

Introduction

The school council is a statutory group with specific authority to keep the school connected and communicating. There are accountability measures that Council must comply with.

KKSA Council supports the active participation of parents in their children's education.

Council believes that parental involvement can be a key determinant in shaping the education system, enriching the life of a school and helping the individual student achieve success.

Parental involvement takes many forms, depending on individual circumstances – from helping with homework or volunteering with bake sales, to accompanying classes on school trips or taking an active role on council.

Karen Kain School of the Arts is a unique institution whose student body is drawn from different neighborhoods of the city, beyond the typical local geographic “catchment” area. The school is a middle school covering grades 6 through 8, with 2 classes per grade. The student body numbers a maximum of 180 students.

The Council will strive for excellence in its communications, its policies and its decision-making processes in order to ensure that each parental voice can be heard and considered, regardless of the form of parental involvement.

1.0 Name

- 1.1 The name of the organization is Karen Kain School of the Arts Council, in common "Parent Council" or "School Council".

2.0 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the Parent Council is to encourage and enable the active participation of our parents in their children's education, whether at home, at school or beyond. Council will work to attract the widest possible demographic to the school, support ongoing student achievement and enhance the education system's accountability to parents.

3.0 Governance

- 3.1 The Council is subject to provincial laws and regulations specifically and in particular the requirements of School Councils O. Reg. 612/00 and Operation of Schools – General R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, as amended.
- 3.2 The School Council and its activities shall be conducted in a democratic manner, be accessible to parents, teachers, students, administrators, and to various community representatives (example: ESA, and will endeavor to reflect the diversity of the School).
- 3.3 The School Council, its members and committees shall conform to the relevant sections of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, when it comes to privacy, personal information and the collection and dissemination of information.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 School Councils are advisory bodies. The Council will provide advice to and make recommendations to the school principal and where appropriate to the school board on any matters that the Council has identified as priorities.
- 4.2 In addition to its advisory role, the Council and its members will:
 - a. Uphold the Purpose of the Council and observe its Code of Ethics;
 - b. Establish and promote its priorities, goals and procedures;
 - c. Hold a minimum of six (6) general meetings per year. These meetings will be open to all members of the school community;
 - d. Communicate regularly with parents, staff, students and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by the Council, and to communicate the activities of the Council to the school community;
- 4.3 Committee Leads and Executive members of council (as per Section 5.6) shall:
 - a. Follow the Description of council roles as defined in Appendix A.
 - b. Commit to serving one year on Council;
 - c. Notify the secretary or Chair(s) if they cannot attend a scheduled council meeting.
- 4.4 All Members shall:
 - a. Work towards the purpose and objectives of Council;
 - b. Conduct themselves according to the Council's by-law.

- c. Focus on student learning and School improvement;
- d. Develop a School-wide perspective on issues;

5.0 Membership

- 5.1 All parents or guardians of students attending Karen Kain School of the Arts are Parent Members of Council;
- 5.2 There are two categories of Parent Members:
 - a. Member-at-Large can participate fully in discussion at Council Meetings but has no voting privilege.
 - b. Voting Member can participate fully in discussions at Council Meetings and has voting privileges.
- 5.3 Despite section 5.1, a person is NOT qualified to be a Parent Member if he or she is employed at the school.
- 5.4 Toronto Board of Education (“Board”) employees are eligible to be elected as Parent Members at their child’s school unless they are also employed at that school. They must, however, inform electors that they are Board employees prior to being elected as a Parent Members.
- 5.5 Board employees will not be eligible to fill Executive roles on the Council; and Board of Education Trustee will not be eligible to serve on a Council in the Board where they are a Trustee.
- 5.6 There are three Executive Parent Member roles that must be filled as per Participation/Appointment/Elections, Section 8.0:
 - a. Chair
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Treasurer
- 5.7 A person who is eligible to fill an Executive role can assume more than one executive role.
- 5.8 There must be at least six Parent Voting Members on Council.
- 5.9 There are five non-parent Members of the School Council:
 - a. The Principal or designate, as non-voting member
 - b. One Teacher of the School, with one vote (Teacher position can be shared, but only one vote for the Teaching staff);
 - c. One Student representative, as non-voting member (Student representative is appointed by the Student Council or the Principal and can be shared);
 - d. One non-teaching Staff at the School, as non-voting member;
 - i. One Community Representative as a non-voting member (Example: ESA, feeder schools, etc.);

6.0 Decision Making / Quorum

- 6.1 All decisions made that require Council approval should be reached by consensus if possible. If consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken, and if requested by any Member of the Council, the vote will be conducted by secret ballot.
- 6.2. Quorum shall be achieved if:
 - a. The membership number of Parent Members on Council exceeds, the number of non-parent Members; and
 - b. 50% of voting Council Members plus 1 participant are present at the meeting;
- 6.3 A vote can be cast by various methods, for example in person at a meeting, via email or online. Financial decision can only be made in person vote only.

- 6.4 To determine if consensus has been reached when Members are not in person at a meeting, both the Chair(s)'s and the Principal's agreement is necessary.
- 6.5 If a decision cannot be made during a Council meeting (for example: more information is required) and it has to move on an email or online vote, the deadline for voting must be at least a full school day, or a non-school day and half school day (same calendar day after 3 PM). Special care must be taken to provide sufficient background information.
- 6.6 A simple majority is sufficient to consider a decision reached.

7.0 Voting Rights of Parent Members of the Council

To be a voting member of the Council

- 7.1 You must attend Council meetings; if you miss two consecutive Council meetings, you cannot vote at the third meeting.
- 7.2 Contrary to 7.1, you are able to vote at the Inaugural Council meeting in October provided you attended the previous Council meeting in September (which would have been the previous Council's final meeting).
- 7.2 Final decision on extending a vote to the entire parent body rests with the (Co-)Chair in consultation with the Principal. These votes will be conducted as outlined in section 6.5.

8.0 Participation/Appointment/Elections

- 8.1 The KKSA Council term runs from the current academic year Council inauguration to the following academic year's new council inauguration.
- 8.2 At the first Council meeting of the current academic year (last meeting of past year's Council) the Leads of Committees will be asked to hold a Committee meeting before the Inauguration Council meeting, where individuals (with the exception of Vice-Chair(s) and Co-Chair(s) can indicate interest in Lead committee positions or participating in the work of the committee.
- 8.2 If there is more than one individual interested in a lead position, it will go to a vote, unless interested parties agree to a Co-Lead. If a vote is required it will be a secret ballot. Individuals will have one week to submit a 50 word introduction. It will be collated and distributed to Council members before the Inauguration Council meeting. Council members will vote at the Inauguration Council meeting. To avoid any conflict of interest, the process will be overseen by the Past-Chairs or the Principal.
- 8.3 The Vice-Chair is determined in February of the previous academic year. If there is more than one individual interested in the Vice-Chair position, it will go to a vote, except if it is a Co-Vice-Chair position between two individuals. It will be a secret ballot. Individuals will have one week to submit a 50 word introduction. It will be collated and distributed to Council members for vote at the next Council meeting.

9.0 Resignation and Vacancies on Council

- 9.1 In the event of a resignation, the vacant position will be filled at the next Council meeting following the procedures outlined in Section 8: Participation/Appointment/Elections.
- 9.2 Any Council Member, except the Principal, may resign his or her position at any time by writing a letter of resignation to the (Co-)Chair(s).
- 9.3 A vacancy in the membership of the Council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority, provided that Quorum can be achieved as per Section 6.2.

10.0 Conflict of Interest

- 10.1 Each council meeting's agenda will be distributed to members in advance of the meeting and will be reviewed and voted on at the beginning of the meeting. Voting members must, at the time of the review, declare any conflicts of interest with regards to an agenda item and, subsequently, abstain from discussion and/or voting on that particular item.

11.0 Code of Ethics

- 11.1 Members:
- a. Shall comply with all applicable laws, TDSB policy and the KKSA School Council by-law;
 - b. Shall not use their Council membership for their own personal advantage, except a Member may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred by the Member in performance of a Member's duties.
 - c. Shall focus efforts on the Objectives of the Council and not on personal goals;
 - d. Shall not disclose any Council information identified as confidential to any person other than fellow members during and after their term of office;
 - e. Shall perform their duties as a member conscientiously, honestly and in good faith;
 - f. Shall perform their duties as Council members in a calm and respectful manner at all times, including in meetings, electronic and regular correspondence;
 - g. Shall treat their fellow Members, TDSB staff, Parents and guests with courtesy and respect.
- 11.2 Members shall not expect or accept that any child of a Member receive preferential or disciplinary treatment as a result of the Member's participation on Council.

12.0 Conflict Resolution

- 12.1 Every Council member and Member at Large will be given an opportunity to express his/her opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him/her.
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences for all members before proceeding.
- 12.4 If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair shall request intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution.
- 12.5 An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
- 12.6. If a Council member or Member at Large become disruptive during a meeting, the Chair after unsuccessfully asking for order, shall direct the individual member(s) to leave the meeting, citing reasons for the request. This does not prevent the member(s) from participating in future meetings of council.
- 12.7 When the Chair has requested the removal of a member(s) from the meeting, the Chair shall request that 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.

13.0 Finances

- 13.1 The Council shall be self-supporting and shall hold such fund raising events necessary to carry out its activities and programs
- 13.2 Expenditures of the Council are to be incurred only in furtherance of the objectives of the Council.
- 13.3 All expenditures of the Council require prior approval of the Council, with the exception of those outlined in Article 13.4
- 13.4 Expenditure decisions up to \$100, and to a maximum of four times per year, can be made by the Lead of Fundraising, in consultation with the Council (Co)-Chair, Treasurer, and Principal, to support Council/School activities that arise during the year. These expenditures must be reported in the Treasurer's Report.
- 13.5 All expenditures are to be reported in a financial statement to be made available in September and June of each year.
- 13.6. The Council will not borrow funds or enter into any financial commitment for which funds are not already in hand.
- 13.7. The Council shall maintain bank accounts into which Council funds will be deposited and from which payments by the Council shall be made. Cheques drawn on the bank account of the Council shall require the signature of least one elected Council members and the Principal or two elected Council members.

14.0 Committees

- 14.1 The Council may establish standing and ad hoc committees to assist it in achieving its objectives. The Council establishes the purpose and mandate for the committees. The committees are entitled to meet in the school and meetings shall be open to all Members.
- 14.2 The standing committees of Council will be set out for the year at the Council's inaugural meeting.
- 14.3 All standing committees of Council shall:
 - a. Have a clear mandate set by Council;
 - b. Select a Parent Member (s) as the Lead of the committee in the manner described in Section 8: Participation/Appointment/Elections;
 - c. Give notice of committee meetings to Parents including date, time and purpose;
 - d. Keep notes of meetings, including attendance records, and submit them to the Council Chair or Co-chairs for inclusion in the general minute book;
 - e. Follow the Operating Guidelines [as applicable].
- 14.4 All ad hoc committees of Council shall:
 - a. Have a clear mandate set by Council;
 - b. Include at least one Parent Member of Council
 - c. Select a chair or co-chairs at the first committee meeting in the manner described in Section 8: Participation/Appointment/Elections.
 - d. Give notice of committee meetings to members and Council Chair including date, time and purpose [as applicable];
 - e. Keep notes of meetings, including attendance records, and submit them to the Council Chair or Co-chairs;
 - f. Follow the Operating Guidelines [if applicable].

- 14.5 At the end of they year each committee must create and submit a year-end report for Council about activities, shortcomings, improvements, etc.

15.0 Budget/Fundraising

- 15.1 The treasurer's position must be filled in order for the Council to operate.
- 15.2 Each Council must prepare and approve an annual budget, which will must be voted on and approved no later than the second meeting of the full Council.
- 15.3 Only items that are approved by the Council can be paid out from the Council's Budget.
- 15.4 All fund-raising activities of the Council shall take place under the direction of the Fundraising Committee.

16.0 Communication

- 16.1 Any correspondence from Council to Parents and the community requires:
- a clear description of the issue;
 - if a response is requested, the communication must include a specific deadline for response and instructions on how to respond (e.g. by email, by ballot deposited in the school office);
 - if the event/is a partnership, the partner must be clearly identified;
 - be approved by one or both of the co-Chairs prior to distribution.
- 16.2 Parents can choose to receive hard copies of all communications or to register for the Council's email service for paperless distribution.
- 16.3 Council communications, whether hard copy or through email, must be distributed in accordance with the Council's Operating Guidelines.

17.0 Operating Guidelines

- 17.1 Council may pass and amend Operating Guidelines, as needed for the effective and efficient operation of Council. These guidelines will cover, but are not limited to, finances, communications, fundraising, committees, KKSA calendar and Council position descriptions.
- 17.2 These guidelines must comply with all relevant TDSB policy and regulations and the Council's by-laws.

18.0 Amendments

- 18.1 This By-law may be amended from time to time by an affirmative vote of at least two thirds of both:
- The total number of Members of the Council; and
 - The total number of Parent Members of the Council;
- at a duly convened meeting of the Council. Any proposed amendment must be submitted in writing to the Chair or Co-Chairs for distribution one week prior to a Council meeting, then moved and seconded at the meeting. Voting on the amendment will occur at the subsequent Council meeting. Notice of the motion with the proposed amendment must be distributed to all Parents two weeks prior to the meeting where the vote will occur.

19.0 Insurance for Members

- 20.1 The Council shall purchase or reimburse the Board for the cost of liability insurance coverage for decisions and activities undertaken at the direction of the Council, with the exception of any willful, destructive or dishonest act performed by a particular Member for which that person will be held accountable.

APPROVED by the Members of Karen Kain School of the Arts Parent Council present and voting at a duly convened meeting of the Council held on the 14th day of June, 2010.