

Officers of the WCC

WCC is served by several officers, including: the Chair, Vice-Chair, Past-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Officers are elected by the board membership at the March meeting. This is one month after the new and re-elected members are seated on the board following the school-wide election.

Chair

The chair of WCC is typically not directly elected, but is instead part of a three-year board leadership rotation. Members interested in serving as chair will run for the **Vice-Chair** office the year prior. After one year of service as Vice-Chair, a member will rotate into the Chair position for the upcoming year. The Chair will then automatically rotate out into the **Past-Chair** office for the following year.

The Chair is a parent member of the board. The Chair presides over WCC meetings, ensuring the agenda is followed, ensures the board's actions and decisionmaking are faithful to the bylaws and the goals of consensus, and goals of the meeting are accomplished. Prior to meetings, the chair gathers agenda input from board members, coordinates with the WPG, Faculty and Administration leadership to coordinate agendas, and then sets the agenda for each meeting. The chair is central point of contact for WCC with the community at large, and is able to call special meetings where necessary. The chair is also able to appoint subcommittees and coordinators to accomplish tasks large and small outside the regular meetings, and those members report their progress back to the board. A member serving as chair has no special latitude for decisionmaking or independent action except for whatever powers the other members might decide to delegate to them. As such, the WCC chair is a facilitator for the board to come to consensus and act as a whole.

Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair is a parent member of the board, elected annually at the March meeting, and will automatically rotate into the Chair position the following March. During the year, the Vice-Chair ideally works closely with the Chair to orient themselves to the tasks required to facilitate the board's work. In case the chair is unable or unwilling to preside at meetings or accomplish their duties, the Vice-Chair

performs the duties of Chair until the Chair returns or is replaced. The Vice-Chair's job at the February annual meeting is to orient new members to the board: providing copies of the bylaws, code of ethics, member agreements, consensus guidelines and other material the Vice-Chair feels necessary to provide. The Vice-Chair is also timekeeper for meetings to help the Chair keep ourselves as a board on task.

Past-Chair

The Past-Chair is a parent member of the board, who rotates into the position at the March meeting which concludes their year of service as Chair. The Past-Chair serves as the conscience and technical consultant to the board. Not bound by the responsibility for timekeeping or facilitation, the Past-Chair ideally can take in the big picture of our meetings, and draw upon their experience to advise our board individually and collectively to help us ensure we are acting ethically and true to our bylaws and procedures.

Secretary

The WCC secretary is elected from among all members of the WCC, and is the record-keeper for the board. The secretary also keeps records of the board membership and their contact information, tracks which seats are up for election in a given year, and writes and posts agendas and minutes of board meetings. During meetings, the secretary records minutes and distributes them in draft to the board membership prior to the next meeting. The secretary also maintains public access to all of the board's documents including the bylaws, code of ethics, member agreements, policies, reports, contracts, minutes and agendas.

Treasurer

The WCC treasurer is elected from among all members of the WCC, and helps keep the board apprised of fiscal health and happenings of the school through monthly meetings with the school business manager. The business manager also typically provides WCC a summary of income, expenditures and balances at each meeting. The Treasurer also keeps WCC apprised of issues and trends in charter school funding in general, and seeks and reports on potential revenue sources for the school. In the event the board decides it is necessary, the Treasurer will arrange full or partial audits of school finances.

Serving on the Winterberry Charter Council

Members of WCC are elected during annual school-wide elections during February of each year, with the first Thursday of February being the first meeting for new members.

The Winterberry Charter Council (WCC) is the governing board of Winterberry Charter School, comprised of parents, staff and a community member. Our board is the “Academic Policy Committee” required under state law for all public charter schools, and its job is to provide oversight such that Winterberry fulfills its contract with the Anchorage School District (our Charter). In practice, this means the WCC contracts with and delegates to an Administrator (principal) the responsibility for managing Winterberry, including hiring and supervision of school staff and the numerous other leadership tasks required to make a great Waldorf charter school. The ability to hire our own principal, and to define our school’s goals, approach and ideals through our Charter, are what set charter schools apart from other alternative schools in Alaska.

WCC is part of a three-fold governance structure at Winterberry, along with the Winterberry Parent Guild and the Faculty Council. The Administrator ties these governing bodies together. To the maximum extent possible, the three bodies govern together by consensus for major decisions affecting our school. Under the three-fold structure, each body has its own sphere of responsibility and decision-making. To this end, WCC’s has created a decision-making matrix, currently in draft (January 2016), and to be distributed among the bodies for their comment upon approval by the board. The three-fold governance structure is a work in progress and WCC strives to meet this ideal.

To boil down our school’s expectations for members of the board, a few key traits would be:

- Belief in unity, even if we do not have unanimity,
- Being mindful of our role in the larger Winterberry community,
- Exercising courage to share our knowledge while respecting the contributions of others, and
- Leaving our personal needs and desires at the door in order to work for the whole.

These ideals don’t all make complete sense at first. We grow and learn as we serve, even as the board itself grows and learns its roles within the larger community.

WCC strives to follow a “consensus” model of decisionmaking in our work. This is different than voting. Instead, consensus follows a three-step process: dialog, where we begin by having members freely

provide their thoughts on the decision at hand without interruption by back-and forth discussion; discussion, where members have back-and-forth discussion to sharpen the board's opinion; and decision, where the board comes to consensus on the decision. Ideally, consensus is used to shape and refine a proposal such that all the members are able to join the consensus to make a decision. Once we reach consensus, the board members agree to go forward in "unity," even if we do not have "unanimity" in our decision. Members who cannot abide by a decision may "stand aside," signaling their disagreement but without blocking the decision from happening. In rare cases (rare as in, once or twice in a lifetime), members may choose to "block" a consensus, which prevents a decision from moving forward, if such a decision may cause the destruction of our organization.

Meetings are held monthly, usually on the third Thursday at 6 pm, from August through May of each year. Meetings last 2-3 hours, but can be longer. A June meeting is scheduled, but will only be held if there is work to be done at the time. Special meetings can, and have been, called at any time to meet specific important needs. Regular meetings are open to the public, their schedule is published in advance, and the agendas are posted on the front door of school 2 days in advance. The typical meeting begins with opportunity for Community Comments open to anyone from the community. We then receive reports from the Administrator, Faculty, Business Manager (for budget) and the Parent Guild liaison. Agenda items for upcoming meetings are solicited from the members a week prior to each meeting and the agenda is posted at school on the Tuesday prior to each regular meeting. Members are expected to attend all WCC meetings and to provide advance notice to the Chair when they can not attend. Members need to be reachable by email or telephone, and it is helpful for board members to provide the Chair notification of extended absences. While we can meet by teleconference, in our experience this is not ideal and difficult to do well. Specific legal requirements of the Alaska Open Meetings Act prevent board members from acting on school business outside of meetings that have been publically noticed.

The board or chair may delegate to subcommittees or coordinators specific tasks, for instance, the Elections Committee organizing this school-wide election. The members participating within subcommittees or as coordinators report their progress back to the board at each meeting. Board members are covered by the Anchorage School District's Officer's & Director's insurance for their actions taken on behalf of the school as members of WCC.