



Parent Council Handbook 2014-15

The Syringa Mountain School Parent Council serves as an essential support group formed by Syringa Mountain School (SMS) parents. The Parent Council upholds the mission and vision of SMS, promotes the school's educational program, advises governance, conducts fundraising efforts, coordinates volunteers for festivals and events, and generally provides appropriate support to parents. All parents are encouraged to attend and participate in Parent Council meetings. Parent Council Members are called upon to advise the Board, Administrator and Staff Council in decision making, goal setting through strategic planning, parent surveys, parent education meetings and parent conferences.

MISSION OF SMS:

Syringa Mountain School provides a rigorous, arts integrated Waldorf inspired curriculum in the public school setting and develops students who are compassionate, eco-literate, critical thinkers prepared to meet the demands of their world..

Envision a school that...

Nurtures the intellect, imagination, and emotional life of each child.

Offers a rigorous, relevant, balanced, and memorable liberal arts education. Incorporates sustainable living practices and experiential learning through daily farming and gardening skills.

Infuses academics with singing, painting, drawing, flute, violin, storytelling, handwork, and drama.

Touches children's hearts and kindles their imaginations.

Inspires children to live engaged and successful lives, prepared to meet the demands of their world

MISSION OF THE SMS PARENT COUNCIL

The Parent Council supports the mission of Syringa Mountain School and serves as a collective voice by facilitating communication between the governing bodies, administration, and families. The Parent Council exists to develop strong social bonds by supporting parent education, active volunteerism and fundraising, school celebrations and special events; thereby building a vibrant community.

CODE OF CONDUCT

As participants of the Syringa Mountain School Parent Council, we agree to improve the community in the following ways:

through honesty and integrity while listening

through speaking and acting in a respectful manner

by adhering to standing rules

by addressing the issues at hand

by being accountable for our words and actions

We agree as a Council to only address those issues that affect our school community as a whole. Issues that involve specific students, families, or staff are not the purview of this Council.

As participants of the Syringa Mountain School Parent Council, we acknowledge that the Parent Council is strengthened by a diversity of perspectives and agree to uphold the integrity of the Parent Council decisions in all contexts within the greater community.

MEMBERSHIP

Parent Council is open to all members of the Syringa Mountain School community and all are encouraged to participate.

MEETINGS

Parent Council conducts regular monthly meetings during the school year (September- May). Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

GOVERNANCE

Parent Council is guided by a Leadership Team, comprised of seven elected members and one to two Parent Representatives from each class selected by the teacher.

PARENT COUNCIL POSITIONS

Chair: Directs and leads the affairs of the Parent Council through Parent Council Meetings and Leadership.

Duties include: working collaboratively with the Parent Council to determine and set yearly goals, creating and posting a monthly Parent Council agenda, leading monthly meetings, ensuring that each class has representation, reviewing meeting minutes and budget, and attending meetings in which Parent Council representation is requested- serving as a liaison to the Administration and Staff Council.

Co-Chair: Assists the Chair and communicates the affairs of Parent Council.

Duties include: Assisting the Chair with all Parent Council business.

Secretary: Records and disseminates the business of the Parent Council.

Duties include: Maintains an active role in one or more Parent Council committees, initiatives or working groups.

Treasurer: Records and disseminates the financial business of the Parent Council.

Duties include: Maintains an active role in one or more Parent Council committees, initiatives or working groups.

COMMITTEES: HEAD, HEART, HAND

Head Committee Chair: Inspires and supports the **academic interests** of our community and our classrooms.

Advocates, organizes and supports community education; for example education on Waldorf teaching methods, reading groups, discussion groups, and a parenting library.

Serves as a liaison to the Administrator and Staff Council for community education efforts, advocating and organizing support for those efforts.

Heart Committee Chair: Inspires and supports **community building and outreach**.

Advocates, inspires, organizes, and supports the community building and outreach efforts of the Parent Council to all of our community.

Creates, supports, leads/inspires efforts that build community. For example, a welcoming committee, hospitality, teacher-staff appreciation, family support, etc.

Hand Committee Chair: Inspires and encourages **volunteerism and community engagement** to do the work of the school.

Advocates, inspires, and encourages engagement and participation in the work of the school.

Inspires, recruits, and schedules volunteers for the work of the school; including community work days, garden work days, animal care support, school-wide celebration support, the school store, and crafting nights.

Matches wants and needs with resources; as such communicates regularly with the Staff Council, Specials

Teachers, Maintenance, and others to identify areas in need of assistance.

Class Representatives (Room Parents): These are selected by the class teacher. Provides support and facilitates communication at all levels for the classroom teacher and families. (Two Liaisons per classroom is ideal. One Liaison can provide the classroom and teacher support; the other can focus on Parent Council and community-wide activities.)

Provides direct teacher and classroom support; such as organizing field trips, room volunteers, class meetings, plays performances, and class projects.

Creates and maintains a classroom contact list.

Organizes teacher appreciation efforts.

Communicates Teacher/Class information, news and events to families.

Inspires and encourages participation in community and school-wide events, such as community work days, celebrations, fundraisers, parent education, and social events.

Maintains an active role in Parent Council.

DECISION MAKING

Parent Council uses Parliamentary Procedure to conduct meetings. This Procedure allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. Decisions are made by majority vote.

PARENT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Parent Council elections occur in April of each year. Elected positions are ***Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Heads Chair, Hearts Chair, and Hands Chair***. Candidates serve a two year term with the option of extension and a maximum of three consecutive years in any one position.

RECRUITMENT

Under the direction of the Hands Chair, a Recruitment Team is formed consisting of at least one community member representative from each of the following: Early Childhood and Grades. The Recruitment Team is responsible for communicating and posting open Parent Council positions within the community and soliciting nominations for these leadership positions. The charge of the Recruitment Team is to recognize and recruit the most qualified people available for Parent Council positions. Having qualified people step into leadership positions for Parent Council will ensure its success for many years into the future.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

Parent Council nomination forms are being accepted until September 30th. Please email them to Svea Grover sgrover@syringamountainschool.org or mail to Syringa Mountain School, PO Box 3531, Hailey, Idaho 83333. The slate of nominees will be posted at the website. The slate will then be voted on at the first Parent Council meeting. Newly elected leaders will begin their terms in June. In the event of a vacancy, a vote may be held at any time during the year to fill the position.