



MOUNT ARROWSMITH TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION STAFF COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

Second Edition



Role of the Staff Committee

Staff committees can impact all decisions made in a school. It is a wonderful vehicle for teachers to have real input into how their school is run! For example, the staff committee may study and make recommendations on:

School regulations, policies and routines

- * Dress codes,
- * Discipline plans and procedures,
- * Assemblies,
- * Attendance,
- * Parent teacher days,
- * Field trips,
- * Collection of money etc.

Non-instructional days

- * Working with Pro-D reps/committee to suggest and plan content
- * Fine arts events involving the community,
- * Evaluation/Reporting formats and schedule,
- * School calendar, etc.

School timetable an organization

- * Class sizes and fairness across the school,
- * Gym or other shared space schedules and limitations,
- * Equitable prep that considers holidays.

School staffing

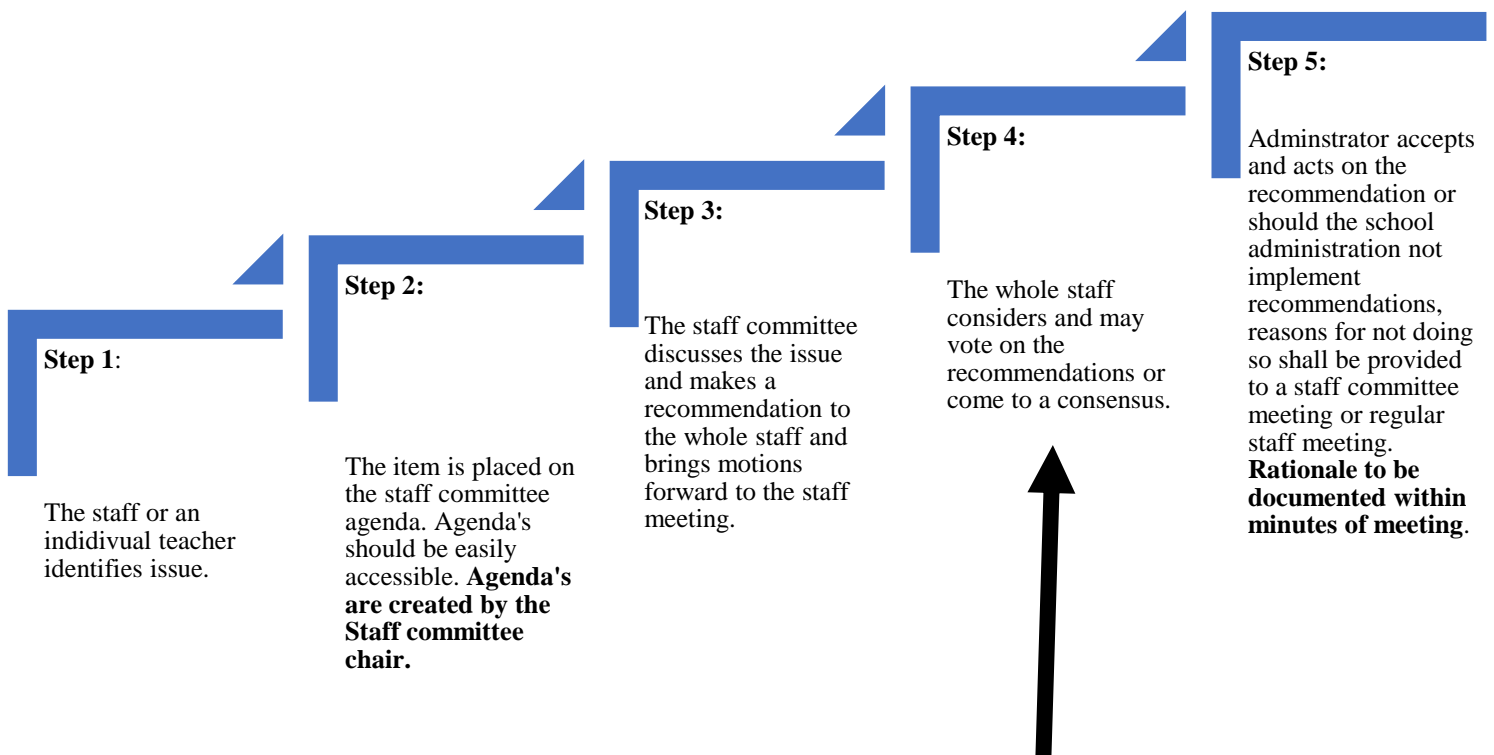
- *Teaching assignments,
- * Utilization of EAs,
- * Planning for next school year
- * Organization of split classes or new courses, etc.

Any issue affecting the teaching or learning conditions within the school

- * Consult on school renovations and replacements (See Article D. 32)
- * Class composition (see Article D. 2)
- * Processes, procedures and protocols for highly deregulated students,
- * Staff-administrative communications and relationship
- * School climate
- * Wider community or neighbourhood issues – to bring to the attention of staff and admin

How Can I Make a Change in Policy at My School?

Process at a glance



If the issue or non-action is perceived to be a violation of the collective agreement, the Staff Committee may initiate

the grievance procedure as per the relevant article in the CA and notify the local President.

Mount Arrowsmith Collective Agreement Language

Re: Staff Committees

Article A. 29 STAFF COMMITTEES

A.29.1 Establishing Staff Committee

If the majority of the teaching staff in the school so decides, there shall be established a recognized staff committee in each school by September 30th of each school year.

A.29.2 Size and Make-up

The professional staff in each school shall determine the size and membership of such a staff committee and the procedures to be followed. In all schools, the staff may decide to act as a committee of the whole.

A.29.3 Operational Procedure

The Staff Committee may make recommendations on matters pertaining to the effective and efficient operation of the school.

A.29.4 Recommendations

Recommendations made by the Staff Committee shall be considered by the staff at a regular staff meeting. Recommendations made by the Staff Committee, accepted at the staff meeting and implemented by the school administration shall be binding on all members of the staff.

A.29.5 Implementation

Should the school administration not implement the recommendations, reasons for not doing so shall be provided to a Staff Committee meeting, and if requested by the Staff Committee, at a regular staff meeting.

Article D. 20 REGULAR WORK YEAR

The regular work year for the teachers covered by this Agreement shall include:

D.20.4.b. A minimum of one (1) day for parent/student/teacher conferences, such day or two (2) half (0.5) days to be determined by the staff committee in each school;

D.20.4.c. One (1) hour on not more than four (4) instructional days for the purpose of facilitating parent/teacher interviews, such time to be determined by the staff committee in each school.

Article D. 32 (new) MEMBER INVOLEMENT IN THE PLANNING OF SCHOOL RENOVATIONS AND REPLACEMENTS

32.1 In the event of school renovation, replacement, or capital project each school shall refer to the Staff Committee for consultation.

32.2 In the event of school consolidation each school shall refer to the Staff Committee for consultation.

32.3 The Superintendent or designate shall receive any recommendations from the Staff Committee for review.

ARTICLE E.23 Assignment in School

E.23.7. A member who feels that their assignment is not consistent with their qualifications (as defined by Article C.26.4) may refer the matter to the staff committee or the Association in the event there is no site staff committee. The staff committee may make recommendations on the matter to the school principal, or the Association may make recommendations to the Superintendent. Nothing in this Article shall preclude the member from going to their staff representative or the Association in the event there is no staff representative. The member shall have the opportunity of meeting with the Superintendent of the Schools within five (5) working days of confirmation of the assignment and may be accompanied to such meeting by a representative of the Association.

FAQ'S

For Staff Committees

What if there is no staff committee at my school, or it is not functioning well?

*Know that each staff has the right to establish a staff committee!

*Request that the administrator place 'establishing staff committee' on the next staff meeting agenda. This should be done in September, but if it hasn't happened, make it happen ASAP.

*Speak to several colleagues about putting their names forward to be staff committee members. If there is a constitutional requirement at your school to have specific roles, keep that in mind while recruiting.

*Elect your staff committee at the meeting, then start having monthly meetings. We recommend notifying the whole staff of the dates of the meetings as far in advance as possible so everyone knows meetings are taking place.

What are some tips to help things run?

Think of it as a monthly process. Here's a typical month for the chair of the staff committee;

***MEET with your administrator** to set up a spot on the staff meeting agenda to report out. Should not be at the end of a staff meeting.

*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 if that works for your school. Special meetings on urgent issues can also take place.

*Mid-month, send an email to all staff to ask for agenda items. When items come in, create the agenda, 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 adjusted 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.

*Email the minutes to the whole staff, and also prepare to present 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.

Who should be on the staff committee?

*Many schools already have a constitution established, and you can ask your principal for a copy of it. The constitution might stipulate that different departments, grades, or school roles should be represented. {If it seems like it should be changed, constitutions can also be amended by your staff to better suit your school's make up going forward.}

*If your school doesn't have a staff committee constitution, see a couple of example ones in this package

*Make sure a staff rep is one of the members

*Administrators are encouraged to be part of the staff committee, but are not required; School staff committee constitutions may include one vote for administration present on committee

*Since having a staff committee is our right established through negotiations between the Employer and the MATA, CUPE workers {Secretarial staff, EA's, custodial staff, Youth care workers.} should not be official members with a vote on the committee, but it can be very helpful to have them present at meetings, especially if they have an issue to bring forward, or an issue you are discussing that involves their work or expertise.

I don't know how to chair a meeting! How do I do it?

* Different schools do things different ways, and that is OK, but some formality does tend to speed up meetings, once people get the hang of it. See our tips sheet on the next page for some basic rules of order to help you!

* Most basically, the chair will keep a speaker's list during the meeting, which means maintain a list during the meeting of who has indicated they want to speak (by raising their hand) and letting people speak in turn. This helps different voices be heard so all sides of an issue can be discussed. It also prevents someone from dominating or interrupting the discussion.

* Some staff committees discuss an issue first, and then vote on a motion that captures the idea, and others 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 whole staff meeting.

* The chair should **not** also be trying to take minutes. They may want to write down the wording of motions, but it is too difficult to do both chairing and minutes- taking at the same time! Ask for a member of the committee to be the regular recording secretary.

Some Basic Rules of Order for Committees

Motion: A main motion brings business before a meeting. A meeting can consider only one subject at a time, so a main motion can be made only when no other motion is pending. The meeting cannot consider any other business until the motion has been disposed of (or some other motion of higher precedence has been proposed, seconded, and accepted by the chair.)

Amendment: A motion to change, to add words to, or to omit words from, an original motion—usually to clarify or improve the wording of the original motion. (There is a long tradition of not allowing amendments that are contrary to the intent of the motion.)

Amendment to the amendment: A motion to change, to add words to, or to omit words from, the first amendment. (There cannot be an amendment to the amendment to the amendment.)

Challenge the Chair: Any ruling of the chair can be challenged, but such appeals must be made immediately after the ruling. If debate has progressed, a challenge is not in order.

Refer: If a motion needs to be discussed more informally or at greater length than is possible in a regular meeting, Robert's Rules allows you to refer the motion (usually to a specific committee). Both sides of the issue must have been heard for this motion to be in order.

Table: A motion to set aside consideration of the main motion; it has the effect of delaying or preventing action from being taken on the main motion. Rather than passing or defeating a motion, a meeting may choose to “bury” it by tabling. A motion to table is not debatable, so if someone moves to table a motion, the vote to do so (or not) takes place immediately.

Postpone: A motion to postpone to a certain time (or postpone indefinitely) allows for limited debate which must not go into the merits of the main question any more than is necessary to enable the meeting to determine the propriety of the postponement. It may only be amended as to the time of postponement

“I MOVE THAT WE....”

Adopt... (the agenda/ or the minutes from meeting dated _____)

amend... (agenda/minutes/motion)

recommend... (something --to another body – admin, dept, STA reps etc.)

put the question... (i.e. vote now /stop debating)

table the motion... (it disappears; no record of it)

refer the motion... (to the next meeting)

***Note:** Remember to record in the minutes who the mover/seconded was, and if it ‘carried’ or was ‘defeated’.

Sample Staff Committee Minutes

Date_____ Time start/end_____ Chair_____ Recording Secretary_____

Members in Attendance:

Member(s) Regrets:

Other staff members in attendance:

Agenda items:

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Item #1: notes:

Motion:

Moved by:_____ Seconded by:_____

Carried/defeated

Item #2: notes:

Motion:

Moved by:_____ Seconded by:_____

Carried/defeated

Item #3: notes:

Motion:

Moved by:_____ Seconded by:_____

Carried/defeated

Sample Staff Committee

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES (CONSTITUTION)

[NAME OF SCHOOL]

Chair Person: [Name] [part of staff representing—can't be admin]

Vice Chair Person/Secretary: [Name] [part of staff representing]

[Name] [part of staff representing]

[Name] [part of staff representing]

[Name] [administrator]

[Name] [MATA rep]

****Bolded*** sections are lifted from the MATA Collective Agreement*

A.29.1 Establishing Staff Committee

If the majority of the teaching staff in the school so decides, there shall be established a recognized staff committee in each school by September 30th of each school year.

The staff committee will operate within the guidelines of the School Act, School Board Policies and the MATA/SD #69 QUALICUM School Board Collective Agreement (Article A.29.1)

A.29.2 Size and Make-up

The professional staff in each school shall determine the size and membership of such a staff committee and the procedures to be followed. In all schools, the staff may decide to act as a committee of the whole.

Committee of the whole: MATA interpretation of committee of the whole is that ALL MATA members are in attendance

The staff committee will consist of five (5) members, consisting of one Administrator and four (4) members elected by the staff as follows:

- i. One representative from Primary;
- ii. One representative from Intermediate;
- iii. One representative from non-enrolling;
- iv. One MATA Rep

The staff committee shall vote the Chair and secretary into office. The chair shall not be an administrator.

Meetings are open to all teaching staff and all may participate in the business of the day, but only the committee members present will be able to vote on motions. Motions are voted on and carried by a simple majority.

Staff committee motions/recommendations will be presented to the teaching staff as a whole at staff meeting to be discussed and voted on by the whole teaching staff.

A.29.3 Operational procedures

The Staff Committee may make recommendations on matters pertaining to the effective and efficient operation of the school.

The Staff Committee will foster the values, attitudes, and skills for an enlightened, reasonable and democratic process in decision-making;

Staff committee at [Name of School] will operate in a democratic way with each individual or group within the committee contributing to the meeting;

Staff committee members are a team of professional working for the common good of the school;

A staff committee agenda form will be kept in a folder in the chairperson's mailbox for teaching staff to record motions. Additions can be made up to two days prior to the staff committee meeting.

Each member of the staff committee will have one vote on any recommendations.

Members who raise items or tender motions for staff committee must be in attendance to present the item/motion

The chairperson will ensure staff committee minutes are distributed to the teaching staff via email

A.29.4 Making Recommendations

Recommendations made by the Staff Committee shall be considered by the staff at a regular staff meeting. Recommendations made by Staff Committee, accepted at the staff meeting and implemented by the school administration shall be binding on all members of the staff.

A.29.5 Implementation

Should the school administration not implement the recommendations, reasons for not doing so shall be provided to a Staff Committee meeting, and if requested by the Staff Committee, at a regular staff meeting.

General Procedures:

- a. Meeting will be held once a month, in the week preceding the monthly staff meeting;
- b. The Simplified Robert's Rules of Order when necessary will govern meetings;
- c. The agenda will be set such that no meeting will go longer than 45 minutes;
- d. If the agenda necessitates more time than the committee members will vote on an extension;
- e. A quorum is defined as 50% plus one of the committee members.
- f. The Chair, administrator and one other staff committee members can set an unscheduled or emergency meeting. All reasonable efforts will be made to schedule the emergency meeting for a time and place such that all members can attend.
- g. "Old Unfinished Business" will be an automatic agenda item.

Sample

SECONDARY 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

COMPOSITION

Staff Committee consists of eleven voting members:

- * 10 teachers (elected by staff each September; one will be a MATA rep).
- * 1 administrator
- * Quorum: A majority of the members (6), with one being the chair (or chair-appointed designate), must be in attendance before a Staff Committee meeting can commence.

PROCEDURES

- * There should be at least one meeting each month.
- * Minutes of the previous meeting and the 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.
- * Any staff member may attend a meeting and speak to questions on the floor, but voting is restricted to elected members.
- * 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.

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).

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 a Staff Committee or the 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.

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). She/he is also responsible for reporting committee activities to the staff.

