

Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) wishes to acknowledge the ancestral, traditional & unceded Indigenous territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, in particular, the Squamish, Musqueam, & Tsleil-Waututh First Nations on whose territory we work, live & play.



PAC 101

Thursday, October 1st 7-9:30pm

www.vancouverdpac.org
media@vancouverdpac.org
www.facebook.com/VSB DPAC/
[@VanDPAC](https://www.instagram.com/VanDPAC)

A Virtual Meeting via Zoom



PAC 101

Fall 2020

Vancouver DPAC



Outline

- Welcome, Privacy
- The 10,000-Foot View of Public Education in BC
- Parent Representation: BCCPAC, DPACs, and PACs (oh my!)
- PAC Basics
- PAC / Administration Relationships
- PAC Meetings
- Election/Succession
- Building Community (Workshops & Resources - SACY, BCTF, etc.)
- Treasury Best Practices
- Updates from Treasury 101



The 10,000-Foot View of Public Education in BC

Who's who, and where do parents fit in?



BC Public Education

(alphabet soup)



SCHOOL
(Local Level)

KEY PLAYERS:

- Principal
- Teachers
- Education Assistants; School Secretary
- Outside Workers
- Accountants
- Building Engineers, Food Service Workers; Supervision Aides
- Construction & Maintenance Workers
- Parent Advisory Council (PAC)
- Students

VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD (VSB)
(District level)

KEY PLAYERS:

- Trustees: Chair: Janet Fraser
- Superintendent: Suzanne Hoffman
- Secretary-Treasurer: J. David Green

STAKEHOLDERS:

- Vancouver Elementary Principals' & Vice Principals' Ass'n (VEPVPA)
- Vancouver Ass'n of Secondary School Administrators (VASSA)
- Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Ass'n (VESTA)
- Vancouver Secondary School Teachers' Ass'n (VSTA)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 15 (CUPE 15)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 407 (CUPE 407)
- Professional and Administrative Staff Ass'n (PASA)
- International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 963 (IUOE)
- Construction & Maintenance Trade Unions (Trades)
- Vancouver School District Parent Advisory Council (Vancouver DPAC)
- Vancouver District Students' Council (VDSC)



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MoE)

(Provincial Level)

Minister of Education: Rob Fleming
Deputy Minister: Scott MacDonald

STAKEHOLDERS:

- BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA)
- BC School Superintendents' Ass'n (BCSSA)
- BC Ass'n of School Business Officials (BCASBO)
- BC Principals' & Vice Principals' Ass'n (BCPVPA)
- BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
- International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE)
- BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC)

Treasury Board

Reviews and approves spending by the Government.

Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD)

Ministry of State for Child Care (MSCC)

First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)

Encourages discussion on education matters affecting First Nations in BC. Membership is open to BC First Nations communities.

First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA)

Works with First Nation schools to create environments that develop learners' pride and competence in their First Nations language and heritage within self-governing First Nations communities.

BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA)

Employers' association and accredited bargaining agent for the province's 60 public boards of education. Board made of 9 school trustees, 4 government representatives, and a non-voting representative each from the BCSSA and BCASBO.

BC Teachers' Council

Enforce standards for educators, assess applicants for certification, approve and evaluate teacher education programs, and issue teaching certificates.

BCCPAC

Parent Representation at the Provincial Level



BC Confederation of
Parent Advisory Councils



BCCPAC

BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils ([BCCPAC](#)) is a registered non-profit & non-partisan charity representing the parents and guardians of over 565,000 children attending provincial public schools.

Recognized by government & education partners, they are the collective voice of parents on educational issues on provincial committees.

As the provincially mandated voice of parents in public schools, they engage, empower, and support parents for the success of all learners through collaboration, partnership, and education, in a culture of acceptance, inclusion, and equity.



BC Confederation of
Parent Advisory Councils



BCCPAC

BCCPAC is governed by a volunteer Board of nine directors elected by the membership which consist of District Parent Advisory Councils (DPACs) and Parent Advisory Councils (PACs).

Membership is \$150/year for DPACs and \$75/year for PACs and allows representatives to attend, bring and speak to resolutions, and vote at the AGM.

Through their DPAC membership, BCCPAC represents 96% of parents in the public education system in BC.



BC Confederation of
Parent Advisory Councils



DPACs

Parent Representation at the District Level



DPACs

DPACs, like PACs, are constituted under the BC School Act. Each school district in BC can have one DPAC, and currently most of the 60 districts have one.

DPACs generally work independently but have the opportunity to network and collaborate at BCCPAC's two conferences, a DPAC Summit in the fall and their AGM in the spring.



DPACs

DPACs are required to have bylaws that govern:

- Meetings
- How business is carried out
- Dissolution

The School Act then gives DPACs the power to:

- Advise the school board on any matter relating to education in the school district



Vancouver DPAC

Vancouver DPAC (officially The Vancouver School District Parent Advisory Council) is the manifestation of a DPAC in the Vancouver School District (#39).

Our bylaws list our three main purposes:

- To officially represent the parents of the school district at the district level;
- To foster and facilitate strong communication between parents, PACs, and the Vancouver School Board; and
- To promote and support parent leadership and effective PAC governance.



Representation

We welcome three levels of representation within DPAC:

- DPAC executives:
 - Are the official representatives of DPAC
 - Are responsible for DPAC governance and fulfilling our organizational purposes
 - Have voting power at executive meetings
- PAC reps (aka DPAC rep):
 - Represent their PACs to DPAC
 - Help form DPAC policy through motions at general meetings
 - Have voting power at general meetings and DPAC elections
- Any parent:
 - Can contact DPAC with an issue requiring representation at the district level
 - Can attend and participate in any DPAC meeting



Meetings

There are four kinds of DPAC meetings:

- Executive meetings:
 - Receive a district update from the Superintendent or trustee liaison
 - Handle governance and organizational matters
 - Receive committee and officer reports
 - Discuss education issues
- General meetings:
 - Host presentations or discussions on topical issues
 - Receive input/questions from PACs and consider motions
- Ad-hoc meetings:
 - Informational meetings such as our town halls
- AGM:
 - Receive end-of-year reports
 - Hold elections



VSB Stakeholder

In addition to the power granted by the School Act, Vancouver DPAC is considered a stakeholder of the Vancouver School Board. This exact nature of this relationship was negotiated by past DPAC executives as a way to make the parent voice more relevant and continues to evolve and needs are identified.

Being a stakeholder entitles DPAC:

- To have representation on all VSB standing committees;
- To have representation on most VSB advisory and ad hoc committees and working groups;
- To participate in workshops and consultations that are often held prior to their public counterparts.



VSB Stakeholder

DPAC continues to grow our relationship with both VSB senior management and the Board of Trustees. Our relationship allows us to have regular meetings with the senior management team and hold special meetings that VSB staff and trustees will both attend in order to engage with parents, e.g., on the LRFP or the budget.



PACs: Parent Representation at the School Level



With great power comes great responsibility

PACs are constituted by the BC School Act which grants them responsibilities to:

- Elect officers
- Create bylaws that govern:
 - Meetings
 - How business is carried out
 - Dissolution
 - **Electing DPAC reps**

The School Act then gives PACs the power to:

- Advise the school admin and staff and the school board on any matter relating to the school



But what is a PAC?

A PAC (Parent Advisory Council) is the official collective voice of the parents of a particular school's student community as constituted by the BC School Act. The PAC should:

- Provide input to the school through a direct channel to administration;
- Learn about (and participate in) school-based activities;
- Advocate for all students of the school community.

There is only be one PAC per school.

PACs are not:

- A social club;
- **are not the forum to discuss individual student or staff issues.**

<http://bccpac.bc.ca/pacd-pac-info/what-is-pac/>



PAC / Administration Relationships

School administrators provide support, information, and access to facilities, without which PACs cannot function effectively. Strengthening and maintaining the relationship with school administrators is therefore crucial for success and can be a source of great stress when it deteriorates.

Regular communication between the PAC executive and administrators outside of meetings is needed and recommended. Administrators should be included as non-voting members of PAC executives and therefore should be included in communications as much as possible.



PAC / Administration Relationships

We recommend some of these practices to help build and maintain relationships with administrators:

- Include administrators in agenda setting and provide a regular place on the agenda for them to deliver a report.
- Keep administrators in communication loops where appropriate.
- When issues are impacting your school community, provide leadership and a common voice for the parent community to cut down on the noise.



PAC Bylaws

The School Act requires every PAC to have bylaws that, at minimum, specify how meetings are run, how the business of the PAC is conducted, how dissolution is to be handled, and how DPAC reps are elected.

If you do not have bylaws, DPAC can help you get started by providing resources, templates, and advice.

We strongly recommend that each PAC make its bylaws available on its website in a searchable format (PDF is best). DPAC will also host a copy of any PAC's bylaws that wishes. One benefit of this is to allow other PACs an opportunity to compare bylaws and make changes if they like something that another PAC has included.



PAC Executive Officers

PACs usually need the following officer roles to function:

- Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- **(DPAC Rep)**

The roles may be shared, e.g., having Co-Chairs, if the bylaws support it. The bylaws stipulate the roles and associated terms. Your bylaws may define other roles like Past Chair, Vice-Chair, etc.



PAC Elections

The PAC bylaws determine the rules regarding officer elections, including timing (some PACs elect in the spring, some elect in the fall). However, it is best practice to announce the election date, often as part of the AGM, as much in advance as possible, providing ample notice and enabling broad parent participation.

All election results should be published in approved minutes and posted online.



PAC Succession Planning

PACs are run by parent volunteers. Succession planning is essential: it is important to pass along customs and “tribal knowledge” about the school community for future parents.

If there is recurring PAC event, like a spring fair or “hot dog days”, create a written manual describing how the event is organized. Some PACs even establish “Past Chair” or “Past Treasurer” positions to ensure overlap with new, incoming officers.

Always leave your school PAC better than when you arrived.



PAC Meetings

Some best practices to consider:

- Publish an agenda, with timings or a **set end time**, in advance of each meeting.
- Establish meeting rules and procedure (e.g., Robert's Rules, Bob's Rules)
 - Robert's Rules training, running meetings
- Ensure all parents have a voice (this is the meeting chair's highest responsibility).
- Keep discussions relevant and take some offline if necessary.
- Be sure to thank parents and staff for attendance.



PAC Meetings

PAC bylaws may dictate a formal meeting format and agenda; but if not, the following monthly meeting agenda topics are recommended:

- Welcome to attendees, a land acknowledgment, and a round of introductions.
- Approve the meeting agenda, after review + feedback.
- Approve last meeting's minutes, after review + corrections.
- Recurring reports (Chair, Principal, Teacher, Treasurer, committees).
- New business or special presentations.



PAC Meetings

Also, take care with important decisions (*ergo* **follow bylaws scrupulously**):

- Approve (by vote) and minute any budgetary or financial change or decision.
- Ensure officer elections (often a case of recruitment and attrition) are handled with respect and are recorded in the minutes.
- Approve (by vote) and minute the addition or removal of signing officers for the banking or related accounts diligently and promptly.

Transparency and permanency of record are important consideration.



PAC Meetings - online

PAC meetings current held by video conference for near future.

The good

- Better attendance
- More accessible to those with childcare needs
- PACs are reporting that technology accessibility has not been a major barrier (ie: Zoom and others have provided software on multiple platforms)
- Chat allows parents to exchange information
- DPAC has a small number of Zoom licenses with a 300 seat capacity



PAC Meetings - online

PAC meetings current held by video conference for near future.

The challenges

- Less casual interaction
- Multiple platforms have differing capabilities
- Bylaws
- Unwanted visitors
- Chat distracting, difficult to follow
- Privacy



PAC Meetings - online

Best practices

- Interpret your bylaws to allow meetings by video
- Change your bylaws if they expressly prohibit
- Familiarity with meeting controls, co-host(s)
- Review controls needed by participants (ie: raise hand)
- Require registration if necessary
- Allow time for mingling
- Ideally desktop setup



The PAC Online

- Register for a domain and maintain a website for agendas, minutes, and important information, such as the PAC's bylaws.
- Create a permanent, inheritable PAC email address (or addresses) for continuity, either using Gmail or the registered domain. Also consider separate email account for the Chair, Treasurer, and DPAC rep, if appropriate.
- Optionally, create social media accounts such as Twitter or Facebook (this varies by school community and parent volunteers) to engage with parents and the larger community.

A question for all PACs to ask: how do new parents learn about the PAC?



Some recommended online vendors (2017)

- Domain registrar: **Namecheap**
- Website host: **Squarespace**
- Email: **Google** or **Namecheap**
- Mailing list: **MailChimp**
- Surveys: **SurveyMonkey**
- Storage: **Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, Dropbox, or Box**
- Messaging: **Slack**

Use primary PAC email as “owner” of all cloud services, never a personal email address. Do not rely on technically-minded parents: use services that all future parents can use easily.



If nothing else resonates, remember this:

1. **No personal email addresses.** Make sure your PAC uses a permanent PAC email address, perhaps “yourpacname@gmail.com” or “chair@yourdomainname.com”.
2. Ensure your **PAC bylaws** are posted online and easily accessible. Share a copy with Vancouver DPAC; we will archive it and make it accessible through our website for you.



Building Community

Being Inclusive

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. To be truly representative and effective, PACs and DPACs 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 inclusive 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.

(highlights from BCCPAC document: https://bccpac.bc.ca/upload/2016/05/lm-tab10_representing_all_voices_0.pdf)



Building Community

Suggestions for building inclusivity:

- If feasible, 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. Have parents who speak the major languages in the school welcome parents in their language.
- Use plain language in all communications and at meetings. Avoid jargon when phrasing survey questions, and make instructions clear and simple.
- Encourage your executive (and all parents) to speak to parents in the hallways, parking lot, and playground.
- Host English-language discussion groups where parents who are learning English can come and practice English with English-speaking parents and also gain support for interacting with school and students



Building Community

Ideas to Reach New Parents

- Display your PAC mission statement at 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 to neighbourhood preschools and daycares (elementary PACs) or your feeder schools (secondary PACs) for distribution to incoming students.



Building Community

Parents who are new to your PAC want to go away from the first meeting:

- Feeling welcomed;
- Feeling that participation by all parents is welcome;
- Knowing more about your PAC, school and district;
- Encouraged to return and get involved;
- Feeling they have something to contribute.

(highlights from BCCPAC document: https://bccpac.bc.ca/upload/2016/05/tab_19_contagious_enthusiasm.pdf)



Building Community

Boosting Attendance at Meetings and Events

- Promote your meetings & events through flyers, newsletters, calendars, signs, email, website, etc.;
- Make building parent community first, and fundraising second (or third, or fourth);
- Offer multiple ways to become involved;
- Make meeting minutes easily available to parents;
- Arrange guest speakers (see next slide for examples);
- Invite a teacher representative and students to share a classroom project;
- Facilitate a discussion on a specific issue, with leading questions to encourage comment;
- Say thank you. Make it fun. Celebrate successes!



Building Community

COVID Update: Talked to BCTF this week. They are working on making their presentations Zoom friendly but none will be ready before November.

Free Guest Speakers and Workshops

- BCTF (<https://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Parents/HomeAndSchoolComm/PresentationsForParents.pdf>)
 - Anti-bullying
 - Advocating for your child
 - Aboriginal content in the curriculum: Exploring historical relationships between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples
 - Show racism the red card
 - So we have a revised curriculum: What does this mean for my child?
 - Social media 4 parents
 - Student privacy: What parents need to know about the collection of student data
 - Supporting your child's Learning
 - Supporting gender-inclusive communities
 - Why no school today? Professional development and my child's classroom

There are also presentations specifically for Aboriginal parents and French immersion parents.



Building Community

Free Guest Speakers and Workshops (continued)

- SACY (Supporting & Connecting Youth)
 - Workshops for parents & caregivers, such as:
 - understanding adolescent development
 - the changing parent-child relationship
 - core communication skills for families
 - Capacity Cafes: bringing youth and adults together to listen to youth speak openly about their lives and experiences
 - Presentations for PAC meetings
 - Multicultural workshops (interpretation)
 - Supporting Grade 7 to 8 transition for families
 - Caregiver support: feel more confident & less stressed in parenting teens
- VSB Staff: new curriculum; assessments; communicating student learning; ...



Building Community

Build Your PAC Support Network

- Connect with DPAC and other PACs at DPAC meetings
- Join Facebook PAC groups such as **Vancouver PAC Connections** and **PACs Helping PACs - BC Lower Mainland**
- Become a member of BCCPAC



What about fundraising?

- Many primary school PACs fundraise, some extensively.
- Some parent communities refuse to fundraise on principle.
- Issue of equality throughout district.
- PAC2PAC

What about direct appeal?



Treasury 101



Gaming Grants

British Columbia PACs are eligible to apply for Gaming Grants from the BC government. Some key points:

- Must apply every school year between April 1 and June 30.
- Must submit statement of account within 90 days of fiscal year.
- Funds typically disbursed no later than September 30. **UPDATE:** new guidelines say by Oct. 30.
- Funding rate is currently \$20/student. The total grant amount is based on student enrollment at the start of the previous school year.
- PACs must retain management and control of their grant funds. PACs cannot transfer any gaming funds to schools unless it is to reimburse for a purchase made on behalf of the PAC and at the PAC's request.
- Grant funds should be fully used within 36 months of receipt.
- Must ensure Gaming Grant funds are used for extra-curricular benefits. This is important to get right; see next slide.

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/gambling-fundraising/gaming-grants>



Gaming Grants: what is eligible? (2019)

Eligible examples

- Uniforms and equipment for after-school activities including sports;
- Playground equipment;
- School clubs and societies;
- Student ceremonies such as graduation;
- Travel within BC for student-related activities;
- Student publications (e.g. newsletters, yearbooks);
- Student competitions (e.g. writing, debating, chess, music);
- Scholarships and bursaries for post-secondary education (paid directly to students);
- Emergency, safety or earthquake related supplies or equipment

Not eligible examples

- Anything directly related to the normal curriculum;
- Travel outside of BC without prior Ministry approval;
- Teacher or classroom resources, eg computer;
- Capital improvements (eg building- related);
- Past debt, loan or interest payments;
- Extra lighting, curtains, props, etc. for in-school theatre/drama classes;
- Digital reader boards;
- Goods and services that benefit parents;
- BCCPAC membership fees (exception for DPACs);
- Teachers on call to attend field trips;
- Staff luncheons

Gaming Grants schedule

1. Apply for following school year between April 1 to June 30.
2. Within 90 day of the PAC's fiscal year-end (varies between PACs), submit the Gaming Account Summary Report for prior year.
3. Funds generally disbursed by September 30. **UPDATE:** new guidelines say by October 30.
4. Funding rate is currently \$20/student. The total grant amount is based on student enrollment at the start of the previous school year.
5. **PACs approve and control final allocation disbursement.**



Gaming Grants

1. Gaming funds include any funds generated through gaming **including licensed gaming events** and community gaming grants
2. Must maintain a separate Gaming Account, specified in the organization's full name, for the exclusive purpose of receiving, holding and disbursing gaming funds.
3. Must obtain cheques for the Gaming Account that have the organization's full name and "Gaming Account" printed on them.
4. Must maintain records that clearly show the amount and purpose of each transaction.
5. Must retain all gaming records for 5 years. The gaming records include all financial records, cancelled cheques, bank statements, bank transaction receipts, invoices and sale receipts, and all receipts from the disbursement of gaming revenue;
6. Must ensure the cheques issued against the Gaming Account are signed by at least 2 of the PACs signing officials
7. Cash transactions from the Gaming Account are not permitted.



Gaming Grants: best practices

- Ask the school community (parents, administration, teachers, staff, students) for project ideas to fund, ensuring that any project is allowable under the BC Gaming rules.
- Always pay any vendor directly, rather than through the school. This ensures appropriate separation of jurisdiction in case of audit.
- Ensure your minutes record any decision regarding gaming fund allocation, including noting quorum and attendance.
- Make sure you have a copy of your bylaws.
- If you do fundraise and plan to hold a gambling event (bingo, raffle, wheel of fortune, 50/50, cake walk, ...), remember to apply for a gambling event licence.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/gambling-fundraising/gambling-licence-fundraising>



VSB PAC Donation Accounts

As of the 2018/19 school year, donations to PACs through the VSB are retained and controlled by the school administration. Spending decisions are expected to still be made by the PAC, but the funds must be disbursed by the administration.

- Direct links available from DPAC or VSB that pre-fill the School Cash Online page
- If using School Cash Online drop-down menus instead, provide clear instructions to parents to prevent donations being inadvertently made to the school
- Consider asking parents that donate through School Cash Online to also advise PAC of donor name and amount so PAC can acknowledge their gift
- Coordinate with school administration for timely updates of totals received through online donations



Treasury Best Practices

- Utilize two bank accounts, one for gaming grants and one for unrestricted funds. Name accounts clearly.
- Always require two signatures for cheques.
- Limit online bank access to reporting/read-only functions only, if possible.
- If using any other online financial system (PayPal), ensure account is owned by PAC email account and that there is always at least 2 PAC executives with full access.
- All PAC officers are normally signatories at the bank. Ensure you have more than two.

For expenses incurred by a PAC officer, approval should be two *other* signatories.



Treasury Best Practices

- Present monthly financial statements at PAC meetings and publish them as part of the meeting minutes.
- When electing a treasurer, some accounting experience is helpful but not required.
- Use a low cost, community-minded bank, like VanCity.
- When in doubt, ask for help; DPAC can connect you with someone who can help.

Always err on the side of maximum transparency and clarity.



Treasury Miscellany

- If your PAC is a registered society or charity, there may be other annual filings that need to be submitted.
 - If there are other annual filings required, create a list for future PAC usage.
- Save copies of all submissions in your online repository (Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, Dropbox, or Box). Make sure the owner of this repository is a permanent PAC email address (not a personal email).



V. 1, October 2016	<i>Please edit and improve, and teach future parents. Nathan WILKES, 20161012</i>
V. 2, June 2017	<i>Minor edits and several additions. Nathan WILKES, 20170625</i>
V. 3, September 2017	<i>Minor edits and several additions. Nathan WILKES, 20170920</i>
V. 4, September 2017	<i>Minor edits and several additions. Rob Peregoodoff, 20170925</i>
V. 5, September 2017	<i>Minor edits and several additions. Nathan WILKES, 20170927</i>
V. 6, September 2018	<i>Additions and some restructuring. Shaun Kalley, Amanda Hillis, Andrea Sinclair.</i>
V. 7, September 2019	<i>Reformat and cleanup. Shaun Kalley, Amanda Hillis.</i>
V. 7, September 2020	<i>Minor edits. Added a slide on Zoom.</i>

Colophon

