

# BC Teachers' Council

## BCTC APPROVED MEETING RULES

Below is a summary of the main rules that are proposed to govern the BC Teachers' Council meetings. They are partly drawn from the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11<sup>th</sup> edition) and partly from best meeting practices.

### Principles

The rules are intended to promote the principles of fairness, equality and common sense. They should be used in a manner that facilitates consensus building and **knowledge-based decision making**. They should be applied in a manner that advances the Council's legal mandate and work plan, and that helps regulate the teaching profession in the public interest.

### Quorum

Under the *Teachers Act*, the Council includes one non-voting member appointed by the Minister of Education. A quorum of the Council is eight voting members. If a quorum is not present when a meeting is called to order, the Council may opt to wait and see whether a quorum can be attained normally within 30 minutes, or the Council may opt to adjourn the meeting.

### Election and Role of the Chair and Vice Chair

The Council shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair annually at the first meeting after May 1st.

### Policy for Electing BCTC Chair and Vice Chair

1. The non-voting member of the Council or Commissioner shall act as Election Officer.
2. Election for Chair will be followed by the election of Vice Chair.
3. Nominations shall be called for from the floor three times by the Election Officer.
4. Nominations will become valid only after the nominee accepts the nomination.
5. If only one person accepts the nomination for the position the nominee shall be acclaimed.
6. When two or more nominees accept the nomination for a position election shall occur by secret ballot.
7. Candidates shall be provided the opportunity to speak to the Council for no more than 3 minutes to present their skills, knowledge and attributes which will support the council in the desired position.
8. The successful candidate must receive 50% plus 1 of the votes cast to be successful. If this is not reached the lowest polling candidate shall be dropped off the ballot and subsequent voting shall occur until a successful candidate is selected.

## **Election Voting Procedures**

1. Staff will distribute one ballot per voting council member.
2. The Election Officer shall instruct Councillors to cast their ballot. Council members may participate in the voting process electronically or by phone. It is the responsibility of the Councillor unable to attend in person to advise the TRB Executive Director and the Chairperson in advance of voting to ensure these options are in place and available. Only Council members who are present in person or through electronic means for the full process will be entitled to vote. Council will consider extenuating circumstances should they arise.
3. Staff shall collect the ballots and receive any electronic ballots.
4. The Election Officer shall call voting closed.
5. The Election Officer will oversee the count of ballots conducted by staff.
6. The Election Officer shall report the election results to the council.
7. Upon completion of the election process a motion will be made by the Council to destroy the ballots.
8. The successfully elected candidates shall hold the position until the first meeting after the following May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Role of the Chair and Vice-Chair**

1. The Chair's role is to preside over council meetings, act as Council's liaison with the Executive Director, and provide overall leadership to the Council.
2. As a presiding officer, one of the Chair's duties is to enforce the meeting's rules. If a member is interrupted by the Chair, he or she must stop speaking until the Chair has explained the procedural concern.
3. The Vice-Chair assumes the Chair's duties in the Chair's absence.

## **Meeting Schedule and Electronic Participation**

1. Pursuant to the Act, the Council must meet at least once a year and may meet more often subject to budget. A schedule of meetings will be determined before the end of each school year for the next school year and will include consultation with, or consideration of any new/incoming members.
2. Meetings may be held by teleconference or by other electronic means.
3. Individual members of the Council may attend a face to face Council meeting by teleconference or by other electronic means.
4. Council meetings, pursuant to the *Teachers Act*, are held in public.
5. The Executive Director or designate of the TRB attends all Council meetings; other staff members attend meetings as needed to provide relevant comments based on their professional expertise. Staff members may speak after being recognized by the Chair.
6. In-private Council meetings may be held on those rare occasions when the Council believes it is in the public interest to deliberate privately, such as when Council acts in an adjudicative

role. A motion to move in-private requires a majority vote to adopt. Council determines what information from an in-private meeting will be reported to the public.

### **Minutes**

1. Minutes are a record of what was done at a meeting, including motions voted on, decisions made or follow-up actions to be taken.
2. Minutes must be approved by Council and posted on the TRB website.
3. Approval of the draft meeting minutes will take place at the end of the meeting. Once approved the word draft will be removed, and the meeting minutes will be posted on the TRB website as final.

### **Rules for speaking in debate**

1. Voting members and the non-voting member of Council are entitled to speak in debate on the same basis.
2. A Council member who wishes to speak must request permission to do so, and then wait to be recognized by the Chair. Recognition is generally on a first-come-first-served basis, except that first time speakers receive preference in recognition to speak.
3. During debate, Council members may request additional information for further clarification from staff through the chair.
4. While speaking, members must remain courteous, maintain decorum and civility and help maintain a safe meeting environment.
5. Speakers must focus their comments on the issue before Council and avoid digressions.
6. During informal portions of meetings (such as discussing reports and decision-making options), no formal time limits on speakers are established. However, Council members are encouraged to help efficiency by keeping their comments concise and purposeful.
7. On each debatable motion, each member is entitled to speak up to two (2) times, each time for no longer than three (3) minutes.

### **Setting the Agenda**

1. A Council member who wishes to propose agenda items, including substantive motions, should submit these to the Executive Director at least ten business days prior to the meeting.
2. The Chair consults with the Executive Director in setting the agenda.
3. First priority on meeting agendas is given to items that are derived from the Council's work plan, as created and as updated from time to time by the Council.
4. A draft meeting agenda is circulated to Council, and posted to the TRB website along with supporting documents at least five business days prior to each meeting.

### **Public Input to Council**

Members of the public may provide input to Council on matters that are directly related to its mandate. They must consider that Council's work is guided by the principles of public interest and service to the public. Two types of input will be considered: consultation and information outside of meetings, and information or presentations to the Council at Council meetings.

1. Sufficient time is given to gather and analyze relevant input from the public through these measures:
  - a. Notices of motions to amend standards or requirements must be given at a previous meeting.
  - b. Input will be actively sought from education partner groups.
  - c. Citizens will be invited to respond to issues and proposed motions upon reviewing information which is posted on the TRB web site substantially before the date of the meeting at which they will be considered.
2. Input may be provided in-person at council meetings:
  - a. A 'Comment Period' of up to ten minutes at the beginning of each meeting will be set aside for comments and input from the public.
  - b. A 'Talking Break' of up to twenty minutes will be provided for approximately half way through each meeting to allow for public comment. The meeting will be suspended for this twenty minute period.
  - c. Requests to make formal presentations to the Council must be received by the Executive Director at least ten business days prior to the meeting at which the matter will be considered. The Chair in consultation with the Executive Director may defer a request for a presentation to the next meeting.
  - d. Presentations to council must not exceed ten minutes.
  - e. The council will not engage in debate with the presenter(s) but may ask for clarification by posing brief clarifying questions through the Chair.
  - f. If a presenter is asking council to make a decision on a matter which is not on the current agenda, the matter may not be considered for a decision at the same meeting at which the presentation was made.

## Decision Making

1. Rules will be used in a positive spirit that facilitates progress, creates a balance between individual rights and collective rights, advances Council's mandate, and creates democratic yet efficient debate. Council believes in the principle of consensus and recognizes it is not always possible. The Chair must confirm Council's decisions (whether made informally, by consensus, or formally, by motions), so such decisions are abundantly clear to Council members, staff, and the public.
2. Voting Council members are entitled to make motions and vote.
3. Motions will be projected on a screen in the boardroom for viewing by the Council and the public.

4. A member who believes the vote on a motion should be delayed may move that the motion be postponed until the next meeting or that it be referred to the Executive Director of the TRB or a designated committee for input and advice. The motion to postpone or refer requires a majority vote to adopt.
5. Debate on a motion may be closed informally (by unanimous consent), or formally by a motion to close debate (such a motion cannot interrupt a person who was recognized to speak, and, if voted upon formally, requires a 2/3 vote).
6. At the request of the member, the member's vote will be recorded.
7. Consistent with Robert's Rules of Order, abstentions are not counted as votes cast.
8. In cases where these rules are silent, provisions in current edition of the rules may be applied to the extent that they are relevant to the situation.