting them to a vote. In the case of a vote, majority rules shall prevail.

The St. Louis Catholic School Advisory Council represents the entire parent/guardian community. As such, they must vote in a manner that reflects the best interests of the community-at-large.

One of the Council's main purposes is to actively seek information from and share information with the school community regarding matters under consideration by the Council. When and how this happens depends on the issues before the Council and may in itself form a matter for discussion by Council. To this end, however, Council meeting dates, times and locations are to be set and publicized as soon as practicable at the outset of the school year. Parents/guardians shall be informed, in writing, of any changes to these dates, times and locations throughout the school year as far in advance as possible.

A bulletin board shall be maintained in the school for the purpose of posting information regarding the activities of the School Council. Copies of minutes and agendas from CSAC meetings will be posted on this board as well as any other information approved by Council. This board and responsibility for its contents shall lie with a CSAC Information Officer who shall be appointed by Council and who shall be a parent member of Council.

## **Committees**

It may be necessary, from time to time, to establish committees to gather information and discuss issues of particular complexity and/or importance for the school community. When such is the case, the Council shall request that a committee be formed to deliberate on a specific issue or set of related issues. The Chair, or one of the Co-Chairs in the case that there are two Co-Chairs, shall be considered an ex-officio voting member of all committees established. At least one other committee member shall be a parent member of Council.

Decision-making rules for committees shall follow the decision-making guidelines for the

Council in general, whereby, consensus is the preferred method, followed by voting if necessary.

No committee shall commit the Council to a course of action or to a contractual or other obligation without submitting a motion to Council for its approval.

## **Budget and Disbursement of Funds**

As soon as practicable after forming a new Council a proposed budget is to be presented to Council members for approval, preferably at the first meeting of the newly elected Council. At that time, the budget proposal should be reviewed, modified if necessary, and approved so as to act as a fiscal guide for Council for the remainder of the school year. The school Principal, after prior consultation with staff, will be invited to present a list of needs to the Council for their consideration and approval.

Unless specifically discussed and approved, only the following expenses will normally be budgeted for and/or disbursed at a new school year startup, provided that sufficient funds exist:

- Pizza Day expenses
- Partial offset funding for school Agendas aimed at assisting those families, who as determined by the School Principal and staff, might suffer hardship if required to purchase Agendas
- The costs associated with transporting students to special events up to one bus per class per school year
- Costs associated with sacraments
- Costs associated with graduation events
- Sundry materials start-up purchases for teachers up to a maximum of \$100.00 per teacher

Additional Principal requests may be made and considered at other Council meetings throughout the school year.

In each budget proposal, an amount not less than \$2,000.00 should be set aside to be carried over to the next school year to facilitate beginning-of-year expenses for the next Council.

## **Fundraising**

No Council member shall make any financial or other commitment to any individual, group or organization on behalf of the Council without first seeking approval of the Council as a whole. In particular, any financial commitments must be part of a formal motion and approved by Council before those committed funds can be released by the Treasurer.

## **Conflict and Conflict Resolution**

Council members are elected or appointed to serve the school community and shall demonstrate respect for their colleagues on Council as well as any and all guests in attendance and appropriate decorum at scheduled meetings. It is the responsibility of all members of Council to ensure that members of the community have an opportunity to make their views known on any issue that is within Council's purview to consider. Council members are encouraged to foster opposing views and give them adequate opportunity for expression during the discussion time surrounding consideration of a legitimate issue.

- If a Council member or guest becomes disruptive to the progression or decorum of the meeting, the Chair or Co-Chair shall ask for order.
- If all efforts to restore order to the meeting fail, the Chair or Co-Chair may direct the individual(s) concerned to leave the meeting.
- The removal of a member or guest from one meeting does not prevent the member or guest from participating in future meetings.
- The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools within one week of the meeting.
- When the Chair or Co-Chair has requested the removal of a member or guest from a meeting, the Chair shall request that the removed individual(s) attend a special private meeting separate from the Council meeting, the purpose of which is to attempt to resolve the issue(s) of dispute that gave rise to the incident.
- The Chair or Co-Chair may request independent third-party intervention to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.
- Any resolution reached in resolving the dispute shall be signed and respected by all involved parties and the resolution shall be read into the minutes of the next meeting by the Council Chair.

Conflicts between Council members or guests and/or administration, which occur outside the context of Council meetings, are the sole responsibility of the parties involved.

## **Bylaw Amendments**

This document of bylaws is to be considered a "living" document and it is envisioned that from time to time, changes to the bylaws contained herein may be required.

Each and any duly formed Council has the right to change any bylaw or set of bylaws so

long as:

- such changes are in keeping with the historical spirit and intent of the existing bylaw, or, if outdated or obsolete, in keeping with the new needs and spirit of the St. Louis Catholic School community-at-large
- such changes do not contravene the Board policies or Ministry regulations for the operation and governance of a school council
- such changes are approved by a two-thirds margin at Council
- such changes do not interfere with the proper functioning of the School