

## **Proposal for a Teachers' Pedagogical Circle and Ombudsmen Group**

### **Introduction:**

***We see the need for a more balanced government structure at Highland Hall that gives more authority to each of the three parts of the school, to govern their own affairs. We propose the following model:***

This three-fold model will mirror our own federal governments' model, with checks and balances in place. This model will also implement aspect's Rudolf Steiner's three-fold social order. We believe that this will serve the school in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There is a need at Highland Hall for a governing group that represents the pedagogy of our school, as well as the teachers and their employee rights. Forming a Teachers' Pedagogical Circle an Ombudsmen Group will serve the teachers, students, parents, and the school.

### **Purpose and Focus of the Teachers' Pedagogical Circle (TPC):**

-The explicit intent of this group is to engage in creative mediation of school-wide pedagogical and employment issues:

The TPC will carry the pedagogy of the school through oversight of programs, classes, schedules, and content.

### **Purpose of the Ombudsmen Group:**

-The explicit intent of this independent subset of the Teachers' Pedagogical Circle is to provide a direct voice for the teachers re. employment grievance issues. This group will also help frame or represent faculty members' issues, providing support, both collegial and documentary, to the TPC.

The Ombudsman Group can submit issues or requests themselves, or on behalf of faculty, to the TPC. The Ombudsmen Group works independently of the TPC and members need not attend every TPC meetings, though Ombudsmen should listen to relevant discussions of the TPC on the matter.

After the Ombudsmen present the issue to the TPC, the TPC will have 30 days to resolve the issue. If the TPC is unable to make a decision in that timeframe, the Ombudsmen Group will make a decision that is final, unless overturned by 4/5<sup>th</sup> of the faculty. (See Appeals to Final Decisions below.)

**Termination of a Teacher:**

-In the event that TPC decided to terminate a teacher, HR will provide pertinent information, including legal, to TPC. LT will then check with school attorney and finalize termination.

-TPC may make recommendations about the terms of termination, but LT has responsibility to review TPC recommendation, affirm it, and execute it.

**The Leadership Team:**

-The LT is given full authority to act on or carry out the consensual decisions of the TPC and/or the Ombudsmen Group.

**Form of Teachers' Pedagogical Circle:**

-the group will be made up of seven teachers

-the group will be made up of teachers from three areas of the school:

1 from ECC

4 from LS

2 from HS

This ratio is based on student population and the number of teachers working in each area of the school

-the group will be pro-active in gaining input and insight from individuals, including parents, and areas of the school, prior to making decisions

-the group will be open and receptive to input initiated by individuals, including parents, or areas of the school prior to making decisions

-the group will meet for at least 2 hours each week or more as they see fit

-once a month, the group will hold open meetings that everyone can attend, share in study and bring up issues, ideas, questions, and/or concerns.

-There will be regularly scheduled meetings with the AD, LT and Board

-The group will make decisions by consensus

-The decisions made by the group will be recognized by the Board and the LT.

-POC and TPC must reach consensus re. termination of a teacher, or LT will make final decision

**Form of Ombudsmen Group:**

-This group will consist of 3 teachers, one from ECC, LS, and HS.

-This group will make decisions by consensus.

**Selection of Teachers' Pedagogical Circle and Ombudsmen Group Members:**

-Each body of the school, ECC, LS, and HS will be responsible for staffing these committees in whatever way they want

**Committee Oversight:**

LT Administrative Oversight: Accreditation, Safety, B and G, Hospitality, Scheduling, Finance/Budget

TPC Pedagogical Oversight: Festivals, PD, Hiring, POC, Finance/Budget

**Checks and Balances:**

When a grievance is brought before the TPC by the Ombudsmen Group, the TPC will have 30 days to make a decision. Failure to do so will necessitate a final decision by the Ombudsmen Group.

When a grievance issue is brought to the Leadership Team by the Ombudsmen Group, the LT will have 30 days to execute the decision. If this is not possible, the LT must report to the TPC every 30 days until the matter is resolved.

When a pedagogical issue is brought to the TPC, and the issue cannot be resolved in 30 day, the LT will have the final decision.

Any issues involving teachers will first go the TPC. Those issues involving teachers' rights will go to the Ombudsmen Group, pedagogical issues will stay with the TPC.

LT selections for POC and Accreditation must be endorsed by the TPC to avoid cronyism and conflict of interest.

**Appeals to Final Decisions:**

Only a 4/5 vote by the full-time faculty can overturn a decision by the TPC, LT or Ombudsmen Group. A special meeting can be called for all faculty during which the faculty can exercise a "Vote of No Confidence" overturning the decision.

Any faculty member can initiate such a meeting by submitting an agenda item and documentation to the Whole School Agenda Coordinator. The meeting will allow for a balanced presentation by all parties involved and a discussion of all relevant points of view with the goal of reaching a final decision.

Two weeks notice and documentation must be given to all faculty members. The decision

will be overturned if there is a 4/5 vote of those faculty members present at the meeting.

**TPC Membership Qualifications:**

- a. Commitment to Waldorf education and its Anthroposophical foundations
- b. Demonstrated success in the classroom
- c. Demonstrated skill in planning, prioritizing and follow through
- e. Mandatory attendance of TPC meetings
- f. Former LT members not eligible to be on TPC for one year following LT service

**How the TPC Members are Selected:**

Each body of the school, ECC, LS, HS selects their members in whatever manner they choose

**The Interim TPC:**

We propose that the current responsibilities of the LT be phased out and an Interim TPC put in place this school year:

-Made up of people who have met since the beginning of the school year, plus current members of the AC, representing the three bodies of the school

-Attend LT meetings for a month to see what issues they are dealing with, before the governance model is shifted

**Elections to staff first TPC:**

-Elections for TPC should happen this school year, allowing for a transitional period. In the future, there should always be an overlap to create smooth transitions. New members will come in for a few months to observe before taking on full responsibility. Members will serve for two years, with half the group elected each year. Members can be re-elected by the faculty indefinitely.