

BOARD OPERATIONS

The Board believes that its ability to discharge its obligations in an efficient and effective manner is dependent upon the development and implementation of a sound organization design. In order to discharge its responsibilities to the parents of MECCS, the Board shall hold meetings as often as is necessary.

A quorum, which is a majority of the number of directors specified in the By-Laws of the Mother Earth's Children Charter School Society, must be present for every duly constituted meeting.

The Board has adopted policies so that the business of the Board can be conducted in an orderly and efficient manner.

Consistent with its objective to encourage all parents to contribute to the educational process, Board meetings will be open to the public. Towards this end, the Board believes its affairs must be conducted in public to the greatest extent possible.

The Board believes there are times when public interest is best served by private discussion of specific issues in "in-camera" sessions. The Board believes it is necessary to protect individual privacy and the Board's own position in negotiating either collective agreements or contracts and therefore expects to go in-camera for issues dealing with individual students, individual employees, land, labour, litigation or negotiation.

The Board further believes having members of the public make presentations at Board meetings can enhance public interest.

The Board also believes that public forums dealing with specific educational topics and held on a regular basis can enhance communications and the effectiveness of the Board.

1. Organizational Meeting

An organizational meeting of the Board shall be the September meeting following the Annual General Meeting.

The organizational meeting shall include, but not be restricted to, the following:

- 1.1 Elect a Chair and Vice Chair;
- 1.2 Establish a schedule (date, time and place) for regular meetings, and any additional required meetings;
- 1.3 Approve the annual work plan for the Board;
- 1.4 Create such standing or ad hoc committees of the Board as are deemed appropriate, and appoint members;
- 1.5 Review Director conflict of interest stipulations and determine any disclosure of information requirements.

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2. Regular Meetings

The dates of regular Board meetings shall be as established at the September annual organizational meeting.

- 2.1 Meetings will ordinarily be held in the Mother Earth's Children Charter School or an alternative location acceptable to the Board;
- 2.2 Notwithstanding the schedule noted in 1.2, the Board may, by resolution, alter the schedule in such manner as it deems appropriate.
- 2.3 All directors shall notify the Board Chair or the Superintendent if they are unable to attend a Board meeting.
- 2.4 All directors who are absent from three consecutive regular meetings shall:
 - 2.4.1 Obtain authorization by resolution of the Board to do so; or
 - 2.4.2 Provide to the Superintendent evidence of illness in the form of a medical certificate respecting the period of absence.
Failure to attend may result in disqualification.
- 2.5 If both the Chair or Vice-Chair through illness or other cause are unable to perform the duties of the office or are absent, the Board shall appoint from among its members an acting Chair, who on being so appointed has all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the Chair during the Chair's and Vice-Chair's inability to act or absence.

3. Special Meetings

Occasionally, unanticipated or emergent issues require immediate Board attention and/or action. Special meetings of the Board may be held from time to time as provided for under section 67 of the School Act and MECCS bylaws. These are public meetings.

The nature of the business to be transacted must be clearly specified in the notice of the meeting. Unless all directors are present at the special meeting, no other business may be transacted. Items can be added to the agenda only by the unanimous consent of the entire Board.

4. In-Camera Sessions

The Board may, by resolution, schedule an in-camera meeting at a time or place agreeable to the Board or recess a meeting in progress for the purpose of meeting in-camera. Such resolutions shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board and shall specify those individuals eligible to attend in addition to directors and the Superintendent. The reason for the In-Camera session shall be limited to discussion pertaining to the following stated reasons:

- 4.1 Individual students;
- 4.2 Individual employees;
- 4.3 Bargaining issues;
- 4.4 Litigation issues;

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4.5 Acquisition/disposal of property; and

4.6 Other topics that a majority of the directors present feel should be held in private, in the public interest.

The Board shall only discuss the matter that gave rise to the closed meeting. Directors and other persons attending the session shall maintain confidentiality and not disclose the substance of deliberations at such sessions.

The Board shall, during the in-camera session, adopt only such resolution as is required to reconvene the Board in an open, public meeting.

5. Agenda for Regular Meetings

The Superintendent is responsible for preparing an agenda for Board meetings in accordance with board policy, practice and the School Act.

The board chair is responsible to review the draft agenda prior to distribution.

5.1 The order of business at a regular meeting shall generally be as follows:

5.1.1 Call to Order

- Approval of Agenda

5.1.2 Approval of Minutes

- Minutes of Regular Board Meetings
- Minutes of Special Board Meetings

5.1.3 Reports

- Action Items
- Information items
- School report

5.1.4 Adjournment

Items scheduled for a specific time shall be clearly identified on the agenda.

5.2 The agenda will be supported by copies of letters, reports, contracts and other materials as are pertinent to the business that will come before the Board and will be of value to the Board in the performance of its duties.

5.3 Items may be placed on the agenda in one of the following ways:

5.3.1 By notifying the Board Chair or Superintendent at least six days prior to the Board meeting.

5.3.2 By notice of motion at the previous meeting of the Board.

5.3.3 As a request from a committee of the Board.

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- 5.3.4 Emergent issues that require Board action may arise after the agenda has been prepared. The Board Chair, at the beginning of the meeting, shall ask for additions to and/or deletions from the agenda prior to agenda approval. Changes to the agenda may be made by a majority of those present
- 5.4. The agenda package, containing the agenda and supporting information, will be provided to each director at least two (2) days prior to the date of the meeting. Subsequently, emergent information may be sent electronically.
- 5.5 The list of agenda items shall be posted on MECCS's notice board and on the school website on the same day it is distributed to directors. Any parent may inspect the agenda.
- 5.6 The Board will follow the order of business set by the agenda unless the order is altered or new items are added by agreement of the Board.
- 5.7 During the course of the Board meeting, the majority of directors present may amend the agenda and place items before the Board for discussion. The Board may take action on such items.
- 5.8 The Board will deal with all matters properly brought before it, unless referred to a committee by a majority vote of the members present.
6. Minutes for Regular or Special Meetings
- 6.1 The minutes shall record:
- 6.1.1 Date, time and place of meeting;
 - 6.1.2 Type of meeting;
 - 6.1.3 Name of presiding officer;
 - 6.1.4 Names of those directors and administration in attendance;
 - 6.1.5 Approval of preceding minutes;
 - 6.1.6 A brief summary of the circumstances which gave rise to the matter being debated by the Board;
 - 6.1.7 All resolutions, including the Board's disposition of the same, placed before the Board, are to be entered in full;
 - 6.1.8 Names of persons making the motion;
 - 6.1.9 Points of order and appeals;
 - 6.1.10 Appointments;
 - 6.1.11 Summarized reports of committees;

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6.1.12 Recording of the vote on a motion (when requested pursuant to the School Act);
and

6.1.13 Director Declaration pursuant to the School Act.

6.2 The minutes shall:

6.2.1 Be prepared as directed by the Superintendent;

6.2.2 Be reviewed by the Superintendent prior to submission to the Board;

6.2.3 Be considered an unofficial record of proceedings until such time as adopted by a resolution of the Board; and

6.2.4 Upon adoption by the Board, be deemed to be the official and sole record of the Board's business.

6.3 The Superintendent or designate shall ensure, upon acceptance by the Board, that appropriate initials are appended to each page of the minutes, and that appropriate signatures are affixed to the concluding page of the minutes.

6.4 The Superintendent or designate shall establish and maintain a file of all Board minutes.

6.5 Upon adoption by the Board, the minutes shall be open to public scrutiny through posting on the school website or availability at the school office.

7. Motions

Motions do not require a seconder, except in rare instances as described below.

7.1 General

7.1.1 All questions will be submitted to the Board by a motion of any Director other than the Board Chair.

7.1.2 After a motion has been submitted, the chairperson or any member may request that it be put in writing or recorded before it is stated by the chairperson.

7.1.3 The motion must be read before the director who introduced the motion may speak on it.

7.1.4 The motion will be voted on unless, with the permission of the Board, it is withdrawn by the mover.

7.2 Notice of Motion

The notice of motion serves the purpose of officially putting an item on the agenda of the next or future regular meeting and gives notice to all directors of the item to be discussed. A notice of motion is not debatable and may not be voted on. A director may present a notice of motion for consideration at the next regular meeting of the Board or may specify another meeting date. A director may also provide the

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Superintendent with a written notice of motion and ask that it be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting and read at the meeting. The director will need not be present during the reading of the motion, however if the director is not present, a seconder is required at the meeting at which the notice is given, otherwise the item will be dropped.

7.3 Discussion on Motions

The custom of addressing comments to the Board Chair is to be followed by all persons in attendance.

A Board motion or a recommendation from administration must generally be placed before the Board prior to any discussion taking place on an issue. Once a motion is before the Board and until it is passed or defeated, all speakers shall confine their remarks to the motion or to the information pertinent to the motion.

7.4 Speaking to the Motion

The mover of a motion first and every director shall have an opportunity to speak to the motion before any director is allowed to speak a second time.

The mover of the motion is permitted to close debate on the motion.

As a general guide, a director should not speak longer than five minutes on any motion. The Board Chair has the responsibility to limit the discussion by a director when such a discussion is repetitive or digresses from the topic at hand, or where discussion takes place prior to the acceptance of a motion.

No one shall interrupt a speaker, unless it is to ask for important clarification of the speaker's remarks, and any such interruption shall not be permitted without permission of the Board Chair.

Should a director arrive at the meeting after a motion has been made and prior to taking a vote, the director may request further discussion prior to the vote.

The Board Chair shall rule on further discussion.

7.5 Reading of the Motion

A director may require the motion under discussion to be read at any time during the debate, except when a director is speaking.

7.6 Recorded Vote

Whenever a director requests a recorded vote, before the vote is taken, the minutes shall record the names of the directors who voted for or against the matter.

Immediately after a vote is taken and on the request of a director, the minutes shall

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record the name of that director and whether that director voted for or against the matter or abstained.

7.7 Required Votes

The Board Chair, and all directors present, unless excused by resolution of the Board or by the provisions of the School Act, shall vote on each question. Each question shall be decided by a majority of the votes of those directors present.

A simple majority of a quorum of the Board will decide in favour of the question.

In the case of an equality of votes, the question is defeated. A vote on a question shall be taken by open vote, expressed by show of hands, except the vote to elect the Board Chair or Vice-Chair, which is by secret ballot, unless there is unanimous agreement among the directors to use a show of hands.

7.8 Debate

In all debate, any matter of procedure in dispute shall be settled, if possible, by reference to Robert's Rules of Order. If this reference is inadequate, procedure may be determined by motion supported by the majority of directors in attendance.

8. Delegations to Board Meetings

The Board believes that it has the responsibility to encourage parents of MECCS to bring matters of concern regarding the education of children and the operation of MECCS to regular meetings of the Board. The Board also believes it has a responsibility to conduct regular public meetings of the Board in an orderly and efficient fashion. The Board will receive representations and delegations on any subject pertinent to Board business provided the item has been placed on the agenda.

8.1 All delegations wishing to appear before the Board shall give six days notice thereof in writing to the Board Chair or Superintendent before the meeting at which they wish to appear. The notice shall contain sufficient information to enable the directors to become acquainted with the subject beforehand. A copy of the request shall be sent to each director with the agenda for the meeting at which the delegation is to appear.

8.2 In an emergent situation where time does not permit adherence to this timeline, the Board may agree to receive a delegation. The Superintendent shall acquaint the directors with the problem at the morning session and shall arrange for the delegation to meet with the Board in the afternoon.

8.3 A spokesperson(s) for the delegation must be identified.

8.4 Delegations are encouraged to keep their presentations brief, with a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes. The Board Chair has the right to restrict the length of time for any delegation at any meeting.

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8.5 Matters deemed to be of a sensitive and/or confidential nature shall be heard at an in-camera session of the Board. Personnel issues will not be discussed in an open forum.

8.6 In discussing matters with the delegation, the Board Chair shall act as spokesperson for the Board. The Board will normally hear the matter presented to it without entering into discussion or debate. However, individual directors or administrators may raise questions of clarification and address these to the delegation. At no time during the presentation shall any director commit the Board to any specific course of action.

8.7 The Board will not necessarily make a decision on the matter at the same meeting that a representation or delegation is heard. Upon completion of the presentation, the Board Chair shall inform the delegation when a decision, if required, will be made. Such decision will be communicated in writing to the spokesperson.

9. Recording Devices

9.1 The Board expects that anyone wanting to use a recording device at a public Board meeting shall obtain prior approval of the Chair.

10. Director Conflict of Interest

The director is directly responsible to the parents of MECCS and to the Board. Upon election to office, the director must complete a disclosure of personal interest statement and accept a position of public trust. The director is expected to act in a manner which will enhance the trust accorded the director, and through the director, the trust accorded to the Board.

The Board is of the firm conviction that its ability to discharge its obligations is dependent upon the trust and confidence of the electorate in its Board and in its director members. Therefore, the Board believes in the requirement to declare conflict of interest

10.1 The director is expected to be conversant with sections 80-86 of the School Act.

10.2 The director is solely responsible for declaring him/herself to be in possible conflict of interest.

10.2.1 The director shall make such declaration in open meeting prior to Board or committee discussion of the subject matter which may place the director in conflict of interest.

10.2.2 Following the declaration of conflict of interest by a director, all debate and action shall cease until the director has left the room.

10.3 It shall be the responsibility of the director in conflict to absent him/herself from the meeting in accordance with the requirements of the School Act and ensure that his/her declaration and absence is properly recorded within the minutes.

10.4 The recording secretary will record in the minutes:

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10.4.1 The director's declaration;

10.4.2 The director's abstention from the debate and the vote; and

10.4.3 That the director left the room in which the meeting was held.

Reference: Section 60, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 80, 81, 82, 83, 145, School Act

Local Authorities Elections Act

Ministerial Order 137/94

Ministerial Order 162/94

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