

Eugene Waldorf School

Parent Council Handbook

September 1998

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I. Description of the Parent Council

A. Purpose

The Parent Council serves as a springboard for parents' ideas, initiatives, and concerns and as a forum where current issues within the school community can be discussed. The Parent Council strives to facilitate and encourage parents' active and positive communication with the Faculty and the Board, strengthen social bonds within the Eugene Waldorf School community and inspire volunteerism of parents in service of the school. The Parent Council shall also establish and oversee committees that run under its auspices.

B. Role Within the School

Parent Council is a way for parents to actively participate in, serve, and contribute to the functioning and organization of the school.

The Parent Council is the third organizational body of the school (the other two being the Faculty/College of Teachers and the Board of Trustees). The Parent Council's main sphere of influence is in the social realm, while the College's main sphere is the pedagogical realm and the Board is mainly responsible for financial and legal matters.

C. Meetings

The Parent Council has regular meetings once a month and occasional, additional special meetings. Monthly meetings are open to all parents of children enrolled in the school and Parent Council strives to maintain an open atmosphere that truly welcomes each parent to attend and participate.

D. Membership

All school parents are members of Parent Council and are encouraged to participate. Voting members of Parent Council consist of: 1 - 2 parent representatives from each class, a Chairperson and a Secretary from the parent body, a parent who is the Parent Council Representative to the Board, an Office Rep and a Representative from the Faculty. Regular attendance by voting members is strongly encouraged, and some decision-making is open only to voting members who have attended at least two consecutive meetings out of the last four meetings. There may also be an Alumni Liaison who participates in Parent Council, but is not a voting member.

E. Decision Making

Consensus

Decisions in Parent Council are made using a consensus process. Decisions that are easily reached are informally decided by assent. At other times, it is more difficult to reach a decision and then a more formal process is used. Consensus is a form of decision making that draws on the diverse insights of everyone and is designed to find a solution that embodies the concerns of all members. In consensus decision-making, representatives are encouraged to be concerned for the good of the School rather than pressing a personal preference. It is important that one listens

carefully and is open to changing one's opinion. The Chair should attempt to formulate a proposal that is a reflection of the Council's thoughts and feelings and that will be amenable to all. When a consensus has been reached, there should be sufficient unity that no one would consider obstructing the decision or undermining it in any way.

When the more formal consensus process is necessary, the following process is followed. The issue to be considered is presented by whoever is bringing the issue before the Council for consideration. There is an opportunity for questions and then a period of time for discussion. The participation of the general parent body and the faculty is welcomed and appreciated during this discussion period. The Chair helps to focus the discussion and ensures that all members have an opportunity to speak. Members should be honest and open in discussions of this kind while taking care to be respectful of other's opinions. Members should take care to speak briefly, stay on the subject, and avoid speaking again until all other participants have had an opportunity to share their thoughts. After all have had an opportunity to ask questions, clarify points, and express concerns, the Chair formulates a proposal that ideally embodies everyone's suggestions and concerns. There is then an additional opportunity for suggested changes or corrections to the proposal.

Once a proposal has been formulated, the Five Finger method is used to determine the level of support for a proposal. Because PC voting members have, by virtue of their involvement in Parent Council, a broad knowledge of the workings of the school, this part of the process includes only voting members of Parent Council.

Five Finger Method

When the Chair asks for a show of fingers, each voting Parent Council member holds up between one and five fingers indicating the level of support they feel for the proposal being discussed.

Five fingers indicates that you enthusiastically support the proposal without reservation.

Four fingers means you like the proposal and support it.

Three fingers means you have some concerns but they are not strong enough to merit standing in the way of the decision

Two fingers means you have concerns about the proposal and cannot support it.

One finger means you oppose the proposal.

The Chair looks around the room to see how many fingers are raised. If all PC voting members have either five or four fingers raised, a consensus has been reached. If all PC voting members have either five, four or three fingers raised and if those who have three fingers raised have stated their concerns within the previous discussion, then consensus has been reached. If there are voting members who are raising only two or one finger or any who are raising three fingers who have not stated their concerns in the previous discussion, they are asked to state them. Often there is more discussion and either revisions made to the original proposal, or new solutions proposed until finally the group reaches consensus. If the group is unable to reach consensus after trying for some time, the Chair may propose that the issue be tabled until the next meeting, or that a small committee be formed to consider the matter and bring back a recommendation to the Council.

Standing Aside

A voting member may "stand aside" from a decision in the following circumstances:

- If they haven't been present for the discussion of the issue or haven't done their research on it and trust that the rest of the group who has can make an appropriate decision
- If they have a conflict of interest in the decision at hand
- If they cannot help implement the decision because of personal reasons
- If they have some concerns but they do not wish to stand in the way of the proposal. These members would like their concerns to be noted in the minutes. (The notation in the minutes distinguishes them from the members who raised three fingers.)

Standing aside is a gesture of trust in the process. Although those who stand aside are not asked to implement a decision, they will not undermine the decision. All those who choose to stand aside state the general reason and this is noted in the minutes.

If, after consideration, the Council is still unable to come to a place of unity, then it may be useful to call a special session for the purpose of airing differences and further clarifying the issue.

Special Session

The special session is not a meeting for decision-making but rather an opportunity for differences to be aired and faced. It is imperative that all opinions are heard and even widely differing opinions are welcomed. We encourage members to thoroughly explore whatever troubles them and we strive to create an environment where it is safe for everyone to speak openly about an issue. In the special session, it is important for the Chair to limit the time taken by frequent talkers, and make sure all have an opportunity to speak. After a session such as this, there may be more clarity among the Council and the way may be found for consensus on the issue.

The Parent Council, as well as the other bodies of the school, are in the process of continually clarifying and honing the form of consensus used and deciding how to proceed when consensus cannot be reached.

Voting

Some decisions, such as selecting the PC Chair and the PC Secretary are conducted through anonymous voting. The Parent Council decided that anonymous voting would best allow voting members to express their feelings honestly in these decisions. Trying to select someone in a more public process can be quite awkward in a close knit social community and can result in people not feeling able to express their true preferences for fear of hurting someone's feelings.

In order to draw upon a broad knowledge of the workings of Parent Council in choosing who will fill these important roles, in most situations, voting members must have attended at least two out of the last four regular PC meetings to be eligible to vote in these elections. Because of the varying schedules of summer and in order to include new members, votes held in the September or October meetings do not have attendance-based eligibility requirements. In votes taken at other times of the year, a voting member who has missed more than two out of the last four meetings but who has stayed connected to and is still committed to Parent Council, can participate in the vote if they request that the other voting members confer voting rights on them and if this request is granted. The voting process is further detailed later in this document.

II. Organizational Structure of the Parent Council

A. Parent Council Class Reps

1. Job Description

Parent Council class reps have the following responsibilities:

1. Attending all Parent Council meetings (approximately 3 hours per month). Continuity of attendance is important for decision-making.
2. Attending all class meetings of the class for which you are the rep (varies from one meeting per term to one meeting per month, depending on the class)
3. Transferring information back and forth between the class and the Parent Council
4. Starting the phone tree for your class as necessary (approx. one hour a month)
5. Conveying information about school events to parents in the class and delegating the responsibility for organizing your class' portion of the event to one of the parents in the class
6. Educating oneself as to the organizational forms that exist within the school, the functioning of the three bodies, and the procedures and policies of the school
7. Attending occasional meetings of other bodies or groups when invited (such as joint Board/faculty meetings or meetings with outside consultants), as a representative of Parent Council
8. Supporting parents in the class who have questions or concerns about the school by directing them to the proper channels by which to get these matters resolved. (See Appendix.)
9. Maintaining an awareness about what it means to *represent* - to proactively solicit and convey the issues and concerns of your class to the Parent Council or the appropriate individual or body, even when those issues and concerns are different than your personal viewpoint
10. Striving to be a role model within the parent body, to consciously try to hold matters that concern the school in the highest way within yourself and to communicate clearly and appropriately with others in the school community about school matters

2. Term of Office

Preschool

Since children only remain in the preschool for one year, reps will be selected at the first class meeting in the fall and will serve until August.

Kindergarten and Grade 1

In the first kindergarten class meeting after April 1, one to two reps will be chosen to represent each of the next year's kindergarten classes and one to two reps to represent the next year's first grade class. The term of office of these reps is April through October. Because there is such a high percentage of new families in kindergarten and first grade, and the intent is for reps to be truly representational of every class parent, the rep selection process will occur again in kindergarten and first grade in the first class meeting after October 1. The reps whose term just ended can run again as well as any other parents from the class. The term of this appointment is from October until April.

Grades 2 - 8

The term of office of Class Reps in grades 2 - 8 goes from the time they are selected until the first Parent Evening of that class after April 1. This is when the regular selection process occurs. Most reps from these grades are selected in April to serve a 12-month term. This helps create continuity in the form, function and direction of Parent Council by assuring that most reps have some experience as a parent in the school. It also allows for the work of Parent Council to continue during the summer months.

3. Eligibility

Any parent of a child currently enrolled in that class and who is not already a rep for a different class and who is willing to fulfill the responsibilities of the job is eligible to be a Class Rep to the Parent Council.

4. Selection Process

In order to begin the selection process one of the current reps for the class (or the Parent Council Chair if there are no current reps) will begin a class phone tree approximately ten days before the first class meeting scheduled after April 1 (as well as the first class meeting scheduled after October 1 in the kindergarten and the first grade). This phone tree will be to let the class parents know that PC rep elections will be held at the next class meeting and anyone who is interested in being a rep should contact the class teacher before the next meeting. Also the phone tree message should tell parents that the Parent Council Handbook (which describes what Parent Council does and contains a job description of being a class rep) is available in the office for them to read if they are interested. Rep selection in the Preschool class happens without prior notice.

If two or fewer parents have volunteered, the class teacher will simply announce at that meeting who the reps will be. If more than two parents have volunteered, then the teacher will announce the candidates and will pass out blank slips of paper to be used as an anonymous ballot. Each parent present can vote for two of the candidates. (A single voter cannot vote for the same person twice.) Any class parents not present may submit their votes to the class teacher IN ADVANCE of the meeting. Ballots will be tallied at the meeting by the teacher and the two candidates with the most votes will be the reps for that class.

At each of the kindergarten class meetings in April, the kindergarten reps will be chosen from among the parents who are planning to have their child stay in kindergarten for the next year. The reps for first grade are chosen from among the parents who are planning to have their child go on to first grade. If there is more than two volunteers from either group, the class teacher will conduct a vote among that group of parents.

In the event that there is more than one kindergarten class and the classes have separate parent evenings, the selection processes for the next year's first grade may result in a total of more than two reps being selected. In this case, the Parent Council will try to work it out informally by speaking with the selected parents and shuffling who represents which class (in the case of parents with more than one child in the school) or considering who is willing to be the Secretary, so that everyone who wants to participate can be included.

Any classes who, for whatever reason, do not have 2 reps when school starts in September, will conduct the selection process to try to fill any remaining spots at the first class meeting.

If at any time there are less than two reps for a class and someone wants to volunteer, they are encouraged to begin attending meetings and participating in Parent Council. The existing rep from that class or the Parent Council Chair, will start a class phone tree 10 days before the next scheduled class meeting and if no one else volunteers, the announcement of that person's rep status is made by the class teacher at the next class meeting. If, as a result of the phone tree message, other class parents come forward wanting to be a rep at that time, the selection process will take place as described above, at that class meeting.

B. Parent Council Chairperson

1. Job Description

The job of the Parent Council Chair (or two parents who agree to share the position as co-chairs) includes the following responsibilities:

Agendas

1. To create agendas for each monthly Parent Council meeting. Agenda items will be topics within the appropriate realm of Parent Council, including topics that are carried over from previous PC meetings and topics that are suggested to the Chair prior to the meeting by reps, parents, teachers, the Agenda group, or any other school body or individual.
2. To post the agenda on the Parent Council bulletin board prior to each meeting and distribute agendas and relevant documents to everyone who attends the monthly meeting and also reps who were absent from the monthly meeting.

Monthly PC Meetings

3. To facilitate monthly Parent Council meetings in an atmosphere of integrity and responsibility.
4. To begin each meeting with a verse and a one minute reiteration of the purpose/mission of Parent Council.
5. To keep meetings orderly by calling on people who want to speak and attending to the time allotments for each agenda item.
6. To assure that all parents are made to feel welcome at meetings.
7. To allot a time in each meeting's agenda for non-reps to bring up topics appropriate to the sphere of Parent Council that, for whatever reason, were not placed on the agenda ahead of time. To publicize in school newsletters and informally that this time exists and welcome community members to use it. To limit such discussions to this time allotment so that the on-going business of the group is not disrupted, and, if necessary, to carry this topic over as a regular agenda item at a future meeting.

Leadership

8. To strive to be a role model within the parent body. To consciously try to hold matters that concern the school in the highest way within yourself and to communicate clearly and appropriately with others in the school community about school matters.
9. To provide a strong sense of leadership to the Parent Council.
10. To make sure that Parent Council sets goals and actively pursues them within the charter and procedures described herein.
11. To insure that each class has representation. To initiate the rep selection process when necessary.
12. To insure that there is a faculty rep to the Parent Council.

1. To strive to have a Parent Council rep serving on the Board.
14. To insure that there is a secretary and that accurate minutes are posted on the PC bulletin board and copies given to each rep.
15. To insure that new voting members are given a copy of the Parent Council Handbook when they begin their term of office.
16. To take the initiative to see that Parent Council continues to grow clearer in its form and function and more effective as a body. To set in motion an annual process of self-evaluation in which the reps and other interested people can have input into the functioning of the Parent Council.

Representation

17. To attend special session meetings with other leadership bodies or chairs or other organizations as needed. To participate in these meetings as a representative of Parent Council. To bring back any appropriate information from these meetings to the Parent Council in a monthly meeting.
18. To maintain an awareness about what it means to *represent*. To proactively solicit and convey the issues and concerns of the Parent Council (and thereby, of the parents in the school) to the appropriate individual or body, even when those issues and concerns are different than your personal viewpoint. (See Appendix for information reprinted from the School Handbook about the appropriate channels through which community members should address any concerns.)

2. Term of Office

The PC Chair is selected in April to serve a 12-month term running from July to June. During the two months in between selection and the beginning of the term of office the Chair-elect serves as a Chair-in-training, joining the acting Chair in as many of the meetings and duties as possible. In the event that there is a mid-year vacancy and a new Chair is chosen at that time, the term of office will be from the time of selection until June of that school year. The regular selection process will still take place in April for the following school year. There is no limit to how many successive terms one parent may hold.

3. Eligibility

In order to be eligible to be the Chair of Parent Council, one must be a parent of a student currently enrolled in the Eugene Waldorf School and must have attended at least 4 meetings of the Parent Council in the previous 8 months. If no one who fits these criteria is willing to serve as Chair, PC members will look for other school parents who have some familiarity with the workings of Parent Council and are willing to serve in the capacity of Chair.

4. Selection Process

The Chair shall be selected in the regular April PC meeting by simple majority through an anonymous vote of the current voting members of the Parent Council.

The current Chair will announce at the February meeting that the selection process will begin at the March meeting and review how that process works. One of the reps of the graduating class (or someone else agreed upon by PC members) will act as a selection coordinator beginning at the February PC meeting. It will be the responsibility of this person to serve as the contact for all parents interested in serving as Chair and to conduct the selection process at the April meeting. Any eligible parents who want to serve as PC Chair declare their candidacy at the March meeting and a brief time will be allotted for each candidate to speak. In order to allow everyone a chance to consider the candidates thoroughly, the Chair selection is not concluded at this meeting even if there is only one candidate.

At the April meeting, the selection coordinator asks if anyone else would like to be considered for the position. If there is only one candidate they officially become the Chair-elect at this time. If there is more than one candidate for the position, the candidates will step out of the room briefly so that the voters can discuss the candidates before voting. The selection coordinator will then hand out one blank paper ballot to each voting member of PC, collect the votes, count them and announce who the new Chair of the Parent Council is. There must always be a one month lag time between the first declared candidacy and the vote or confirmation of the new appointment. This one-month lag time applies also to Chair selections that occur at other times of the year.

In the event that the field of candidates numbers more than two, and the two top candidates receive an identical number of votes, a runoff election will be conducted at this time between these top two candidates. If there is a tie vote among a field of only two candidates a discussion will be held at that time about how to proceed.

If there is a vacancy in the Chair position at any other time in the year an anonymous vote, or in the case of only one candidate, a confirmation, will be held one month after a volunteer steps forward. There will be a Parent Council phone tree message during this month to alert all voting members.

C. Parent Council Rep to the Board

1. Job Description

The Parent Council Rep to the Board shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Attending all Board meetings and all PC meetings. Continuity of attendance is vital for decision making.
2. Presenting PC reports at Board meetings.
3. Educating Board members about the functioning of the Parent Council and what issues are “alive” among the parents who serve on Parent Council.
4. Presenting Board reports at PC meetings.
5. Reporting on non-confidential Board topics which are still in progress on the Board and gathering feedback from PC on these topics to take back to the Board.
6. Carrying out all the responsibilities of a Board member as defined in the by-laws and as understood by other members of the Board, including, but not limited to, maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
7. Educating oneself as to the organizational forms that exist within the school, the functioning of the three organizational bodies, and the procedures and policies of the school.
8. Maintaining an awareness about what it means to *represent* - to proactively solicit and convey the issues and concerns of the Parent Council to the Board, even when those issues and concerns are different than your personal viewpoint.
9. Striving to be a role model within the school community, to consciously try to hold matters that concern the school in the highest way within yourself and to communicate clearly and appropriately with others in the school community about school matters. (See Appendix.)

2. Eligibility

Ideally, the PC Rep to the Board has significant experience as a member of Parent Council. Specific eligibility requirements will be determined when the school's by-laws are amended to set aside an official seat on the Board for a PC Rep.

3. Selection Process

At this time there is not an official seat on the Board set aside for a Parent Council Rep, so our reps run for election to the Board alongside all Board candidates at the Annual General Meeting of the Waldorf Education Association of the Willamette Valley in the spring.

4. Voting Status

The Parent Council Rep to the Board is a full voting member of Parent Council and participates in all consensus decisions and decisions made by anonymous voting (subject to the stated attendance requirements).

D. Parent Council Rep to committees with limited parent membership

1. Job Description

Some school committees, such as the Tuition Assistance, Classroom Form, Teacher Search, and the Administrative Workgroup can only accommodate a limited number of representatives (usually only one or two) from the Parent Council. (Other committees can accommodate any number of interested parents.) It is the responsibility of the PC representatives to such committees to:

1. Attend all meetings of the committee of which you are a member.
2. Participate in the work of the committee.
3. Transfer information back and forth between the committee and the Parent Council. This includes reporting to PC on non-confidential committee topics which are still in progress in the committee and gathering feedback from PC on these topics to take back to the committee.
4. Be responsive to parents in the school who have questions or concerns about the realm of the school which is handled by the committee of which you are a member.
5. Maintain an awareness about what it means to *represent* - to proactively solicit and convey the issues and concerns of the Parent Council and the parents who are to be affected by the issue at hand to the committee of which you are a member, even when those issues and concerns are different than your personal viewpoint.
6. Educate oneself as to the organizational forms that exist within the school, the functioning of the three organizational bodies, and the procedures and policies of the school.
7. Strive to be a role model within the parent body, to consciously try to hold matters that concern the school in the highest way within yourself and to communicate clearly and appropriately with others in the school community about school matters (See Appendix.)

2. Term of Office

There is no limitation of the term of these positions. However, each year, at the October Parent Council meeting, PC will review which committees have PC Reps on them and who those Reps are. It has not yet been determined how to proceed when there are others interested in serving in a position that is not vacant.

3. Eligibility

Any parent of a child currently enrolled in the school who is willing to fulfill the responsibilities stated above, is eligible to be a Parent Council Rep to a committee.

4. Selection Process

The selection process for these reps is still in the process of being decided. Some Parent Council members feel that the existing committee members should choose the parent that serves with them. Some Parent Council members feel that since this parent is representing parents, that Parent Council should choose this parent. If it is determined that the Parent Council shall choose these reps, the following selection procedure can be used:

When there is an opening on one of these committees, a discussion will be held about what is needed and Parent Council will gather nomination ideas from sitting committee members, from

Parent Council members, and from the parent body (via a notice in the Bulletin and sometimes personally approaching parents who might be interested). At the next Parent Council meeting any nominees who are willing to serve will speak briefly about their interest and experience. If there is only one volunteer, the Parent Council will support them in this role. No vote of confidence will be taken. If there is more than one volunteer, an anonymous vote will be held in the same way that other anonymous votes are conducted in Parent Council and the person with the most votes would be selected. If the sitting committee members have concerns about a newly selected parent rep to their committee then a dialogue between PC and the committee could occur to resolve it.

An orientation will be held for newly selected PC Reps to committees with limited parent membership who are not voting members of Parent Council. This orientation will go over the job description in detail, with special emphasis on what it means to *represent* Parent Council and how communication will happen between this Rep and Parent Council (e.g. will they attend meetings to report and gather information when their committee is active, send written reports, use a PC member as a liaison, etc.).

5. Voting Status

The Parent Council reps to committees with limited parent membership are only considered voting members of Parent Council if they are also serving in the capacity of Class Rep, PC Chair, PC Secretary, PC Rep to the Board or Office Rep.

E. Secretary

1. Job Description

The Parent Council Secretary is responsible for:

1. Attending all Parent Council meetings.
2. Keeping written minutes of each meeting (usually the equivalent of 2 - 5 typed pages per meeting). The writing should describe the major threads of discussion and, in most cases, not specifically detail who said what. Care should be taken to describe the discussions as accurately and objectively as possible. The minutes should list those in attendance at meetings, detail any decisions that have been made, anyone who stands aside from a consensus decision and specific tasks that were assigned (including the name of the person who committed to doing a specific thing).
3. Showing the written minutes to the Chair as soon as possible (ideally within one week of each meeting) for review and revision.
4. Making any needed revisions in a timely manner.
5. Distributing a copy of the final version to each of the members of the Parent Council.
6. Posting a copy of the minutes on the Parent Council bulletin board so they are available for other members of the community to read.
7. Submitting written material about the goings on in the PC to the New Tidings and the Bulletin as necessary.
8. Keeping the Parent Council notebook that is stored near the school office updated with agendas, minutes and other PC documents.
9. Striving to be a role model within the parent body, to consciously try to hold matters that concern the school in the highest way within yourself and to communicate clearly and appropriately with others in the school community about school matters (See Appendix)

2. Term of Office

The term of office for a PC secretary is one year, usually from September through August.

3. Eligibility

Any school parent who is willing is eligible for this position. The Secretary does not need to also be a class rep.

4. Selection Process

Anyone who is interested will be directed to speak with the PC Chair. If there is more than one volunteer, it will be decided upon by an anonymous vote by the voting members of PC. If there is only one volunteer s/he will simply become the Secretary. We will not conduct a vote of confidence. As with school concerns in any realm, if someone has concerns with the Secretary, they should use the three steps for dealing with concerns as detailed in the Appendix to this Handbook..

5. Voting Status

The Secretary is a full voting member of Parent Council and participates in all consensus decisions and decisions made by anonymous voting (subject to the stated attendance requirements).

F. Office Rep

1. Job Description

The Office Rep's job includes the following responsibilities:

1. To serve as a source of knowledge for Parent Council about school plans, events, procedures, etc.
2. To put notices in the Bulletin about Parent Council events, needs, etc.
3. To serve, at the school office, as a liaison between parents and Parent Council
 - explaining what Parent Council does
 - assisting parents who come to the school office in bringing ideas, initiatives and concerns to the Parent Council
 - generally facilitating communication between parents and the Parent Council
4. Striving to be a role model within the parent body, to consciously try to hold matters that concern the school in the highest way within yourself and to communicate clearly and appropriately with others in the school community about school matters (See Appendix.)

2. Eligibility

Ideally the Office Manager serves as the Office Rep to the Parent Council even if this person is not a parent of a student in the school. If the Office Manager is unable or unwilling to participate in this way in Parent Council, any other EWS office worker, paid or volunteer, who is willing and able to fulfill the functions of the position is eligible to be the Office Rep.

3. Voting status

The office Rep is a full voting member of Parent Council and participates in all consensus decisions and decisions made by anonymous voting (subject to the stated attendance requirements).

G. Alumni Liaison

1. Job Description

The role of the Alumni Liaison is to encourage alumni to stay connected to the school. The Alumni Liaison is someone who will:

1. Come to meetings or stay closely in touch with Parent Council work in other ways such as by reading minutes or talking with another meeting attendee.
2. Be responsible for keeping in mind what would be of interest to alumni
3. Communicate with the Office Manager about maintaining the alumni mailing list and what events alumni should be notified of
4. Consider setting up a phone tree of alumni who want to stay connected
5. Brainstorm ways for alumni families to stay connected with the school (coming to events, staffing events, fundraising, enrichment opportunities, etc.)

2. Eligibility

Any school parent, current PC rep or alumni parent is eligible to be the Alumni Liaison.

3. Term of Office

The Alumni Liaison can serve for as long as they are willing. If there is more than one person willing to fulfill this role, they can share the duties.

4. Voting Status

The Alumni Liaison is encouraged to participate in all discussions and activities of Parent Council, but is not a voting member of Parent Council and thus does not participate in decisions made by consensus or by voting.

III. Changes to this Handbook

Voting members of Parent Council may propose changes to Parent Council procedures as described in the Parent Council Handbook by putting the issue on the agenda of a regular PC meeting. The issue will be discussed in this meeting and then the members will be given a month to consider the issue. It will be revisited at the next regular PC meeting and a consensus decision will be made on whether to leave the procedure as it is written or change it.

IV. Calendar

September

- Selection process for reps conducted in the first Parent Evening for the preschool (used to be called Parent Orientation)
- Selection Process announced and explained to kindergarten and first grade parents at the first Parent Evening (which used to be called Parent Orientation night) so they can consider it and volunteer as a candidate before the next Parent Evening

October

- Selection Process conducted for class reps from kindergarten and first grade at their individual Parent Evenings
- Review PC Reps to committees with limited parent membership
- New family welcoming Tea

February

- Announce and review upcoming selection process for PC Chair
- Host Adult Arts Evening

March

- Discuss the having a PC member run for the Board
- Candidates for PC Chair announce themselves

April

- Selection process for class reps announced, explained via phone trees to the kindergarten through eighth grade classes 10 days prior to their individual Parent Evenings; selection process carried out in these Parent Evenings
- Selection process for PC Chair concluded

May

- Parent Council annual self-evaluation process

June

- Plan how to welcome new families in the summer

July

- New Chair begins term of office

V. Appendix

A. Concerns *(reprinted from the School Handbook)*

If you have a concern, please utilize the following constructive avenues towards resolution:

- 1) First work on the question within yourself if possible, to see if you can come to terms with it without carrying it any further.
- 2) For questions that need further resolution, the next step is to speak directly to the person involved. To speak directly in this way can be difficult, but it is absolutely necessary if we are to be a healthy community. It is not appropriate to discuss your concerns with others in the community before you speak directly with that person.

For instance, if you have a concern about your child or a situation in the classroom, it is very important that you discuss your concerns directly with the child's teacher. Our teachers are dedicated to working in partnership with parents to do what is best for each child; they appreciate your involvement.

Communication challenges are the norm in human relations, but if we bring our concerns and questions directly to the person involved before the issue has a chance to grow unwieldy it will make resolution easier and will promote growth for everyone involved.

- 3) If, after direct communication, you feel the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved you are welcome to approach someone who is in a position of responsibility in that sphere of the school for assistance in resolving the matter.

For instance in the case of difficulty resolving an issue with a teacher, it would be appropriate to speak next to the Faculty Chair. In the case of a financial matter that wasn't being adequately resolved with the Finance Manager, it would be appropriate to next speak to the treasurer of the Board or a member of the finance committee. If you are not sure who to approach next, look at the Quick Reference Page, ask at the Office or ask any Board, Faculty or Parent Council member and they will direct you to the right person or group.

At times it may be appropriate to reach out to someone who seems to have a concern and help them in determining the appropriate channels through which to seek resolution. The responsibility rests with all of us to support the healthy functioning of this vital part of community life and to ensure that differences between people are addressed face to face between those people. If someone begins discussing a concern with you, ask them if they have approached the person directly and if they are familiar with the three steps for resolving conflicts in our school community. It will benefit all of us to follow the steps in this process.

If you have a long-held concern about a certain aspect of the school, consider joining the group or committee that guides that aspect of the school. Plugging your experiences, perspectives and interest into the structures that exist in the school organization is an excellent way to help us evolve towards an ever more healthy and strong school.