

## POLICY 21

# Student Senate Constitution

### 1.0 OBJECTIVE

To establish a Student Senate that will serve as an advisory body and planning committee for all student related issues within the RCDSB, in direct consultation with the two elected Student Trustees.

### 2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this document,

(2.1) **Board** refers to the eight board of trustees appointed or elected that are responsible for exercising effective stewardship of board resources.

(2.2) **Student Trustee** refers to the elected representatives for all students in the Renfrew County District School Board.

(2.3) **Co-chair** refers to a Student Trustee.

(2.4) **Student Senate** refers to the body of elected delegates from each secondary school in the Renfrew County District School Board. The senate is tasked with advising and working with the Student Trustees to support them in their role of representing student voice.

(2.5) **Student Council** refers to the prevailing elected body at each secondary school responsible for coordinating student activities and encouraging school involvement. Such bodies may exist under differing titles (student council, student parliament, activities council, activities committee) but are all comprised of democratically-elected student leaders.

(2.6) **Non-voting administrative liaison** refers to the Renfrew County District School Board Communications Manager.

### 3.0 POLICY

(3.1) The Board shall establish a Student Senate whose mandate shall be:

- a) to provide the Board with active and effective insight into all manners of student-related issues and programming.
- b) to act as a conduit for communication and idea sharing between the Board and its secondary students, empowering the role of the Student Trustees and their mandate to represent student voice.

- c) to support the Student Trustees in their task of coordinating initiatives which benefit and celebrate student achievement by collaboratively working towards a common goal.
- d) to oversee the election of the incoming Student Trustee for the following two academic years to serve as the representative of all Renfrew County District School Board students at official Board meetings and standing committees of the Board.

(3.2) A member of the Student Senate shall:

- a) represent the interests of students from their secondary school at every meeting of the Student Senate.
- b) liaise, represent, and gather information with and to their student council and to the students at their school on topics discussed at Student Senate meetings, and any issues arisen by the student body.

(3.3) The term of a member of the Student Senate shall last for the duration of the academic year in which they serve as an elected member of their respective school's student council.

#### **4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES**

##### Senate Membership

(4.1) The Student Senate shall consist of:

- a) two voting elected members of each secondary school's respective student council such that:
  - i) one is the head (Prime Minister, President, etc.) of their school's respective student council, as elected by the general population of the student body.
  - ii) one is a regular member of their student council and is chosen by their student council peers to serve as the second representative on the Student Senate.
- b) the two Student Trustees, as elected by the previous year's Student Senate.
- c) one non-voting Board member as determined by the Board.
- d) The Communications Manager of the Board as non-voting administrative liaison.

### Meetings of the Student Senate

(4.2) The elected Student Trustees shall co-chair all meetings of the Student Senate.

(4.3) In-person meetings of the Student Senate shall occur at the Renfrew County District School Board Office in Pembroke on a bi-monthly (once every two months) basis beginning in October of each academic year.

(4.4) Meetings of the Senate which take place on months between in-person meetings shall be conducted via means of electronic audio/video conferencing. Alternatively, members of the Senate unable to attend in-person meetings may connect via electronic means.

(4.5) Prior to the culmination of the academic year, the incoming Student Trustee and newly elected heads of student councils will meet with the incumbent Senate for transition into the following Senate term.

### Meetings of the Board and its Committees

(4.6) The Student Senate shall be officially represented at all meetings of the Board and its standing committees by the two Student Trustees, providing the perspective shared by delegates of the student body.

(4.7) The Student Trustees will bring regular updates to the Student Senate on activities of the Board.

### Quorum

(4.8) A quorum exists if over 40% of Senate members are noted to be in attendance at duly scheduled in-person or electronic meetings.

### Budget

(4.9) An operational budget for the Student Senate will be established annually by the Director of Education in consultation with the Superintendent of Corporate Services. It will be managed by the non-voting administrative liaison and covers costs limited to teacher release, staff mileage to and from school sites and food and refreshment for meetings held at the board office.

### Election of Student Senators

(4.10) Each school's Senate members shall be elected and confirmed by the school's student council by no later than the first week of October.

(4.11) Should a member resign from the Student Senate or be disqualified, the respective student council will be tasked with electing a replacement.

### Filling a Vacancy

(4.12) All vacancies on the Student Senate shall be filled, unless the vacancy occurs within one month of the end of the academic year. A vacancy that occurs after the election of senators but before the new Senate is organized shall be filled after the new Senate is organized.

(4.13) The Senate has 30 days to decide whether to fill the vacancy by appointment or by holding a by-election. If it is determined that a by-election is permitted, the school with the vacancy will be asked to hold an election for a replacement.

### Appointment

(4.14) If a majority of the senators remain in office, the remaining senators may appoint a qualified student representative within 30 days of the position becoming vacant.

(4.15) If the Senate decides to fill a vacancy by appointment, they must appoint a person who is eligible to serve and who is willing to accept the appointment. It is up to the Senate to determine whom to appoint provided they adhere to one of the following methods:

- a) appointing the candidate who came second in the general election;
- b) inviting interested persons to apply for the position.

(4.16) The Senate can, by resolution, require that a vacancy be filled in a by-election in the respective school council. Once the Senate has decided to hold a by-election, the non-voting administrative liaison is in charge of conducting the by-election. The Senate does not decide when nomination day or voting day will be. These dates are determined by the administrative liaison.

(4.17) Nominations open when the Senate has passed a resolution ordering the by-election. Nominations close at 2 p.m. on nomination day.

(4.18) The non-voting administrative liaison shall set the nomination day within 15 days after the by-election is ordered. Voting day takes place 5 days after nomination day.

### Qualifications

(4.19) A member of the Student Senate is deemed disqualified from their position 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 of the Student Senate without just cause.