
PAC + Treasury 101

— Surrey DPAC —

(with credit to Vancouver DPAC)

BCCPAC:

Parent representation at the provincial level

What is 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.

BCCPAC

They are governed by a volunteer Board of nine directors elected annually by the membership consisting of District Parent Advisory Councils (DPAC) and Parent Advisory Councils (PAC)

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

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

DPAC: Parent representation at the district level

What is DPAC?

Surrey DPAC is the official representative body of parents and guardians of children in the Surrey School District (#36). DPACs are constituted under the BC School Act and required to have bylaws governing:

- Meetings
- How business is carried out (e.g., Robert's Rules)
- Dissolution

The School Act then gives DPACs the power to:

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

Representation

There are three levels of representation within DPAC:

- DPAC Board of Directors:
 - Are the public representatives of DPAC
 - Are responsible for DPAC governance
 - Have voting power at executive meetings
- DPAC Reps:
 - Represent their PACs to DPAC
 - Help form DPAC policy through motions
 - 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 any DPAC meeting

Meetings

There are three kinds of DPAC meetings:

- **Executive meetings:**
 - Deal with governance matters
 - Discuss education issues
 - District update from the Superintendent or board liaison
- **General meetings:**
 - Presentations or discussions on topical issues
 - Opportunity to get input from PACs
- **AGM:**
 - End-of-year reports
 - Executive elections
 - Budget

PACs: Parent representation at the school level

With great power comes great responsibility

PACs are defined in the BC School Act which grants them responsibilities to:

- Elect officers
- Create bylaws that govern:
 - Meetings
 - How business is carried out (e.g., Robert's Rules)
 - 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 and guardians of a particular school's student community constituted, as said, 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.

PACs are not the forum to discuss student or staff issues.

PAC Bylaws

The School Act requires that every PAC has bylaws that minimally 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 and templates.

A copy of PAC bylaws should be sent to DPAC to be kept on file. PACs can also make the bylaws available on their website in a searchable format (PDF is probably best).

PAC executive officers

PACs usually need the following officer roles to function:

- President/Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary

The roles may be shared, e.g., having Co-Presidents, if the bylaws support it. The bylaws stipulate the roles and associated terms. Your bylaws may define other roles like Past President, President, 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 or guardian participation.

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

PAC succession planning

PACs are run by parent or guardian 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 President” or “Past Treasurer” positions to ensure overlap with new, incoming officers.

Always leave your school PAC better than when you arrived.

PAC meetings: best practices (1)

- Publish an agenda, with timings or a **set end time**, ideally in advance.
- Ensure all parents have a voice (this is the chair's greatest responsibility).
- Some discussions may need to be taken offline, with a subset of participants.
- Be sure to thank parents and staff for attendance.
- Arrange for child care, if appropriate.

PAC meetings: best practices (2)

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

- I. Welcome to parents, acknowledgment, introductions.
- II. Approve the meeting agenda, after review + feedback.
- III. Approve last meeting's minutes, after review + corrections.
- IV. Recurring reports (President, Principal, Teacher, Treasurer, and so on).
- V. New business or special presentations.

PAC meetings: best practices (3)

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

- Approve (by vote) and minute any budget or financial change or decision.
- Ensure officer elections (often a case of recruitment and attrition) are handled with respect, following the bylaws carefully.
- 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 principles.

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 (for continuity), either using Gmail or the registered domain. Also consider separate email account for the Chair, Treasurer, or DPAC representative, if appropriate.
- Optionally, create Twitter or Facebook accounts (this varies by school community and parent volunteers).

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”](mailto:yourpacname@gmail.com) or [“chair@yourdomainname.com”](mailto: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.

Treasury 101

Gaming Grants

British Columbia PACs are eligible to apply for Gaming Grants from the BC government. (In 2018, the award was \$24 per student based on registration on September 30.) Some keypoints:

- Must apply every school year.
- Must submit statement of account.
- Funds typically disbursed in October, and funds must always remain in the full control of the PAC.
- Must ensure Gaming Grant funds are used for extra-curricular benefits. This is important to get right; see next slide.

Gaming Grants: what is eligible? (2016)

Eligible examples

- Uniforms for after-school sports.
- Sports or playground equipment.
- School clubs or societies.
- Grad activities.
- Special events for students (extra-curricular).
- Travel within the province for student-related activities.

Not eligible examples

- Travel outside of the province without prior Ministry approval.
- Anything directly related to the normal curriculum.
- Teacher or classroom resources, eg computer.
- Capital improvements (eg building-related).

Gaming Grants schedule

1. Apply for following school year between April 1 to June 30.
2. After PAC fiscal year-end and within 90 days afterwards, submit the Gaming Account Summary Report for prior school year.
3. Funds generally disbursed by September 30.
4. **PACs approve and control final allocation disbursement.**

Gaming Grants: best practices

- Ask the school community (parents, guardians, teachers, staff) 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.

Treasury: best practices (1)

- 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 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 two PAC executives with full access.
- All PAC officers are normally signatories at the bank. Ensure you have more than two.

In general, for expenses incurred by a PAC officer, approval should be two *other* signatories.

Treasury: best practices (2)

- Present and publish monthly financial statements at PAC meetings.
- When electing a treasurer, some accounting experience is helpful but not mandatory.
- Use a low cost, community-minded bank, like VanCity.
- When in doubt, ask for help (Surrey DPAC will connect you with someone who can help)

Aim for maximum transparency and clarity.

Treasury: other

- 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.
- Always save copies of all submissions in your online repository (Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, Dropbox, or Box). Make sure the “owner” of this cloud repository is the permanent PAC email address (not a personal email).
- Consider a year-end review, conducted by two or three parents who do not have signing authority on the council’s bank account.

Treasury: links

- Financial Controls Checklist (on DPAC's Resources page):
<http://surreydpac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Financial-Controls-Checklist.pdf>
- BCCPAC's Leadership Manual, Tab 15, Financial Management in PACs and DPACs: https://bccpac.bc.ca/upload/2016/05/lm-tab15_financial_management_0.pdf