



POLICY P.113.GOV

TITLE: STUDENT SENATE

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COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND EQUITY

The Board recognizes its responsibility to ensure that this policy and associated procedures promote and protect Indigenous rights, human rights, and equity. The District will strive to address and eliminate racism and structural and systemic barriers for students, staff, and the community.

1.0 RATIONALE

To establish a Student Senate (SS) that will provide opportunities for students to become informed and involved in Board governance and to understand the issues and operation of public education.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Please refer to Appendix A for a list of definitions of terms used in this policy.

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 The Board shall establish a Student Senate whose mandate shall be:
- a) to advise the Student Trustees in matters relating to students of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and the business of the Board;
 - b) to promote student voice and to encourage students, particularly students in grades 9 and 10, to consider opportunities for student governance; such as student council, Student Senate, and Student Trusteeship;
 - c) to elect two of the Student Trustee Candidates to serve as Student Trustees(2);
 - d) to work collaboratively with Indigenous Student Trustee (1) to support the needs of Indigenous students;
 - e) to elect student members from the Senate as observers at Board standing and advisory committees;

- f) to determine a process for communicating information to their student councils and to the students at their schools and, where appropriate, feeder schools; and
 - g) to advise the Board as soon as possible following an election or by-election of the names of the three elected student trustees as well as the names of members of the Student Senate appointed to Board standing and advisory committees.
- 3.2 A member of the Student Senate shall:
- a) represent the interests of students at Student Senate meetings; and
 - b) liaise, represent and gather information with and to their Student Councils and to the students at their schools and, as appropriate, to feeder schools on topics pertaining to students and their schools which have been discussed at Senate meetings, as well as other matters of interest to students and their schools.
- 3.3 The term of office for the Grade 11/12 Student Senator will begin on August 1 of the year in which the member is elected and is terminated at the end of Grade 12. The term of Office for the Grade 9/10 Student Senator shall begin on October 31st and be terminated at the end of Grade 10. A member can be re-elected in accordance with elections directives and qualifications below.

4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

Senate Membership

- 4.1 The Senate will consist of:
- a) two student voting members from each secondary and alternate school, one in grades 9 or 10 (the Grade 9/10 Student Senator), and one in grades 11 or 12 (the Grade 11/12 Student Senator), to be known as members of the Student Senate;
 - b) three non-voting Student Trustees (3), including one non-voting Indigenous Student Trustee (1);
 - c) two non-voting Board members as determined by the Board, one to serve as member and one as an alternate;
 - d) three non-voting Student Presidents' Council members comprised of the two Student Presidents' Council chairs and one additional member as determined by Student Presidents' Council;
 - e) five non-voting members representing student-run diversity groups as nominated by the respective groups;
 - f) one school administrator (principal or vice-principal) appointed by the Director of Education as staff advisor; and
 - g) the Director of Education or designate as administrative liaison.

Meetings of the Student Senate

- 4.2 The elected Student Trustees shall co-chair the Student Senate.
- 4.3 Members of the Student Senate are expected to attend meetings of the Student Senate. A member of the Senate, excluding the Co-Chairs, who participates in a meeting by electronic means is considered to be-present at the meeting and will be recorded in the attendance for the meeting. Given that the member must be able to be heard and hear all other participants in the meeting, audio-teleconferencing will be the electronic means used.
- 4.4 Prior to the end of the school year, the newly elected members of the Student Senate will meet with the incumbent Senate members for in-service preparation and to define the Senate's internal structure for the coming school year.

Meetings of the Board and its Committees

- 4.5 The representative of the Student Senate elected to a standing and/or an advisory committee may speak to any matter before such committee, in accordance with the Governance Bylaws. Such participation shall provide for a student perspective to be heard at the table and for feedback to students regarding committee decisions.
- 4.6 Appropriate Board documents shall be provided to members of the Student Senate.

Quorum

- 4.7 A quorum exists if members of the Student Senate form 35% or more of the secondary schools and one Board member or administrator are present at a duly scheduled meeting of the Senate.

Budget

- 4.8 The budget to support the operation of the Student Senate will be co-developed annually in June between the Student Senate and the staff advisor, based on the amount approved in the Board's annual operating budget, and will be managed by the staff advisor. Members of the Student Senate shall be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in fulfillment of their responsibilities and in accordance with Board policies and procedures.

Election of Student Senators

- 4.9 Each secondary school shall describe in its Student Council's constitution a process for electing the school's members of the Student Senate, and shall provide that the members of the Student Senate shall be members of the school's Student Council.
- 4.10 Grade 11/12 Student Senators will be elected by May 31 and serve as the co-representative on the Student Senate for a term of two years or until the students graduate, whichever occurs first.
- 4.11 Grade 9/10 Student Senators will be elected by October 31 and serve until the end of their Grade 10 year as the co-representative on the Student Senate.

- 4.12 Each school's election process shall also describe a replacement process should a student member resign from the Senate, fail to maintain regular attendance or otherwise become disqualified to serve as a member of the Student Senate.

Qualifications

- 4.13 A member of the Student Senate is disqualified from office and the position is deemed vacant if:
- a) the student is no longer enrolled as a full-time student in a non-alternate program secondary school of the Board, or a part-time student at an alternate secondary school;
 - b) the student changes schools within the district; or
 - c) the student is absent from three consecutive meetings without just cause of the Student Senate or from three consecutive regular meetings of a Board committee which they have been designated to attend.
- 4.14 The Director of Education is authorized to issue such procedures as may be necessary to implement this policy.

5.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Policy Definitions

6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The *Education Act*, § 55; 191.2 and [Education Act Regulation 07/07 Board By-Laws and Standing Rules](#)

Board Policy [P.004.GOV: Board Member Honoraria](#)

Board Policy [P.010.GOV: Community Involvement on Board Standing Committees](#)

Board Policy [P.017.GOV: Student Trustees](#)

Board Policy [P.018.GOV: Electronic Meetings of the Board and Committees](#)

Board Policy [P.039.FIN: Expense Policy](#)

Board Policy [P.125.SCO: School District Code of Conduct](#)

Board Procedure [PR.503.GOV: Trustee Expenses for Professional Development, Constituency Communications and Support Service](#)

APPENDIX A: POLICY DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

Board means the Board of Trustees of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

District means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

Student Trustees means the three elected students representatives to the Board.

Student Presidents' Council means the organization composed of student presidents and co-presidents from each secondary school.

Student Senate means a committee that is comprised of up to four student voting representatives per secondary and alternate school (grades 9, 10, 11 or 12) that advises Student Trustees and represents students on Board Standing and Advisory Committees, and makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees through Student Trustees.

Student Trustee Candidate means a student elected by students at their secondary school to seek election for the office of Student Trustee.