



TITLE: STUDENT SENATE

Date Issued: June 2007
Last Revised: 26 June 2017
Authorization: Board: 12 June 2007

1.0 OBJECTIVE

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

In this policy,

- 2.1 **Board** means the Board of Trustees of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.2 **District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.3 **Student Trustee** means an elected student representative to the Board.
- 2.4 **Student Presidents' Council** means the organization composed of student presidents and co-presidents from each secondary school.
- 2.5 **Student Senate** means a committee comprised of one student voting representative per secondary school (grades 10, 11 or 12) that advises Student Trustees and represents students on Board Standing and Advisory Committees.
- 2.6 **Student Trustee Candidate** means a student elected by students at their secondary school to seek election for the office of Student Trustee.

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;

- d) to elect student members from the Senate as observers at Board standing and advisory committees;
 - e) to determine a process for communicating information to their student councils and to the students at their schools and, where appropriate, feeder schools; and
 - f) to advise the Board as soon as possible following an election or by-election of the names of the student trustees elected 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 a member of the Student Senate will begin on August 1 of the year in which the member is elected and ends on July 31 of the following year. 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) one student voting member from each secondary school in grades 10, 11, or 12, to be known as members of the Student Senate;
 - b) two non-voting Student Trustees;
 - c) two non-voting Board members as determined by the Board, one to serve as member and one as an alternate;
 - d) one school administrator (principal or vice-principal) appointed by the Director of Education as staff advisor; and
 - e) 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 from 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 A budget for the operation of the Senate will be established annually and managed by the staff advisor to the Senate in the Board's approved expenditure budget from which 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 member of the Student Senate, and shall provide that the members of the Student Senate shall be a member of the school's Student Council.
- 4.10 Students will be elected by May 31 of each year to represent the school for the coming school year as student members on the Student Senate.
- 4.11 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

- 4.12 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 secondary school of the Board; or
 - b) 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 s/he has been designated to attend.
- 4.13 The Director of Education is authorized to issue such procedures as may be necessary to implement this policy.

5.0 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: Travel, Meal and Mileage Claims

Board Procedure PR.503.GOV: Trustee Expenses for Professional Development, Constituency Communications and Support Service