

Elk Island Public Schools Committee of School Councils Operating Procedures

1. DEFINITIONS

In these Operating Procedures:

- A. "EIPS" means Elk Island Public Schools;
- B. "COSC" means the Committee of School Councils;
- C. "Representative" means an individual member chosen by their school council to attend COSC;
- D. "Parents" means parent, guardian or primary caregiver of any child enrolled in an educational program in EIPS; and
- E. "Operating Procedures" means the governing document serving the same purpose as Bylaws referenced in the Regulations.

2. HISTORY AND AUTHORITY

Strathcona County Committee of School Advisory Councils (COSAC) formed in the late 1980s under Strathcona County Public Schools to bring together partners in education. As the group evolved, ownership transferred to parents who held the executive positions. When amalgamation occurred in 1993, Strathcona County Schools became part of Elk Island Public Schools. School Councils also became mandated under the *School Act* in 1995, currently known as the *Education Act*, and COSAC became the EIPS COSC. COSC was the first group of this nature in Alberta and has been a model for other divisions.

COSC operates with autonomy and is supported by Board Policy 2 which states:

2.3 The Board shall encourage the formation of a Committee of School Councils (COSC).

2.3.1 If a COSC is formed, its primary purpose shall be to enhance communication among the school councils, the Board, the Superintendent and the community.

2.3.2 School personnel or individual student concerns shall not be discussed at COSC meetings. Parents and guardians with concerns are encouraged to present their concerns directly to the teacher or Principal.

2.3.3 Further terms of reference and operating procedures shall be as determined by COSC.

3. PURPOSE

COSC exists for the purpose of empowering, engaging and supporting school council representatives.

4. OBJECTIVES

- Receive timely presentations by EIPS representatives and education partners on provincial and Division education initiatives.
- Share best practices and perspectives from school councils throughout the Division.
- Understand our legislated role as school councils and how parents can make an impact provincially.
- Understand the role of fundraising societies.
- Support and empower school council representatives through support and mentorship opportunities.
- Create opportunities for meaningful discussion which can then inform discussion at the school level.
- Build relationships with other school council representatives and education partners.
- Understand Division priorities, goals and outcomes, and their role in the *EIPS Four-Year Education Plan* and School Education Plans.

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- Share content from individual school councils.
- Foster the collaborative spirit of Parents as Partners.
- Broaden perspectives to include the full K-12 educational experience.
- Encourage participation in and understanding of the role of the Alberta School Councils' Association.
- Resource and equip healthy school councils and fundraising societies.

5. GOVERNANCE, MEMBERSHIP and DECISION MAKING

The Committee of School Councils encourages engagement, providing participation falls within the purpose and objectives.

The membership shall consist of:

- A. School council representative(s) as defined in 1(c)
- B. The Superintendent and/or designate
- C. EIPS COSC liaison
- D. ATA Local President and/or designate
- E. Board of Trustee Chair and/or designate(s)
- F. Additional Trustee(s)
- G. Other invited guests
- H. Past Chair (for a term of one year)

Decision Making

Most decisions shall be made by consensus by school council representatives.

Decisions requiring a vote, such as elections, or dissolution, shall be made by school councils through their appointed representative. Each attending school council shall be granted one vote. Proxy votes will not be counted. Votes shall be simple majority, with the exception of dissolution which shall require 75% approval.

6. QUORUM

COSC does not have quorum requirements.

7. EXECUTIVE and TERMS OF OFFICE

Term of office shall be one year beginning at our October meeting.

The positions of the Executive shall consist of: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary

- A. All Executive positions must be filled by representatives as defined in 1C above.
- B. Every representative is eligible to be elected to an Executive position on the COSC.
- C. Any Executive member may resign their position by providing written notice to the other executive members.
- D. Any Executive member may be removed from the Executive at any time with cause by a majority vote voting members at a regularly-scheduled COSC meeting.
- E. The Executive will carry out the day-to-day operation of the COSC.

8. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

A. Chair

It is expected that the COSC Chair will be a representative as described in 1 (c). Unless otherwise delegated, the Chair of COSC will:

- 1) Chair all meetings of the COSC;
- 2) Coordinate with the EIPS liaison to establish meeting agendas;
- 3) Decide all matters relating to rules of order at the meetings;

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- 4) Ensure that COSC Operating Procedures are current and followed;
- 5) Be the official spokesperson of the COSC;
- 6) Ensure that there is regular communication with the whole COSC community;
- 7) Review any communication to the COSC community prior to distribution; and
- 8) Have general responsibility for all activities of COSC.

B. Vice-Chair

Unless otherwise delegated, the Vice-Chair of COSC will:

- 1) In the event of resignation, incapacity or leave of absence of the Chair, fulfill the Chair's responsibilities;
- 2) In the absence of the Chair, supervise the affairs and preside at any meetings of COSC;
- 3) Work with and support the Chair in agenda preparation;
- 4) Promote teamwork and assist the Chair in the smooth running of the meetings; and
- 5) Assist the Chair and undertake tasks assigned by the Chair.

C. Secretary

Unless otherwise delegated, the Secretary of COSC will:

- 1) Act as a recorder at each meeting and ensure that the minutes are prepared accurately to reflect the directions agreed to at the meeting;
- 2) Work together with the EIPS liaison to maintain a dated record of all meetings and members of COSC and their information, in compliance with PIPA; and
- 3) Work together with the EIPS liaison to distribute, as determined by COSC, agendas, minutes, notices of meetings and notices of other events.

In the absence of the Secretary, COSC shall choose a recording Secretary for the meeting.

9. VACANCIES

Elections for a vacant position will be held at subsequent meetings of COSC until the vacancy is filled.

10. MEETINGS

Regular Meetings

A minimum of 7 scheduled meetings will be held per school year or as called by the Executive. It will be decided when these meetings will take place at the October meeting. The meetings will take place in the EIPS Board Room or at an alternate location as decided by the members or the Executive.

11. MEETING AGENDAS

The Chair will work in partnership with the EIPS liaison to create the agendas for all meetings. Agenda item requests must be made through the Chair, who will, if necessary, consult with the Executive as to the appropriateness of the item requested.

12. COMMITTEES

COSC may appoint committees that consist of COSC Representatives and other appropriate community partners. Committees meet outside of COSC meetings to complete their assigned tasks as per the direction of the COSC and present a report of their activities at COSC meetings.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT

All School Council Members shall:

- A. Be guided by the purpose and objectives of COSC;

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- B. Act within the intent of the COSC Operating Procedures and EIPS Board Policies and Administrative Procedures. Practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth;
- C. Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each COSC member;
- D. Declare any conflict of interest;
- E. Encourage a positive atmosphere in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
- F. Apply democratic principles;
- G. Consider the best interests of all students;
- H. Use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise; and
- I. Practice respectful meeting etiquette (as specified on the back of the meeting nameplates).

14. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

COSC shall abide by the Conflict Resolution Procedures outlined:

- A. If at any time, 75% of the representatives of the prior month's meeting are of the opinion that COSC is in a state of conflict such that its operation is significantly impaired, they may deliver a signed statement of conflict to all Executive Members and the statement of conflict shall be added to the agenda of the next meeting.
 - 1. All COSC representatives present will have an opportunity to hear and discuss the issues causing conflict.
 - 2. On motion, a vote shall be taken respecting a proposed resolution to the conflict.
 - 3. If the majority of voting Members present vote in favour of the resolution proposed, the COSC will immediately act upon it.
- B. Interpersonal conflict shall not be addressed in the public meeting, but rather, privately between the parties involved. Informal and collegial resolution of problems is the preferred approach.

15. PRIVACY

COSC shall adhere to the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) and shall not use or share personal information for purposes other than those of COSC business.

16. DISSOLUTION

If due to legislation, COSC becomes redundant or loses its autonomy, COSC may choose to dissolve with a minimum 75% approval of COSC representatives.

17. REVIEWS and AMENDMENTS

COSC may make any changes to these Operating Procedures deemed necessary to carry out its functions. These Operating Procedures have been accepted by a majority of the Members entitled to vote at a regularly-scheduled COSC meeting of the School Council.

Date _____

Chair's Name

Chair's Signature

Vice Chair's Name

Vice Chair's Signature

Secretary's Name

Secretary's Signature