

# Langley Teachers' Association



# Staff Committee Handbook



***January 2019***

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## **SCHOOL STAFF COMMITTEE (ARTICLE A.25, from Collective Agreement)**

1. The Board and the Union encourage each school to develop a committee to foster communication and collegiality among teachers through discussion of issues relevant to the teaching staff.
2. Each school, district staff or itinerant group has the right to establish a recognized Staff Committee of LTA members.
3. Staff Committee size, quorum and membership shall be determined by the teaching staff.
4. Proposals made by Staff Committee shall be considered by the school administration
5. Should the administrative officer choose not to implement a proposal of the Staff Committee, the administrative officer will, when requested, advise the Staff Committee of the reasons. The administrative officer, at the administrative officer's option, shall provide the reasons in writing or shall attend the next meeting of the Staff Committee and provide oral reasons.

### **STAFF COMMITTEE PURPOSE**

The purpose of the staff committee is:

- To promote democratic decision making in schools
- To ensure greater commitment to decisions
- To enhance professionalism and the quality of education

The staff committee shall review and make recommendations on any matter which may include but shall not be limited to the following:

- a) Review each teachers' assignments under the following headings:
  - i. Adequate physical requirements
  - ii. Suitable class size and composition
  - iii. Suitable instructional assignment
  - iv. An adequate supply of learning materials
  - v. An adequate auxiliary staff
  - vi. Time to plan, to organize and to work with individual students, with colleagues, with parents
  - vii. Pupil evaluation (reporting on pupil progress)
- b) Assess the teaching and learning conditions within the school and make recommendations for improvement in the total teaching situations.
- c) Study and make recommendations on:
  - i. School regulations, policies, and routines
  - ii. School education policy
  - iii. Non-instructional days
  - iv. School curriculum planning and evaluation
  - v. School timetable and organizations
  - vi. School staffing including utilization of teaching staff and auxiliary staff
  - vii. Professional and staff development

- d) Establish structures that promote effective communication and co-operation between staff and the school's parent advisory committee.
- e) Receive representations from members of the community, students and/or committees of students in such a manner as may be agreed to by the committee.
- f) Have access to and review all school level budget and financial information
- g) Ensure that all staff are provided with the relevant information to assist the staff on making educationally sound decisions.
- h) Timetabling Considerations
  - i. In timetabling teachers' workloads, consideration shall be given to each load with regard to equalizing the teachers total assignments considering factors as:
    - a) The number of course preparations
    - b) The number of subject areas
    - c) The number of locations
    - d) Other relevant factors
  - ii. In timetabling members' loads, special consideration should be given to the load of beginning teachers to provide an assignment which is not excessive for the beginning teacher in terms of the number of course preparations, the number of subject areas, the teaching location and the number of students.

#### GUIDELINES FOR STAFF COMMITTEE:

That the local association policies and guidelines for staff committees shall be consistent with the terms of the local collective agreement and with the BCTF policy with respect to the following:

- a) Size and composition of the school staff committees
- b) Relationship between staff committees and other school based committees, non-teaching personnel, parent advisory council, and student council
- c) Guidelines for the framing of staff committee constitution that include:
  - i. Voting and election procedures, including election of a chair
  - ii. Scheduling meetings
  - iii. Development of the agenda
  - iv. Reporting and circulation of minutes
  - v. Conduct of meetings
  - vi. Function and responsibility of the staff committee
  - vii. Decision making
  - viii. Role of the Staff Representative

## **HOW CAN I MAKE A CHANGE IN POLICY AT MY SCHOOL? - PROCESS AT A GLANCE**

### ***Step 1***

When a teacher has a concern about an issue, encourage them to start with some questions and investigate before bringing it to Staff Committee – they can ask the School Union Team and/or Admin – it may or may not need to be dealt with at Staff Committee.

### ***Step 2***

If, after doing some research, the member still feels that the matter needs to be addressed at Staff Committee, it is placed on the Staff Committee Agenda with the caveat that the item cannot violate the terms of the Collective Agreement. Ideally it comes in the form of a motion.

### ***Step 3***

Minutes from the Staff Committee meeting will be emailed or posted for all members.

### ***Step 4***

Meeting with administrators to discuss Staff Committee proposals.

### ***Step 5***

The Administrator accepts and acts on the recommendation or responds to the Staff Committee verbally or written, which is minuted, if they are unable to act on the recommendation. Article A.25-5

## **TIPS TO HELP THINGS RUN**

- Staff Committee could be a monthly process. Some are as needs are brought up. Some mid-semester, every semester at secondary. Here's a typical month for the chair of a Staff Committee:
- Plan to have your Staff Committee meeting a week or so before the staff meeting. You could set up a year long schedule for regular meetings. This does not preclude having extraordinary meetings for emergent time sensitive issues.
- Mid-month, send an email to all staff requesting agenda items. When items come in, create the agenda (which likely includes standing agenda items such as Pro-D, WLC/B etc.), and circulate the proposed agenda a few days before the planned meeting. This may generate more items as people are reminded of the upcoming meeting. If appropriate, add the new items and circulate the revised agenda. It is important that all staff know what will be discussed, as items may pertain to them and they may want to come and speak on these issues. Wherever possible, discussion items should be framed as motions so that the discussion is focussed and it leads to action. This forestalls meandering conversations with no tangible outcomes.
- It is important to notify people who should be at the meeting if an agenda item will affect them personally/professionally. For example, if an agenda item is about something happening at the library, make sure the teacher librarian is informed about it so they can attend. Everyone gets the agenda emailed.
- Hold the meeting. Have a recorder take the minutes, and forward them as soon as possible to
- the Chair for distribution to the whole staff.
- Email the minutes to the whole staff and also prepare to present the motions to the Staff meeting.
- Present any motions passed (or defeated!) at your Staff Committee meeting to the general staff meeting for their consideration and vote. The Staff Committee Chair should facilitate the discussion on these items at the staff meeting.

## **I DON'T KNOW HOW TO CHAIR A MEETING! HOW DO I DO IT?**

- Different schools do things different ways which is fine, however, basic rules of order speed up meetings and keep them consistent.
- Keep a speaker's list, which means maintaining a list during the meeting of who has indicated that they want to speak, by raising their hand, and letting people speak in turn. The objective is to have a variety of voices heard and a sense of fairness about who speaks.
- Some Staff Committees have a discussion about an issue first, and then vote on a motion that captures the idea, and other have motions proposed first, followed by debate, discussion and then voting. The important thing is that if you have arrived at a decision, make sure it is articulated and recorded and voted upon by the members of the committee, so everyone is clear on what the committee is taking forward to the staff meeting.
- The chair should NOT be taking minutes. Ask a member of the committee to be the regular recording secretary.

## **STAFF COMMITTEE CONSTITUTIONS**

Staff Committee Constitutions should be sent to the LTA to keep on file if you are thinking about updating yours, please send it in. The Constitution must be congruent with the language in the Collective Agreement. Furthermore, the Staff Committee cannot pass motions that contravene the language of the Collective Agreement, the School Act, the Human Rights Act etc.

## **LAST THOUGHTS**

Discussion in the form of motions makes for productive and well run Staff Committee meetings that people will want to attend. People can speak for or against the motion, or ask clarifying questions.

The Chair has the power to direct the meeting and keep it professional and on task – these are the powers invested in you by Robert's Rules of Order.



## **ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER**

### **Role of meeting chair (in our case, the president)**

1. Calling the meeting to order on time
2. Announcing the business before the group in the order noted on the agenda
3. Determining the presence of a quorum
4. Recognizing members who want to speak
5. Processing all motions
6. Expediting business
7. Ruling on points of order
8. Conducting the meeting in a fair and equitable manner

### **DEBATES AND DECORUM**

- After a motion is made, the floor is open for debate.
- The person making the motion has the right to speak first.
- Each speaker needs to be recognized by the meeting chair.
- Ideally, speakers should alternate between those in favor of a motion and those opposed.
- Each speaker is given a specific time limit to present his or her argument, usually 10 minutes. (Our meetings typically don't have the luxury of time, so this may be too long.)
- A longer time can be given, if approved by a two-thirds vote.
- A person who hasn't spoken out gets precedence over people who have already spoken to the motion.
- No speaker can speak more than two times.
- Maker of the motion (or the chair) calls for closure of the debate after everyone who wishes to speak has been heard. If someone calls a question before that, the group must vote on whether to end the debate (no discussion).
- A two-thirds vote is required to end a debate.
- To keep the discussion focused on the motion, avoid discussing personalities of the people involved, questioning the motives of the other members, making derogatory remarks, including name calling.

## **Example of Staff Committee Minutes**

**SCHOOL NAME**

**DATE/TIME**

**MINUTES**

Chair:

Recording Secretary:

Attending:

Regrets:

**Agenda Items**

Item #1: notes

Motion:

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Carried/defeated

Item #2: notes

Motion:

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Carried/defeated

Motion to Adjourn

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Carried/defeated



## ***Example of School Staff Committee Constitution/ Procedures***

### **Statement of Purpose:**

The purpose of the Staff Committee structure is to promote and facilitate a democratic, collegial process in school-based decision making

### **1. Composition**

All LTA members or voted staff committee membership

### **2. Procedures**

- There could be at least one meeting each month, or as decided by the Staff Committee.
- Minutes of the previous meeting and agenda of the upcoming meeting will be distributed by the Chair at least two school days prior to each meeting. A staff member with a concern or issue will submit this item to the Staff Committee Chair to be added to the agenda.
- In order for an item to be considered, this individual- or a representative- must be present at the Staff Committee meeting.
- The Chair may call an emergency meeting if an issue must be dealt with in a timely manner.
- The Chair has the discretion to determine if it is an emergency issue. Should an emergency issue arise after the agenda for an upcoming meeting has been distributed, the Chair will make every effort to communicate this item to staff. If possible the item should be referred to the next scheduled meeting.

### **3. Responsibilities**

- To represent the staff at large
- To receive and make recommendations
- To advise and assist the administration in the solution of specific problems
- To develop and maintain effective communication and consultation throughout the school
- To review school policies and procedures and develop recommendations for improvement (an example would be to review Pro-D Committee, Safety Committee)

### **4. Decision Making**

- Significant Staff Committee motions/recommendations/decisions will be presented to the staff as a whole at staff meetings to be discussed and voted on by the whole staff.
- The principal shall not unreasonably refuse to implement the recommendations (decisions) of the Staff Committee or a majority vote of the staff.
- In the case where a Principal rejects a recommendation (decision) of the Staff Committee or a majority vote of the staff, the Principal will submit in writing the reasons for rejection to the Staff Committee in a timely manner.

### **5. Duties of Chair and Secretary**

The Staff Committee Chair calls all meetings and accepts motions in accordance with the BCTF Simplified Rules of Order (1984). They are also responsible for reporting committee activities to the staff.

