

## Parent Involvement ~ Basic Principles

In this **section**, you will find

- A Brief History of Parent Involvement Page 2
- The PAC Network in BC Public Education Page 3
- Purposes of PACs and DPACs Page 4
  - Advisory Role Under the School Act Page 4
  - Activities of PACs and DPACs to Support Their Advisory Role Page 4
  - Comprehensive List of PAC and DPAC Purposes Page 4
- Rights and Responsibilities of Parents and Students Page 5
  - Parents' rights and responsibilities Page 6
  - Students' rights and responsibilities Page 8
- Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) Page 10
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP) Page 12

## A Brief History of Parent Involvement in BC Public Education

We cannot afford to sequester parents on the periphery of the educational enterprise. Parent involvement is neither a quick fix nor a luxury; it is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education.

*Anne Henderson, 1988*

Parent groups have been active in BC's public schools for over eighty years. On September 8, 1915, the first official parent organization was launched at the oldest school in the province, Craigflower on the outskirts of Victoria. In the same autumn, two groups were meeting in Vancouver to discuss organizing parent teacher associations at Bayview Elementary and King Edward High School. Other schools in the Vancouver area soon followed, leading to the creation of the Vancouver and District Parent Teacher Federation.

By 1922, the idea of parent involvement in education had spread so far across the province that it was evident that a provincial organization was needed. More than 60 associations sent 283 delegates to a conference in Vancouver to create a plan for a provincial federation. On April 22, 1922, the BC Parent Teacher Federation was formed, and plans were made to promote the ideals and objectives of the organization in all schools in the province.

Over the years, the provincial federation was successful in providing input to government on many educational, health, and safety issues affecting children and youth in BC. The name was changed to include the words "Home and School", and the federation became a member of the Canadian Home and School Federation.

The BC chapter undertook provincial surveys, the last of which was to gather input for the Royal Commission on Education in 1987. Following the two-year Commission, the BC government amended the School Act to give parents the right to belong to a parent advisory council in their school, and through it to advise the board, principal, and staff on any matter relating to the school. Many parent organizations already in place in schools became the official parent advisory council for the school. Many more schools acquired a council for the first time.

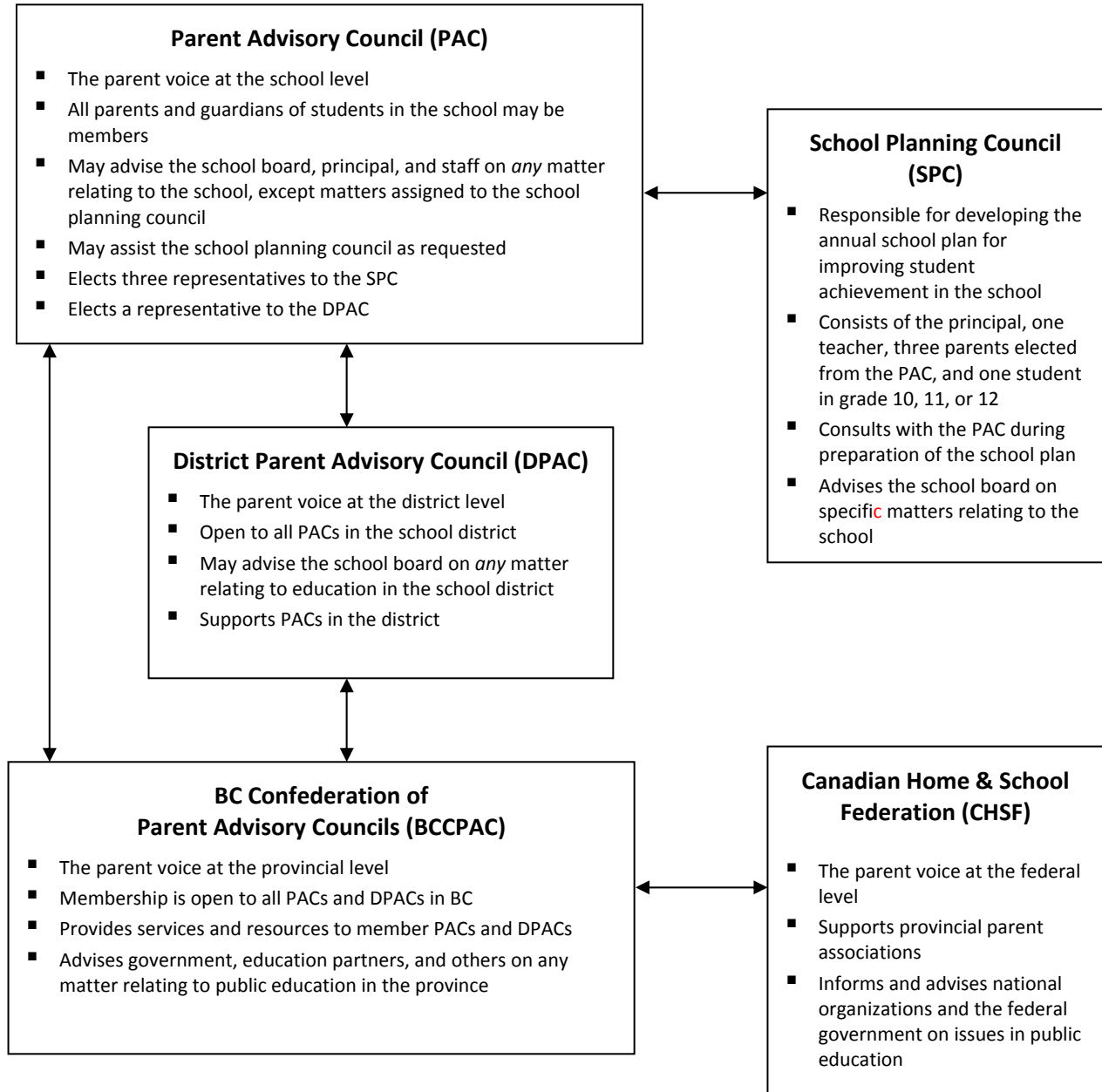
More legislative changes came in 2002. Parents were given the right to form a district parent advisory council in their school district, and through it to advise the board on any matter relating to education in the district. School planning councils in every school were legislated for the first time, with the responsibility of creating an annual school plan for improving student achievement. Parents were given majority representation (3) on the school planning council, joining the principal, one teacher, and a senior student in secondary schools.

The BC Parent Teacher Home and School Federation changed its name to BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils in 1990.

Since 1989, BCCPAC has held two conferences each year. These conferences offer professional development opportunities for parents to learn more about supporting student learning. Parents discuss educational issues, share information, and express their views to the Ministry of Education and partner group representatives.

BCCPAC is the parent voice on provincial committees dealing with a wide range of issues, including student assessment, Aboriginal education, curriculum, and school safety. Just as a principal consults with the PAC on school issues and a school board consults with the DPAC on district issues, the Minister of Education consults with BCCPAC on public education issues in the province.

### The PAC Network in BC Public Education



## Purposes of PACs and DPACs

### Advisory Role Under the School Act

Under the School Act, PACs and DPACs have an advisory role in schools and districts:

- A PAC, through its elected officers, may advise the school board, principal, and staff on *any* matter relating to the school, other than matters assigned to the school planning council. [*School Act, section 8(4)*]
- A PAC, through its three elected representatives on the school planning council, participates in preparing an annual school plan to improve student achievement in the school. [*School Act, sections 8.1 and 8.3*]
- A DPAC may advise the school board on *any* matter relating to education in the school district. [*School Act, section 8.5(1)*]

### Activities of PACs and DPACs to Support Their Advisory Role

PACs and DPACs are involved in many kinds of activities to support their advisory role under the School Act, including, but not limited to

- promoting parent involvement in schools
- communicating with parents about the school and district
- providing parent education and professional development
- providing a forum for discussion of educational issues
- assisting parents and students in obtaining information and communicating with the school and district
- advocating for students and parents, and supporting local advocacy projects
- organizing activities and events for students and parents
- providing financial support for the goals of the council, as identified by the members.

### Comprehensive List of PAC and DPAC Purposes

Following is a list of purposes of PACs and DPACs, reflecting the full range of activities PACs and DPACs are typically involved in.

This list is not necessarily in order of priority. Through discussion, councils will decide for themselves which purposes are most important to them. This list is often used as a starting point for developing a PAC or DPAC constitution or mission statement.

### Purposes of PACs

- To promote the education and welfare of students
- To encourage parent involvement in the school
- To advise the school board, principal, and staff on any matter relating to the school, other than matters assigned to the school planning council
- To participate in the work of the school planning council through the PAC's elected representatives
- To contribute to a sense of community within the school and between the school, home, and neighbourhood

## Parent Involvement ~ Basic Principles

---

- To provide parent education and professional development, and a forum for discussion of educational issues
- To assist parents in obtaining information and communicating with the principal and staff about their child's progress or other concerns
- To assist the principal and staff in ensuring the highest safety standards are maintained in the school and neighbourhood
- To organize and support activities for students and parents
- To provide financial support for the goals of the council, as determined by the membership
- To advise and participate in the activities of the DPAC and the BCCPAC

### Purposes of DPACs

- To be the collective voice of parents in the school district
- To advise the school board on any matter relating to education in the district, including the district's Achievement Contract
- To communicate with parents and PACs on educational matters
- To provide parent education and professional development, and a forum for discussion of educational issues
- To assist parents in forming a PAC in every school
- To assist members in obtaining information and communicating with district personnel
- To communicate with other organizations in the community and province on educational matters of common interest
- To advise and participate in the activities of the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC)

### Rights and Responsibilities of Parents and Students

Parents and students have rights and responsibilities from a variety of sources, including

- BC School Act and other provincial legislation
- regulations passed pursuant to the School Act and other legislation
- Orders in Council<sup>1</sup>
- Ministerial Orders<sup>2</sup>
- federal legislation
- United Nations Conventions.

Knowing the basic rights and responsibilities of everyone in the school community will make it easier to work together for the benefit of students.

PACs and DPACs are encouraged to consult the Ministry of Education's *Manual of School Law*, a compendium of law on education in BC available at

✓ [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/)

---

<sup>1</sup> *Orders in Council* are official documents implementing government decisions concerned with the day-to-day operation of the province. See [www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/oic/aboutoic.htm](http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/oic/aboutoic.htm)

<sup>2</sup> *Ministerial Orders* are orders made from time to time by a Minister that do not require the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. See [www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/oic/aboutoic.htm](http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/oic/aboutoic.htm).

On the following pages, you will find a list of the most important rights and responsibilities of parents and students, categorized as shown below. The legislative reference appears after each item. All references to the School Act can be found here: [School Act](#)

### Parents' rights and responsibilities:

- Individual parental rights and responsibilities under the School Act
- Individual parental rights and responsibilities under Orders in Council
- Collective parental rights under the School Act

### Students' rights and responsibilities:

- Individual student rights and responsibilities under the School Act
- Individual student rights and responsibilities under Orders in Council
- Collective student rights under the School Act
- Rights of students with special needs under the *Special Needs Students Order* of the Minister of Education
- Student rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Principles of *Fair Schools*, Report of the BC Ombudsman, May 1995

### Parents' rights and responsibilities

#### Individual parental rights and responsibilities under the School Act:



All sections of the School Act referred to here can be found at

[School Act BC](#)

Under section 11 of the School Act, every school board must establish an appeal procedure. You can obtain a copy of the appeal or complaints policy for your school or district from your principal, district office, PAC, or DPAC.

- The right to be informed of their child's attendance, behaviour, and progress in school [*School Act, section 7(1)(a)*]
- On request, to receive a copy of the school plan for the school and the achievement contract for the district [*School Act, section 7(1)(b)*]
- To belong to the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) in their school [*School Act, section 7(1)(c)*]
- To consult with the teacher, principal, vice-principal, or director of instruction with respect to their child's educational program. Conversely, parents are required, if requested, to consult with the teacher, principal, vice-principal, or director of instruction on their child's educational program [*School Act, section 7(2)*]
- To provide volunteer services at or for a school [*School Act, section 7.1*]
- To examine all student records kept by a board pertaining to their child [*School Act, section 9(1)(a)*]
- On payment of a fee, if any, to receive a copy of any student record they are entitled to examine under the above section [*School Act, section 9(1)(b)*]
- Can be held liable, with or separately from their children, for property of a school board that is destroyed, damaged, lost, or converted by an intentional or negligent act [*School Act, section 10*]

- To appeal to the school board a decision, or failure to make a decision, by a school board employee that significantly affects the education, health, or safety of their child [*School Act, section 11*]
- To educate their child at home or elsewhere [*School Act, section 12*]

### Individual parental rights and responsibilities under Orders in Council:

“Parents have the right and responsibility to participate in the process of determining the educational goals, policies, and services provided for their children”.

They have the primary responsibility to ensure that children are provided with the healthy and supportive environment necessary for learning.



The Statement of Education Policy Order is an order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It can be found at:

[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic\\_1280-89.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic_1280-89.pdf)

They have a responsibility to help shape and support the goals of the school system and to share the task of educating their young.”  
[*Statement of Education Policy Order, OIC 1280/89*]

### Collective parental rights under the School Act:

- The right to form a Parent Advisory Council in their school [*School Act, sections 8(1) and 8(2)*]
- Through the PAC’s elected officers,
  - to advise the school board, principal, and staff on any matter relating to the school, other than matters assigned to the school planning council, and
  - at the request of the school planning council, to assist the school planning council in carrying out its functions under the School Act [*School Act, section 8(4)*]. The purpose of the school planning council is to prepare an annual school plan to improve student achievement in the school [*School Act, section 8.3*]
- Through the PAC, to elect three parent representatives to the school planning council [*School Act, section 8.1(3)*]
- Through the PAC, to form a district parent advisory council in their district [*School Act, sections 8.4(1) and 8.4(2)*]
- Through the PAC, to elect one parent representative to the district parent advisory council [*School Act, section 8.4(3)*]
- Through the district parent advisory council, to advise the school board on any matter relating to education in the district [*School Act, section 8.5(1)*]

## Students' rights and responsibilities

Students are the focus of the whole education system and the primary recipient of the service. Every position in the system exists to serve students, to provide them with an education. They are the reason for the existence of the system.

[Fair Schools Report  
May 1995](#)

### Individual student rights and responsibilities under the School Act:

- The right to participate in an educational program between the ages of 5 and 19 [*School Act, section 2(1)*]
- The right to attend any school in British Columbia, if the school board determines that space and facilities are available in the school [*School Act, section 2(2)*]
- The responsibility to participate in an educational program until the age of 16 [*School Act, section 3(1)(b)*]
- The right to consult with a teacher, principal, vice-principal, or director of instruction about their educational program [*School Act, section 4*]
- The responsibility to comply with school rules, codes of conduct, and other rules and policies of the school board [*School Act, section 6(1)*]
- If attending a school, the responsibility to participate in an educational program as directed by the school board [*School Act, section 6(2)*]
- Can be held liable, with or separately from their parents, for property of a school board that is destroyed, damaged, lost, or converted by an intentional or negligent act [*School Act, section 10*]
- The right to appeal to the school board a decision, or failure to make a decision, by a school board employee that significantly affects their education, health, or safety [*School Act, section 11*]

### Individual student rights and responsibilities under Orders in Council:



The *Statement of Education Policy Order* is an order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It can be found on the web at:

[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic\\_1280-89.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic_1280-89.pdf)

- “Students have the opportunity to avail themselves of a quality education consistent with their abilities, the opportunity to share in the shaping of their educational programs, and the opportunity to determine their career and occupational goals.
- They have the responsibility to make the most of their opportunities, to respect the rights of others, and to cooperate with fellow students in the achievement of their goals.”  
[*Statement of Education Policy Order, OIC 1280/89*]

### Collective student rights under the School Act:

For grade 10, 11, and 12 students, the right to be consulted by the principal on the appointment of a student representative to the school planning council [*School Act, section 8.1(3)*]

## Rights of students with special needs under the *Special Needs Students Order* of the Minister of Education:



The *Special Needs Students Order* can be found on the web at:

[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m150-89.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m150-89.pdf)

- A “student with special needs” is a student who has a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature, has a learning disability or has exceptional gifts or talents.
- An administrative officer (principal, vice-principal, or director of instruction) must offer to consult with a parent of a special needs student regarding the placement of that student in an educational program.
- A school board must provide a special needs student with an educational program in a classroom where that student is integrated with other students who do not have special needs, unless the educational needs of the special needs student or other students indicate that the educational program for the special needs student should be provided otherwise. [*Ministerial Order 150/89*]

## Student rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* can be found on the web at:

<http://www.unicef.org/irc/>

- The right to free and compulsory primary education [*Article 28*]
- To equal access to secondary and higher education [*Article 28*]
- To school discipline consistent with the child’s human dignity [*Article 28*]
- To express their views freely in matters that affect them, and to have their views considered in accordance with their age and maturity [*Article 12*]

Parents continue to be the primary advocates for children in the public school system. They are no longer prepared to restrict their activities to fundraising...The Ombudsman supports parental involvement in schools at the local, district and provincial levels.

[Fair Schools Report  
May 1995](#)

### Principles of *Fair Schools*, Report of the BC Ombudsman, May 1995

**Note:** Parent and student advocacy as practiced by the BCCPAC Advocacy Project is based on the principles of *Fair Schools*.

1. All children and youth have the right to be valued and to be treated with respect and dignity.
2. All children and youth have the right to a fair and equitable education.
3. All children and youth have the right to receive appropriate advocacy supports.
4. All children and youth have the right to participate in decisions that affect them, to express their views, and to have them carefully considered.
5. All children and youth have the right to the benefit of the fundamental human rights provided in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*.
6. All children and youth have the right to a safe physical and emotional environment.

7. All children and youth have the right to receive appropriate programs from appropriately trained and properly motivated staff.
8. All children and youth should have the opportunity to access publicly funded services in their home communities or as close to their home as possible.

The *Fair Schools Report* is available free of charge from the BC Ombudsman. Call **1-800-567-3247**.

It is also available on the BC Ombudsman's website at

- ✓ [http://www.ombudsman.bc.ca/resources/reports/Public\\_Reports/Public%20Report%20No%20-%202035.pdf](http://www.ombudsman.bc.ca/resources/reports/Public_Reports/Public%20Report%20No%20-%202035.pdf)

### **Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)**

The *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)* came into effect in BC on January 1, 2004, to regulate the way private sector organizations collect, use, keep secure, and disclose personal information.

The Act ensures that all private sector organizations that hold information about individuals handle that personal information responsibly. It also gives individuals control over the way information about them is handled, and a right to request access to, and correction of, their personal information.

#### ***Who is covered by PIPA?***

The Act applies to businesses, trade unions, unincorporated associations, and the non-profit sector, including clubs. PACs, DPACs, and BCCPAC fall within these categories.

PIPA does not apply to *public* bodies such as provincial government ministries, municipalities, or school boards. Public bodies are covered by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*,<sup>3</sup> and are specifically excluded from PIPA.

#### ***What is "personal information"?***

Personal information is defined as "information about an identifiable individual". It means

- information that *can identify* an individual, for example, name, home address, home phone number, and ID numbers
- information *about an identifiable* individual, for example, physical description, education, religion, employment, marital status, and blood type.

Personal information includes *employee personal information*, but does *not* include "business contact information" or "work product information":

- *Business contact information* is the kind of information you would find on a business card or letterhead—name, position or title, business phone number, address, e-mail, and fax number. You do not need consent to collect, use, or disclose this information.
- *Work product information* is anything prepared or collected as part of a person's business or employment—for example, letters, reports, or research. Employees do not have a right of access to everything they prepare as part of their employment.

---

<sup>3</sup> See page 12

With limited exceptions, all other information collected on an identifiable individual is protected under the Act.

### ***What does this mean for PACs and DPACs?***

The Act creates “common sense” rules for collecting, using, and sharing personal information. These rules will apply if your PAC or DPAC decides to collect personal information for

- contact lists that use *home* phone numbers, addresses, or personal e-mail rather than business addresses
- volunteer or committee lists
- donour lists
- awards or prizes.

The personal information might include photographs and video tapes as well as electronic or paper records.

The common sense rules are:

- *Identify the purpose* for which the personal information is needed. Is the purpose reasonable?
- *Limit the collection* of personal information. Is the information necessary for the purpose?
- *Disclose the purpose* to the individuals from whom the information is collected.
- *Obtain consent* from the individuals before or at the time the information is collected, *and* when a new use for the information is proposed.
- *Limit the use, disclosure, and retention* of information to the purpose for which it was collected, unless the individuals consent to a new purpose. Get rid of the information (or render it anonymous) as soon as it no longer serves the purpose.
- *Be accurate and complete* in the information you collect.
- *Safeguard personal information* from unauthorized access, collection, use, disclosure, modification, or disposal by people within and outside the PAC or DPAC.
- *Be open* about your practices with respect to personal information. Identify who is accountable for the information collected, who can answer questions, and how a person can gain access to his or her personal information.
- *Give people access* to their personal information. Explain how it has been or is being used. Tell them who it has been given to. Correct it if it is inaccurate or incomplete.
- *Provide recourse* if someone complains. Investigate complaints, deal with them openly, and resolve them.

### ***Giving consent***

A person can consent to the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information *explicitly* in writing or verbally, or *implicitly*, called “deemed consent”. Consent is *deemed* to be given when

- the purpose of the information would be considered obvious to a reasonable person, *and*
- the person voluntarily gives the information for that purpose.

### ***Information collected before PIPA***

Personal information that your PAC or DPAC may have collected *before* January 1, 2004, does not need to be *re*-collected. The Act applies, however, to how you use, secure, and share the information. You may only use the information for a reasonable purpose consistent with the purpose for which it was originally collected.

### ***Responsibility for volunteers***

Responsibility for personal information lies with your PAC or DPAC, not with the individual volunteers who collected, used, or shared the information. The PAC or DPAC is responsible for the methods volunteers use to collect information and the manner in which it is handled.

For more information on the *Personal Information Protection Act*, go to these websites:

#### ***For the legislation:***

- ✓ [http://www.leg.bc.ca/37th4th/3rd\\_read/gov38-3.htm](http://www.leg.bc.ca/37th4th/3rd_read/gov38-3.htm)

#### ***For a guide prepared by the Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner:***

- ✓ [http://www.oipcbc.org/pdfs/private/guide\\_to\\_oipc\\_processes.pdf](http://www.oipcbc.org/pdfs/private/guide_to_oipc_processes.pdf)

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP)**

Unlike the *Personal Information Privacy Act*, which applies to the private sector, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP)* applies to *public* bodies such as provincial government ministries, municipalities, and school boards.

FOIPOP is based on two principles:

- information in the custody or control of public bodies is available to the public
- any personal information held by public bodies should be protected from unauthorized collection, use, and disclosure.

The objective of FOIPOP is to make public institutions more open and accountable, and to protect individual privacy. The Act does several things:

- With limited exceptions, it gives the public the right of access to “records”, meaning all recorded information.
- It gives individuals the right to request correction of information about themselves.
- It prevents unauthorized collection, use, and disclosure of personal information by public bodies.

### ***Access to information under FOIPOP***

FOIPOP is not intended to replace the normal process people go through to obtain information. Public bodies, including schools and school districts, are expected to respond to most requests for information on an informal and voluntary basis.

When people want information that would not normally be available, they have the right to make a formal request. The public body must respond within 30 calendar days by either providing the information or explaining why it cannot be released.



Check your school district website, school board office, or school for a district policy on Freedom of Information. Or go to the website of the BC School Trustees Association at

[www.bcsta.org/policy/poindex.htm](http://www.bcsta.org/policy/poindex.htm)

### ***Requesting information from a school district***

Most school districts have a policy setting out the steps to access information under FOIPOP. Many have an Information and Privacy Coordinator who looks after requests.

A request for information must be in writing, either as a letter or a form required by your local policy. The information requested must be in the form of a “record”. Records are defined as books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers, papers, or any other thing on which information is recorded or stored by graphic, electronic, or mechanical means. A fee may be charged for photocopying.

### ***Withholding of records***

Some records can be withheld. These are designated exceptions under FOIPOP. Many of the exceptions are discretionary, meaning the school district can decide whether to withhold the information or not.

Any request for *someone else’s* personal information must be refused. FOIPOP establishes strict standards for the collection and use of personal information.

For the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, go to

- ✓ [www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/F/96165\\_01.htm](http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/F/96165_01.htm)
- ✓ [bclaws.bc.ca](http://bclaws.bc.ca) - FOIPOP

**Tab 3 ~**

## **The Accountability Framework ~ How It Works in BC's Public Schools**

In this **Tab 3**, you will find

The Accountability Cycle	Page 2
The School Plan	Page 3
The Accountability Contract	Page 5
The District Review Process	Page 6
Special Advisors	Page 9

## The Accountability Framework ~ How It Works in BC's Public Schools

It's ALL about Student Achievement—  
ALL Achievements and Achievements for ALL  
*BC Ministry of Education's Accountability Framework*

Improving student achievement is the Ministry of Education's top priority. To address student achievement, the Ministry has created the *Accountability Framework* for BC's public education system. The purpose of the framework is to refocus everyone's attention and resources—school, district, and Ministry—on improving the achievement of *all* students.

The *Accountability Framework* replaces the six-year accreditation cycle that existed in BC public schools for over a decade.

### The Accountability Cycle

#### *What is it?*

The *Accountability Framework* creates an annual accountability cycle involving every school, district, and the Ministry of Education. The cycle involves

1. an annual **school plan** for improving student achievement in the school, developed by the school planning council and approved by the school district
2. an annual **district accountability contract** containing specific targets for improving student achievement in the district. The accountability contract is developed by district staff using all the school plans in the district. It is approved by the board and critically reviewed by the Ministry of Education.
3. a **district review** conducted periodically in each district by a Ministry-appointed District Review Team.

"School and district plans must reflect the characteristics, values, and needs of the community they serve."

*Minister of Education  
Christy Clark speaking in  
2002 of the new  
accountability framework*

In addition to the district review, the Deputy Minister of Education visits approximately 20 districts each year. The purpose of his visit is to look at how student achievement in the district connects with the accountability contract and recommendations of the District Review Team. The Ministry of Education closely scrutinizes every accountability contract every year.

The DPAC can request a district review or district visit by the Deputy Minister.

### *Connections in the cycle*

Each element of the accountability cycle takes from and contributes to the other elements—

In public education, we need to know that every school is a good school.

*Ministry of Education  
presentation at Provincial  
Symposium on the  
Accountability Framework,  
2002*

- The district examines and uses school plans in creating the year's accountability contract.
- School planning councils use the district's accountability contract as an important source of information in creating the school plan.
- The District Review Team uses school plans and the accountability contract as the basis for its review of student achievement in the district.
- Both school planning councils and the district use the recommendations of the District Review Team in subsequent planning.

The framework is structured so as to give parents and school communities the opportunity to participate effectively in decision-making aimed at improving student achievement.

## **The School Plan**



All sections of the School Act referred to here can be found in **Tab 2, The BC School Act.**

### *The School Planning Council (SPC)*

The school plan is the responsibility of the school planning council (SPC) in every school. The School Act is specific in defining the job of the SPC—

*By a date set by the board, a school planning council must prepare and submit to the board a school plan for the school in respect of improving student achievement and other matters contained in the board's accountability contract relating to the school. [School Act, s. 8.3(2)]*

The SPC may advise the school board—and the board *must consult* with the SPC—in respect of certain matters:

- allocation of staff and resources in the school
- matters contained in the school board's accountability contract relating to the school
- education services and programs in the school [*School Act, s. 8.2*]

Your school plan is a public document. Your school board is required to make it available to all parents of students attending your school.

It may be posted on your school or district website. Or ask your principal or school district office.

By comparison, PACs and DPACs have a much broader role than SPCs under the School Act—

### **PACs**

- may advise the board, principal, and staff of the school on *any* matter relating to the school, other than matters assigned to the SPC
- at the request of the SPC, may assist the SPC in carrying out its functions under the Act [*School Act, section 8(4)*]

### **DPACs**

- may advise the school board on *any* matter relating to education in the school district [*School Act, section 8.5(1)*]

### ***Consultation***

The SPC *must consult* with the PAC during preparation of the school plan. [*School Act, s. 8.3(3)*]

This requirement, in combination with the make-up of the SPC (three parent representatives elected by secret ballot by the PAC), is intended to ensure effective parent participation in preparing the school plan.

To find school district policies on hundreds of topics, go to

[www.bcsta.org/policy/polindex.htm](http://www.bcsta.org/policy/polindex.htm)

Many school districts have developed policies on SPCs setting out the process for consultation to be used in the district. Ask your PAC or DPAC chair, principal, or school board office for the policy in your district. Many of these policies are available on the website of the BC School Trustees Association at

- ✓ [www.bcsta.org/policy/polindex.htm](http://www.bcsta.org/policy/polindex.htm)

### ***Timelines***

Your school district policy on SPCs may set out annual timelines for establishing the SPC in each school and submitting the school plan to the district.

Because the district *must* submit its accountability contract to the Minister of Education on or before October 31<sup>st</sup> each year, the timeline for SPCs is important to ensure the district can take all school plans into account in preparing its accountability contract. [*School Act, s. 79.2(2)*]

Once the school plan is approved by the board, it must be made available to every parent of a student attending the school [*School Act, s. 8.3(7)*]. Many schools post the school plan on their website.

For complete information on school planning councils and the school planning process, see **Tab 5, School Planning Councils**.

## The Accountability Contract

School boards are elected to represent the public interest in education.

School boards serve the entire electoral area of the school district.

Accountability contracts are the Ministry's way of ensuring school boards remain focused on improving student achievement in their districts.

Every school board must

- prepare an annual accountability contract with respect to improving student achievement in the district and other matters ordered by the Minister of Education
- submit its accountability contract to the Minister by October 31<sup>st</sup> each year
- make its accountability contract available to residents of the school district and parents of students attending schools in the district. [*School Act, section 79.2*]

Your school district's accountability contract is available on the Ministry of Education's website at

- ✓ [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc\\_contracts/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc_contracts/)

### *Guidelines for accountability contracts*

The Ministry has created guidelines for district accountability contracts to ensure they reflect the characteristics, values, and needs of the community. Contracts must include

1. a description of the characteristics, strengths, and values of the district
2. a description of the connections between the district accountability contract and school plans
3. clearly stated goals for improving student learning
4. clearly stated objectives focused on specific areas
5. a data-based rationale for the goals and objectives
6. the measures that will be used to indicate progress towards the goals and objectives

7. specific targets for improvement in student performance, both annual and long-term
8. a summary of the progress made and the data used to determine that progress
9. strategies used to achieve the goals and objectives, based on research, best practice, and innovative thinking
10. structural changes made to support student learning (for example, class size, timetabling, personnel)

The Ministry of Education's *District Accountability Contract Guidelines: 2003-2004* are available at

- ✓ [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc\\_contracts/guidelines.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc_contracts/guidelines.pdf)

## The District Review Process

Accountability means reporting results and progress to education partners and the community.

Accountability is demonstrated through monitoring and public reporting, including districts' accountability contracts and the Ministry's service plan and annual report.

*Ministry of Education's  
Glossary for District  
Review Teams*

The district review process began in the 2002/03 school year and replaces the external accreditation process. Unlike accreditation, which focused on one school at a time, District Review Teams examine the entire district. A representative sample of schools is singled out for special attention, but the information gained is used to draw conclusions about the entire district.

Up to twenty districts undergo a formal review each year. Each review takes 3-5 days, depending on the size of the district.

### *Purpose of the district review*

The purpose of the district review is to provide feedback to the district, Ministry of Education, and the public on the district's efforts to improve student achievement by

- bringing an informed, objective, external perspective to the work of the school district
- reviewing district and school achievement data
- reviewing the district's accountability contract and school plans
- making recommendations to the board and Minister about improving student achievement in the district
- identifying promising practices that will assist other districts and schools in their efforts to improve student achievement.

The Ministry of Education's *District Review Guidelines* are available at

✓ [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/review/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/review/)

### ***The District Review Team***

The District Review Team is appointed by the Ministry of Education and includes

- a team chair—a superintendent from another district selected by the Ministry
- a parent selected by the Ministry
- Ministry staff person(s) selected by the Ministry
- educators (principals, administrators, and teachers) from other school districts selected by the team chair and the superintendent of the district under review.

Information and the Ministry's application form for parents interested in serving on a District Review Team can be found on the Ministry's website at

[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/review/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/review/)

District Review Teams vary in size according to the size of the district under review.

Parents interested in serving on a District Review Team can contact BCCPAC for more information, or go to the Ministry's website at

✓ [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/review/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/review/)

### ***Key Areas for Inquiry***

To guide the work of District Review Teams, the Ministry has developed a core set of questions, called *Key Areas for Inquiry*, based on research into what makes schools and districts effective.

The *Key Areas for Inquiry* are:

- Goals
- Rationale
- Data
- Strategies
- Structures
- Results
- Communication
- Teamwork—District and School Coherence
- Teamwork—District and Parent Involvement
- Leadership/Teamwork

The Ministry encourages all schools and districts to use the *Key Areas for Inquiry* as guidelines in formulating school plans and accountability contracts.

### ***The public report***

The District Review Team gives its report to the Minister of Education on completion of the review. All reports are made public by the Ministry which does not change them. The reports are posted on the Ministry's website within two weeks of the review, and are often reported in the media.

All District Review reports are published on the Ministry of Education's website at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/)

The school district must respond publicly to the recommendations in the report by June 30<sup>th</sup> of the review year. The recommendations must be reflected and dealt with in the next accountability contract.

DPACs are encouraged to follow up on the recommendations, and may request the school district to explain how the recommendations are being used to improve student achievement in the district.

### ***Schedules of district reviews***

The annual schedule of district reviews is set by the Ministry well in advance and posted on the Ministry's website. School districts are informed in September that they will be reviewed during the school year.

Visits by the Deputy Minister of Education are also scheduled in advance and posted on the Ministry's website.

## Special Advisors

Under the School Act, the Minister of Education can appoint a special advisor to review a school district's progress on its accountability contract or to assist a board with educational, financial, or community issues in the district. [*School Act, s. 171.1*]

It is not expected that special advisors will be appointed often. In the first year after the School Act was amended to allow for special advisors, only two were appointed in the province.

The special advisor must submit a report on anything resulting from carrying out his or her duties. The report is public, available on the Ministry's website soon after it is completed.



**Tab 4 ~**

## **Getting Started in Your PAC and DPAC**

In this **Tab 4**, you will find

Knowing Your Council	Page 2
Sources of Information and Assistance	Page 3
Checklist of Important Documents for PACs	Page 4
Checklist of Important Contacts for PACs	Page 5
Checklist of Important Documents for DPACs	Page 6
Checklist of Important Contacts for DPACs	Page 7
DPAC Membership Contact List	Page 8

## Getting Started in Your PAC and DPAC

Welcome to the exciting and challenging world of parent advisory councils in BC public schools!

If you are reading this manual, chances are you have chosen to take on a leadership role in your PAC or DPAC, as an executive member, committee chair or member, project or event coordinator, or interested parent willing to help out wherever you are needed.

The information in this **Tab 4** will help you get started, with checklists and leads on important questions:

- What do I need to know about my PAC and DPAC?
- Where can I find the information I need?
- Who can I turn to for help?

### Knowing Your Council

Your PAC and DPAC are organized bodies, with

- a mission statement
- a constitution and bylaws
- an executive elected or appointed by the membership
- committees.

Getting to know your PAC or DPAC means becoming familiar with its mandate, purposes, structure, and the people involved. The few hours it takes to learn about your council, ask some basic questions, and organize your information will be well worth it.

On the following pages, you will find checklists to help you look for and keep track of important information.

## Sources of Information and Assistance

As a parent taking on a new position or responsibility in your council, your best source of information may be the experienced parents who have gone before you. Give them a call, ask them to show you around—and take advantage of their wisdom.

### *Your DPAC*

Part of your DPAC's mandate is to assist member PACs. Parents who volunteer in DPACs are often experienced and knowledgeable. Many of them have held responsible positions in their PACs and are willing to help new parents. Do not hesitate to take full advantage of the services your DPAC offers.

### *BCCPAC Member Services*

BCCPAC's Member Services Committee is available to help member PACs and DPACs, as well as individual parents, with the information and resources they need to represent parents effectively in their schools and districts.

BCCPAC Member Services can be reached through the BCCPAC office at

**604-687-4433**  
**info@bccpac.bc.ca**

When you call Member Services, you will receive assistance from BCCPAC's office staff or a volunteer director.

For complete information on BCCPAC, see **Tab 20**.

### *BCCPAC Advocacy Project*

If you are experiencing conflict, or have a personal issue or an issue with respect to your child, find out if your DPAC runs a local advocacy project, or call the BCCPAC Advocacy Project toll free message line at **1-888-351-9834**.

For information on the BCCPAC Advocacy Project, see **Tab 11, Speaking Up!**

### Checklist of Important Documents for PACs

What documents should I look for?	Where can I find these documents?
<b>PAC documents</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Constitution</li> <li>✓ Bylaws</li> <li>✓ Mission statement</li> <li>✓ Policy book</li> <li>✓ Agendas</li> <li>✓ Minutes</li> <li>✓ Financial records</li> <li>✓ Treasurer's reports</li> <li>✓ List of committees</li> <li>✓ Committee reports</li> <li>✓ PAC newsletters and announcements</li> <li>✓ PAC website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ask the president, immediate past president, secretary, or treasurer. All of these documents should be in the PAC files.</li> <li>– Ask the principal. Copies may be on file in the school office.</li> <li>– Ask the DPAC president or secretary. Some DPACs keep copies of PAC constitutions and bylaws.</li> <li>– Phone the School District Administration Office. Some school districts require PACs to file their constitution and bylaws with the district office.</li> <li>– If your PAC is a registered society, the constitution, bylaws, and annual reports will be on file with the Registrar of Companies, 604-775-1046.</li> <li>– Check your PAC website.</li> <li>– For samples of many of these items, see <b>Tab 6, Constitutions and Bylaws</b>, and <b>Tab 14, Effective Meetings</b>.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ DPAC newsletters and other DPAC communications</li> <li>✓ DPAC website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ask the president, immediate past president, or DPAC representative.</li> <li>– Check your DPAC website.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ BCCPAC newsletters and other BCCPAC communications</li> <li>✓ BCCPAC website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ask the president, immediate past president, or secretary.</li> <li>– Check the BCCPAC website at <b>www.bccpac.bc.ca</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Other documents that will help me understand my PAC's role</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ School or PAC Handbook</li> <li>✓ School newsletters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ask your principal or school secretary.</li> <li>– Check your school website.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ School Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Tab 2, BC School Act</b></li> <li>– Ministry of Education Manual of School Law, available on the web at <b>www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ School District Policy Manual</li> <li>✓ School District newsletters or website</li> <li>✓ School District Handbook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ask your principal or school secretary.</li> <li>– Phone or visit the School District Administration Office. The Policy Manual contains policies and procedures on many topics of interest, including PACs, DPAC, School Planning Councils, volunteers, field trips, parent-teacher interviews, conduct, discipline and suspension, safety, emergency procedures, complaints, appeals, and fundraising.</li> <li>– Check your school and district websites.</li> <li>– Many school district policies can be found on the website of the BC School Trustees Association at <b>www.bcsta.org</b>.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ BCCPAC Leadership Manual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Phone BCCPAC at <b>604-687-4433</b>.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ BCCPAC website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>www.bccpac.bc.ca</b></li> </ul>

### Checklist of Important Contacts for PACs

PAC Executive	Phone No.	Fax No.	E-mail
President			
Immediate Past President			
Vice-President			
Secretary			
Treasurer			
DPAC Representative			
SPC Representatives 1. 2. 3.			

<b>School Contacts</b>			
School office (school secretary)			
Principal			
Vice-Principal			
Counsellor			
School District Administration Office			

<b>DPAC Contacts</b>			
DPAC office			
DPAC President			
DPAC Zone Representative [in some larger districts]			
DPAC Advocacy Project			
DPAC website			

<b>BCCPAC Contacts</b>			
BCCPAC office or Member Services	<b>604-687-4433</b>	<b>604-687-4488</b>	<b>info@bccpac.bc.ca</b>
BCCPAC Advocacy Project	<b>1-888-351-9834</b>		
BCCPAC website	<b>www.bccpac.bc.ca</b>		

### Checklist of Important Documents for DPACs

What documents should I look for?	Where can I find these documents?
<b>DPAC documents</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Constitution</li> <li>✓ Bylaws</li> <li>✓ Mission statement</li> <li>✓ Policy book</li> <li>✓ Agendas</li> <li>✓ Minutes</li> <li>✓ Financial records</li> <li>✓ Treasurer's reports</li> <li>✓ List of committees</li> <li>✓ Committee reports</li> <li>✓ DPAC newsletters and announcements</li> <li>✓ DPAC website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ask the president, immediate past president, secretary, treasurer, communications chair, or office staff. All of these documents should be available in the DPAC files. Ask for a tour of the DPAC office, if you have one.</li> <li>– Check to see what is on file at the School District Administration Office. Some districts require DPACs to file their constitution and bylaws with the district office.</li> <li>– If your DPAC is a registered society, the constitution, bylaws, and annual reports will be on file with the Registrar of Companies, 604-775-1046.</li> <li>– Check your DPAC website.</li> <li>– For samples of many of these items, see <b>Tab 6, Constitutions and Bylaws</b>, and <b>Tab 14, Effective Meetings</b>.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ DPAC newsletters and other DPAC communications</li> <li>✓ DPAC website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ask the president, immediate past president, communications chair, or office staff.</li> <li>– Check your DPAC website.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ BCCPAC newsletters and other BCCPAC communications</li> <li>✓ BCCPAC Leadership Manual</li> <li>✓ District Associate binder</li> <li>✓ BCCPAC Advocacy Project Manuals</li> <li>✓ BCCPAC website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ask the District Associate to BCCPAC.</li> <li>– Phone the BCCPAC office or Member Services at <b>604-687-4433</b>. E-mail <a href="mailto:info@bccpac.bc.ca">info@bccpac.bc.ca</a>.</li> <li>– Phone the BCCPAC Advocacy Project toll free message line at <b>1-888-351-9834</b>.</li> <li>– Check the BCCPAC website at <a href="http://www.bccpac.bc.ca">www.bccpac.bc.ca</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Other documents that will help me understand the DPAC's role</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ School Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Tab 2, BC School Act</b></li> <li>– Ministry of Education Manual of School Law, available on the web at <a href="http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/">www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ School District Policy Manual</li> <li>✓ School District newsletters or website</li> <li>✓ School District Handbook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Phone or visit the School District Administration Office. The Policy Manual contains policies and procedures on many topics of interest, including PACs, DPAC, School Planning Councils, volunteers, field trips, parent-teacher interviews, conduct, discipline and suspension, safety, emergency procedures, complaints, appeals, and fundraising.</li> <li>– Check your school and district websites.</li> <li>– Many school district policies can be found on the website of the BC School Trustees Association at <a href="http://www.bcsta.org">www.bcsta.org</a>.</li> </ul>

### Checklist of Important Contacts for DPACs

DPAC Executive	Phone No.	Fax No.	E-mail
President			
Immediate Past President			
First Vice-President			
Second Vice-President			
Secretary			
Treasurer			
Committee chairs 1. 2. 3.			
Zone Representatives [in some larger districts] 1. 2. 3.			
BCCPAC District Associate			
DPAC website			

<b>School District Contacts</b>			
School District Administration Office			
School Board Chair			
School Board Liaison			
Trustee Representative			
Superintendent			
Secretary-Treasurer			
Senior Staff Liaison			
Local Teachers' Association President			
Local CUPE President			

*Continued...*

School District website			
-------------------------	--	--	--

<b>BCCPAC Contacts</b>			
BCCPAC office or Member Services	<b>604-687-4433</b>	<b>604-687-4488</b>	<b>info@bccpac.bc.ca</b>
BCCPAC Advocacy Project	<b>1-888-351-9834</b>		
BCCPAC website	<b>www.bccpac.bc.ca</b>		

**DPAC Membership Contact List**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Member Representative</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>School Contact</b>	<b>Member Website</b>
Great Elementary School PAC	Name Phone no. E-mail	Name Phone no. E-mail	Name Phone no. E-mail	www.gratelementary.ca

**Tab 6 ~**

## **Constitutions and Bylaws**

In this **Tab 6**, you will find

Purposes of a Constitution	Page 2
Purposes of Bylaws	Page 2
Requirements of the School Act Involving Your Membership	Page 3
Should Our PAC or DPAC Become a Society?	Page 4
Filing Your Constitution and Bylaws	Page 5
Sample Constitution for PACs and DPACs	Page 6
Sample Bylaws for PACs and DPACs	Page 10

## Constitutions and Bylaws

An organization's constitution and bylaws are living documents, and should be well known to the members, executive, partners, and others interested in the organization.

Copies of the constitution and bylaws should be available at all meetings, posted in a conspicuous place, and included at the front of any manuals or guides frequently used by the membership or executive.

### Purposes of a Constitution

A constitution states the reasons why an organization exists. A well written constitution

- defines the organization's reasons for being
- clarifies its mandate and purposes
- can be used to focus its activities.

A constitution should be brief (1-2 pages), and separate from the bylaws.

### Purposes of Bylaws

Bylaws are an organization's operating rules. Well written bylaws

- define the roles of the membership and executive
- provide direction and authority to the membership and executive
- provide a method for holding everyone in the organization accountable for their decisions and actions.

## Requirements of the School Act

The School Act requires PACs and DPACs to make bylaws governing their meetings and the business and conduct of their affairs. The Act's requirements are specific, as follows:

### PACs—School Act, section 8(5)

A PAC's bylaws are to be made in consultation with the principal, and must include rules governing

- the dissolution of the PAC
- election of members to represent the PAC on the school planning council
- election of members to represent the PAC on the district parent advisory council.



All sections of the School Act referred to here can be found in **Tab 2, The BC School Act.**

Elections to the school planning council and DPAC must be by secret ballot [*School Act, section 8(6)*]

### DPACs—School Act, section 8.5(2)

A DPAC's bylaws must include rules governing the dissolution of the DPAC.

## Involving Your Membership

It is important to involve your members in creating and reviewing your council's constitution and bylaws. Both documents belong to the membership, not to the executive or constitution committee.

You can involve your members through various means, such as

- a letter or notice that the constitution and bylaws will be reviewed, with a survey or questionnaire on key issues. The survey or questionnaire can be dropped off at the school without coming to a meeting.
- an informal get-together off school property to talk about the parent role in the school
- a special meeting, or dedicated time at a regular meeting, where parents are invited to discuss the council's mission, purposes, and operating rules
- a committee to review the constitution and bylaws, and make recommendations to the executive and membership

- a follow-up meeting to discuss the committee's recommendations and approve any changes.

If you are creating a constitution and bylaws for the first time, or are undergoing a major review, plan to spend several months on the project. These documents require close attention to detail and plenty of discussion. All members should have the opportunity to consider the issues and express their views.

BCCPAC recommends that councils review their constitution and bylaws annually. A regular review focuses members' attention on the council's purposes and objectives, and encourages members to reconsider its mission. Members may find that the council's needs have changed.

A **Sample Constitution and Bylaws** can be found beginning on page 6 of this **Tab 6**.

### **Should Our PAC or DPAC Become a Society?**

A few PACs and DPACs in BC are registered societies under the BC Society Act.

PACs and DPACs created under the School Act can carry on all of their activities without registering as a society. This includes applying for grants and licenses.

A PAC or DPAC considering registering as a society should obtain legal advice. For information on incorporating a society, contact the Society/Cooperative Association Unit at 250-356-8673, (in Greater Vancouver, direct dial 604-775-1046), or consult *Information for Incorporation of a British Columbia Society*, available on the web at

- ✓ [www.fin.gov.bc.ca/registries/corppg/forms/reg20.pdf](http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/registries/corppg/forms/reg20.pdf)

## Filing Your Constitution and Bylaws

Some school districts require PACs and the DPAC to file a copy of their constitution and bylaws with the district office. Check with your district administration. If there is no such requirement, it is your council's choice whether to send a copy to the district office or board of trustees.

If your council is a society registered under the Society Act, you must file your constitution or bylaws with the Registrar of Companies in Victoria. *If your council is not a society, do not send your constitution or bylaws to Victoria.*

Some DPACs ask their member PACs to file their constitution and bylaws with the DPAC. Check with your DPAC.

BCCPAC recommends that PACs keep an up-to-date copy of their constitution and bylaws in the school office.

# Sample Constitution for PACs and DPACs

*The samples in this manual offer the best suggestions available. You are encouraged to use them to develop your own documents, suited to your organization's needs.*

## Table of Contents

<b>Section I</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Section II</b>	<b>Purposes</b>
<b>Section III</b>	<b>Interpretation of Terms</b>

## Constitution

*Note: Where there are differences in the suggestions for PACs and DPACs, the wording for DPACs appears in italics.*

### Section I – NAME

The name of this Council is...

The name should include the name of your school (*or school district*). The titles “parent advisory council” and “district parent advisory council” are sanctioned by the School Act.

The Council will operate as a non-profit organization with no personal financial benefit accruing to members.

The business of the Council will be unbiased in respect of race, religion, gender, politics, sexual orientation, and physical or mental ability.

### Section II – PURPOSES OF THE COUNCIL

The following list reflects the full range of activities PACs and DPACs are typically involved in. The list is not necessarily in order of priority. Through discussion, your membership will decide which purposes are most important to your council.

The purposes of the Council will be:

1. To promote the education and welfare of students in the school
2. To encourage parent involvement in the school, and to support programs that promote parent involvement
3. To advise the school board, principal, and staff on any matter relating to the school, other than matters assigned to the school planning council
4. To participate in the work of the school planning council through the Council’s elected representatives
5. To promote the interests of public education and, in particular, the interests of (name of your school)
6. To provide leadership in the school community

7. To contribute to a sense of community within the school and between the school, home, and neighbourhood
8. To provide parent education and professional development, and a forum for discussion of educational issues
9. To assist parents in obtaining information and communicating with the principal and staff about their child's progress or other concerns
10. To assist the principal and staff in ensuring the highest safety standards are maintained in the school and neighbourhood
11. To organize and support activities for students and parents
12. To provide financial support for the goals of the Council, as determined by the membership
13. To advise and participate in the activities of (name of your district parent advisory council) and the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

### ***Section II – PURPOSES OF THE COUNCIL***

*The purposes of the Council will be:*

1. *To be the collective voice of parents in the school district*
2. *To advise the school board on any matter relating to education in the district, including the district's Accountability Contract*
3. *To communicate with parents and parent advisory councils on educational matters*
4. *To promote the interests of public education and, in particular, the interests of (name of your school district)*
5. *To provide parent education and professional development, and a forum for discussion of educational issues*
6. *To assist parents in forming a parent advisory council in every school*
7. *To assist members in obtaining information and communicating with district personnel*
8. *To provide and support a local advocacy project*
9. *To communicate with other organizations in the community and province on educational matters of common interest*

---

### Section III -- INTERPRETATION OF TERMS

**“community organizations”** means groups that demonstrate an interest in education and are not already included in the scope of the Council’s constitution and bylaws

**“district”** means School District No. ( )

**“DPAC” or “district parent advisory council”** means the parent advisory councils organized according to the School Act and operating as a district parent advisory council in School District No. ( )

**“PAC” or “parent advisory council”** means the parents organized according to the School Act and operating as a parent advisory council in (name of your school)

**“parent”** is as defined in the School Act and means

- (a) the guardian of the person of the student or child,
- (b) the person legally entitled to custody of the student or child, or
- (c) the person who usually has the care and control of the student or child

and, for the purposes of these bylaws, means the parent or guardian of a child or children enrolled in School District No. ( )

**“school”** means any public elementary or secondary educational institution as defined in the School Act operating within School District No. ( )

**“SPC”** means the school planning council created for (name of your school) according to the School Act

---

# Sample Bylaws for PACs and DPACs

*The samples in this manual offer the best suggestions available. You are encouraged to use them to develop your own documents, suited to your organization's needs.*

## Table of Contents

<b>Section I</b>	<b>Membership</b>
<b>Section II</b>	<b>Meetings of Members</b>
<b>Section III</b>	<b>Proceedings at General Meetings</b>
<b>Section IV</b>	<b>Executive</b>
<b>Section V</b>	<b>Executive Meetings</b>
<b>Section VI</b>	<b>School Planning Council, District Parent Advisory Council, and External Committee Representatives</b>
<b>Section VII</b>	<b>Conduct of Executive and Representatives</b>
<b>Section VIII</b>	<b>Duties of Executive and Representatives</b>
<b>Section IX</b>	<b>Committees</b>
<b>Section X</b>	<b>Financial Matters</b>
<b>Section XI</b>	<b>Constitution and Bylaws Amendments</b>
<b>Section XII</b>	<b>Property in Documents</b>
<b>Section XIII</b>	<b>Dissolution</b>

## Bylaws

*Note: Where there are differences in the suggestions for PACs and DPACs, the wording for DPACs appears in italics.*

### Section I – MEMBERSHIP

#### Voting members

1. All parents and guardians of students registered in (name of your school) are voting members of the Council.

#### Non-voting members

2. Administrators and staff (teaching and non-teaching) of (name of your school) may be invited to become non-voting members of the Council.

3. Members of the school community who are not parents of students registered in the public school system may be invited to become non-voting members of the Council.

4. At no time will the Council have more non-voting than voting members.

#### Compliance with bylaws

5. Every member will uphold the constitution and comply with these bylaws.

### *Section I – MEMBERSHIP IN A DPAC*

1. *All parent advisory councils in School District No. ( ) are voting members of the Council.*

2. *A member will be represented on the Council by the person elected annually by the member for that purpose.*

3. *There will be no other members of the Council.*

DPACs are recognized in the School Act. Every PAC is entitled to elect one of its members to be its representative on the DPAC for a term of one year. The election must be by secret ballot. See **Tab 2, The BC School Act**, sections 8, 8.4, and 8.5.

## Section II –MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

### General meetings

1. General meetings will be conducted with fairness to all members.
2. General meetings will be held not less than four times during the school year. One of those meetings will be the annual general meeting.

### Conduct

3. At general meetings, members will not discuss individual school personnel, students, parents, or other members of the school community.
4. The Council will refrain from partisan political action or other activities that do not serve the interests of the school or the public school system.

### Notice of meetings

5. Members will be given reasonable notice of general meetings.

Notice of meetings can be sent in various ways—by flyer, newsletter, e-mail, or website. A calendar of meetings for the year satisfies the requirement for reasonable notice.

See **Tab 19, Communication in PACs, DPACs, and School Planning Councils.**

## Section III – PROCEEDINGS AT GENERAL MEETINGS

### Quorum

1. A quorum for general meetings will be ten\* voting members (\*the minimum number of voting members that can reasonably be expected to attend).

*1. A quorum for general meetings will be 10% of the voting members.*

2. If at any time during a general meeting a quorum ceases to be present, business then in progress must be suspended until there is a quorum present or until the meeting is adjourned or terminated.

A quorum is the minimum number of voting members that need to be present at a meeting to make decisions. The requirement for a quorum ensures that a representative number of voting members are present in the room when decisions are made. The quorum cannot be waived or suspended, even by unanimous consent.

For more information on quorum, see **Tab 14, Effective Meetings**, page 8.

## Voting

3. Except as provided elsewhere in these bylaws, all matters requiring a vote will be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast (50% plus 1).

4. In the case of a tie vote, the chair does not have a second or casting vote and the motion is defeated.

5. Members must vote in person on all matters. Voting by proxy will not be permitted.

*5. Members will vote through their elected representatives. A representative must be present at a meeting to vote. Voting by proxy will not be permitted.*

6. Except as provided elsewhere in these bylaws, voting is by a show of hands or, where requested by two voting members present, by secret ballot.

7. A vote will be taken to destroy the ballots after every election.

## Section IV -- EXECUTIVE

### Role of executive

1. The executive will manage the Council's affairs between general meetings.

### Executive defined

2. The executive will include the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, immediate past president, and such other members of the Council as the membership decides.

The composition of your executive should suit your council's needs. At a minimum, you should fill the positions of president, secretary, and treasurer.

PACs are required by the School Act to elect three representatives to the school planning council. One of the representatives must be on the PAC executive. To meet this requirement, one of the representatives may already hold an executive position, or you may modify your PAC bylaws to create an additional executive position called "PAC Executive Representative to the SPC".

You may choose whether to include your DPAC representative on your executive.

## Eligibility

3. Any voting member of the Council is eligible to serve on the executive, except employees or elected officials of School District No. ( ) or the Ministry of Education.

*3. Any elected representative of a Council member is eligible to serve on the executive, except employees or elected officials of School District No. ( ) or the Ministry of Education.*

**Perception of Bias** – Councils need to appear to be representing the voice of parents and protecting the integrity of their membership. Members who are school board or Ministry of Education employees or elected officials may be seen as having a bias and not speaking or acting solely on behalf of parents.

For information on perception of bias, see **Tab 8, Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest**, pages 6-8.

## Election of executive

4. The executive will be elected at each annual general meeting.

5. Elections will be conducted by the chair of the Nominations Committee.

## Term of office

6. The executive will hold office for a term of one year beginning immediately following the election (or between specified dates, for example, from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>).

7. No person may hold the same executive position for more than four years.

## Vacancy

8. If an executive member resigns or ceases to hold office for any other reason, the remaining executive members may appoint an eligible member of the Council to fill the vacancy until the next annual general meeting.

*8. If an executive member resigns or ceases to hold office for any other reason, the remaining executive members may appoint an eligible representative of a Council member to fill the vacancy until the next annual general meeting.*

**Removal of executive**

9. The members may, by a majority of not less than 75% of the votes cast, remove an executive member before the expiration of his or her term of office, and may elect an eligible member (*an eligible representative of a Council member*) to complete the term.

10. Written notice specifying the intention to make a motion to remove the executive member must be given to all members not less than 14 days before the meeting.

**Remuneration of executive**

11. No executive member may be remunerated for serving on the executive, but may be reimbursed for expenses reasonably and necessarily incurred while engaged in the Council's affairs.

**Section V – EXECUTIVE MEETINGS****Meetings**

1. Executive meetings will be held at the call of the president. At least one meeting will be held before each general meeting.

**Quorum**

2. A quorum for executive meetings will be a majority (50% plus 1) of the members of the executive.

**Notice**

3. Executive members will be given reasonable notice of executive meetings.

**Voting**

4. All matters requiring a vote at executive meetings will be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast (50% plus 1).

5. In the case of a tie vote, the chair does not have a second or casting vote and the motion is defeated.

---

## **Section VI - SCHOOL PLANNING COUNCIL, DISTRICT PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL, AND EXTERNAL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

### **School Planning Council representatives**

1. Three representatives to the school planning council (SPC) must be elected annually from among the voting members who are not employees or elected officials of any school board or the Ministry of Education. One of these representatives must be an elected member of the Council executive.

### **District Parent Advisory Council representative**

2. One representative to the (name of your DPAC) may be elected annually from among the voting members who are not employees or elected officials of School District No. ( ) or the Ministry of Education.

### **Election of SPC and DPAC representatives**

3. The election of representatives to the SPC and DPAC must be by secret ballot.

### **Term of office**

4. SPC and DPAC representatives will hold office for a term of one year.

### **Vacancy**

5. If an SPC or DPAC representative resigns or ceases to hold office for any other reason, the membership may elect an eligible member of the Council to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term. Such election must be by secret ballot.

### **External committees**

6. The membership or executive may elect or appoint a member (*a representative of a Council member*) who is not an employee or elected official of School District No. ( ) or the Ministry of Education to represent the Council on an external committee or to an external organization.

7. The representative will report to the membership or executive as required.

## Section VII – CONDUCT OF EXECUTIVE AND REPRESENTATIVES

### Code of ethics

1. On election or appointment, every executive member and representative must sign and agree to abide by a code of ethics acceptable to the membership.

A sample Code of Ethics appears at the end of these bylaws. For more information on code of ethics, see **Tab 8, Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest.**

### Representing the Council

2. Every executive member and representative must act solely in the interests of the parent membership of the Council.

### Privilege

3. Any information received in confidence by an executive member or representative from school personnel, a student, parent, or other member of the school community is privileged and must not be divulged without permission of the person giving the information.

### Disclosure of interest

4. An executive member or representative who is interested, either directly or indirectly, in a proposed contract or transaction with the Council must disclose fully and promptly the nature and extent of his or her interest to the membership and executive.

5. Such an executive member or representative must avoid using his or her position on the Council for personal gain.

## Section VIII – DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE AND REPRESENTATIVES

### A. The President will

- (a) speak on behalf of the Council
- (b) consult with Council members
- (c) preside at membership and executive meetings
- (d) ensure that an agenda is prepared
- (e) appoint committees where authorized by the membership or executive
- (f) ensure that the Council is represented in school and district activities
- (g) ensure that Council activities are aimed at achieving the purposes set out in the constitution

- (h) be a signing officer
- (i) submit an annual report

The meeting agenda is usually the president's responsibility. It is good practice to consult with the executive, membership, principal (for PACs), or superintendent/school board liaison (for DPACs) before the meeting to give them an opportunity for input.

The terms "president" and "chairperson" are often used interchangeably.

The president usually gives a report at each meeting outlining work done and issues considered since the last meeting.

### B. The Vice-President will

- (a) support the president
- (b) assume the duties of the president in the president's absence or upon request
- (c) assist the president in the performance of his or her duties
- (d) accept extra duties as required
- (e) be a signing officer
- (f) submit an annual report

### C. The Secretary will

- (a) ensure that members are notified of meetings
- (b) record and file minutes of all meetings
- (c) keep an accurate copy of the constitution and bylaws, and make copies available to members upon request
- (d) prepare and maintain other documentation as requested by the membership or executive
- (e) issue and receive correspondence on behalf of the Council
- (f) ensure safekeeping of all records of the Council
- (g) *DPAC—keep an accurate record of PAC representatives*
- (h) *DPAC—assist the president in providing information to local news media*
- (i) may be a signing officer
- (j) submit an annual report

If changes are made to the constitution and bylaws, they should be dated and initialed and a copy placed in the school office for safekeeping.

Financial records should be kept for seven years. Other documents may be kept according to their value or precedent-setting nature. Minutes can be a valuable history of the council.

**D. The Treasurer will**

- (a) be a signing officer
- (b) ensure all funds of the Council are properly accounted for
- (c) disburse funds as authorized by the membership or executive
- (d) ensure that proper financial records and books of account are maintained
- (e) report on all receipts and disbursements at general and executive meetings
- (f) make financial records and books of account available to members upon request
- (g) have the financial records and books of account ready for inspection or audit annually
- (h) with the assistance of the executive, draft an annual budget
- (i) ensure that another signing officer has access to the financial records and books of account in the treasurer's absence
- (j) submit an annual financial statement at the annual general meeting

**E. The DPAC Representative will**

- (a) attend all meetings of (name of your DPAC) and represent, speak, and vote on behalf of the Council
- (b) maintain current registration of the Council
- (c) report regularly to the membership and executive on all matters relating to the DPAC
- (d) seek and give input to the DPAC on behalf of the Council
- (e) receive, circulate, and post DPAC newsletters, brochures, and announcements
- (f) receive and act on all other communications from the DPAC
- (g) liaise with other parents and DPAC representatives
- (h) submit an annual report

**E. The District Associate (DA) to BCCPAC will**

- (a) *act as the liaison between the Council and BCCPAC*
- (b) *encourage PACs in School District No. ( ) to be members of BCCPAC*
- (c) *disseminate BCCPAC information to all PACs in School District No. ( )*
- (d) *help identify interested and qualified parents for BCCPAC external committees*
- (e) *help PACs and the Council to process BCCPAC forms, proxies, and applications*
- (f) *assist PACs and the Council in responding to BCCPAC AGM resolutions*
- (g) *submit an annual report*

**F. Members-at-Large (Directors) will**

- (a) serve in a capacity to be determined by the Council at the time of election, and at other times as the Council requires
- (b) submit an annual report

**G. The immediate Past President will**

- (a) advise and support the membership and executive
- (b) provide information about resources, contacts, and other matters
- (c) submit an annual report

Annual reports are important because they

- provide an opportunity to review personal and council goals and achievements
- provide a record of actions taken
- outline responsibilities for those considering running for an executive position

**H. The School Planning Council (SPC) representatives will**

- (a) attend all meetings of the school planning council (SPC)
- (b) represent, speak, and vote on behalf of the Council at SPC meetings
- (c) request and take direction from the membership and executive
- (d) be strong advocates for meaningful parent involvement in the school and school planning
- (e) provide a written report to all general and executive meetings
- (f) attend general and executive meetings as directed by the membership or executive
- (g) submit an annual report

**Section IX – COMMITTEES**

1. The membership and executive may appoint committees to further the Council's purposes and carry on its affairs.
2. The terms of reference of each committee will be specified by the membership or executive at the time the committee is established, or by the committee at its first meeting, as the membership or executive decide.
3. Committees will report to the membership and executive as required.
4. A Nominating Committee will be appointed annually before the annual general meeting.

A *standing committee* exists every year and may be described in the bylaws. Examples are budget, nominating, programs, hot lunch, special events, and fundraising.  
An *ad hoc committee* is created to do a specific task within a certain time period.

## Section X – FINANCIAL MATTERS

### Financial year

1. The financial year of the Council will be (date) to (date).

### Power to raise money

2. The Council may raise and spend money to further its purposes.

### Bank accounts

3. All funds of the Council must be kept on deposit in the name of the Council in a bank or financial institution registered under the Bank Act.

### Signing authority

4. The executive will name at least three signing officers for banking and legal documents. Two signatures will be required on all of these documents.

### Annual budget

5. The executive will prepare a budget and present it to the membership for approval before the current budget expires.

The budget gives the executive authority to spend money. Without a current budget, the executive cannot spend money. A budget covers a time period within a council's financial year, usually the entire financial year. It must not extend over more than one financial year. For more information, see **Tab 15, Financial Management in PACs and DPACs**.

### Non-budgeted expenditures

6. The executive will present all proposed expenditures beyond the current budget for approval at the next general meeting.

### Treasurer's report

7. A treasurer's report will be presented at each general meeting.

### Auditor

8. Members at a general meeting may appoint an auditor.

Council money can only be spent if authorized by a motion passed at a general meeting. One of the most useful motions is approval of a budget. A budget gives the executive authority to make the transactions included in the budget without coming back to the membership for approval.

### **Section XI – CONSTITUTION AND BYLAW AMENDMENTS**

1. The members may, by a majority of not less than 75% of the votes cast, amend the Council's constitution and bylaws.
2. Written notice specifying the proposed amendments must be given to the members not less than 14 days before the meeting.
3. Where the proposed amendments exceed one page, they need not be given to every member, but must be posted in a conspicuous place in the school or made accessible to all members.

### **Section XII – PROPERTY IN DOCUMENTS**

All documents, records, minutes, correspondence, or other papers kept by a member, executive member, representative, or committee member in connection with the Council shall be deemed to be property of the Council and shall be turned over to the president when the member, executive member, representative, or committee member ceases to perform the task to which the papers relate.

### **Section XIII – DISSOLUTION**

1. In the event of winding up or dissolution of the Council, and after payment of all debts and costs of winding up or dissolution, the assets and remaining funds of the Council shall be distributed to another parent advisory council or councils in School District No. ( ) having purposes similar to those of the Council, as the members of the Council may determine at the time of winding up or dissolution.
2. In the event of winding up or dissolution, all records of the Council shall be given to the principal of (name of your school) (*the Secretary-Treasurer of School District No. ( )*).

**Adopted by (name of council) at (your city or town), British Columbia, on (date).**

**Signatures of president and one other executive member**

**CODE OF ETHICS**

A parent who accepts a position as a Council executive member, committee member, or representative

1. upholds the constitution and bylaws, policies, and procedures of the electing body
2. performs his or her duties with honesty and integrity and in the interests of the Council
3. works to ensure that the well-being of students is the primary focus of all decisions
4. respects the rights of all individuals
5. takes direction from the membership and executive
6. encourages and supports parents and students with individual concerns to act on their own behalf, and provides information on the process for taking concerns forward
7. works to ensure that issues are resolved through due process
8. strives to be informed and only passes on information that is reliable
9. respects all confidential information
10. supports public education

**Statement of Understanding**

I, the undersigned, in accepting the position of \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of your council) have read, understood, and agreed to abide by this Code of Ethics. I also agree to participate in the dispute resolution process that has been agreed to by the electing body, should there be any concerns about my work.

Name of Executive Member, Committee Member, or Representative

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

This page can be photocopied and used annually for all executive members and representatives.  
**Administration of the Code of Ethics** can be found in **Tab 8, Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest**, page 4.



**Roles, Responsibilities, and Accountability  
of PAC and DPAC Executives**

Responsibilities of Executives	Page 2
Duties of Executives	Page 2
Fulfilling Your Responsibilities as an Executive Member	Page 3
Conflict of Interest	Page 4
Assignment of Responsibilities	Page 4
Choosing Good Leadership	Page 6
A Special Note on Choosing a Treasurer	Page 7
Respecting Diversity in Your Council Executive	Page 7

### Roles, Responsibilities, and Accountability of PAC and DPAC Executives

Every organization needs good leadership. Your council's leaders will facilitate the membership in setting the course for your organization and achieving its goals.

The executive's role is:

- to provide leadership
- to take initiative
- to carry on the council's day-to-day business.

The executive's authority comes from two sources:

- the council's constitution and bylaws
- direction of the membership.

### Responsibility of Executive Members

Council executive members have important responsibilities:

- to understand and abide by the council's constitution, bylaws, and code of ethics
- to understand and carry out the responsibilities of their executive office set out in the bylaws
- to ensure that the council is involved only in activities it is authorized to do under its constitution
- to consult with the membership, to manage the council's affairs by
  - establishing direction, policy, and procedures
  - being involved in planning
  - delegating tasks and responsibilities, with supervision, to committees
- to report to the membership and abide by the membership's direction.

The executive, as a group and as individuals, is responsible to the membership for everything they do.

### Duties of Executive Members

Executives are expected to act with the highest standards. Once elected, executives

- assume responsibility for the council's affairs
- owe a duty of trust to
  - students in the school and district
  - the council's membership
  - each other as executive members
  - the council's staff, if any
  - anyone who may be affected by the executive's actions or decisions.

### ***What does this mean?***

This means, as an executive member, you have a duty to put the council's interests ahead of your own. You should not act in the interests of a special group or in your own self-interest.

In addition:

- be careful, honest, and forthright
- think about what you are doing and saying, and ask yourself
- ? Am I doing what's right for the council, its members, and the parents of this school and district? Do I have their interests at heart rather than my own interests or the interests of another organization or person with whom I am associated?
- ? Am I being honest and up front with the other executive members? What would I want another executive member to do or say if they were in my position?
- ? Am I acting in accordance with the decisions and policies of the executive and membership, or am I acting in some way contrary to those decisions and policies?
- ? Do I have a personal interest (financial or personal benefit not available to others) which I have not disclosed to the executive or membership?
- ? What would the other executive members and the council membership expect me to do here?

### ***Upholding decisions***

As an executive member, you are obligated to uphold the decisions of the executive and membership. If you cannot in conscience uphold a decision, then you must resign from the executive. You are entitled to try to persuade others to change their views, decisions, or policies, but outside the executive, you must act and speak in accordance with the executive's and membership's decisions.

### **Fulfilling Your Responsibilities as an Executive Member**

The job of an executive member is challenging and rewarding. You are helping to involve parents in improving the quality of our public education system.

To fulfill your role better:

- Attend meetings and stay informed of the council's business.
- Read what you are given. Someone thought it was important for you to know.
- Ask questions. Make sure you understand the issues before you make decisions and vote. Be reasonable—don't insist on information that won't make a difference.
- Take on only what you can do effectively and within a reasonable time, and then do it. If you can't, talk to the president/chair or another executive member promptly.
- If you have a special skill or expertise (for example, you are an accountant), you must act with the same standard of care as you would in your professional work.

**Note:** There is nothing inherently wrong with having a conflict of interest, or making a personal profit by providing goods or services to the council, school, or district.

The problem arises when an executive member fails to put the interests of the council first. A prudent executive member will immediately disclose the conflict and avoid using their position for personal gain.

The terms “president” and “chair” are often used interchangeably.

The meeting agenda is usually the president’s responsibility. It is good practice to consult with the executive, membership, principal (for PACs), or superintendent/school board liaison (for DPACs) before the meeting to give them an opportunity for input.

## **Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest arises when an executive member could benefit financially from a decision of the council that they can influence or vote on.

The executive member has a duty to report the conflict promptly to the executive and membership, and refrain from using their position to personal advantage. Failure to report is a breach of duty to the council, and may lead to personal liability for any loss to the council.

## **Assignment of Responsibilities**

It is important for your council to have a clear and fair assignment of responsibilities for executive members. This allows everyone—executive, membership, principal, and staff—to understand what is expected of each executive member.

### **A. The President/Chair may**

- speak on behalf of the council
- consult with council members
- preside at membership and executive meetings
- ensure that an agenda is prepared
- appoint committees where authorized by the membership or executive
- ensure that the council is represented in school and district activities
- ensure that council activities are aimed at achieving the purposes set out in the constitution
- be a signing officer
- submit an annual report

### **B. The Vice-President may**

- support the president
- assume the duties of the president in the president’s absence or upon request
- assist the president in the performance of his or her duties
- accept extra duties as required
- be a DPAC representative
- be a signing officer
- submit an annual report

### **C. The Secretary may**

- ensure that members are notified of meetings
- record and file minutes of all meetings
- keep an accurate copy of the constitution and bylaws, and make copies available to members upon request

- prepare and maintain other documentation as requested by the membership or executive
- issue and receive correspondence on behalf of the council
- ensure safekeeping of all records of the council
- *DPAC—keep an accurate record of PAC representatives*
- *DPAC—assist the president in providing information to local news media*
- may be a signing officer
- submit an annual report

**D. The Treasurer may**

Financial records should be kept for seven years. Other documents may be kept according to their value or precedent-setting nature. Minutes can be a valuable history of the council.

- be a signing officer
- ensure all funds of the council are properly accounted for
- disburse funds as authorized by the membership or executive
- ensure that proper financial records and books of account are maintained
- report on all receipts and disbursements at general and executive meetings
- make financial records and books of account available to members upon request
- have the financial records and books of account ready for inspection or audit annually
- with the assistance of the executive, draft an annual budget
- ensure that another signing officer has access to the financial records and books of account in the treasurer's absence
- submit an annual financial statement at the annual general meeting

**E. The DPAC Representative may**

Annual reports are important because they

- provide an opportunity to review personal and council goals and achievements
- provide a record of actions taken
- outline responsibilities for those considering running for an executive position.

- attend all DPAC meetings and represent, speak, and vote on behalf of the PAC
- maintain current registration of the PAC
- report regularly to the membership and executive on all matters relating to the DPAC
- seek and give input to the DPAC on behalf of the PAC
- receive, circulate, and post DPAC newsletters, brochures, and announcements
- receive and act on all other communications from the DPAC
- liaise with other parents and DPAC representatives
- submit an annual report

**F. Members at Large (Directors in a DPAC) may**

- serve in a capacity to be determined by the council at the time of election, and at other times as the council requires
- submit an annual report

**G. The Immediate Past President may**

- advise and support the membership and executive
- provide information about resources, contacts, and other matters
- submit an annual report

**H. The School Planning Council (SPC) representatives may**

- attend all SPC meetings
- represent, speak, and vote on behalf of the PAC at SPC meetings
- request and take direction from the membership and executive
- be strong advocates for meaningful parent involvement in the school and school planning
- provide a written report to all general and executive meetings
- attend general and executive meetings as directed by the membership or executive
- submit an annual report
- at least one representative must be an Executive member

**Choosing Good Leadership**

Choosing good leadership is the most important decision your council will make all year. Your organization's effectiveness is often a direct result of the quality of its leadership.

Before election night, parents who are considering running for a position, as well as those recruiting others, should review the responsibilities listed above or contained in your bylaws. Executives are more often successful when parents take on jobs they like and are qualified for. Volunteers serve their organizations better, and enjoy their work more, when they do what they are good at.

***Tips for finding volunteers to do the important job of the executive:***

- Strike a nominating committee to solicit volunteers before election night. (Your bylaws may provide for one.) People respond better to a phone call ahead of time than to a plea at an open meeting.
- Offer to put new parents in touch with experienced parents to explain the job.
- Give a clear outline of the duties and time commitment of each position. Describe past activities and successes. New jobs for new people are less intimidating with background information and a personalized helping hand.
- Encourage retiring executive to stay on in an advisory capacity.
- Invite prospective volunteers to an executive meeting to find out first hand what goes on.
- Encourage new parents to put their names forward. New parents bring new involvement and new ideas.

### **A Special Note on Choosing a Treasurer**

With the large amounts of money many PACs and DPACs handle, the job of Treasurer has become central to the council's smooth operation. Proper financial management will help the council financially support its goals.

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring safe custody of the council's money. Ideally, candidates for treasurer should have accounting or bookkeeping experience. At the least, they should be comfortable with numbers and familiar with the basics of financial record-keeping. They should also be attentive to detail and timelines.

The Treasurer should feel comfortable working closely with the President and others, as he or she will be asked to disclose record-keeping and account for financial transactions.

### **Respecting Diversity in Your Council Executive**

PACs and DPACs are striving to become truly representative of all the parents in their school communities.

Through sensitivity to the barriers many parents face in becoming involved in their children's education, council leaders can draw all parents in and pave the way for them to take on leadership roles. This begins with a close look at the reasons under-represented groups may not participate in council activities. Councils and council leaders need to find ways to overcome these barriers and actively recruit parents from all parts of the school community.

**Tab 8 ~**

## **Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest**

In this **Tab 8**, you will find

Code of Ethics	Page 2
What is the Purpose of a Code of Ethics?	Page 2
Sample Code of Ethics	Page 3
Administration of the Code of Ethics	Page 4
Conflict of Interest and Perceived Bias	Page 6
What is Conflict of Interest?	Page 6
What is Perceived Bias?	Page 6
Examples	Page 6
Check Your Bylaws	Page 7
Encourage Full Disclosure	Page 7
A Cautionary Note	Page 7

## Code of Ethics

Ever since provincial legislation gave parents the right to form parent advisory councils, parent leaders in BC schools have taken on challenges never before attempted by volunteers in the education system. With these challenges comes a high degree of responsibility on executives, committee members, and representatives to act in an ethical manner.

### What is the Purpose of a Code of Ethics?

A code of ethics

- provides a common reference point from which questions regarding the conduct of an executive member, committee member, or representative can be resolved
- lays out, in language understandable to everyone, the minimum standard of conduct that the membership expects of parents serving in these positions
- gives the membership a basis from which to bring forward a concern about a parent serving in one of these positions.

A code of ethics should be accompanied by a process for administering it. This ensures that concerns are raised in a timely and fair manner, and that the person who is the subject of the concern has full and fair opportunity to respond.

## Sample Code of Ethics

A parent who accepts a position as a Council executive member, committee member, or representative

1. upholds the constitution and bylaws, policies, and procedures of the electing body
2. performs his or her duties with honesty and integrity and in the interests of the Council
3. works to ensure that the well-being of students is the primary focus of all decisions
4. respects the rights of all individuals
5. takes direction from the membership and executive
6. encourages and supports parents and students with individual concerns to act on their own behalf, and provides information on the process for taking concerns forward
7. works to ensure that issues are resolved through due process
8. strives to be informed and only passes on information that is reliable
9. respects all confidential information
10. supports public education

### Statement of Understanding

I, the undersigned, in accepting the position of \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of your council) have read, understood, and agreed to abide by this Code of Ethics. I also agree to participate in the dispute resolution process that has been agreed to by the electing body, should there be any concerns about my work.

Name of Executive Member, Committee Member, or Representative

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

This page can be photocopied and used annually for all executive members and representatives.
---

## Administration of the Code of Ethics

The following is a process for dealing with a concern that an executive member, committee member, or representative may have failed to observe the Code of Ethics. The process is intended to deal with complaints in a positive manner. Its goal is to facilitate a fair resolution, agreeable to all parties.

- Any person bringing forward a concern will be advised of this process.
- All complaints and information surrounding complaints will be dealt with in confidence.
- Those directly involved in the complaint will be given access to all relevant information.
- All parties will be dealt with respectfully.
- Any person involved may have a support person.
- There will be a fair review of the concern to protect volunteers, executive members, and representatives from vexatious and mischievous complaints.

### PROCESS

1. All complaints, verbal and written, will be received by the president. The president may appoint another executive member to act as chairperson for the specific purpose of administering the Code of Ethics. In the event the complaint relates to the president, the complainant will be directed to the vice-president. If the president and vice-president are involved, any executive member may receive the complaint.
2. For the purpose of this process, the person acting on the complaint is named the chairperson.
3. Upon receiving the complaint, the chairperson will work to clarify the complaint, determine if and how the Code of Ethics has been breached, and facilitate the complaints process. The chairperson is responsible for keeping complete notes of the process. These notes should include names of all involved, details of all meetings, and the specifics of any resolutions.
4. Every attempt will be made to resolve the concern in a timely manner.
5. As a first step, the person bringing forward the complaint will be encouraged to inform the person in question of their concern and to discuss the problem with the intent of reaching a resolution.
6. If resolution is not reached between the parties, the chairperson will enter the discussion, with the intent of facilitating a positive resolution.
7. The chairperson may request the participation of other executive members in the process.

8. If the parties cannot agree on a resolution, the chairperson will make a recommendation to the parties. The chairperson may recommend that the matter be closed.
9. Either party may appeal the decision of the chairperson. The appeal must be in writing to the council executive within 30 days of being notified of the decision.

Dealing with these types of circumstances is difficult. Individuals can seek help from their DPAC, local DPAC Advocacy Project, BCCPAC, or the BCCPAC Advocacy Project.

---

## Conflict of Interest and Perceived Bias

### What is a Conflict of Interest?

If a parent or a member of the parent's immediate family could benefit financially from a decision of the PAC, DPAC, or school planning council that the parent can influence or vote on, the parent has a conflict of interest. This is true whether the parent is an executive member, committee member, or member at large.

### What is Perceived Bias?

Perceived bias may exist if a parent has another role in the education system that might be seen to influence the parent's conduct or views. For example, if a parent is an employee or elected official of the school district or Ministry of Education (or is married to one), others may question whether the parent is acting solely in the interests of the council.

### Examples

Your council should consider the implications of choosing a parent for an executive, committee, or representative role who might have a conflict of interest or perceived bias. Here are two examples:

#### *Example #1*

A PAC directs its president to express concern to the principal or school district about bullying on the playground. The president is employed as a noon-hour supervisor. Discussing playground policy might require the president to disagree with her supervisor (the principal) or employer (the district), and might even put her in breach of her collective agreement. She might not be comfortable, or able, to represent the PAC's concerns in the way the parents expect. The president has a financial interest in protecting her job.

*Example #2*

The DPAC chooses a parent who is also a teacher to represent the DPAC on a district budget committee. Other members of the committee, as well as the broader community, may not feel confident that the parent is speaking solely in the interests of parents. This perception of bias may diminish what the parent has to say.

**Check Your Bylaws**

It is important to address these concerns before problems arise. Check your council's bylaws. Do they address the issues of *conflict of interest* and *perceived bias*? Consider adopting bylaws that

- prohibit parents from using their position on the council for personal gain
- prohibit any parent who is an employee or elected official of the school district or Ministry of Education from holding an executive position or representing the council on an external committee or organization
- clarify that any parent speaking for or representing the council must do so solely in the interests of the parent membership.

**Encourage Full Disclosure**

Even with carefully written bylaws, the issues of conflict of interest and perceived bias should be discussed openly.

Consider incorporating a requirement for full disclosure in your council's nomination procedure. Ask nominees or prospective volunteers to disclose any educational affiliations, professional designations, and contractual relationships that might relate to or affect their executive, committee, or representative duties.

As part of your meeting procedure, consider adopting a policy or practice requiring parents to identify themselves by name, PAC (at a DPAC meeting), and any other role they hold in the education system before speaking on an issue.

### **A Cautionary Note**

Just because a parent holds a position in the education system, or owns a business that supplies goods or services to the school or district, the parent is not precluded from participating fully as a council member. The parent can vote on issues that affect all parents in the same way, including elections in which they are a candidate, and can participate in all activities that do not involve decision-making.

When the parent has a financial interest not common to other members of the council, they should refrain from voting. When a parent may be seen to be biased, members should exercise caution in electing or appointing the parent to an executive, committee, or representative position.

**Tab 9 ~**

## **Decision-Making in PACs, DPACs, and School Planning Councils**

In this **Tab 9**, you will find

Quality Decision-Making	Page 2
Models of Decision-Making	Page 3
Models of Decision-Making—Chart	Page 5
Reaching Decisions Through Consensus	Page 6
Making Majority-Based Decisions	Page 8
Implementing the Decision	Page 9

## Decision-Making in PACs, DPACs, and School Planning Councils

The roles and responsibilities of PACs, DPACs, and school planning councils are defined in the School Act and, in the case of PACs and DPACs, in their constitution and bylaws.<sup>1</sup>



Important sections of the School Act can be found in **Tab 2, The BC School Act.**

PACs and DPACs created under the School Act are autonomous organizations. This means they are able to govern their own affairs and determine their own procedure.

The School Act contains specific requirements for PAC and DPAC bylaws: PACs and DPACs must make bylaws governing their meetings and the business and conduct of their affairs.<sup>2</sup> Many school districts have policies with implications for PACs and DPACs that parents should be aware of.

School planning councils are governed by the School Act and school and district policies. Many of these policies address SPC procedure. On matters not covered by the Act or policy, SPCs are able to determine their own procedure. SPCs are not required to make bylaws.

For requirements of the School Act for PAC and DPAC bylaws, see **Tab 6, Constitutions and Bylaws**, page 3.

### Quality Decision-Making<sup>3</sup>

The success of a meeting is ultimately measured by the quality of the decisions made in it.

*Eli Mina, The Complete Handbook of Business Meetings*

One of the measures of a successful organization is the quality of the decisions it makes. Quality decisions

- are in the organization's best interests, consistent with its mandate
- are logical, wise, responsible, and compelling
- take into account the needs of the organization's members and the people it serves
- are made after consideration of all relevant information
- are made after considering their short and long-term impact
- reflect creative and courageous thinking
- solve real problems.

<sup>1</sup> PACs and DPACs registered under the Society Act are subject to the requirements of that Act.

<sup>2</sup> School Act, s. 8(5) for PACs, and s. 8.5(2) for DPACs.

<sup>3</sup> This information is adapted from Eli Mina, *The Complete Handbook of Business Meetings*. AMACOM 2000

Quality decisions are made in an atmosphere of *openness*, *listening*, and *collaboration*.

- ✓ In an *open* atmosphere, members come with an open mind, participate equally and fairly, and learn from others.
- ✓ Members *listen*, knowing that a diversity of opinions makes the organization stronger.
- ✓ Members *collaborate*, knowing that collective decision-making is not about winning and losing, but about making the best decisions for the entire organization.

## Models of Decision-Making

There are three basic models of decision-making:

- consensus
- majority-based
- autocratic.

Instead of you against me, can we work on the basis of you and me against the problem?

*Eli Mina, The Complete Handbook of Business Meetings*

All three models are used by organizations at various times, and sometimes in combination. Each model has its appropriate use and, if used properly, can facilitate effective decision-making.

### *Consensus*

“Consensus” means “general agreement” or “the judgment arrived at by most of those concerned”.<sup>4</sup>

Consensus is interpreted in various ways, as

- a broad level of agreement
- unanimous support of a decision
- the point at which each member is prepared to either support the decision or stand aside and not block it (accepting it as a compromise).

Consensus is often used to approve minutes and reports. It can also be used for complex issues, such as supporting a new program in the school or district. It is especially appropriate when a decision needs broad-based support.

<sup>4</sup> Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary

***Majority-based***

Parliamentary procedure is based on this model—one member, one vote, and a decision requires more than half the votes cast. Most decisions can be made using this model. It is an inclusive and practical approach that most people are familiar with.

***Autocratic***

Under this model, one person is given or assumes unilateral power to make a decision without consulting others.

This approach is appropriate for routine and purely administrative decisions. It may be used for urgent decisions when there is no time to consult members or build consensus. Members should be notified of the decision as soon as practicable.

## Models of Decision-Making

Adapted from Eli Mina, *The Complete Handbook of Business Meetings*  
AMACOM 2000. Pages 25-27

Model	Pros	Cons	Appropriate Situations
<b>Consensus (more than a simple majority)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Broad support for an initiative is generated</li> <li>▪ The decisions reflect a broad spectrum of views and are more likely to endure</li> <li>▪ Decisions are viewed as legitimate and are less likely to be undermined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time consuming, slow</li> <li>▪ Risk of being blocked or undermined by the minority</li> <li>▪ Risk of a proposal being so diluted (to accommodate all interests) that it becomes meaningless</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complex or controversial initiatives where time is available, and it is important to get more than a simple majority to endorse and support the initiative</li> </ul>
<b>Majority-based voting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inclusive, yet efficient</li> <li>▪ Potentially measured and deliberate</li> <li>▪ Unanimity is not required and hence disputes can be settled by a vote</li> <li>▪ If minorities are heard, the decisions are likely to be viewed as legitimate and are therefore more likely to be respected and implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential for creating winners (majorities) and losers (minorities)</li> <li>▪ Potential for important decisions being pushed through by impatient majorities, possibly causing “losing minorities” to leave the organization or stay but undermine the implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complex decisions that stand to benefit from broad input</li> <li>▪ Controversial decisions that affect people and stakeholders in a significant way</li> <li>▪ Decisions that cannot wait, where the number of options is limited, and a middle ground between positions is hard or impossible to find within the time available</li> <li>▪ No time is available to obtain much more than a simple majority support for a proposal</li> </ul>
<b>Autocratic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expeditious</li> <li>▪ Simple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not inclusive</li> <li>▪ Lacks the benefit of a broad perspective</li> <li>▪ Potential for a lack of commitment by followers, or even undermining of the decision by them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Routine, administrative, or non-controversial decisions</li> <li>▪ Urgent decisions that cannot wait for collective decision-making</li> </ul>

## Reaching Decisions through Consensus<sup>5</sup>

When decisions must be made, PACs, DPACs, and SPCs strive to take into account the opinions of a diverse school community and make the best decision possible.

Consensus is one of several ways to make an effective decision, with advantages depending on the circumstances.

### *When to use the consensus process*

The essence of the consensus process is participation and respect. The consensus process works best when

Consensus decision-making can work for many issues.

- members see a reason to participate—they have a common concern
- everyone with an interest in the issue has the opportunity to be involved
- everyone has a basic understanding of, and agrees to, the consensus process. (It is the leader's responsibility to explain the process.)
- everyone has fair and equal access to all information on the issue before or during the discussion
- all members are willing to listen, participate, and assist others to understand the issue
- members are prepared to be flexible and change their opinions after hearing others' views.

### *When to use another decision-making process*

People often prefer the decision-making process they are familiar with and that has worked well for them in the past. The majority-based model will be highly successful in the circumstances listed above. Let your members decide which method to use.

Consider using the majority-based model rather than consensus when

- a number of members indicate they would prefer to use the method they are most familiar with
- the issue is “hot” or urgent
- people or groups appear to have set positions

<sup>5</sup> This information is adapted from *Reaching decisions through consensus*, BCCPAC's Inclusive PACs and DPACs Series.

- there is disagreement as to which decision-making method to use
- members are not participating
- the discussion is not moving along well, or consensus cannot be reached.

### *Steps to consensus*

#### **1. The issue must be clear to all participants.**

Begin by explaining the issue or concern and why it is being discussed at this time. Invite a knowledgeable member or guest to provide clear information.

#### **2. Invite all members to participate in the discussion.**

Once the problem is clearly understood, invite possible solutions and encourage all members to join the discussion.

Everyone does not have to speak, but if a member appears anxious, invite them to comment.

Once a satisfactory solution has been reached, discontinue the discussion and move on to the next step unless a new concern arises.

#### **3. Restate the solution.**

Clarify the solution to ensure nothing has been overlooked. Ask if anyone has a question regarding the proposal.

#### **4. Ask if there is any opposition.**

This is an important step. Although it is assumed that everyone who wished to speak did so, once the decision is restated it is wise to ask for objections.

#### **5. Deal with objections.**

If there are objections, they must be worked out or a new solution proposed. Ask the person or persons objecting to propose an alternative.

Parents must feel accepted even when their opinion differs from the majority.

If the members who do not agree with the decision are clearly in the minority, and it is recognized the solution will work, ask the minority for clarification of their position. There are two options at this point:

- Members not in full support may *stand aside*—they are not expected to participate in implementing the decision, but they agree not to block others in doing so.
- The minority *states non-support* within the group—this will not be stated publicly outside the group, and will not be used to block success.

**6. If there are no objections, or you have satisfied them, record the decision in the minutes.**

**7. If no decision can be reached, consider voting on the issue and letting the majority decide.**

### **Making Majority-Based Decisions**

The same atmosphere of *openness, listening, and collaboration* that leads to consensus-building also leads to good majority-based decisions. All members need

- a reason to participate
- equal opportunity to be involved
- a basic understanding of the process
- fair and equal access to all information on the issue.

With these conditions met, the majority-based process can be highly inclusive and effective for PACs, DPACs, and SPCs.

### ***Respecting the minority***

Diversity of opinion can be viewed an asset—different pieces of the truth we need to make a good decision.

Members with a minority viewpoint often contribute valuable information to the discussion of an issue. In a well-run meeting, where everyone has equal opportunity to speak and be heard, these members can come away feeling their opinions were considered and respected, even though they did not prevail. In such an

atmosphere, minority members are more likely to support the majority decision, or at least not undermine it.

Listening to the minority viewpoint also requires the majority to justify their decision. The majority needs to feel that the final decision was made after taking the minority's concerns into account.

### **Implementing the Decision**

An important part of good decision-making, whether by consensus or majority, is to give everyone an opportunity to participate in implementing the decision.

Following the decision (at the same or a later meeting), invite all members to join together in action-planning. This will preserve the support that was achieved for the decision during the decision-making process.

The positive relationships developed within the group during the consensus process or a well-run majority-based process will improve the overall effectiveness of your council.

For more information on meetings and decision-making, see **Tab 14, Effective Meetings**.



**Tab 10 ~**

## **Representing All Voices ~ Building an Inclusive Council**

In this **Tab 10**, you will find

Where to Start	Page 2
<i>Understanding Your Community</i>	Page 3
<i>Examining Your Council</i>	Page 4
Promoting an Inclusive Council	Page 5
<i>Suggestions for Building Inclusivity</i>	Page 6
Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements	Page 8
<i>Involving your PAC, DPAC, and SPC</i>	Page 8
First Nations Parent Clubs	Page 9

## Representing All Voices ~ Building an Inclusive Council

*Diversity refers to the unique characteristics that we all possess that distinguish us as individuals and identify us as belonging to a group.*

*Diversity includes dimensions of race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and ability.*

*Diversity offers strength and richness to the whole.*

*Diversity may also include ancestry, age, colour, political belief, marital status, and family status.*

*The Hastings Institute<sup>1</sup>*

All parents and students in BC's public education system deserve the opportunity to participate fully and equally in everything the system has to offer. Parent leaders recognize that, to be truly representative and effective, PACs, DPACs, and SPCs must respect the diversity among parents and students in our school communities and find ways to draw all parents into the work of our councils.

Building an inclusive council means going beyond recognizing the diversity among us. It means working actively to encourage and make it possible for all parents to participate fully in all activities of the council.

### Where to Start

Meeting the needs of all parents and students requires coordinated effort and shared responsibility among our schools, districts, and parent leaders.

---

<sup>1</sup> Established in 1989 by the City of Vancouver to deliver training on issues related to employment and service equity, diversity, cross-cultural relations, literacy, and harassment-free workplaces. Website: [www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/eo/index.htm#Hastings](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/eo/index.htm#Hastings)

### *Understanding your community*

The information you need to understand your school community lies with the community members themselves. Begin with a conversation among parents and students about the characteristics of your community. Explore the diversity of opinion, cultural background, and life-style. Identify what makes your school community unique.

Your school and district also hold a great deal of information about your community. Ask your principal or superintendent how the district tracks student enrollment and needs.

Consider the following:

- What is the cultural, ethnic, language, and religious composition of the school or district?
- What are the socio-economic, education, and literacy levels of the community? Are there various levels? How are they distributed? How do they interact?
- What is the overall level of parent or community involvement? Are there higher or lower levels in certain areas or activities?
- What makes the community unique? What are its special characteristics or expectations?

Together, we must go further than just inviting parents to the school.

*BCCPAC's Inclusive  
PACs and DPACs Series*

Find out what outreach programs are available in the school or district, for example:

- multicultural and language services
- programs to welcome new families
- programs and services for pre-schoolers, teens, and single parents
- health services
- meal programs or food bank
- clothing exchange
- childcare
- sports and recreation
- education centres for teens who have left the mainstream schools
- continuing education for adults
- police liaison.

### *Examining your council*

An important step toward becoming more inclusive is to evaluate how representative your council is at the present time. This can be done in several ways:

- a general meeting of all members to discuss representation and inclusivity
- a committee to examine the issue
- a survey of parents, the entire school, or district.

Reflect on the following questions:

#### *How do parents view your council?*

Many parents recognize PACs, DPACs, and SPCs as an integral part of the education community, promoting effective parent involvement at all levels.

Other parents are not familiar with the role parents are entitled to play in public education. Some parents may come from cultures where parent participation in schools is discouraged or non-existent. These parents may hesitate to become involved because they think parent councils are part of the school bureaucracy.

You want all parents to view your council as approachable and welcoming, including those parents who cannot come to the school on a regular basis or participate in council activities. You want all parents

- to understand that PACs and DPACs are parent organizations, run by parents for the benefit of parents and students
- to understand that SPCs include parent representatives working to improve student achievement
- to know about the activities and issues these councils are involved in.

#### *Who comes to council meetings and events? Who is missing? Why?*

Look at who is attracted to your meetings and events. Do certain people or groups come to some things and not to others?

Parents must see your meetings and events as relevant and useful to them or their children before they will take the time to

With commitment to action, PACs and DPACs can be successful in promoting and modeling respect for diversity of all kinds, and ensure the broadest representation of families in their schools and districts.

*BCCPAC's Inclusive  
PACs and DPACs Series*

come. They must also feel welcome and comfortable talking to others with whom they share common ground.

*Is your council aware of the values, traditions, and needs of the families and children in your school or district?*

Once your council is aware of the diversity in your school or district, the council can respond to parent and student needs by promoting relevant resources in the community.

*What does your council do to encourage participation from diverse groups?*

Your council's structure, procedure, and traditional ways of doing things can encourage or discourage parents from participating in council activities. Take a look at how you do business and ask:

- Do our methods encourage participation, or do they keep some people away?
- How do we encourage participation from new members?

## Promoting an Inclusive Council

Believe that everyone can make a worthwhile contribution.

*BCCPAC's Inclusive  
PACs and DPACs Series*

Inclusive organizations understand, accept, and respect all aspects of diversity. They have regard for the diverse groups within their community when they plan their work and develop their policies.

Becoming a more inclusive parent council is an important undertaking. Consider making it a goal in your annual plan, with a specific plan of activities, responsibilities, and targets. You may wish to appoint a committee of interested parents to explore the issue in depth and plan strategy.

See **Tab 13, Effective Planning in PACs and DPACs**, for information on creating a plan, and **Tab 12, The Role of Committees in PACs and DPACs**.

As you plan, keep a positive, open attitude and a strong commitment to working with your education partners. Talk to your PAC and DPAC members, principal, staff, superintendent, and trustees, and seek out opportunities to work with others in the community who have a stake in the issue, for example:

- students

- parent groups
- teachers
- community groups
- churches
- Band Councils
- local businesses
- labour and cultural organizations
- social and child welfare professionals.

### *Suggestions for building inclusivity*

The following suggestions have worked well for other councils and will help you get started:

- Publish information about your council in the major languages of your parent community. This is especially important for newsletters and announcements.
- Enlist the help of your principal and teachers in promoting your PAC whenever they meet with parents. Ask your principal for time to welcome parents at school-sponsored events, especially events for new parents. Have parents who speak the major languages in the school welcome parents in their language.
- Ask your school board chair and superintendent to promote your DPAC when they meet with parents, teachers, or administrators. Educate your school board chair and superintendent on the services your DPAC offers (for example, parent education and advocacy), and ask them to promote these services.
- Use plain language in all communications and at meetings. Avoid jargon when phrasing survey questions, and make instructions clear and simple. (Test your survey on a dozen people before sending it out. Are the questions clear? Are the instructions obvious?)
- Use community facilities to distribute information about your council—community, recreational, and multicultural facilities; Band Council centre; libraries; ethnic newspapers; radio and TV stations; places of worship; festivals; local businesses.
- If available, use your school's auto-dialer for PAC messages about upcoming meetings or events. Translate the messages into major languages.

- Ask your school or school district to include PAC or DPAC pages on their websites. Advertise the links to these pages in your school, PAC, and DPAC newsletters.
- Encourage your executive (and all parents) to speak to parents at social events, in the hallways, parking lot, and playground. Personal contact is one of the best ways to make people feel welcome. Attend other groups' meetings, conferences, multicultural, and religious events. Collect printed material and share it with your council.
- Hold your meetings in different locations. For example, alternate meetings between the school and local Band Council centre or community centre. Hold each meeting in a different classroom in the school so that parents can see the various classrooms.
- Plan cultural activities and events that appeal to parents of diverse backgrounds. Ask them for suggestions and help with organizing and getting the word out. Hold the events in major languages.
- Plan activities that attract families and working parents to the school, such as a family volleyball night or early morning (7:00 a.m.) Meet-the-Teacher event.
- Provide advocacy services for parents needing assistance in communicating with the school or district and obtaining information about their children. Contact the BCCPAC Advocacy Project for assistance in obtaining advocacy services in languages other than English. See **Tab 11, Speaking Up! ~ The BCCPAC Advocacy Project**.
- Make an extra effort to welcome new parents—a PAC-sponsored barbeque, social or cultural event, or information evening. Ask for contact information. Phone new parents after their first meeting or event and ask them how they enjoyed it. Offer to put them in touch with people who can answer their questions. See **Tab 19, Contagious Enthusiasm ~ How to Get Parents Involved**.

## Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements (EA)

An Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement is a working agreement among a school district, all local Aboriginal communities, and the Ministry of Education. Its purpose is to improve the quality of education achieved by Aboriginal students.

### Enhancement Agreements

- support cooperation between the local Aboriginal communities and the school district
- give the Aboriginal communities and the school district greater autonomy to create solutions that work for Aboriginal students, the schools, and communities
- require a high level of respect and trust to function.

The Ministry of Education has a goal to have Enhancement Agreements in all 60 school districts by 2005.

Effective programs in districts with Enhancement Agreements have included

- traditional cultural activities and field trips for all Aboriginal students
- curriculum on Aboriginal history, culture, and issues
- parent and community involvement from all local Aboriginal communities, including events such as monthly “Family Gathering Evenings”.<sup>2</sup>

For information on Enhancement Agreements, go to

- ✓ [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/agreements/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/agreements/)
- ✓ [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/agreements/ea\\_guide.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/agreements/ea_guide.pdf)

### *Involving your PAC, DPAC, and SPC*

Find out if there is an Enhancement Agreement in your district. Your PAC, DPAC, and SPC should be familiar with it. Plan to discuss it at a council meeting. Invite local Band Council members and your superintendent and principal to explain it and answer questions.

Discuss how all parents can become involved in supporting the Enhancement Agreement and all Aboriginal students in your school and district.

<sup>2</sup> School District #35, Langley. See [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/effprog/sd35.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/effprog/sd35.htm)

SPCs must pay close attention to the Enhancement Agreement in setting priorities for improving the achievement of Aboriginal students in the school.

The suggestions in this manual for building inclusivity, engaging parents in your school community, and boosting attendance at meetings can be used to encourage Aboriginal parents and students to become more involved in PAC, DPAC, and SPC activities. See **Tab 17, Building Partnerships**, and **Tab 19, Contagious Enthusiasm ~ How to Get Parents Involved**.

### **First Nations Parent Clubs**

First Nations Parent Clubs are a program of the First Nations School Association (FNSEA), a non-partisan organization that promotes quality and culturally-appropriate education for First Nations students.

Parent Clubs help First Nations parents become more involved in their children's education. They provide a wide range of activities, information, support materials, and publications.

For more information, go to

- ✓ [www.firstnations-schools.bc.ca/index.htm](http://www.firstnations-schools.bc.ca/index.htm)



**Tab 12 ~**

## **The Role of Committees in PACs and DPACs**

In this **Tab 12**, you will find

Creating a Committee	Page 2
Defining the Committee's Role ~ Terms of Reference	Page 3
Sample Committee Terms of Reference	Page 4
Limits of a Committee's Authority	Page 5
Examples of Committees in PACs and DPACs	Page 5

## The Role of Committees in PACs and DPACs

Effective committees form the working heart of parent advisory councils.

Effective committees contribute greatly to the success of any volunteer organization. Committees have important advantages over meetings of the entire membership:

- Committees promote sharing of responsibility and allow more members to take an active role. New and less experienced members gain valuable information and find support in other parents. Parents who are hesitant to take on a new volunteer task may be willing to offer time to a committee they are interested in.
- Meetings are smaller, more focused, and less formal. There is more time for discussion, and issues can be handled on short notice. Responsibilities can be broken down into more manageable proportions.
- Many tasks require special skills or interest. Committee members often volunteer or are chosen for their expertise and interest. These members are willing to carry the bulk of the workload on an issue, freeing other members to devote their time to other things.
- Complex or difficult issues can be researched and discussed thoroughly before recommendations are taken to the larger group, allowing for more thoughtful and informed decision-making.

### Creating a Committee

Consider committees whenever there is work to be done!

Committees are appointed under the bylaws by the membership or executive to perform a particular task. There are two types of committees:

#### *Standing committees*

exist every year and are usually described in the bylaws. Examples are policy, budget, nominating, hot lunch, programs, special events, and fundraising.

#### *Ad hoc committees*

are created to do a specific task within a certain time period.

Committees are technically “committees of the executive” and are overseen by the executive. The president is an ex officio member of every committee, meaning a member “by virtue of his or her position”. The president does not have to attend every committee meeting, but is responsible for overseeing the committee to ensure it is working effectively.

### Defining the Committee’s Role ~ Terms of Reference

Effective committees require thought and planning.

To be effective, a committee must have well-defined terms of reference, including

- the committee’s mandate—a clear and limited purpose
- clearly defined tasks
- a committee chairperson, responsible for the committee. Additional volunteers can be invited either by the committee chairperson or the executive.
- a plan and timeline
- direction on reporting—to whom, when, and in what form. Most committees report to the executive which then decides when the committee should report to the general membership.
- direction on filling committee vacancies.

Terms of reference should be specified by the executive or membership at the time the committee is appointed, and written into the minutes or as a separate document attached to the minutes. Sometimes, the committee itself is given authority to create its own terms of reference at its first meeting. These should be reviewed and approved by the body that created the committee.

All committee members should have a copy of the terms of reference. A list of committee members and the terms of reference should be available to any council member who requests them.

On the next page, you will find **Sample Committee Terms of Reference**.

## Sample Committee Terms of Reference

### Great Elementary School PAC Parent Conference Planning Committee

**Mandate:** To plan and organize a Parent Conference on the theme, *Becoming Involved in Your Child's Learning*, to be held at Great Elementary School on Friday, February 29, 20\_\_, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**Chair:** Jane Brown

**Committee Members:** Anne White, Gerry Blue, Pat Green, George Black. The Chair may fill vacancies and add members as necessary to carry out the committee's mandate and responsibilities.

**Responsibilities:**

- To propose topics for keynote addresses, panel discussions, and workshops
- To find and book suitable speakers, panel participants, and workshop presenters
- To plan the day's agenda
- To organize the room schedule
- To create and publish advertising to the school and neighbourhood community
- To organize registration
- To organize and photocopy all workshop materials
- To order food and beverages for the day
- To arrange additional volunteers as necessary
- To do such other tasks related to the conference as the executive directs

**Reporting and Timeline:**

The Chair will report to the PAC President once a week, at which time the Chair and President will review all planning to date. The Chair will report in person, if possible, and will make all written materials available to the President on request.

The Chair will report to the Executive at all Executive meetings, and to the membership as the Executive directs.

The Committee will make every effort to meet the following timeline:

- December 15, 20\_\_: Complete planning of topics for keynote addresses, panel discussions, and workshops
- January 10, 20\_\_: Book all speakers and presenters
- January 20, 20\_\_: Complete the day's agenda and room schedule
- January 30, 20\_\_: Complete and distribute advertising
- February 15, 20\_\_: Place order for food and beverages
- February 15, 20\_\_: Review volunteer roster and arrange for additional volunteers
- March 5, 20\_\_: Submit final conference report to the President

**Financial responsibilities:**

The budget for the conference is \$1,500.00. The Chair will:

- keep a running account of all expenditures
- submit invoices and receipts to the PAC Treasurer once a week.

**Final decision:**

Where the Committee and Executive disagree on a matter regarding the conference, the Executive will decide the matter.

### Limits of a Committee's Authority

A committee can do only what it is authorized to do in its terms of reference. In general, committees make recommendations. They may then be given authority to take certain action, but they may not make decisions or take action without approval.

The council executive should take care to ensure that committees are reporting as required and are not taking action beyond their authority.

### Examples of Committees in PACs and DPACs

PAC and DPAC committees may include any of the following:

- constitution and bylaws
- policy
- strategic planning
- budget
- nominating
- programs and special events
- communications, including newsletter, announcements, website, and phoning
- earthquake preparedness
- school safety
- parking patrol
- grounds beautification
- outreach
- sunshine (to send greetings where appropriate, such as thank you, birthday, sympathy)
- hot lunch
- noon-hour games
- Block Parent or Block Watch
- Dry Grad
- hospitality
- fundraising



**Tab 13 ~**

## Effective Planning in PACs and DPACs

In this **Tab 13**, you will find

Types of Planning	Page 2
<i>Annual planning and priority-setting</i>	Page 2
<i>Planning for action on a decision</i>	Page 3
The Planning Process	Page 3
Sample Annual Plan	Page 6
Sample Action Plan	Page 7
Year-End Evaluation	Page 8
<i>A note on societies and registered charities</i>	Page 9

## Effective Planning in PACs and DPACs

If your group exists to do something, rather than for something to do, you need to organize!

*From Plan for action!  
BCCPAC Inclusive PACs  
and DPACs Series*

Effective volunteer organizations pay close attention to planning. Planning moves the organization forward by

- focusing the group on its purposes, goals, and decisions
- building interest, enthusiasm, and commitment among members
- enabling the group to put the organization's beliefs and decisions into action.

Through the planning process, your council will ensure that its goals and decisions are capable of being carried out with the resources, people, and time available. You will reinforce your members' commitment to the tasks the council has chosen—and you will be better able to recognize and celebrate your successes.

### Types of Planning

PACs and DPACs do two basic *types* of planning:

- setting annual goals and priorities (long-term planning)
- planning for action on specific decisions (short-term planning).

There are three steps to planning:

- Make the plan.
- Implement the plan.
- Evaluate the plan.

### *Annual planning and priority-setting*

It is important for your council to have an annual plan and clear priorities. An annual plan gives direction to the membership and executive for the coming year, and lets others in your school and district know what to expect from your council in the months ahead.

Annual planning should include a year-end evaluation. A close look at what your council has done during the year will lead naturally into goal-setting for the following year. Year-to-year continuity will enhance the effectiveness of your council.

More on **Year-End Evaluation** on page 8 of this **Tab 13**.

### *Planning for action on a decision*

Good decision-making includes planning for action on the decision. Whenever your council makes a decision, consider how the decision will be implemented.

Ideally as soon as the decision is made (at the same or a later meeting), invite members to join in action-planning. This will preserve the support that was achieved for the decision during the decision-making process. The greater the support, the more likely the decision will endure.

For more on decision-making, see **Tab 9, Decision-Making in PACs, DPACs, and School Planning Councils.**

## The Planning Process

In planning, you need to keep your eye on the prize.

An effective long-term planning strategy uses five *planning questions* to focus and direct the group.<sup>1</sup> Consider using this process for annual planning. Short-term planning will make use of Questions Four and Five.

- Question One:**     *Where have we been?*  
**Question Two:**    *Where are we now?*  
**Question Three:**   *Where do we want to go?*  
**Question Four:**    *How are we going to get there?*  
**Question Five:**    *How will we know we have arrived?*

Set aside a significant part of a meeting (or schedule a special meeting) for this process. As you take the group through these questions, designate a recorder to keep notes on flip chart paper or the chalkboard.

**Question One:** *Where have we been?*

The purpose of **Question One** is to

- reflect on the history of your council
- recognize accomplishments
- recall challenges and how they were resolved.

<sup>1</sup> *The Planning Questions* are used with permission of Don Cameron Associates, copyright 2002.

Invite members to share two or three stories, and ask them to reflect on the following questions:

- Is this event or accomplishment typical of the kinds of things our council does?
- What does it show about our council?

**Question Two:** *Where are we now?*

The purpose of **Question Two** is to

- gather information about the status of your council
- identify your council's main areas of interest
- identify your council's strengths and weaknesses
- identify threats and opportunities.

Here, you are taking stock of your council as it is today. This is necessary before you can decide where you want to go from here. Points to consider are

- level of interest shown in your council—Who comes to meetings? Who is missing? What kind of response do you get when you ask for participation or volunteers?
- your organizational structure—How well are your executive and committees functioning? How do your members feel about the council overall?
- educational issues the council is addressing
- the council's relations with school and district staff and officials.

**Question Three:** *Where do we want to go?*

The purpose of **Question Three** is to

- develop a vision and goals for the future of your council
- create a statement to show others where your council will be by the end of the year or in 1-2 years.

This is perhaps the most important step in the planning process. Here, you will envision your council's future. Everything you do from this point forward will come out of this part of your plan.

As you consider Question Three, keep in mind the purposes of your council as listed in your constitution. Everything you decide must be consistent with your purposes.

Does our objective or goal fit with the purposes of our council?

Does it fit with our budget?

Also consider your council's budget. You cannot bind future executives to expenditures—an approved budget lasts only for a specified period, usually the school year or term of the executive.

**Question Four:** *How are we going to get there?*

The purpose of **Question Four** is to

- identify what your council will do to achieve its vision for the future, or to implement a decision
- identify opportunities for success
- identify barriers to success and ways to overcome them
- outline and prioritize steps.

Here, you will decide what your members will do. Be specific—

- **Who** will be involved?
- **What** task will each person do?
- **How** will each person do their task? What will the person need?
- By **when** will the task be done?
- What, if any, problems will each person face? How can the problems be resolved?

When a group *commits* to a plan, they almost always achieve it.

**Question Five:** *How will we know we have arrived?*

The purpose of **Question Five** is to

- identify ways to monitor progress towards your council's goals and decisions
- measure results from specific activities
- measure broader results that may come from a series of activities or a course of action.

The **Sample Annual Plan** and **Sample Action Plan** on the following pages show you one way to chart an *implementation* strategy that includes

- a list of goals, tasks, names, resources, and timeline
- a schedule of meetings or consultations to monitor progress
- indicators of success along the way.

## Sample Annual Plan

<b>Great Elementary School PAC Annual Plan 2004-2005</b>			
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Who will do it?</b> (by name)	<b>Material/resources/information required</b> (special equipment, documents or information, consultation with others, funding)	<b>By when?</b> (date to report, date to complete)
Update constitution and bylaws	Constitution/Bylaw Committee—list members	Sample BCCPAC constitution and bylaws	Nov. 1/04—First draft to executive for discussion Dec. 1/04—Second draft to executive Dec. 15/04 general meeting—Present to membership for discussion and questions Feb. 15/05 general meeting—Present to membership for approval
Improve communication to membership	Communication Committee—list members	Photocopy resources Parent e-mail list Access to school website	Oct. 1/04—Draft communication plan to executive for discussion Oct. 15/04—Discussion at general meeting Nov. 1/04—Initial implementation Jan. 15/05—Review of implementation
Hold a series of information sessions on school planning	Executive in consultation with SPC representatives—list members	Current school plan School District Accountability Contract School and district data Ministry of Education data	Oct. 1/04—Draft overall plan of sessions to be offered Oct. 15/04—Present plan at general meeting Nov. 1/04—Assign responsibilities for each session

**Note:** Each goal in the Annual Plan can be broken down into smaller parts. The **Sample Action Plan** on the next page deals with one of the information sessions on school planning.

## Sample Action Plan

<b>Great Elementary School PAC Action Plan</b>			
<b>Decision: Hold an information session on the School District Accountability Contract, January 15, 2005</b>			
<b>What needs to be done?</b> (list each action required to implement the decision)	<b>Who will do it?</b> (by name)	<b>Material/resources/information required</b> (special equipment, documents or information, consultation with others, funding)	<b>By when?</b> (date to report, date to complete)
Invite Superintendent	President (name)		Nov. 15/04
Reserve school library	Secretary (name)		Nov. 15/04
Obtain copies of Accountability Contract and supporting policies and other documents	Vice-President (name)		Dec. 1/04
Prepare and issue invitation to all parents and staff	Secretary (name)	PAC/school newsletter PAC/school website and/or e-mail Phone-out to class reps	Dec. 1/04
Arrange volunteers for room set-up	Committee members (name)	Podium, chairs, overhead/LCD projector, screen, flip chart stand, paper, felt pens	Dec. 15/04
Arrange volunteers for refreshments	Committee members (name)	Money allocated from PAC budget to cover cost of refreshments Large coffee pot	Dec. 15/04
Consider how to include parents who will not or cannot attend	All executive	Phone-out survey with specific questions; results to be presented at meeting	Jan. 10/05
Photocopy and collate all materials for meeting	Secretary (name), with help of 2 volunteers	Access to school photocopying	Jan. 10/05
Phone Superintendent's office to confirm invitation	President (name)		Jan. 10/05
Issue reminder to all parents and staff	Secretary (name)	Flyer Website/email Bulletin board Electronic sign or sandwich board School PA announcement	Jan. 13/05

## Year-End Evaluation

At year-end, set aside some meeting time to look back on the year and reflect on the council's progress.

Annual reports are important because they

- provide an opportunity to review personal and council goals and achievements
- provide a record of actions taken
- outline responsibilities for those considering running for an executive position.

All executive members and committee chairs should prepare an annual report. The president's report should summarize the year's activities, identify successes and challenges, and thank various people. These reports can be collated into a booklet and copies made for members before and at the meeting.

Ask your members to consider the following questions:

- Did your council have a positive impact in advising the board, principal, and staff on educational issues in your school or district?
- Which parent education programs were successful? Which were not? Why not?
- Which events and activities were successful? Which were not? Why not?
- Did the council accomplish its priorities?
- On reflection, were the council's goals and priorities reasonable and able to be accomplished?

Invite your members to ask questions of the executive and committee chairs on their reports.

Year-end evaluation is a time to thank everyone for their contribution during the year.

This is an opportunity to lead into annual planning for next year. Ask members for ideas and suggestions based on the year-end review. Planning for next year should not necessarily be completed at the same meeting. It will require time and preparation by the executive, and you will want to include new parents to the council.

*A note on societies and registered charities*

If your council is a society under the Society Act, or a registered charity under the Income Tax Act, there are special year-end reporting requirements.

For information on societies, contact the Society/Cooperative Association Unit at 250-356-8673, (in Greater Vancouver, direct dial 604-775-1046), or consult *Information for Incorporation of a British Columbia Society*, available on the web at

✓ [www.fin.gov.bc.ca/registries/corppg/forms/reg20.pdf](http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/registries/corppg/forms/reg20.pdf)

For information on registered charities, contact Canada Customs and Revenue Agency at

✓ [www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/charities/](http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/charities/)



**Tab 14 ~**

## Effective Meetings

In this **Tab 14**, you will find

What makes a meeting effective?	Page 2
What is the purpose of the meeting?	Page 3
Time and location	Page 3
Notice of the meeting	Page 3
Developing the agenda	Page 4
Sample Council Agenda	Page 7
Why a Quorum?	Page 8
The Role of the Chair	Page 9
Parliamentary Procedure	Page 10
Tips for Conducting a Good Meeting	Page 11
Motions and When You Need Them	Page 13
The Art of Taking Good Minutes	Page 15
Sample Minutes of a PAC Meeting	Page 17
A Note on Chairing Difficult Meetings	Page 19

## Effective Meetings

The basic purpose of any meeting is to conduct business in a fair and orderly way. As parents participating in BC's public education system, we want effective meetings

- to ensure that good decisions are made for our schools and students, and goals are achieved
- to enhance the image of our councils as effective organizations.

PAC, DPAC, and school planning council meetings are opportunities for parents to learn about public education, define and explore issues, and build understanding among people with diverse backgrounds and views.

### What makes a meeting effective?

Certain attributes contribute to the overall effectiveness of any meeting:

Meetings are opportunities to build relationships, build and share knowledge, and solve problems.

*Joanne Quinn  
Ontario Institute for  
Studies in Education*

- has a purpose
- starts and ends on time
- has a manageable agenda of necessary business that can be accomplished in the time available
- is well conducted and remains on task
- decisions are made and business is completed
- follow-up action is clear (what, by whom, and by when)
- the chair remains friendly and professional throughout

Participants are more likely to feel the meeting was effective if

- various points of view were invited and shared
- all participants had the opportunity to contribute to the discussion
- creative ideas and positive solutions were generated
- participants were committed to the decisions made and action taken
- participants are willing to work together in the future.

## What is the purpose of the meeting?

Every meeting needs a purpose or reason. If there is no reason to meet, the meeting should not be held.

Several things should be clear to all participants:

- Is this a regular meeting to conduct general business?
- Is it a special meeting to deal with a problem or crisis? What is the problem or crisis?
- What needs to be accomplished?
- Is the business of the meeting within the council's mandate under the School Act, its constitution and bylaws, or terms of reference?
- Can or should the business be accomplished in another or better way?

## Time and location

Consider the best time and location for most parents. Some councils meet during the day and some during the evening. Others use a rotating schedule. At the beginning of the year, or when a committee is formed, ask members what works best for most people.

Take a look at whether your traditional meeting times make it difficult for certain groups of parents (for example, working parents) to attend. Flexibility in your meeting schedule may attract new members.

## Notice of the meeting

All members of the particular group planning to meet (council, executive, or committee) are entitled to notice of the meeting. Check your bylaws or terms of reference for specific requirements as to the form of notice and the notice period.

If notice is given in accordance with the bylaws or terms of reference, then your meeting can proceed even if a member (or member representative in the case of a DPAC) did not actually *receive* the notice (for example, the bylaws authorize sending the notice home with students, but it was lost along the way). If the bylaws or terms of reference are not followed, your meeting cannot proceed.

Ask your members what is the most effective way of reaching them and, if possible, send the notice in several ways. Use public notice boards in community centres, places of worship, and local newspapers in all available languages.

In addition to members who are entitled to notice, there may be people who should be given notice as a matter of courtesy:

- school board chair and/or trustees
- superintendent
- principal
- teacher representative
- other staff representative
- student representative
- community members interested in the issues to be discussed.

## Developing the agenda

The agenda is your master plan or road map for the meeting. It reflects your vision of how the meeting will unfold step by step to accomplish its purpose.

*Eli Mina, The Complete Handbook of Business Meetings. 2000 AMACOM*

Your meetings will be more successful if you plan your agenda carefully. A good agenda will help your council avoid the common pitfalls of

- too much business for the time available
- poor time allocation
- too much attention to routine items.

Preparing the agenda is usually the president's responsibility. It should be done in consultation with the executive and membership. This gives everyone a greater sense of participation, and will more likely lead to the agenda being completed.

Check your bylaws and see **Tab 7, Roles, Responsibilities, and Accountability of PAC and DPAC Executives.**

### *The first draft*

To gather agenda items

- Check the minutes of your last meeting, and bring unfinished items forward.
- Ask your executive for items. Solicit their thoughts on how difficult issues might be handled.

- Contact committee chairs and anyone else who is going to report or speak on an item. Ask them what outcome they expect. Is a decision or recommendation necessary?
- For a PAC, conduct an informal survey of parents in the hallways, playground, and parking lot for items of interest or concern. This will help avoid unexpected, and unprepared for, additions to the agenda at the start of the meeting.
- Consult the principal for items to be considered under new business or the principal's report.
- For a DPAC, ask your member representatives for items of interest or concern. Consult your school board chair or superintendent for items your membership should know about.

### *Screening and prioritizing items*

Your meetings will attract more parents if the agendas are interesting and varied, and important items are dealt with in a timely fashion.

In selecting agenda items, ask

- Does this item need to be discussed at this time, or is it on the agenda out of habit?
- Has enough preparation been done to allow members to make an informed decision on this item?
- How urgent is this item compared to other business? Can it wait?
- Is the person best able to lead the discussion on the item available and prepared?

With these questions answered, decide on the best course of action:

- **Deal with it**—leave it on the agenda.
- **Delay it**—to the next meeting.
- **Delegate it**—to an executive member or committee.
- **Drop it**—because it is outside the council's mandate or not worthy of discussion.

### *Estimating and allocating time*

Meeting time is precious. Let members know how important various items are by estimating the time required for each one. Time estimates can be written beside each item on the agenda. If discussion on an item goes overtime, the chair can remind members of the time estimate and ask them how they would like to handle the item and the remaining agenda.

Begin with routine items (minutes, updates, reports), then move on quickly to items needing discussion, keeping these tips in mind:

- Avoid planning so tightly that you have no room to maneuver. You can't predict everything, so build in some flexibility.
- Consolidate related items, for example, reports and decisions on the upcoming parent conference.
- Allocate less time to routine items, and more time to complex items needing discussion.

If you have invited a guest speaker, put her first and hold your business meeting afterwards. She may be the reason many parents came.

Keep in mind there are no hard and fast rules to setting an agenda. The order of items can vary from one meeting to the next. Do what makes sense and stimulates discussion.

### *Handling reports*

Executive members and committee chairs should prepare a report for every meeting. Reports can be brief and in point form. They do not need to be read out; copies can be made available before or at the meeting.

If a committee did not meet, the report should say so. The point of the report is to let members know what has happened since the last report.

Only recommendations in the report need to be considered by members. Members can ask questions of the person giving the report, but if discussion is needed, time should be scheduled into the agenda.

A **Sample Council Agenda** appears on the following page.

## Sample Council Agenda

1. **Welcome/Call to Order**  
 Introduce executive, guests, and new members.  
 Declare the quorum.  
 Door prize draw
2. **Approval of agenda**  
 Ask for changes, additions, and approval.  
 Identify the most important items to be discussed so as to adjourn on time.
3. **Guest presentation**
4. **Minutes of last meeting**  
 Errors, omissions, adoption. Do not allow debate to re-open on an issue. Approving minutes is about ensuring they are *accurate*.
5. **Correspondence**  
 Summarize correspondence unless an item is of such importance that it should be read in full.
6. **Reports**  
 Reports need not be read out. Members deal only with recommendations in the report.  
**President/Chair**—report on everything done since the last report  
**Vice-President**  
**Secretary**  
**Treasurer**—see Tab 15, **Financial Management in PACs and DPACs**  
**School Planning Council**  
**DPAC Representative**  
**Committees**—file a report even if the committee did not meet  
**Principal**—a brief informational report. Items for discussion should be dealt with under New Business.  
**Staff Representative**  
**DPAC—BCCPAC**  
     **Advocacy Project**  
     **School District report (by the School Board Chair, a trustee, or the Superintendent)**  
**SPC**—reports from each partner representative
7. **Unfinished Business**  
 Items carried forward from the last meeting.
8. **New Business**  
 Items requiring a decision, recommendation, or discussion.  
 Deal with the most important times first. Less important items can be postponed to the next meeting if time runs out.
9. **Date of next meeting**
10. **Agenda items for next meeting**
11. **Adjournment**—End on time!

## Why a Quorum?

The quorum for general, executive, and committee meetings is set in the council's bylaws or committee's terms of reference.

A quorum is the minimum number of voting members that need to be present at a meeting to make decisions. Common alternatives for setting a quorum are

- in a PAC, the minimum number of voting members that can reasonably be expected to attend, for example, ten
- in a DPAC, a percentage of the voting member PACs
- in a board, executive, or committee meeting, a majority (more than 50%) of the board, executive, or committee members.

The requirement for a quorum ensures that a representative number of voting members are in the room when decisions are made. It protects the absent members and the organization. Without a quorum, any decision your council or committee makes is invalid.

The quorum cannot be waived or suspended, even by unanimous consent. If you do not have a quorum, members can remain and discuss issues, *but they cannot make decisions*—decisions must wait until a quorum is present. If members leave the room during the meeting so that you *no longer* have a quorum, the decisions made while a quorum was present are still valid.

If the quorum set in your bylaws or terms of reference is too big or difficult to obtain, consider doing the following:

- Change your bylaws or terms of reference to make the number more realistic, (but you will need a quorum at the existing level to approve the amendment).
- Find out why members are not coming. Is the meeting time inconvenient? Are you getting the word out? Are your meetings sufficiently engaging and productive to attract parents?

In the absence of a quorum, your council or committee has several options:

- Adjourn the meeting.
- Recess, and see if interested members are available on short notice.

- Set a date, time, and place for a reconvened meeting, and see what you can do to attract a larger attendance.

## The Role of the Chair

Chairing a meeting requires a *little* preparation, a *little* confidence, and a *lot* of common sense. Be familiar with your bylaws and use them to guide you.

As chair,

**CONDUCT  
DON'T CONTROL**

As chair, your job is to do your best to ensure the proceedings are fair to everyone present. To help you achieve this end

- start the meeting on time
- stick to the agenda
- take speakers in turn
- keep the meeting focused on one thing at a time
- rule on procedural questions
- end on time.

As a participant,

- Be informed
- Arrive on time
- Keep your comments brief and on topic
- Be honest
- Allow others to finish speaking
- Be an active listener—understand what is being said
- Participate—ask questions, give your opinions
- Never make personal comments about someone
- Focus on ideas and issues, not people
- Help the chair whenever possible

And through it all

- be friendly and polite
- radiate enthusiasm
- keep your sense of humour!

### *What are the qualities of an effective chair?*

An effective chair has special qualities that all of us, with a little time and attention, can develop. An effective chair is

- knowledgeable and prepared
- patient and respectful, with a good sense of humour
- a good listener
- decisive and purposeful
- able to encourage and inspire others to participate
- guided by the council's mandate and the members' needs
- recognizes diversity of opinion as an asset and opportunity for growth.

## Parliamentary Procedure

Apply these rules as you conduct a meeting, and you will be effective, even though you may be weak on the finer points of parliamentary technique.

*John Noonan, PRP,  
ASP, CGA*

Parliamentary procedure is meant to achieve fairness for all. It is used to

- facilitate action, not obstruct it
- enable the assembly to express its will
- give every member a fair hearing
- maintain order.

Parliamentary procedure is based on the following principles:

- justice and courtesy for all
- equality of opinion
- rule of the majority
- right of the minority to be heard
- do only one thing at a time.<sup>1</sup>

Rules of order are designed to include all members in decision-making, with everyone having a fair and equal opportunity to participate and influence the group's decisions. Think of parliamentary procedure as table manners—a certain amount is needed for an orderly meal.

Many organization's bylaws say that Robert's Rules of Order apply if the bylaws are silent on an issue. Robert's Rules are often more complex than you need. You may use any procedure your council agrees on. Think *fair, reasonable, and responsible*.

See **Tips for Conducting a Good Meeting**, page 11.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from John Noonan: *A Briefing in Robert's Rules of Order & Parliamentary Procedure*. Presentations to BCCPAC, May 2, 2003, and May 14, 2004.

## Tips for Conducting a Good Meeting

1. *Before the meeting*, contact everyone who is going to report or speak on an item. Ask them what outcome they expect. Is a decision or recommendation necessary?
2. If you have the facilities available, circulate the agenda, minutes, correspondence, and reports to members before the meeting. This can be done through e-mail, a website, or photocopying (although the latter may be costly). Then, in most cases you will not need to read these items out.
3. Have a greeter at the door.
4. Begin by welcoming everyone. Introduce the executive, guests, and new members.
5. Discuss **rules of decorum** at the start of the meeting and reach consensus, for example
  - Members may speak only when recognized by the chair.
  - Only one person may speak at a time.
  - A member may speak a second time only after all those who wish to speak have had the opportunity to speak once.
  - Remarks must be confined to the motion or issue being discussed.
  - Members must remain courteous and avoid personal remarks.
  - In larger meetings, remarks are directed “through the chair”.
6. The **quorum** set in your bylaws or terms of reference must be present to make decisions. It cannot be waived or suspended, even by unanimous consent.
7. Keep minutes and reports brief. (See **The Art of Taking Good Minutes**, page 15.)
8. Avoid “off the top” verbal reports unless the matter is urgent.
9. If a decision or recommendation on a report is necessary, prepare the wording ahead of time and propose alternatives.
10. A motion to “approve”, “adopt”, or “receive” a report is not necessary unless there is something to be decided.
11. Seven steps for handling a **motion**:
  - a) A member makes the motion (“I move that...”)
  - b) Another member seconds the motion (“I second the motion.”)
  - c) The chair states the motion (“It is moved and seconded that...”)
  - d) Debate and amend it. An amendment must relate to the motion and may change it in one of three ways:
    - by leaving out certain words
    - by adding certain words
    - by replacing certain words with others.
  - e) The chair puts the amendment, if any, to a vote.
  - f) The chair puts the main motion (if the amendment failed) or the motion as amended (if the amendment was approved) to a vote (“We are now voting on the motion to... All in favour? All opposed?”)
  - g) The chair announces the result (“The motion is carried/defeated.”)

12. “Whereases” are not necessary and are not part of the motion.
13. Adoption of a motion requires a **majority** (more than 50%) in favour. A tie vote means the motion is defeated.
14. Be clear about what is being voted on and make sure everyone knows you are **taking the vote**. Reread the motion (or proposed amendment) before voting. Use plain language—instead of “calling the question”, say, “Let’s take a vote”.
15. A member who **moves** a motion may not speak against it, but may vote against it; the member may have changed their mind after hearing discussion.
16. To **second** a motion, a member does not have to be in favour of it; the member may simply want it discussed. In a small assembly (less than 12), seconding is not required.
17. A motion (mover and seconder) is not required to nominate someone for a position.
18. During debate, keep track of those wishing to speak. This is called a “speakers’ list”. In a small group, try going around the table to give everyone an opportunity to speak.
19. Ask your vice-chair or another executive member to help with anything you need during the meeting. The vice-chair can even chair part of the meeting.
20. As chair of a PAC, committee, or School Planning Council, you have a vote and may take part in debate (unless the bylaws state otherwise). *As DPAC chair or other DPAC executive member, you may vote only if you are representing your school PAC (unless the bylaws state otherwise).*
21. In larger meetings, it is best for the chair to remain impartial. Keep the dialogue among all group members, not between the chair and one or two members.
22. Before closing debate, invite those who have not spoken to do so.
23. If a procedural question arises and you don’t know the answer, call a brief recess and consult a rule book.
24. Of the motions in Robert’s Rules, it is suggested that only four be used:
  - propose a motion
  - amend a motion
  - refer the motion to a committee
  - postpone the motion to a definite timeDo not *table* the motion (this kills it) or postpone it indefinitely.
25. Members must agree to extend a meeting beyond the scheduled time. Unless they agree to extend, close the meeting on time and postpone unfinished items to the next meeting.
26. Think ahead to where the meeting is going. *Preparation is everything!*

## Motions and When You Need Them

A motion is a proposal to take action. It is the main way business is brought before a meeting. It allows a member to bring up an issue or point of business, and it requires the group to focus. It is improper to discuss anything else while a motion is on the floor.

### *When is a motion required?*

Any time your council wants to *do* something, the action should be approved by motion. If the council wants to *change* the course of something already underway, the change should be sanctioned by motion. And, if your council wants to *spend* money, the expenditure *must* be approved by motion.

There are many kinds of motions. Remember two things:

- Motions move your group forward—they give you the go-ahead to take action.
- Motions allow for debate and consideration of all sides of an issue. Because motions require the group to focus on one issue at a time, disagreement can be resolved by motion.

For steps in handling a motion, see **Tips for Conducting a Good Meeting**, page 11.

### *When is a motion unnecessary?*

If there is agreement, a motion is unnecessary. For example, in approving minutes or a treasurer's report, the chair can simply ask, "Are there any additions or corrections?" If there are none, the chair can say, "Seeing none, the minutes are approved."

This can be done with any routine item.

### *What is a negative motion?*

A negative motion proposes *not* doing something, for example, *not* holding a parent conference this year. If the motion is defeated, what happens? Does the conference go ahead? No.

This is confusing. Motions must be framed in the affirmative. An affirmative motion would say, “I move that we hold a parent conference this year.”

If the group had already approved the conference and the member’s intention was to reverse the decision, the proper wording would be, “I move that the council cancel plans to hold a parent conference this year.”

### ***How do you amend a motion?***

A motion can be amended at any time during the discussion and before the vote. The proposed amendment cannot have the effect of nullifying the main motion or changing its basic intent. The amendment must be relevant to the main motion and may change it in one of three ways:

- by leaving out certain words
- by adding certain words
- by replacing certain words with others.

The amendment must be approved. If approved, the motion *as amended* is then voted on. If not approved, the motion *as originally proposed* is voted on.

### ***How long should a motion last?***

A motion cannot bind future executives of your council, for example, a motion to hold a parent conference every year for the next five years.

People and priorities change. Your council’s decisions must be capable of being carried out within the term of your current executive. If a decision is important enough to extend beyond the year, consider amending your bylaws.

## The Art of Taking Good Minutes

Minutes are a permanent, formal record of what took place at a meeting—they are the only record that counts.

Minutes provide members and interested outsiders with

- a clear and objective summary of the group's activities
- a way of updating members who were unable to attend a meeting
- a reminder of action to be taken, by whom, and when
- an historical record of decisions made.

### *The essence of good minutes*

Good minutes are well organized and concise, and contain a clear record of necessary and useful information. They are readable and easy to follow, with short paragraphs and a consistent format using **boldface**, *italics*, and other formatting devices to highlight decisions, action items, and key points.

Good minutes are often a reflection of good meetings. Just as members get more out of a well-run meeting, the person taking minutes will find it easier to prepare good minutes from meetings where members respect the chair, speak in turn, and remain on task. Taking minutes can be a tough job. Both the chair and participants can help the minute-taker.

### *How much is too much?*

Meetings are a place for group discussion and collective decision-making. Minutes should focus primarily on the collective decisions that are made and less on the actions or words of individuals.

It is a common mistake to record too much. While it is important to record the precise wording of a decision, it is not necessary to record the discussion that led to it. Word-for-word accounts are rarely practical or desirable. They are lengthy and often confusing, and can lead to arguments about who said what. Verbatim minutes can also discourage free-flowing discussion, as members become guarded about what they say.

The rationale for a decision may sometimes be important, or the group may feel that the flavour of a debate should be reflected in the minutes. In that case, it is appropriate to capture the essence of the discussion by recording the main points. It is not necessary to identify speakers—remember, the decision was a collective one—even if a member insists on having their position recorded. No member has the right to have their comments on record.

### ***Closing the loop***

Good minutes flow naturally from a well organized, numbered agenda. The agenda and minutes are part of a discussion loop: Each item is listed in the agenda, discussed at the meeting, and recorded in the minutes. The item is either completed at this point, or directed back into the loop through the next agenda.

Closing the loop is an important part of the meeting process. It is the collective responsibility of the chair, minute taker, and meeting participants to ensure this happens. All agenda items should be noted in the minutes, and action items should be taken from the minutes and included in the next agenda.

For **Sample Minutes of a PAC Meeting**, see page 17.

### **Recommended resource:**

Eli Mina. *The Complete Handbook of Business Meetings*.  
AMACOM 2000

✓ [www.elimina.com/](http://www.elimina.com/)

## Sample Minutes of a PAC Meeting

### Minutes of Great Elementary School PAC

Held in Great Elementary School Library, February 29, 20\_\_

#### 1. Welcome

M. Smith, President, welcomed those present. Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m.  
Quorum present.

#### 2. Agenda

Report on parent conference added.  
Amended agenda accepted by consensus.

#### 3. Approval of minutes of meeting March 3, 20\_\_

Special thanks to E. Snow for chairing this meeting.  
**Moved** by J. Brown that the minutes of the March 3, 20\_\_ meeting be approved. **CARRIED.**

#### 4. Correspondence

None

#### 5. Reports

**5.1 Treasurer's Report**—See attached submitted by C. Daily (*or record details here*)

#### 5.2 Principal's Report

- Vice-Principal Mr. Henderson, reported on behalf of Principal Mr. Ingle that the District Review Team will be in the district and school next week. There will be an opportunity for input from parents. J. Johnson, J. Brown, and A. Kelly will co-ordinate this.
- *Meet the Teacher Night* to be held in early September.
- Mr. Ingle will be retiring at the end of June. The PAC will be asked to be involved in selecting a new principal.

#### 5.3 Staff Rep's Report—J. Low

- The Staff Committee brief to the school board on professional development ideas has been circulated to parents and staff.
- The staff wishes to thank the PAC for developing the workshop for parents on the new curriculum changes. Ms Low commented on how important it was for all the teachers present to see the parents' enthusiasm and hear their questions.
- S. Miller has been elected to attend the PAC meetings next year. The president thanked Ms Low for her valuable input to PAC meetings.

#### 5.4 Report of PAC Rep to Staff Meetings—A. Kelly

- A staff priority this year is to review the school's Code of Conduct. Staff requests a meeting with the PAC to discuss surveying parents for their views.
- Staff requests the PAC to co-sponsor a BBQ in September to coincide with the Open House.

**Moved** by A. Kelly that the PAC co-sponsor a BBQ in September. **CARRIED.**

A committee will be needed. It was agreed to ask for volunteers in the next newsletter. **ACTION:** A. Kelly

#### 5.5 Nominations Committee

J. Fraser reported that the March newsletter gave notice of the AGM in May and requested nominations for the Executive. So far seven candidates have put their names forward. The committee will continue to seek nominees. Members are asked to encourage others to put their names forward. **ACTION:** All members.

**5.6 Hospitality Committee**

S. Green was thanked by M. Smith for all the work undertaken by the committee.

S. Green to send report to M. Black for Annual Report.

**5.7 Hot Meals Committee**

A. Chambers reported the last hot lunch day was a great success thanks to parent help. Next month, the hot meal will be pizza.

**5.8 Fundraising Committee**

B. White reported all major fundraisers for the year are completed. Thanks to all who assisted. Details will be included in the Annual Report.

**5.9 Student Council—Tom North**

- Last dance will be May 11<sup>th</sup>. Profits to go to scholarship.
- Athletic awards to be presented May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Year-end Awards Assembly June 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Grad Ceremony May 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Special thanks to the PAC for awards and for giving an opportunity to attend PAC meetings.
- M. Sloan, a Grade 11 student, has been designated to represent the Student Council at our PAC meetings next year.

The President thanked Tom for the valuable perspective he brought to PAC meetings. It was suggested that perhaps two students would like to attend PAC meetings. Tom agreed to take this suggestion to the next Student Council Meeting.

**6. New Business**

- 6.1** This summer, 22 students from our school district will be attending the National Conference of the National Association of Student Councils in Toronto. Information obtained will be used as a resource at the Student Leadership Conference in the fall.

**Moved** by B. White that the PAC provide \$200 for meal expenses for the students from the school.

**CARRIED.**

**6.2 Parent Education Library**

Mr. Henderson will check to see where the PAC can use a shelf in the library for resources for parents, and will report to next meeting.

**7. Date and time of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held May 4, 20\_\_

**8. Agenda items for next meeting**

How to communicate better with all parents of the school.

**9. Meeting adjourned 9:08 p.m.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

## A Note on Chairing Difficult Meetings

Contentious meetings can be an opportunity to address difficult issues, achieve reconciliation, and refocus the council on its broader objectives.

Contentious meetings present a special challenge to the chair. Fearing a difficult meeting can prevent the chair from preparing so as to achieve the best results. Instead of focusing on preventing something negative from happening, the chair can focus on making something positive happen.

Two assumptions will help you prepare for the contentious meeting:

- Most people, if treated reasonably, will respond reasonably.
- Most members want a principled and productive discussion.

### *Treating people reasonably*

Treating people reasonably means agreeing to reasonable ground rules, adhering to them consistently for everyone, and doing your best to treat everyone fairly. Reasonable ground rules include

- speaking only when recognized by the chair
- observing a time limit, for example, 2 minutes
- allowing members to speak a second time only after all those who wish to speak have had the opportunity to speak once
- encouraging members to speak on all sides of an issue.

Review these rules at the start of the meeting and agree on them. Then, if proceedings become difficult, remind everyone of the rules the group agreed to.

It is important to genuinely listen to a member's views and address legitimate concerns. What appears to be contention can often be attributed to a lack of knowledge or misunderstanding. With thorough preparation on the issues, the chair can correct a member's mistaken view or invite a more knowledgeable person to do so.

Remind members that, while the minority has the right to be heard, the majority will ultimately make the decision—and a good decision will more likely come out of a reasoned discussion.

### ***Creating a principled and productive discussion***

Most members appreciate a well-run meeting with a clear focus. A well-focused discussion often reveals that differences are more imagined than real, and common ground is broader than anyone realized.

Everyone benefits from hearing all sides of an issue. When all points of view are aired, the group can feel confident that its final decision took all concerns into account.

Although members' views may be divided, most of us accept that compromises need to be made. If we are treated with respect, and helped to focus on important issues, we are usually willing to agree to a reasonable compromise.

### ***The right questions to ask***

The following questions will help you, as chair, focus the group on reaching a good decision:

- What are the issues at the heart of this dispute? What are the side issues clouding the real ones?
- What are the principles on which everyone seems to agree? Where do members truly differ?
- How can the discussion be focused on the things that matter, and shifted away from things that are causing contention (for example, personalities or misinformation)?
- What needs to be done to bring closure to this dispute and begin the process of reconciliation and refocusing on the purpose of our organization?

Diversity of opinion can be an asset—different pieces of the truth we need to make a good decision. Debate, if well managed, can become an opportunity for growth, or a catalyst for a long-needed reexamination of your organization.

**Tab 15 ~**

## Financial Management in PACs and DPACs

In this **Tab 15**, you will find

Basic Principles	Page 2
Basic Principles of Gaming Funds	Page 3
Budgeting ~ A Council's First Step in Financial Planning Reporting	Page 4
Year-End Review	Page 6
Bank Reconciliation	Page 7
Sample Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for a One-Month Period	Page 10
Sample Treasurer's Report for a One-Month Period	Page 11
Sample Proposed Annual Budget	Page 12
Sample Budget for a Single Event	Page 13
Sample Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for a Single Event	Page 14
Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)	Page 14
PST and GST Refunds on PAC-Funded Purchases for Schools	Page 15
	Page 16

## Financial Management in PACs and DPACs

Like all organizations accountable to their members, PACs and DPACs are responsible for the money they hold on behalf of parents.

PAC and DPAC money, wherever it comes from, belongs to the membership as a whole. It does not belong to the executive, treasurer, school, or school district. The executive and treasurer may spend council money *only* with the authority of the membership and in accordance with the council's bylaws.

### Basic Principles

The following basic principles will help your PAC and DPAC manage their money:

1. The council must have its own bank account, separate from the school or school district's accounts. Bank statements should be mailed to the PAC at the school's address and to the DPAC at its office or the school district's address.
2. The treasurer is responsible for ensuring safe custody of the council's money. The treasurer's responsibilities also include
  - ensuring safe-keeping of all banking and financial records, including cheque and deposit books
  - properly recording all financial transactions in a ledger, spread sheet, or similar format
  - preparing a bank reconciliation on a timely basis
  - preparing regular financial reports and a year-end report for the executive and membership
  - with the assistance of the executive, drafting an annual budget.
3. The president should be familiar with all financial records, and should review the bank reconciliations regularly.
4. Money can only be spent according to the council's approved budget or with authorization of a motion passed at a general meeting. The treasurer is responsible for ensuring that this authority is not exceeded.
5. All deposits must be made to the council's account, and all payments must be made by cheque.

6. All money received must be deposited on a timely basis.
7. Cash received should be counted by at least two people and deposited within a day.
8. Receipts must be given for all money received.
9. All cheques must be signed by two out of a possible three or four authorized people. (Check your bylaws.) These should be parent members of the PAC or DPAC who are not employees or elected officials of the school district or Ministry of Education.
10. A petty cash fund is not recommended as it is too easy to lose track of expenditures.
11. Some council bylaws allow the executive to spend small amounts without prior approval. This spending should be approved at the next general meeting.
12. If the council holds an event requiring advance payments, consider giving the purchaser a reasonable float. The purchaser should provide receipts and return any balance. Parents should not be out of pocket for council purchases.
13. Every council member has the right to see all financial records on reasonable notice.
14. An annual review of the council's books and records should be conducted by two or three parents who do not have signing authority on the council's bank account. The team of reviewers must be appointed by a motion passed by the membership. See *Year-End Review* on page 7.
15. All banking and financial records should be kept for five years from the end of the fiscal year to which they relate.

### Basic Principles of Gaming Funds

Funds received from the BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch have special requirements:

1. All gaming funds, whatever their source, must be managed by the PAC or DPAC that received them. Your council membership must make *all* decisions relating to the management and expenditure of gaming funds. PACs may consult the principal and school staff, and DPACs may consult the school district superintendent and senior management, but decision-making remains with the council.

For current information on the application for, eligible uses of, and reporting of gaming funds, consult the BCCPAC website at

[www.bccpac.bc.ca](http://www.bccpac.bc.ca)

or the website of the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch at

[www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/gaming/](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/gaming/)

2. Gaming funds must be deposited and kept in a separate bank account marked “gaming”.
3. Cheques issued on the gaming account must be signed by two council members with signing authority under your bylaws. One of the signatories must be an executive member.
4. Gaming revenue and expenditures are reported separately from other council funds.
5. All gaming records must be kept for five years from the end of the fiscal year in which funds were spent.

### Budgeting ~ A Council’s First Step in Financial Planning

Budgeting reflects planning for the year ahead and gives your council’s executive and treasurer the authority they need to spend money.

A budget approved by the membership at a general meeting allows the executive to go ahead with the council’s plans for the year and spend money at the appropriate time.

All money raised should have a purpose.  
All money kept should have a purpose.

*Without a budget, the executive must seek approval from the membership for every expenditure.*

#### ***Steps to good budgeting***

Good budget planning takes into account the wishes of the council membership and the needs of the school:

1. Begin with the parents, either through a survey sent home or an open discussion at a general meeting called for the purpose.
2. To support student achievement in your school, take into consideration your school goals. Do your PAC’s proposed revenue sources and expenditures support these goals?
3. Consult your school administrators. Ask for a prioritized wish list from school staff. If possible, avoid taking competing requests from individual staff members.

4. If your council is planning to use gaming funds, check to ensure that proposed expenditures fall under eligible uses for gaming funds.
5. If fundraising is necessary to meet your council's goals, work with the fundraising committee to prepare a list of possible fundraisers and anticipated income.
6. Previous budgets and annual financial reports serve as a guide. A comparison between last year and this year is helpful to members in assessing the council's financial position and whether the budget is reasonable

This process should produce a realistic plan for the year. Consult your administrators to make sure the plan fits the school's needs and can be coordinated with school plans. Take the draft budget to the next general meeting, discuss it, and finalize it.

*It is important to complete this process before the current budget expires.* Otherwise, there will be a gap during which the executive and treasurer have no authority to spend anything. This may hold up a project or event.

### ***Unanticipated expenses***

Any active organization will have unanticipated expenses.

Your council's bylaws may allow the executive to spend small amounts on unbudgeted items. If the bylaws say nothing on this, an amount can be approved at the same time as the budget.

*All* unbudgeted expenditures must be reported to the membership at the next general meeting. Members may ask questions and express their approval or disapproval of the expenditure. They may direct the executive to stay within the budget in future.

### ***Amending the budget***

A budget can always be amended by a vote at a general meeting.

Part of the treasurer's responsibility is to keep track of revenue and expenditures and alert the executive and membership to any problems with the budget. If more money comes in than expected, advise the membership at the next general meeting and ask them to

decide what to do with it. If less comes in, the membership must decide which expenditures to reduce or cancel.

## Reporting

The treasurer is responsible for preparing regular financial reports for the executive and membership.

A report reflecting *all* transactions since the last report should be prepared for every executive and general meeting. The purpose of the report is two-fold:

Funds should be used for the purpose for which they were raised.

- to show what has transpired since the last report
- to give the executive and members the information they need to make informed decisions.

### *Principles of reporting*

1. Reports should be in writing—verbal financial reports are not adequate—in a format that is easily read and understood.
2. The report becomes part of the minutes.
3. Every member attending a meeting is entitled to a copy of the report. Copies should be available for parents unable to attend.
4. The treasurer does not need to read the report if members have copies. It is enough to highlight significant items.
5. All records should be brought to every meeting as members are entitled to question the report.
6. A separate financial report for a particular event may be appropriate. For example, if sports day involves the purchase and sale of several items, a separate report showing all items should be prepared. The net results of this report will be reflected in the regular report.
7. An annual financial statement showing all revenue and expenditures for the year should be prepared after year-end and presented at the annual general meeting. The council may decide to have the financial statements audited or reviewed. See *Year-End Review* on page 7.
8. Revenue and expenditures from the BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch are reported separately. See *Basic Principles of Gaming Funds* on page 3.

9. Large expenditures, for example, computers or playground equipment, may take several years to prepare for. Funds in trust for these purchases should be shown clearly on all reports. Consult your school district about holding the funds in trust and reducing PST and GST liability.

## Year-End Review

A *review* is an examination of the council's financial records to ensure that the financial statements presented to the membership fairly reflect the council's financial position. It is sometimes called an audit, but should not be confused with the term "audit" used in the accounting profession.

### *Conducting the review*

1. A review does not have to be done by a professional accountant or bookkeeper. It can be done by two or three parents who do not have signing authority on the council's bank account. The team must be appointed by a motion passed by the membership.
2. The review team obtains all the financial records from the treasurer, and should conduct their work at a neutral location *without the treasurer present*. This can take two to four hours.

### *Revenue*

3. All cash received should have been recorded on a tally sheet and deposited on a timely basis. Check the tally sheets for cash received against the bank deposits, then have two reviewers initial the tally sheets. Check the deposit book against the bank statement.
4. The records should reflect the category for each deposit. For example, book sales should be under the heading "Book Sales".

### *Expenditures*

5. For every expenditure, there should be either an item in the annual budget or a motion in the minutes authorizing the expenditure.
6. For every cheque written, there should be an invoice or receipt.
7. The review team may review all cheques or a random number, say every third one.
8. Examine each cheque against the invoice or receipt to confirm:
  - the payee is the same as the invoice or the person who prepaid it
  - the amount agrees with the invoice or receipt
  - the payee is not one of the people who signed the cheque
  - the cheque is signed by two authorized people
  - there is no trace of any alteration on the cheque
  - the bank has stamped the back of the cheque
  - the cheque appears on the bank statement in the same amount.
9. Check each bank statement against the record book to ensure that all transactions have been recorded and the amounts charged to the proper categories. Any voided cheques should be accounted for.
10. Examine the bank reconciliation for the year-end and trace the reconciled bank balance to the year-end financial report. Verify that all deposits outstanding at the year-end were deposited shortly after the year-end. Any outstanding cheques should be current and verified.

### *Examining the financial records*

The next step is to fully examine the financial records.

11. All deposits and cheques should have been recorded in some form of record book.
12. If the records are in electronic form, work with the paper printouts. Electronic records should be backed up on disk or CD.
13. Check the record book to verify that an item is recorded in the proper category and the arithmetic is correct. Reviewers may check all transactions or check at random.

14. Trace the total of each category or an item in the record book to the year-end financial statements prepared for the membership.
15. All items in the financial statements must come from the records, and all balances must correspond. In particular, the bank or cash balance shown in the financial statements must correspond to the total of the reconciled bank balance.
16. If the reviewers need clarification of an item, they may contact the treasurer. Any minor exceptions found should be mentioned to the treasurer and president. Significant exceptions should be reported in writing to the executive.
17. On completion of the examination, the review team will write a report to the council, similar to the following:

*We have examined the books and records of (name of council) for the year ended June 30, 20\_\_ . As a result of our examination, we feel that the financial statements fairly present the financial position at June 30, 20\_\_, and the revenue and expenditures for the year then ended.*
18. The reviewers will return the records to the treasurer.

## Samples

On the following pages, you will find:

- Bank Reconciliation
- Sample Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for a one-month period
- Sample Treasurer's Report for a one-month period
- Sample Proposed Annual Budget
- Sample Budget for a single event
- Sample Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for a single event

These samples have been created very simply in Microsoft Word. They can also be done by hand. You may use accounting software, but it is not necessary.

## Great Elementary School Parent Advisory Council

### Bank Reconciliation as at *(date)*

**Ending balance on bank statement** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADD:**

**Outstanding deposits** (deposits recorded in your books but not shown on bank statement)

Deposit date	Amount
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Total outstanding deposits** \_\_\_\_\_

**DEDUCT:**

**Outstanding cheques** (cheques recorded on your books that have not cleared the bank)

Cheque #	Amount
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Total outstanding cheques** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current balance:** (This balance should agree with the records. Any differences should be found and corrected.) \_\_\_\_\_

**Great Elementary School Parent Advisory Council  
Sample Statement of Revenue and Expenditures  
March 12, 2005 – April 10, 2005**

<b>Cash on hand March 12, 2005 *</b>	\$ 201.00	
<b>Revenue:</b>		
Book sales	600.07	
Hot lunch	<u>301.71</u>	
<b>Total Revenue</b>		\$1,102.78
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
Hot lunch supplies	180.00	
Books	450.00	
Bank service charge for March	<u>0.50</u>	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		<u>630.50</u>
<b>Cash as of April 10, 2005:</b>		<u><u>472.28</u></u>
<b>Cash in Bank:</b>		
Chequing account		400.00
Savings account		52.28
Share account		<u>20.00</u>
<b>Cash on hand April 10, 2005</b>		472.28
<b>Outstanding payables:</b>		
Dairyland		50.00
Name tags		<u>23.00</u>
<b>Cash available for use:</b>		<b><u>\$ 399.28</u></b>

\* This amount should agree with cash on hand at the end of the last statement.

**Great Elementary School Parent Advisory Council  
Sample Treasurer's Report March 12, 2005 – April 10, 2005**

	2005 Mar 12–Apr 10	Year to Date Oct 1–Apr 10	2004-2005 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenue</b>				
Interest	\$ 0.67	3.89	10.00	(6.11)
Craft Fair	0.00	4,732.32	4,500.00	232.32
Book sales	0.00	2,789.22	2,500.00	289.22
Hot lunches	85.27	325.11	450.00	(124.89)
Car wash	363.00	363.00	500.00	(137.00)
Plant sale	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	(1,500.00)
Sports day booth	0.00	0.00	900.00	(900.00)
	<u>448.94</u>	<u>8,213.54</u>	<u>10,360.00</u>	<u>(2,146.46)</u>
<b>Expenditures</b>				
Craft Fair	\$ 0.00	1,835.22	2,000.00	(164.78)
Books	0.00	1,950.00	2,000.00	(50.00)
Hot lunches supplies	123.22	352.00	450.00	(98.00)
Plant sale supplies	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)
Library books *	550.00	900.00	1,200.00	(300.00)
Computer software *	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,500.00	(500.00)
Field trips	500.00	500.00	1,100.00	(600.00)
Photocopying	0.00	77.56	125.00	(47.44)
DPAC	25.00	25.00	25.00	00.00
Teacher Appreciation Day	0.00	0.00	150.00	(150.00)
Grade 7 grad *	0.00	0.00	225.00	(225.00)
Bicycle rodeo *	0.00	55.00	50.00	(0.00)
Planetarium van	350.00	350.00	350.00	00.00
Sports day supplies	0.00	0.00	175.00	(175.00)
BCCPAC membership	0.00	0.00	65.00	(65.00)
Bank charges	2.00	3.50	10.00	(6.50)
	<u>2,550.22</u>	<u>7,048.28</u>	<u>10,425.00</u>	<u>(3,381.72)</u>
Excess (Deficiency)				
Revenue over expenditures	\$ (2,101.28)	1,165.26	(65.00)	1,235.26
<b>Cash on hand</b>				
At beginning of period	3,643.19	376.65	300.00	76.65
At end of period	<u>\$ 1,541.91</u>	<u>1,541.91</u>	<u>235.00</u>	<u>1,311.91</u>
<b>Cash in bank</b>				
Chequing	\$ 10.31			
Savings	<u>1,531.60</u>			
	<u>\$ 1,541.91</u>			
<b>Funds held in trust</b>				
Playground	\$ 14,500.00			
Interest	<u>68.26</u>			
	<u>\$ 14,568.26</u>			
		Held in Term Deposit maturing May 15, 2005 90 days – 3.5%		

**Great Elementary School Parent Advisory Council  
Sample Proposed Annual Budget  
October 1, 2005 – September 30, 2006**

	Oct 2004 to Sept 2005 Actual	2004-2005 Budget	Proposed 2005-2006 Budget
<b>Revenue</b>			
Interest	\$ 8.00	10.00	10.00
Craft Fair	4,732.22	4,500.00	4,700.00
Book sales	2,789.22	2,500.00	0.00
Hot lunches	565.00	450.00	500.00
Car wash	363.00	500.00	0.00
Plant sale	1,863.00	1,500.00	2,000.00
Sports day booth	754.36	900.00	1,000.00
	11,074.80	10,360.00	8,210.00
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Craft Fair	\$ 1,835.22	2,000.00	2,000.00
Books	1,950.00	2,000.00	0.00
Hot lunches supplies	483.26	450.00	500.00
Plant sale supplies	910.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Library books *	1,500.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
Computer software *	1,800.00	1,500.00	1,400.00
Field trips	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,200.00
Photocopying	123.65	125.00	100.00
DPAC	25.00	25.00	25.00
Teacher Appreciation Day	147.50	150.00	150.00
Grade 7 grad *	275.00	225.00	225.00
Bicycle rodeo *	145.20	50.00	0.00
Planetarium van	295.00	350.00	0.00
Sports day supplies	175.00	175.00	200.00
BCCPAC membership	65.00	65.00	65.00
Bank charges	5.00	10.00	10.00
	10,834.83	10,425.00	8,075.00
Excess (Deficiency)			
Revenue over expenditures	\$ 239.97	(65.00)	135.00
<b>Cash on hand</b>			
At beginning of period	321.65	300.00	500.00
At end of period	561.62	235.00	635.00

\* Motion passed to exceed budget.

**Great Elementary School Parent Advisory Council  
Sample Fun Fair Budget  
February 3, 2005**

Below is a sample budget for a single event.

<b>Revenue:</b>		
Game ticket sales	\$700.00	
Concession	600.00	
Plant sale	250.00	
Silent auction	300.00	
<b>Total anticipated revenue</b>		<b>\$1,850.00</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
Food supplies	\$300.00	
Game rentals	250.00	
Prizes	70.00	
Plants	100.00	
Decorating	30.00	
Caricaturist	150.00	
<b>Total anticipated expenditures</b>		<b>900.00</b>
<b>Anticipated profit</b>		<b>\$950.00</b>

**Great Elementary School Parent Advisory Council  
Sample Fun Fair Revenue and Expenditure Statement  
April 12, 2005**

Below is a sample revenue and expenditure statement for a single event.

<b>Revenue:</b>		
Game ticket sales	\$821.00	
Concession	695.40	
Plant sale	225.00	
Silent auction	345.00	
<b>Total revenue</b>		<b>\$2,086.40</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
Food supplies	\$354.23	
Game rentals	257.00	
Prizes	62.00	
Plants	100.00	
Decorating	26.00	
Caricaturist	150.00	
<b>Total expenditures</b>		<b>949.23</b>
<b>Profit</b>		<b>\$1,137.17</b>

## Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)

*Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)* are a set of principles for accounting and financial reporting that are generally accepted by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA). They provide guidance on how to measure and communicate economic information through financial statements.

All BC school districts are required to comply with GAAP. Consistent use of GAAP makes it possible to compare financial data among school districts.

### ***Should PAC funds be included in school district GAAP financial statements?***

No. PACs are separate entities from schools and the school district. PAC funds are not *school-generated funds*. This means they do not need to be reported to the school district and should not be included in school district financial statements.

PAC-generated funds that the PAC uses to purchase items for the school or to pay for student activities do not need to be included in district financial statements. However, if a PAC *donates funds* to the school, those funds will be considered school-generated funds and will be included in the district statements, according to GAAP.

### ***Are funds raised by parents for school or teacher-sponsored events or activities considered to be PAC funds?***

There is disagreement whether these funds are PAC-generated funds (not subject to GAAP) or school-generated funds (subject to GAAP).

To avoid confusion, *all* fundraising by parents, whether for PAC, school, or teacher-sponsored events, should be approved by the PAC, reflected in the PAC minutes, and deposited into the PAC bank account.

## **PST and GST Refunds on PAC-Funded Purchases for Schools**

### ***PST***

PACs are eligible to receive a refund of provincial social service tax (PST) paid on goods purchased with PAC-raised funds and given to a school for school use.

Information on eligibility is available from the Consumer Taxation Branch at **604-660-4524** in Vancouver, or toll free **1-877-388-4440**, or consult

- ✓ [www.rev.gov.bc.ca/ctb/](http://www.rev.gov.bc.ca/ctb/)

The *Application for Refund* can be downloaded at

- ✓ [www.rev.gov.bc.ca/ctb/forms/0413PACFILL.pdf](http://www.rev.gov.bc.ca/ctb/forms/0413PACFILL.pdf)

### ***GST***

PACs also qualify for GST rebates. For assistance in completing a rebate application, consult

- ✓ [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/gp/rc4034/rc4034eq-07.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/gp/rc4034/rc4034eq-07.html)

The application for GST rebate can be downloaded at

- ✓ [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/gf/gst66/gst66-e.pdf](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/gf/gst66/gst66-e.pdf)

For additional assistance, call the BCCPAC office at **604-687-4433**.

**Tab 16 ~**

## **Communication in Your PAC, DPAC, and School Planning Council**

In this **Tab 16**, you will find

<i>Why</i> do we want to communicate?	Page 2
<i>What</i> do we want to communicate?	Page 2
<i>How</i> can we communicate?	Page 3
How will we know we are communicating effectively?	Page 6
Sample Communication Plan	Page 7
Communicating with the Media	Page 8

## Communication in Your PAC, DPAC, and School Planning Council

PACs, DPACs, and school planning councils are becoming more creative and sophisticated in communicating with their membership and the community. Keeping our members and partners informed through ongoing communication is essential to the effectiveness and smooth operation of our councils.<sup>1</sup>

### *Why do we want to communicate?*

To communicate effectively, we need to understand *why* we want to communicate—What are we trying to achieve through communication? Communication helps us

- build relationships and understanding among our members, education partners, and the community
- demonstrate to our members and others the value and importance of what we are doing
- mobilize our members and others to join us in bringing about positive change for students.

### *What do we want to communicate?*

We need to be clear about our key messages. What do we want our members and others to know? Different types of information can be communicated in different ways, and often the *method* of communication determines how well the message is received and understood.

Important information includes

- the purposes and goals of the council—Why does it exist? Why would a parent want to become involved?
- What does the council do day-to-day, month-to-month?
  - events
  - meetings
  - services

---

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Pat Webb, parent, Chantrell Creek Elementary School, School District #36 Surrey, for many of the ideas in this Tab.

- What opportunities does the council offer parents?
  - parent education
  - a forum for discussion of educational issues
  - the opportunity to be involved in school planning
  - the opportunity to be involved in setting priorities for the school and district
  - leadership
  - organization of events
- What services does the council offer parents?
  - information about the school and district, and how to communicate with staff, administrators, and elected officials
  - facilitation of meetings and discussion with other parents on educational issues in the school and district
  - advocacy
- What educational issues is the council focusing on? How does the council gather input and formulate a position on an issue?

### ***How can we communicate?***

There are two basic ways to communicate, written and oral.

#### ***Written*** communication includes

- newsletters and bulletins
- notices
- brochures and flyers
- calendars
- parent handbook
- meeting minutes and reports
- surveys
- bulletin boards
- sandwich boards and signs, including electronic signs
- e-mail
- websites
- press releases

#### ***Oral*** communication includes

- council meetings
- committee meetings
- focus groups

- meetings with school and district personnel
- one-to-one conversations
- phone-outs, including auto-diallers
- school public address system
- school assemblies

### *Newsletters and calendars*

A regular newsletter or page in the school or district newsletter remains one of the best ways to get the word out to parents, especially at the elementary level. Try to make your council's information stand out by putting a banner across the top of the page or using differently coloured paper.

Many schools, and some districts, produce a monthly or full-year calendar showing all important dates at a glance. Ask your principal (or district superintendent) to include PAC, DPAC, SPC, and BCCPAC events and meetings in **bold** or *italic* type. Or consider producing your own calendar.

Other effective print methods are

- a bulletin board at the school entrance or foyer of the school district administration office (remind parents it is there for their use)
- a sandwich board or electronic sign on the road or at the parking lot entrance announcing the next meeting or event
- flyers handed out to students and parents at pick-up and drop-off time.

### *Electronic communication*

Communication by e-mail and websites is common in schools, particularly large secondary schools.

Ask your principal or superintendent how the council can access electronic communication with information for parents.

- Is there a school or district policy on parent use of the website or e-mail system?
- How often does the school or district update its website or send an e-mailing?
- How are parents added to the e-mail list? How many parents are on the list?

- What kind of information goes out, and what can parents send?

If there is no centralized e-mail system, consider creating your own system—

**PAC**—With parental permission, the school may give you e-mail addresses from registrations. If not, ask parents at every meeting to add their address to your list.

**DPAC**—Ask every council representative to include their e-mail address, or a PAC address, with their registration information.

Remember to show good judgment in your use of e-mail. Reserve it for important information such as meeting reminders and upcoming events, and keep your messages short. Use the e-mail function that allows you to hide the addresses on your list so that no one else can use them. Encourage recipients to “Read the message, delete it, or pass it on.”

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

*Margaret Meade*

### ***Word of mouth***

Even with the ease of electronic communication, nothing replaces the personal touch, especially when you are trying to persuade busy people to become involved in something new.

Word of mouth remains one of the best ways to reach people. Councils find that the phoning committee draws parents in and makes them feel welcome—a key ingredient to greater involvement.

**PAC**—In setting up a phoning committee for your PAC, assign a list to each caller so that the caller becomes acquainted with the parents on their list. Reserve phone-outs for important events, and concentrate on new parents to the school. A phone call to these parents after their first PAC event will encourage them to come again.

**DPAC**—In your DPAC, assign a list of PAC representatives to each caller, and encourage your callers to establish a good relationship with the parents on their list. This may become the most effective way you communicate with your DPAC members.

Callers can ask parents how they like to receive information: What gets their attention? What do they usually ignore? Callers can also use the opportunity to survey parents on a “Question of the Month”.

### How will we know we are communicating effectively?

Councils need practical measurements to assess how well they are communicating with their members and partners. Some measurements are

- attendance and participation at meetings, presentations, and social events
- level of participation in focus groups, special events, or projects
- level of response to requests for volunteers
- feedback from surveys or requests for information. This includes both the *quantity* of feedback and what the feedback *tells* you about parent awareness and understanding of issues.
- frequency of member requests for information or assistance
- response from education partners to requests for information or assistance
- response from education partners to invitations to meetings or events.

### Sample Communication Plan

On the following page, you will find a **Sample Communication Plan**.

List the important information you want to communicate under *Key Messages*. Update the table regularly—a monthly update works best.

**Sample Communication Plan  
November 20\_\_**

<b>Key Messages</b>	<b>School Assembly</b>	<b>Newsletters</b>	<b>Notices</b>	<b>Bulletin Board</b>	<b>PA System</b>	<b>PAC Meetings</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Focus Groups</b>
SPC		✓				✓	✓	✓
Parent Conference		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Budget		✓				✓		
Bullying issues	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Healthy Lifestyles	✓	✓				✓		
Christmas Hampers		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	

## Communicating with the Media

Make your contact with the media positive, professional, and productive.

Your council may have occasion to talk to the media, usually in the following circumstances:

- your council issues a press release
- your council spokesperson calls a reporter on an issue or event the council wants publicized
- a reporter calls your council president or spokesperson and requests an interview on a current issue.

*Only the person designated to speak on behalf of your council (usually the president) should talk to media. All media inquiries should be referred to the designated spokesperson.*

In all of these circumstances, your goal in communicating with the media is to get *your* message across and be quoted correctly.

### *Tips for writing a press release*

Press releases are an excellent way to get your message to the media and the multitude of readers and listeners the media serves. *You* have control of the message. To write an effective press release—

- Limit the press release to one page, if possible.
- Put the most important information first. You want the reporter picking up the press release to know the story, and why it is important, by the time she has finished reading the headline and first paragraph. Detail and background information follow, in decreasing order of importance—the less important the information, the further down it appears.
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- Include one or two quotes that you would like to see reported.
- Include contact information at the end.

Expect, and be prepared for, a phone call from a reporter about your press release. Familiarize yourself with the key message you want to get across, and even practice out loud! Keep in mind the tips on the following pages for handling interviews with the media.

Only your council's designated spokesperson has authority to speak to the media on the council's behalf. Check your bylaws!

### *When a reporter calls<sup>2</sup>*

Whether or not you are expecting the call, you are entitled to ask a few questions up front. There is no rule that says the reporter gets to ask all the questions or that you have to do all the answering. Appropriate questions are

- *What is your name, media outlet, and phone number?*
- *Why are you calling me?*
- *Will you be taping this interview?*
- *What is the story about? What angle are you working on?*

When a reporter asks a general question, she could be working on a story from any number of angles. Knowing the story angle tells you what the context will be, so that you can supply the information that *you*, rather than the reporter, believe is relevant.

- *Where did the story come from?*

Knowing the origin of the story may tell you the reason for a question, putting you in a better position to respond.

- *Who else are you going to interview?*

This will give you a clearer understanding of the context and whose comments may appear next to yours.

- *What do you know about this issue?*

You may have to give the reporter background information. This is your opportunity to educate the reporter on the issue as your council sees it.

- *What is your deadline?*

This is a critical question. You want to avoid answering “under the gun”. There are ways to buy yourself time.

### *Buying time*

A reporter wants one thing from you—a quote or “sound byte” in time to meet her deadline. Your comments will be edited, clipped, and reorganized. In most interviews, the reporter’s questions are

<sup>2</sup> This information is adapted from *Media Wise Relations*, a presentation by Carol Boothroyd. BCCPAC Leadership Conference 2000.

not printed or aired, with the result that your comments read like a statement rather than the answer to a question.

To think and prepare the best response, buy yourself some time by telling the reporter you will call back in 15 minutes. Then make notes, call another council member, and script out some of your answers. Write down key messages—*your* agenda—and underline key words. Call back within the time you promised.

### *Tips for talking to reporters*

An interview is not an ordinary conversation. The reporter is gathering information. Your objective is to make sure *your* key message is communicated.

- Try to be concise, quotable, and easy to understand. Avoid jargon.
- When you have finished what you want to say, *stop talking*. The reporter may wait, encouraging you to speak freely. Resist the urge to fill the silence, as you may say something beyond what you intended.
- There is no such thing as “off the record”. Anything you say may appear in print or on the airwaves.
- You are speaking on behalf of your council. Begin with “As the spokesperson for the PAC, I can tell you parents believe...” rather than “I believe...” Avoid personal opinions.
- If the reporter asks you to speak for others—“What do you think the principal, teachers, trustees will say about...?”—respond with “I can only speak on behalf of the PAC, and parents have said...”
- Include your key message as part of as many responses as possible during the interview. Use connecting bridges between your answer and the reporter’s question, such as
  - “What’s really important here is...”
  - “The public needs to know that...”
  - “The bottom line is...”
- Use the connecting bridge if the reporter asks you to speculate or baits you—“Do you think this is just another cash cow?”

**Tab 17 ~**

## **Building Partnerships**

In this **Tab 17**, you will find

Who Are Our Education Partners?	Page 2
Working with Education Partners	Page 3
Education Partners	Page 4
Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement	Page 5
What Works in Each Type of Involvement	Page 6
Planning for Action	Page 11
Sample Activities from the Six Types of Involvement to Help Achieve the Goal: <i>To Promote a Climate of Partnership in the School</i>	Page 12
Duties, Rights, and Responsibilities of Education Partners	Page 13
Acronyms and Websites of Education Partners	Page 15
Resources	Page 16

## Building Partnerships

In public education, there is a large body of research confirming that students do better in school when families, educators, and community members work together to improve schools, strengthen families, and enhance student learning and development.<sup>1</sup>

In this **Tab 17**, you will find information about our education partners, along with ideas and sample practices for building effective partnerships in our schools.

### Who Are Our Education Partners?

The most powerful outcomes appear to develop when there is true mutuality between the school and the community, such that each party learns to value and respect the knowledge, skills, and goals of the other.

*Benjamin Levin, 1995*

Everyone who supports or contributes to public education is an education partner. Depending on what we are involved in at any given time, our education partners are those people or groups who can assist or join us in achieving our goals.

On page 4, you will find a chart of education partners at different levels in the public school system. Many of these partners have duties, rights, and responsibilities defined by the Ministry of Education in its *Statement of Education Policy Order*,<sup>2</sup> reprinted on page 13.

Many partners have professional associations that speak for them as a group and will provide information to parents. Parents are encouraged to contact them with questions or concerns. A list of associations and their websites can be found on page 15.

Many schools and districts have policies with important implications for partnership among parents, students, educators, business, and the community. It is important for parents to be aware of policies on

- volunteering
- communication
- extracurricular activities
- field trips
- homework

<sup>1</sup> Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Johns Hopkins University, [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm)

<sup>2</sup> OIC 1280-89, effective September 1, 1989. Available at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic\\_1280-89.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic_1280-89.pdf).

To find school and district policies, ask your PAC, DPAC, principal, or district administration office. Or go to your school or district website, or the website of the BC School Trustees Association at

[www.bcsta.org/policy/polindex.htm](http://www.bcsta.org/policy/polindex.htm)

- resolving concerns
- PACs and DPACs
- school planning councils
- community involvement
- school-community relations
- business and community partnerships
- advertising
- fundraising
- use of facilities.

## Working with Education Partners

Successful partnerships share certain key elements:

- mutual understanding and respect of each partner's roles and responsibilities
- effective two-way (or more) communication
- clear, easily understood language and processes, capable of being used by everyone
- equal opportunity to speak and be heard
- equal access to relevant information, resources, and expertise
- joint planning, goal-setting, and evaluation
- shared desire to work in the interests of students and public education.

The remainder of this **Tab 17** contains many ideas for working effectively with our education partners. As you consider these ideas for your council, school, or district, keep in mind that people who are informed and have the opportunity to be involved in decision-making are more likely to support the decisions made and participate in action.

**Education Partners**

When acting as	Your education partners are
An individual parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Your PAC and DPAC</li> <li>▪ Your Band Council</li> <li>▪ BCCPAC Advocacy Project</li> <li>▪ Your children’s teachers</li> <li>▪ Your school principal, vice-principal, and counselors</li> <li>▪ Your district superintendent and, in larger districts, the assistant superintendent responsible for your school</li> <li>▪ Your Board of School Trustees</li> <li>▪ BC College of Teachers</li> <li>▪ Ministry of Education</li> </ul>
A PAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Your DPAC</li> <li>▪ BCCPAC Member Services and office staff</li> <li>▪ BCCPAC Advocacy Project</li> <li>▪ Your School Planning Council</li> <li>▪ Local Band Councils</li> <li>▪ All school staff</li> <li>▪ Student Council</li> <li>▪ District superintendent and, in larger districts, the assistant superintendent responsible for your school</li> <li>▪ District teachers’ association</li> <li>▪ District principals’ and vice-principals’ association</li> <li>▪ District support staff associations</li> <li>▪ Board of School Trustees</li> <li>▪ BC College of Teachers</li> <li>▪ Local community groups</li> <li>▪ Local police</li> <li>▪ Ministry of Education</li> </ul>
A DPAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Member PACs</li> <li>▪ BCCPAC Member Services and office staff</li> <li>▪ BCCPAC Advocacy Project</li> <li>▪ Local Band Councils</li> <li>▪ District student groups</li> <li>▪ District superintendent</li> <li>▪ District teachers’ association</li> <li>▪ District principals’ and vice-principals’ association</li> <li>▪ District support staff associations</li> <li>▪ Board of School Trustees</li> <li>▪ BC College of Teachers</li> <li>▪ Local community groups</li> <li>▪ Local police</li> <li>▪ Ministry of Education</li> </ul>

## Epstein's Six Types of Involvement<sup>3</sup>

Researchers such as Joyce L. Epstein<sup>4</sup> and Anne Henderson<sup>5</sup> are well known for their research on school, family, and community partnerships and the benefits of parent and community involvement in public education.

Based on more than a decade of research and the work of many educators, parents, students, and others, we know it is possible for all elementary, middle, and high schools to develop and maintain strong programs of partnership.

Joyce L. Epstein, Director,  
Center on School, Family,  
and Community  
Partnerships  
[www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/default.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/default.htm)

Epstein has identified six types of involvement that, if practiced effectively, enhance school, family, and community partnerships:

### Type 1

**Parenting** ~ Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.

### Type 2

**Communicating** ~ Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

### Type 3

**Volunteering** ~ Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.

### Type 4

**Learning at home** ~ Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.

### Type 5

**Decision-making** ~ Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PACs, DPACs, school planning councils, committees, and other parent organizations.

<sup>3</sup> Epstein, Joyce L., Six Types of Involvement. [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/sixtypes.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/sixtypes.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Joyce L. Epstein, Director, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland

<sup>5</sup> Anne Henderson, Senior Consultant, Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University, New York

## Type 6

**Collaborating with the community** ~ Coordinate resources and services *for* families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services *to* the community.

## What Works in Each Type of Involvement

### *Type 1 ~ Parenting*

Schools are recognizing that parents need and deserve support in providing basic needs to children and creating a home environment that supports children *as students*.

Many schools have become a community focal point for resources, information, and counselling for parents and families seeking support. In providing this support, these schools gain a better understanding of the family cultures, goals, and needs of their community, and in so doing contribute to the potential success of students.

Suggestions for enhancing *Type 1* involvement ~ **Parenting**:

- Workshops on parenting, child-rearing, and helping children at home, offered to accommodate both working and non-working parents. Consider parents who cannot come, or do not feel comfortable coming, to the school by using audio and video tapes, summaries or newsletters, computerized phone messages, websites, and cable TV.
- Programs for teen parents
- Family support programs such as clothing exchanges, food co-ops, and parent support groups
- School meal programs
- Parent library or resource centre containing books and information on parenting, how to help your child learn, ministry and school district programs and resources, and community programs and resources
- A designated resource person within the school to field parents' questions and direct them to appropriate resources.

In order for families and communities to become informed about and involved in children's education at school and at home, partnerships must be viewed as an essential component of school and classroom organization.

National Network of  
Partnership Schools  
[www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/  
program2.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/program2.htm)

### ***Type 2 ~ Communicating***

Effective partnerships begin with effective communication. Good communication

- helps parents understand and support the school and district
- helps students make better decisions about their programs and coursework
- helps educators, parents, and students find common ground to discuss a student's progress and behaviour.

No longer an optional activity or a matter of public relations, school, family, and community partnerships are essential for student learning and success in school. It takes time, organization, and effort to develop a good program.

*National Network of  
Partnership Schools  
[www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/  
program2.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/program2.htm)*

Suggestions for enhancing *Type 2* involvement ~  
***Communicating:***

- Language translation for all forms of communication in schools where there are parents with limited English language skills
- Teacher/parent/student conferences, in person or by phone, with follow-up as needed
- Student work sent home on a regular basis for parent review and comment
- Frequent informal contact between teachers and parents through notes, agenda books, phone calls, or e-mail, for positive feedback as well as issues of concern
- Student agendas to record homework assignments
- A 24-hour event hotline for students and parents to keep track of upcoming events
- Regular newsletters and calendars of events, translated where appropriate
- An up-to-date parent handbook, also translated
- PAC, DPAC, school, and district websites and e-mail lists
- Outreach to parents and students of different cultural backgrounds, using community and cultural centres and language schools
- Satisfaction surveys of parents and students.

***Type 3 ~ Volunteering***

Volunteering in schools is vitally important to many people.

Students benefit from the attention of volunteers, and learn to communicate with more adults. Teachers benefit from volunteer expertise and help, and often try new programs because volunteers are available. Volunteers benefit from the opportunity to participate in the education of their own children and all children.

The **School Act, s. 7.1**, says

Subject to this Act, the regulations and any rules of a board, a parent of a student may provide volunteer services at or for a school.

Better recognition and use of volunteers improve the school/volunteer partnership. Volunteer work includes attending school functions, performances, and teacher conferences. Creating volunteer opportunities beyond the classroom lets working parents and other community members contribute to the school. Epstein would like to extend the definition of *volunteer* to everyone who gives time anywhere to support school goals and student learning.

Suggestions for enhancing ***Type 3*** involvement ~ ***Volunteering***:

- Parent/community survey to see where people would like to volunteer
- Volunteer opportunities that meet the interests, skills, and availability of as many community members as possible
- Volunteer opportunities that address the language and cultural needs of the community and facilitate outreach and communication to parents from different cultural groups
- Effective recruitment to ensure that all who wish to participate can do so
- Appropriate volunteer orientation, training, and support
- Space in the school for volunteer work and meetings
- Volunteer recognition, both public and private.

***Type 4 ~ Learning at home***

Epstein has found that parents want to know how to participate in learning activities at home.

When parents are oriented to the teacher's policies and patterns of homework and grading, they know how to help and how not to help.

*Joyce L. Epstein, Director,  
Center on School, Family,  
and Community  
Partnerships.*

Teachers can help by designing homework that includes parents *on purpose*. At regular intervals, students can be required as part of a homework assignment to talk to someone at home about a particular topic. Weekend assignments can be different from weekday work—more enjoyable, interactive homework or long-term assignments that require some discussion or exchange.

**Suggestions for enhancing *Type 4* involvement ~ *Learning at home*:**

- Information for parents on skills (or expected learning outcomes) in each subject and grade
- A regular homework schedule or calendar requiring students to discuss a schoolwork topic at home
- Workshops on ways to help children at home at all grade levels, scheduled to accommodate both working and non-working parents. Offer information through audio and video tapes, summaries or newsletters, websites, and cable TV.
- Student work sent home on a regular basis for parent review and comment
- Student agendas to record homework assignments
- Frequent informal contact between teachers and parents through notes, phone calls, or e-mail
- Parent consultation and involvement in setting academic goals and preparing their children for transition from elementary to secondary and secondary to post-secondary or work.

***Type 5 ~ Decision-making***

Through PACs, DPACs, and SPCs, parents are an integral part of the decision-making process in our public schools. The School Act gives parents the right to advise their school board, principal, and staff on any matter relating to their school or education in their district, and to participate in school planning.

Suggestions for enhancing *Type 5* involvement ~ ***Decision-making:***

- Training, resources, and mentorship for parent leaders on leadership, inclusivity, cultural awareness, and collaborative decision-making
- Defined processes for providing advice. These processes should be developed, reviewed, and publicized by parents, the school, and district in collaboration.
- Parent positions on school and district committees
- Regular updates by school and district staff on how parental advice and resources are being used.

***Type 6 ~ Collaborating with the community***

As our schools take on greater responsibility for the educational, social, and emotional needs of all students, stronger partnerships between the school and community have become essential.

All schools and districts make use of government services; many are also working with local businesses and charitable organizations. These partnerships bring resources and opportunities into the schools to complement and expand the regular curriculum. Many students can trace career decisions to programs and opportunities made possible through community and business partnerships.

Suggestions for enhancing *Type 6* involvement ~ ***Collaborating with the community:***

- Encourage parents to support or contribute to schools through their own businesses, professional groups, community or cultural groups, and charitable organizations.
- Make information freely available to parents and students through a parent resource centre or library, newsletters and

websites on social, health, cultural, recreational, and athletic programs and opportunities in the community.

- Encourage and help students to serve the community through drama and music performances, recycling, neighbourhood cleanup, murals, and tutoring.
- Canvas local businesses for financial sponsorship.

## Planning for Action

Building partnerships in your school and district requires planning and action involving all members of the community.

When your PAC, DPAC, or SPC identifies a goal as part of its annual plan, consider how activities from the six types of involvement will help you reach that goal. Discuss with other members of your school or district community how each partner can help reach the goal.

On the next page, you will find a sample list of activities from each of the six types of involvement that will help your council and school work together toward the goal, *To Promote a Climate of Partnership in the School*. These activities involve all members of the school community—the key to building partnerships.<sup>6</sup>

For more information, see **Tab 13, Effective Planning in PACs and DPACs**.

---

<sup>6</sup> Epstein, Joyce L. *Successful Partnerships, Successful Schools, Successful Students*, presentation to Langley School District Professional and Community Services, October 10, 2002

**Sample Activities from the Six Types of Involvement to Help Achieve the Goal:  
To Promote a Climate of Partnership in the School**

<b>Great Elementary School PAC Goal: To Promote a Climate of Partnership in the School</b>	
<b>Type of Involvement</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>Type 1: Parenting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Host a school-sponsored workshop on <i>Parenting Your Pre-Teen</i>, open to all parents in the school and community. Invite school staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Type 2: Communicating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote student-led conferences through the PAC newsletter, website, e-mail, and phone fan-out.</li> <li>▪ Set up a PAC information display at the school entrance on conference day.</li> <li>▪ Invite PAC executive members and other interested parents to be available in the hallways on conference day to greet and direct parents and answer questions.</li> <li>▪ Invite student council representatives to PAC meetings (on a regular basis or several times a year) to talk about courses, special events, or leadership opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Type 3: Volunteering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a volunteer directory, listing volunteer opportunities for parents and other community members. Include classroom, field trips, sports and recreation, music, shop, library, school dance, school concert.</li> <li>▪ Advertise volunteer opportunities through the school and PAC newsletter, website, and e-mail.</li> </ul>
<b>Type 4: Learning at Home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invite the principal and a teacher representative to talk to parents at a PAC meeting about the school's homework policy, how to help at home, and whom to call with questions.</li> </ul>
<b>Type 5: Decision-Making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invite non-parent members of the School Planning Council to a PAC meeting to hear parents discuss the draft school plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Type 6: Collaborating with the Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invite local artists to showcase their music, painting, crafts, and information on art programs, museums, and lessons in the community.</li> </ul>

**Duties, Rights, and Responsibilities of Education Partners**  
**Ministry of Education Statement of Policy Order, OIC 1280-89, effective September 1, 1989**  
 Available at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic\\_1280-89.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic_1280-89.pdf).

<b>Education Partner</b>	<b>Duties, Rights, and Responsibilities</b>
<b>Students</b>	Students have the opportunity to avail themselves of a quality education consistent with their abilities, the opportunity to share in the shaping of their educational programs, and the opportunity to determine their career and occupational goals. They have the responsibility to make the most of their opportunities, to respect the rights of others, and to cooperate with fellow students in the achievement of their goals.
<b>Parents</b>	Parents have the right and responsibility to participate in the process of determining the educational goals, policies, and services provided for their children. They have the primary responsibility to ensure that children are provided with the healthy and supportive environment necessary for learning. They have a responsibility to help shape and support the goals of the school system and to share the task of educating their young
<b>Teachers</b>	Teachers have the right to exercise professional judgment in providing instruction to students in accordance with specified duties and powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure that each student is provided with quality instruction, to participate in all normal school activities, and to monitor the behaviour and progress of each learner in accordance with provincial and local policies. They have a responsibility to communicate with students and parents, and are accountable to the School Board and its delegates.
<b>School Principals</b>	School principals the right to exercise professional judgment in managing the school in accordance with specified duties and powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure that each student is provided with opportunities for a quality education. Principals are to provide administrative leadership, in consultation with teachers and the community, that reflects the aspirations of parents and the school community and that is consistent with provincial and district guidelines. They cooperate with parents and the community in the delivery of non-educational support services to students, and focus on the following areas of school concern: (1) student access and achievement; (2) quality teaching; (3) communication with parents and the community; and (4) accountability to parents and to the Board.
<b>School Boards</b>	School Boards have a duty to govern districts and their schools in accordance with specified powers in a fiscally responsible and cost effective manner. They have a responsibility to ensure that schools provide students with opportunities for a quality education; to set education policies that reflect the aspirations of the community and that are consistent with overall provincial guidelines; to provide leadership and encouragement to schools and the community; to cooperate with the community and social service agencies in the delivery of non-educational support services to students; and to focus on the following areas of district concern: (1) implementation of provincial and local education programs; (2) school finance and facilities; (3) student access and achievement; (4) teaching performance; and (5) accountability to parents, taxpayers, the community, and to the Province.

<b>District Officials</b>	District officials have a duty to exercise professional judgment in managing the district in accordance with specified powers and duties. They have a corresponding responsibility to provide professional leadership in the design and implementation of education programs in districts, and are accountable to the local school board.
<b>The College of Teachers</b>	The College of Teachers has the duty to establish and apply standards of fitness and qualifications governing admission to the teaching profession. The specific duties of the Council of the College are to approve, for certification purposes, teacher education programs established by provincial Faculties of Education, to define bylaws and policies related to the academic and professional qualifications of teachers, to issue teaching credentials, to investigate allegations of professional misconduct, and, if necessary, to exercise professional judgment in disciplining its members. The College has the responsibility for encouraging and facilitating programs of continuing teacher education, professional development, and inservice designed to ensure general teacher competence, and to improve the quality of teaching in provincial schools.
<b>The Community</b>	The community has the right to expect that every child will have access to quality education provided in a fiscally responsible and cost effective manner. The community, through local volunteer groups and private and public agencies, has a corresponding responsibility to support the family and school by providing children with a healthy and supportive environment in the community.
<b>The Ministry of Education</b>	The Ministry of Education has a duty to set policies for the British Columbia public school system in accordance with specified duties and powers. The Ministry has a corresponding responsibility to ensure that the education system provides students with opportunities for a quality education in a cost-effective manner; to set standards and overall directions for the education system; to provide leadership and encouragement to all educational agencies in the province; to cooperate with provincial agencies in the delivery of non-educational support services to students; and to focus at a high level of provincial concern on the following areas: (1) finance and facilities; (2) program direction, development, and implementation; (3) student access and achievement; (4) teaching performance; and (5) system evaluation and public accountability.
<b>Other Government Ministries and Agencies</b>	Other government ministries and agencies have a duty to set policies in accordance with specified powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure that provincial policies and resources support the family and local community in providing a healthy and supportive environment necessary for children's learning.
<b>The Public</b>	The public of British Columbia has the right to expect that schools operate effectively and efficiently and are accountable for evaluating and reporting their progress on a regular basis. The public has the corresponding responsibility to provide schools with the necessary resources and moral support to fulfil their mission.

### Acronyms and Websites of Education Partners

<b>AMSAA</b>	Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC	<a href="http://www.amssa.org/">www.amssa.org/</a>
<b>BCASAA</b>	BC Association of Student Activity Advisors	<a href="http://www.bcasaa.bc.ca/">www.bcasaa.bc.ca/</a>
<b>BCASCD</b>	BC Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development	<a href="http://www.ascd.org/cms/index.cfm?TheViewID=808">www.ascd.org/cms/index.cfm?TheViewID=808</a>
<b>BCCPAC</b>	BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils	<a href="http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/">www.bccpac.bc.ca/</a>
<b>BCCT</b>	BC College of Teachers	<a href="http://www.bcct.ca/">www.bcct.ca/</a>
<b>BCPSEA</b>	BC Public School Employers' Association	<a href="http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/public/index.html">www.bcpsea.bc.ca/public/index.html</a>
<b>BCPVPA</b>	BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association	<a href="http://www.bcpvpa.bc.ca/">www.bcpvpa.bc.ca/</a>
	BC Safe Schools & Communities Centre	<a href="http://www.safeschools.gov.bc.ca/">www.safeschools.gov.bc.ca/</a>
<b>BCSDSTA</b>	BC School District Secretary-Treasurers' Association	<a href="http://www.bcsdsta.ca/">www.bcsdsta.ca/</a>
<b>BCSS</b>	BC School Sports	<a href="http://www.bcschoolsports.ca/pages/news.php">www.bcschoolsports.ca/pages/news.php</a>
<b>BCSSA</b>	BC School Superintendents' Association	<a href="http://www.bcssa.org/index.html">www.bcssa.org/index.html</a>
<b>BCSTA</b>	BC School Trustees Association	<a href="http://www.bcsta.org/">www.bcsta.org/</a>
<b>BCTF</b>	BC Teachers' Federation	<a href="http://www.bctf.bc.ca/home.shtml">www.bctf.bc.ca/home.shtml</a>
<b>BCTLA</b>	BC Teacher-Librarians' Association	<a href="http://www.bctf.bc.ca/PSAs/BCTLA/">www.bctf.bc.ca/PSAs/BCTLA/</a>
<b>CASE</b>	Council of Administrators of Special Education	<a href="http://www.bctf.bc.ca/PSAs/BCTLA/">www.bctf.bc.ca/PSAs/BCTLA/</a>
<b>CEA</b>	Canadian Education Association	<a href="http://www.cea-ace.ca/">www.cea-ace.ca/</a>
<b>CHSF</b>	Canadian Home and School Federation	<a href="http://www.canadianhomeandschool.com/">www.canadianhomeandschool.com/</a>
<b>CMEC</b>	Council of Ministers of Education, Canada	<a href="http://www.cmec.ca/index.en.html">www.cmec.ca/index.en.html</a>
<b>CUPE</b>	Canadian Union of Public Employees	<a href="http://www.cupe.bc.ca/">www.cupe.bc.ca/</a>
<b>DASH</b>	Directorate of Agencies for School Health	<a href="http://www.dashbc.org/">www.dashbc.org/</a>
<b>EAC</b>	Education Advisory Council	
<b>FISA</b>	Federation of Independent Schools in Canada	<a href="http://www.kingsu.ab.ca/~fisc/province.htm">www.kingsu.ab.ca/~fisc/province.htm</a>
<b>FNESC</b>	First Nations Education Steering Committee	<a href="http://www.fnesc.bc.ca/">www.fnesc.bc.ca/</a>
<b>LATA</b>	Learning Assistance Teachers' Association	<a href="http://www.bctf.ca/lata/">www.bctf.ca/lata/</a>
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education	<a href="http://www.gov.bc.ca/bced/">www.gov.bc.ca/bced/</a>
<b>OLA</b>	Open Learning Agency	<a href="http://www.ola.bc.ca/">www.ola.bc.ca/</a>
<b>PEEPAC</b>	Parent & Education Engagement Partnership Advisory Committee	<a href="http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/reports/parent_engage.pdf">www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/reports/parent_engage.pdf</a>

## Resources

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships. Johns Hopkins University. Joyce L. Epstein, Director. Online at [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm)

Epstein, Joyce L., Six Types of Involvement. Online at [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/sixtypes.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/sixtypes.htm)

Henderson, Anne T. and Karen L. Mapp. *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002. Available online at [www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf](http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf)

National Network of Partnership Schools. Established by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, the NNPS brings together schools, districts, and states committed to developing and maintaining comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships. Online at [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/default.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/default.htm)

**Tab 18 ~**

## **Parent Education**

In this **Tab 18**, you will find

Using Local Resources	Page 2
School and District Professional Development	Page 4
BCCPAC	Page 4

## Parent Education

Educating parents about your school, district, province, and public education in general is a key component to the development and success of your council.

Some of the ways you can offer parent education are

- speakers at regular and special meetings, events, and conferences
- presentations to coincide with parent-teacher interviews or other events that bring parents into the school
- sponsoring parents to attend conferences, workshops, and presentations offered by others
- a bulletin or newsletter explaining current issues (paper, e-mail, or website), translated into the major languages spoken by parents in the community
- collaboration with community groups concerned about particular issues. Invite a group to explain their concerns to parents.
- collaboration with cultural groups in the community willing to assist with outreach to parents using volunteer interpreters
- open house or regular drop-in
- a well-stocked, up-to-date parent library, open at times convenient to parents.

### Using Local Resources

There are many people in our schools and districts with knowledge and expertise on issues of interest to parents. Inviting members of our own community to speak to parents is an excellent way to take advantage of local expertise while building good relations with our education partners.

Consider inviting the following people to speak on suggested topics:

#### **Principal—**

- Your school—layout, facilities, grounds, where to find people and things. Suggest a tour with student leaders.
- School staff—classroom teachers, specialist teachers (English as a Second Language, learning assistance, speech/language, hearing impaired, behaviour), department

heads, coaches, counsellors, psychologists, office staff, maintenance staff. What do these people do? When are they in the school? How does a parent get in touch with them?

- Curriculum and programs—What does the school offer? How does a student qualify for a particular program? Who should the student or parent speak to?
- School plan, current issues, special projects
- Opportunities for parent involvement

**Teachers, counsellors, specialists—**

- Curriculum, programs, special projects, services to students and parents
- How to get in touch, best methods of communication
- Opportunities for parent involvement

**Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer, Planner—**

- School district facilities, organizational structure, personnel. Suggest a tour of the main administration office or special program centres.
- School district annual budget—How is it created? Who is consulted?
- Special programs or projects, educational choices available to students
- School district Accountability Contract, current issues
- Physical planning and development
- Opportunities for parent involvement

**Chair of the Board of Trustees—**

- Governance and decision-making, school district policy structure
- Current issues, special programs or projects, vision for the future
- Opportunities for public consultation

**Local groups or organizations with special knowledge or expertise on current issues—**

- Band Councils—hold a PAC or DPAC meeting at the Band Council centre, or alternate meetings between the school and Band Council centre
- Public service clubs (Rotary, Lyons Quest) on programs for children and youth

- Public health service on nutrition, exercise, substance abuse, or safety
- Cultural groups on multiculturalism and cultural awareness
- Police on crime prevention, substance abuse, teen driving, or safety
- Crisis centre on services for children, youth, and parents
- Local experts on conflict resolution, bullying, and harassment
- Parenting instructors on programs for new, experienced, or teen parents
- Tutors on helping children with homework or tips for reading together
- Gardening clubs on keeping school grounds green.

### School and District Professional Development

Check your school or district website for upcoming professional development opportunities.

Publicize these events in your council's newsletter or website.

School and district staff take part in ongoing professional development. Many schools and districts extend open invitations to parents to participate in workshops, presentations, and conferences. These are excellent opportunities to learn alongside those who work with our children.

Ask your principal or school district administration office for a schedule of professional development opportunities for the year. Find out which ones are open to parents. For those that may not be, inquire what parents can do to attend.

Some events may require a fee. Check your council's annual budget, and consider including an item for parent professional development to defray all or part of the cost.

**BCCPAC**

BCCPAC offers many resources and opportunities for parent education:

- Fall Leadership Conference
- Spring Conference and Annual General Meeting
- Regional Events
- Website including
  - information and updates on current educational issues
  - online discussion forums
  - issues bulletins
  - practice notes
  - discussion papers and submissions
  - frequently asked questions
  - sample constitution and bylaws
  - member resolutions
  - hundreds of links to information, resources, and organizations
- Regular mailouts to members
- PAC *Ed* Education and Development Workshop Series
- Presentations on the role of parents
- Member Services
- BCCPAC Advocacy Project

BCCPAC website:

**[www.bccpac.bc.ca](http://www.bccpac.bc.ca)**

BCCPAC Member  
Services:

**Call 604-687-4433**

**Or e-mail  
[info@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:info@bccpac.bc.ca)**

BCCPAC Advocacy  
Project toll free  
message line:

**1-888-351-9834**



# Contagious Enthusiasm

## How to Get Parents Involved

In this section, you will find

Starting Off the Year	Page 2
Gathering Contact Information	Page 4
Reaching New Parents	Page 5
Boosting Attendance at Meetings and Events	Page 5
DPAC Representative Form	Page 8

## Contagious Enthusiasm How to Get Parents Involved

Enthusiasm is contagious. It takes only a little to generate a lot among the people around you.

Parents are constantly coming up with new ideas on how to involve more parents in their PACs, DPACs, and SPCs. As you read this, you will find dozens of suggestions for getting the word out and attracting more parents to the work of your council—and keeping them!

All of these ideas come from parents—our best source of information. In this section, you will find suggestions collected from parents during networking sessions at BCCPAC conferences.

### Starting Off the Year

For many councils, the September meeting is the best attended of the year. How can you capture that September energy and enthusiasm and make it last all year? It is important to be welcoming, organized, communicate well, and follow up.

An informal social event can be one of the best ways to start the year. It helps renew friendships and welcomes new parents to your council. Some ideas to consider...

Food is always an attraction—it makes people feel more comfortable and inclined to mingle. Include it whenever possible.

#### *For PACs*

- a hospitality event at morning drop-off, afternoon pick-up, or in the evening
- a PAC display and hospitality table at the school's first Open House or Meet the Teacher Night
- a regular drop-in for coffee at the same time every week, especially through September

#### *For DPACs*

- a hospitality event during the first half hour of your September meeting. Invite trustees, the superintendent, and senior district staff.
- Include a display of DPAC information, with your mission statement prominently displayed.
- Encourage your executive (both current and last year's) to mingle and talk to as many people as possible about your DPAC.

Offer name tags at every event or meeting.

*Be sure to advertise the event, using all the communication tools available to your council.*

For communication ideas, see **Tab 16, Communication in your PAC, DPAC, and SPC.**

***Making the most of your first meeting***

Use your September meeting to tell parents what your council is, what it does, how parents can become involved—and how much fun you have. Describe your council’s purposes as they are set out in your constitution. Explain how these purposes relate to every parent and child in the school.

Parents who are new to your council want to go away from the first meeting

Have greeters at the door at every event or meeting. Their job is welcome everyone, make introductions, and make sure new people aren’t isolated.

- feeling they were welcomed
- feeling comfortable – the higher the comfort level, the more likely that they will return
- feeling that participation by all parents is welcome, not just by a chosen few
- encouraged to speak up
- knowing more about your council, the school, and district
- encouraged to return and get involved
- feeling they have something to contribute

Your first meeting is a time to celebrate parent involvement in public education, to welcome *everyone*—parents, staff, students—and to gather speed for the year ahead.

If your first meeting gets little accomplished and lasts forever, attendance will be low in the future. Show everyone that your council is organized and respects people’s time.

Wear name tags and make sure to introduce everybody – there’s no better way to turn off a new parent than by ignoring them.

Many councils hold their elections at the first meeting of the year. Consider holding elections at a later meeting so the first meeting is more of a social event.

A good way to solidify new contacts is to phone or email them after the meeting. Thank them for coming and ask how they enjoyed it. Provide them with contact information for people who can answer their questions.

## Gathering Contact Information

There are a number of different ways of reaching parents, such as face to face communication, phone calls, newsletters, websites, emails, meetings, posters, and social media. Important considerations for the method include how much time it takes your volunteers, how effective the method is for getting information out, the cost of the method, how much control you have over the communication, and what results you want from the method. It is best to look at communicating in as many methods as possible, in order to communicate with as many parents as possible.

The information your council will wish to communicate is for different purposes:

- Actions required – volunteers, wanted, events, meeting attendance
- Council information – minutes, reports, agendas
- Discussions and announcements, for parents to feel informed about what is going on
- How to get more information – resources for further information or concerns

### *For PACs*

- Electronic methods, such as email or websites, are typically the easiest and cheapest methods for communication. Some websites have the capacity to automatically send out daily or weekly email updates when website content is updated, which can be a very simple method of communicating.
- Some schools have a listserv for e-mail addresses which you may be able to use. If they do not have this list, then they may be able to provide you with email addresses so that you can create your own email list. Ask your principal. Often your DPAC will have listserv capabilities.
- Circulate a sign-in sheet at every event or meeting, with a place for name, phone number, and e-mail address. Use this information to create a data base for regular communication. Warning: if you ask people to put down their contact information for an event or a committee, it's an important courtesy to contact them, even if it's just to explain that there aren't any meetings or enough work to go around at the moment.

### *For DPACs*

- On the PAC member registration form, request name, phone number, and e-mail address of the PAC representative and alternate representative, if any, as well as the PAC Chair. *A sample form is included for your reference- see page 8.*
- Also request contact information for the PAC member's school and president.
- At DPAC meetings, ask everyone to sign in. Invite anyone who is not a designated representative to give their phone number and e-mail address if they wish to receive information directly.

- Your school district may collect information on PACs for their own database. Ask the school district to make sure that they can share this information with DPAC.
- Use all of this information to create a data base for regular communication.

Before collecting personal information on parents, see *Personal Information Protection Act* in **Tab 1, Parent Involvement ~ Basic Principles**, page 12.

### **Reaching New Parents**

New parents to your school want to learn about the school, staff, other parents, and your council.

- Invite new parents to a PAC-sponsored barbeque or event. Ask your principal to include the invitation with registration information.
- Invite parents of students registering in the Spring to your last PAC meeting of the school year.
- Hold a special PAC meeting for parents of incoming middle or secondary school students while the students are visiting the school.
- Ask your principal for time to welcome parents at school-sponsored events for new parents. Encourage your executive to attend and mingle.
- Display your PAC mission statement at the school entrance, with information on how to learn more about the PAC and where they can find the PAC bulletin board.
- Create a one page letter of introduction to be provided to all new registrations and also deliver enough copies of the letter to neighbourhood preschools and daycares and your feeder schools for distribution to students who will be coming to your school for the new school year.

### **Boosting Attendance at Meetings and Events**

- Welcome parents to the school with regular coffee get-togethers. (If you have a parent room, keep the coffee on.) Use the opportunity to talk about parent involvement in your school. Offer to take parents' comments, questions, and concerns to the next PAC meeting. Encourage parents to come themselves to discuss their points.
- Advertise your meetings through flyers, newsletters, calendars, signs, sandwich boards, phone-outs, e-mail, and website. See **Tab 16, Communication in your PAC, DPAC, and School Planning Council**.
- Hold your meetings in different locations. For example, alternate meetings between the school and local Band Council centre or community centre. Hold each meeting in a different classroom in the school so that parents can see the various classrooms.

- Make minutes of PAC, DPAC, and SPC meetings easily available to parents. Post them on the parent bulletin board, in the parent centre, or school office. Include them in the PAC or school newsletter or website, or send them by e-mail.
- Offer free babysitting by students with babysitting certificates. Thank the students with a free lunch on hot lunch day, or pay them.
- Offer to pick up anyone without transportation.
- Offer donated door prizes, or a draw for dinner-for-two or front row seats at the Christmas concert or spring play. Hold the draw at the beginning of the meeting to encourage people to come on time.
- Schedule meetings to accommodate as many members as possible. Follow the principles of good meetings. See **Tab 14, Effective Meetings**.
- Use an ice-breaker at each meeting. For example, invite everyone to introduce themselves to two other people.
- Arrange guest speakers. Ask members for suggestions.
- Invite a student representative. Let the student speak early on and then leave.
- Invite a teacher representative and students to share a classroom project.
- Facilitate a discussion on a specific issue, with leading questions to encourage comment.
- Include an open question or information period at each meeting. (Limit 15 minutes.)
- Include an up-to-date list of volunteer opportunities at each meeting.
- Ask everyone to bring a friend to the next meeting.
- Invite members who do crafts to bring an item to the next meeting.
- Place a PAC suggestion box in the school entrance.
- Assure members that any information they give the PAC will not be used to solicit support for fundraising.
- Hold a pot luck celebration dinner at the close of the annual general meeting.
- It's important to partner with your principal – you want to work together towards the betterment of the school. Just as the principal shouldn't take over the PAC, the PAC shouldn't take over the school – involvement should be a respected partnership.
- Respect teacher's time – if your council communicates by sending newsletters or flyers home, remember that this typically involves a lot of teacher time. Try and minimize teacher efforts, and make sure to give back.
- Make it easy for people to participate. For some people, the smallest obstacle to involvement can become a major barrier.
- Consider what excuses or reasons people have for not getting involved in your council, and then look at those areas for improvement. This may mean a hard look at how your

group currently works. However, if you are serious about increasing involvement, it needs to be easy for parents to say yes to your council.

- The single best method to increase involvement is to personally ask people to participate. Personal contact can be the best way for people to take that first step and become involved.
- Don't assume that people know what it is that your council does – communicate this important message in a variety of ways.
- Make fundraising second, and building parent community first.
- Offer multiple ways to become involved. Some parents can't make evening meetings, or volunteer during the work day, but they can contribute and participate in many other ways. Attending meetings is not the only way of being involved, but it's often one that councils focus on.
- Say thank you. Some people may not feel it is important to be thanked, but many people respond well to a personal thank you note, or a volunteer appreciation event.
- Make it fun, and celebrate successes!
- For DPACs, hold a special breakfast meeting in the fall and spring for DPACs reps and PAC presidents. Keep the agenda short (or have no agenda at all) and encourage networking and open discussion.
- For DPACs, hold a breakfast, lunch, or dinner meeting for DPAC reps, PAC presidents, interested parents, principals, senior district administrators, and trustees with a guest speaker. Leave time for networking and encourage everyone to mingle.

## DPAC REPRESENTATIVE FORM

<b>School Year:</b>	
<b>School Name:</b>	
<b>PAC Website:</b>	
<b>School Website:</b>	
<b>DPAC Representative Name:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
<b>Alternate DPAC Representative Name:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
<b>PAC Chair Name:</b>	
<b>Signature authorizing above representatives to represent your PAC:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
<b>Any additional email addresses for DPAC notices:</b>	

DPAC will use the information provided above to communicate information to representative, PAC chairs, and other PAC members. Contact information may be made available to the DPAC Executive, PAC representatives to DPAC, PAC Chairs and the School District.

Your DPAC representative(s) should be elected from your PAC, and are responsible for attending DPAC meetings, voting and reporting back to your PAC.

**Tab 20 ~**

# BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

In this **Tab 20**, you will find

Purposes of BCCPAC	Page 2
About BCCPAC	Page 3
Membership	Page 3
Funding	Page 4
Conferences, Events, and Workshops	Page 4
Written Resources and Website	Page 5
Website and Forums	Page 5
Strategic Plan 2002—2005	Page 6
Statement of Policy and Resolution Tracking	Page 6
Committees	Page 6
District Associates	Page 7
BCCPAC Guidelines for District Associates	Page 9
BCCPAC Member Services	Page 10
BCCPAC Advocacy Project	Page 10

## BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

BCCPAC aims to improve public education for all students by including and supporting parents. The word *including* means two things:

- that we involve parents in the work of the organization
- that we advocate for the public education system to include parents at all levels.

BCCPAC is recognized by the Ministry of Education and education partners as the collective provincial voice for parents and guardians of students enrolled in our public education system.

Members of BCCPAC are PACs and DPACs in BC who apply for and are granted membership. BCCPAC also has Honourary, Life, and Associate Members.

BCCPAC is a charitable non-profit organization registered under the Society Act.

### Purposes of BCCPAC

#### **BCCPAC's Vision**

To improve public education for all students by including and supporting parents

BCCPAC's purposes, set out in its constitution, are twofold:

- to advance the public school education and well-being of children in the province of BC
- to carry on activities to promote and enhance meaningful parent participation in an advisory role at the school, school district, and provincial levels.

These purposes are elaborated as follows:

#### **To advance the public school education and well-being of children in the province of BC by:**

- exercising leadership in developing and expressing collective parental views, as identified through parent advisory councils
- informing and educating parents, children, and the public on key issues impacting children, schools, and education
- promoting excellence and equal opportunity in public education

Research shows that parent involvement is related to less absenteeism, improved achievement, and a better perception of school and classroom climate.

*Renihan & Renihan, The School Trustee, February 1994*

- fostering cooperation and understanding between parents and educators in the education and guidance of children and youth
- consulting with and advising the Minister and the Ministry of Education on policies and programs
- liaising with other national and provincial organizations representing students, parents, teachers, school support staff, principals, administrators, school trustees, and the broader community
- promoting research in education and the dissemination of research results

**To carry on activities to promote and enhance meaningful parent participation in an advisory role at the school, school district, and provincial levels by:**

- supporting school and school district parent advisory councils in developing and maintaining their advisory role
- providing information to enable and enhance the members' participation and decision-making in education
- providing leadership development
- promoting effective communication and consultation between parents, students, and school administration and staff
- providing relevant information to prospective members

The constitution also says

*Membership and activities of the Society shall be free of commercial, partisan, sectarian, racial, and gender bias.*

## About BCCPAC

BCCPAC is

- governed by a volunteer board of nine directors elected annually by the membership, and the past president
- managed by a committed full-time and part-time staff
- assisted by contract workers and volunteers.

### *Membership*

BCCPAC represents a membership of over 1,000 PACs and DPACs from every school district in the province. Collectively,

we represent the parents of hundreds of thousands of children in BC.

BCCPAC has five classes of members:

*Regular members* are PACs in good standing. Regular members have full voting privileges at annual general meetings and can take advantage of all services.

*DPACs* can also be members, can take advantage of services, but do not have voting privileges.

*Honourary members* are individuals, not affiliated with BCCPAC, whose exemplary activities warrant recognition. Honourary members are approved by the Board of Directors and ratified at the annual general meeting.

*Life members* are individuals whose service to BCCPAC warrants recognition. Life members are also approved by the Board and ratified at the annual general meeting.

*Associate members* are individual parents or guardians of children in the public school system who apply for associate membership. Associate members may attend conferences, purchase resources at member rates, direct queries to BCCPAC, and use the services of the BCCPAC Advocacy Project.

BCCPAC ensures

- that parents have a voice in their children's education
- that the BC public education system remains focused on the needs of children.

Honourary, Life, and Associate Members do not have voting privileges

### ***Funding***

BCCPAC receives funding from government, membership fees, conference registration fees, sales of resources, advertising, sponsorship, and project funding.

### ***Conferences, Events and Workshops***

- ✓ BCCPAC holds two *annual conferences* for members—a Fall Leadership Conference, held at different locations throughout BC, and a Spring Conference and Annual General Meeting, usually held in the Lower Mainland.

BCCPAC supports parents as they navigate the education system and exercise their and their children's rights in education.

- ✓ We hold *Regional Events*—customized leadership sessions designed to meet the needs of PACs and DPACs in different regions of the province.
- ✓ We offer an up-to-date *PAC Ed Education and Development Workshop Series* to assist PAC and DPAC volunteers to develop individual and collective leadership skills to participate effectively in their school communities and the public education system.
- ✓ We collaborate with education partners in sponsoring and organizing educational and leadership events.

### ***Written Resources***

BCCPAC produces a wide range of written resources, including

- Brochures
- *IMPACT*, a quarterly newsletter
- *Speaking Up! A parent guide to advocating for students in public schools*
- *Call it Safe*: Two parent guides for dealing with harassment and intimidation in secondary schools and bullying in elementary schools
- Leadership Manual
- Advocacy Manuals for DPACs and appointed advocates
- Issues Bulletins explaining current educational issues
- Practice Notes
- Discussion papers and submissions
- Press releases
- News Bytes
- Inclusive PACs and DPACs Series

**BCCPAC Website**  
[www.bccpac.bc.ca](http://www.bccpac.bc.ca)

Some of these resources are available in several languages. Check our website or call the BCCPAC office.

### ***Website and Forums***

We maintain an extensive up-to-date website, with hundreds of pages of information and analysis, resources, announcements, links, forms, and archived material.

Our website offers discussion forums for use by members and the general public to submit questions and offer opinions on educational matters of all kinds.

## Strategic Plan

*Using effective communication, BCCPAC will serve the members and be their voice.*

BCCPAC's Board of Directors develops and updates a strategic plan containing goals and objectives for service to members, representation, advocacy, and other areas of importance to BCCPAC members.

The current Strategic Plan is available on our website.

## Statement of Policy and Resolution Tracking

BCCPAC invites parents to participate on Resolution Strategy Teams to plan effective action on recently approved resolutions. Consult our website or the BCCPAC office for details.

At every annual general meeting, BCCPAC members approve resolutions proposed by member PACs and DPACs from all parts of the province. These resolutions reflect the collective views of parents on educational issues, and guide BCCPAC's actions, decisions, and public positions on key issues.

All approved resolutions are collated into BCCPAC's *Statement of Policy*, available on the website or from the BCCPAC office.

Also available on the website is detailed information on the steps BCCPAC has taken to put each resolution into action, called *resolution tracking*.

For more information on **BCCPAC's Resolutions Process**, see **Tab 21**.

## Committees

Effective committees contribute greatly to the success of any volunteer organization.<sup>1</sup>

BCCPAC's *internal* committees assist with governance and organizational issues. BCCPAC also participates on *external* committees organized by education partners, government ministries, and advisory groups.

<sup>1</sup> See **Tab 12, Role of Committees in PACs and DPACs**.

### *A note on external committees*

BCCPAC invites volunteers from member PACs and DPACs to participate on external committees. Through these committees, volunteers represent the parent voice to our education partners, government ministries, and groups serving children and youth.

Opportunities arise throughout the school year and cover such diverse topics as

- curriculum and assessment
- special education
- sports
- community link programs
- youth violence
- young worker safety

A list of external committees and new opportunities, together with application forms, are available on our website.

## **District Associates**

BCCPAC District Associates, or DAs, are the communication link between BCCPAC and its member PACs and DPACs.

District Associates are chosen by member DPACs. Their mandate and job description are determined by the DPAC using guidelines developed by BCCPAC (see page 9). Duties commonly include

- communicating BCCPAC information to PACs and the DPAC
- consulting PACs and the DPAC on current issues
- communicating PAC and DPAC views to BCCPAC
- processing BCCPAC forms
- promoting membership in BCCPAC
- attending BCCPAC conferences.

### *How does a parent become a District Associate?*

The DPAC elects or appoints a DA according to its bylaws and notifies BCCPAC. The selected individual must complete a registration form which must also be signed by two executive members of the DPAC. The registration form is mailed to all

DPACs and PACs when they register or renew their BCCPAC membership. It can also be downloaded from our website.

***Who pays a District Associate's fees for attending BCCPAC conferences?***

If the DA has been identified as the *Designated Delegate* for their district, BCCPAC will reimburse travel expenses according to its policy. The conference registration fee and accommodation expenses are the responsibility of the member PAC or DPAC.

***Should a District Associate be a member of the DPAC Executive?***

Yes, this is recommended. However, it is up to the DPAC and should be decided by the DPAC members.

***Can a District Associate delegate responsibilities?***

DAs in large school districts may need help with such tasks as collecting AGM resolutions or proxy forms, identifying parents for BCCPAC committees, and promoting membership in BCCPAC. The DA is ultimately responsible for the work delegated to others.

## BCCPAC Guidelines for District Associates

The role of the District Associate is to enhance communications between member DPACs, PACs, and BCCPAC. This is a vital role in bringing to BCCPAC the cumulative voice of its members. These combined views will comprise a great deal of the representational voice of parents in this province.

- Be a conduit for information and inquiries to and from BCCPAC.
- Make contact with individual PACs, including an annual letter of introduction to PAC presidents.
- Ensure BCCPAC information is received by PACs, for example, newsletters, bulletins, and surveys.
- Report monthly to DPACs as appropriate.
- Be available to attend BCCPAC conferences.
- Help identify district parents for BCCPAC committees.
- Process BCCPAC forms and applications, for example, membership forms, AGM resolutions, proxy forms, and conference registrations.
- Promote the value of BCCPAC membership.
- Field inquiries from PACs and DPACs on BCCPAC member services (call the BCCPAC office for information when necessary).
- Submit an annual report to BCCPAC.

## BCCPAC Member Services

BCCPAC's Member Services Committee helps member councils, as well as individual parents, obtain the information and resources they need to represent parents effectively in their schools and districts.

When parents call Member Services, they can expect to receive timely, informed assistance from BCCPAC's office staff or a director.

- If the caller needs written materials, a staff member will mail or fax them, or direct the caller to the BCCPAC website.
- If the question is about policy or process, the caller will be referred to the Member Services Chair who will arrange for a Committee member to return the call.

If the caller is experiencing conflict or has a personal issue, they will be referred to the BCCPAC Advocacy Project toll free message line at **1-888-351-9834**.

## BCCPAC Advocacy Project

What makes BCCPAC advocacy so successful is the way we assist the adults involved to focus on the best interests of the child.

*Janet Phillips,  
BCCPAC Provincial  
Advocate*

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project is a parent-driven movement to help parents and students be heard in our public education system and solve problems in a positive way.

The project began in the Qualicum School District in 1993, and went province-wide in 1994 when BCCPAC received funding from the Ministry of Education.

The project focuses on assisting local DPACs to create their own advocacy projects. Through the provincial and local projects, BCCPAC has helped thousands of parents advocate for students, and has produced a wealth of information for PACs, DPACs, parent advocates, and individual parents acting on their own.

For more information on the BCCPAC Advocacy Project, see **Tab 11, Speaking Up ~ The BCCPAC Advocacy Project**.