



Handbook for Parent Advisory Councils

A goldmine of information for Parent Advisory Councils

Developed by the Vancouver School Board and the
Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council

May 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction and History	pp. 1 - 4
	A. A Word about Organization	p. 2
	B. Introduction	p. 2
II.	Parents and Their Children's Schools	pp. 5 - 45
	A. Overview	pp. 6 - 11
	1. Parent Advisory Councils (PACs)	p. 6
	2. Organization of PACs	p. 6
	3. Vancouver School Board Support	p. 8
	4. Functions of the PAC	p. 8
	5. General PAC Guidelines	p. 9
	6. School Planning Councils	p. 10
	B. How to Help Your PAC Function Smoothly	pp. 12 – 22
	1. Chairperson	p. 13
	2. Other Members of the Executive	p. 15
	3. Some Questions Answered	p. 16
	4. Tips and Ideas	p. 18
	5. Assessing Interests	p. 19
	6. Improving Communication	p. 20
	7. Special Activities and Events	p. 21
	8. Issues to Address	p. 22
	9. Discussion Topics	p. 22
	C. How to run a meeting	pp. 23 - 35
	1. Planning Your Agenda	p. 24
	2. Minutes of Your Meeting	p. 28
	3. Parliamentary Procedure	p. 29
	4. Effective Meeting Strategies	p. 32

D.	Money Matters	pp. 36 - 42
1.	Different Ways of Handling Bank Accounts	p. 37
2.	If You Decide to Incorporate	p. 37
3.	Using the VSB Charitable Tax Number	p. 38
4.	Signing Authority	p. 38
5.	When Deciding on a Fundraising Event	p. 39
6.	Successful Fundraising Ideas	p. 40
7.	Liability Insurance	p. 40
8.	Parent Partnership Funds	p. 42
E.	Communicating with Your School Community	pp. 43 - 46
1.	PAC Section in Your School Newsletter	p. 44
2.	Phone Trees/PAC email networks	p. 45
3.	Parent Bulletin Board	p. 45
4.	Parent Resources	p. 45
III.	Parents at the District Level	pp. 47 - 60
A.	Area organization	pp. 47 - 49
1.	Administrative Areas	p. 48
2.	Blue Bag Mail System	p. 48
3.	PAC E-mails	p. 49
4.	Abbreviations of Education Organizations	p. 49
B.	Parent Advisory Council at the District Level	pp. 50 - 54
1.	Delegations to Vancouver School Board Standing Committee Meetings and School Board Meetings	p. 51
2.	Appeal Process	p. 53
3.	Liaison Trustees	p. 53
4.	District Parent Advisory Council	p. 53

C.	District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC)	pp. 55 - 60
1.	Job Description	p. 56
2.	DPAC Executive Elections	p. 57
3.	Communication with PACs	p. 58
4.	Committees	p. 59
IV.	Sample Forms	pp. 61 - 67
A.	Sample Agenda	p. 62
B.	Minutes Forms	p. 63
C.	Volunteer Recruitment Forms	p. 65

I. Introduction and History

- A. A Word About Organization
- B. Introduction

A Word About Organization

The Vancouver public school system, with over 56,000 students and over 5,500 employees, is a large organization that functions within a framework.

1. The Ministry of Education, Skills and Training in Victoria is responsible for the overall direction of education and executes this authority through the School Act that is changed from time to time by the legislative assembly. The Ministry's Public Information Division address is:

Ministry of Education, Skills and Training
Public Information Division
P.O. Box 9150 Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria, BC V8W 9H1
Telephone: (250) 387-2500
(toll free via Enquiry BC - (604) 660-2421)
Online at www.bc.ca/bced/

2. Operating within the provisions of the School Act, the Vancouver Board of School Trustees is responsible for setting local or district policies. Policies may be updated from time to time. The most current policies are available online at www.vsb.bc.ca under **About the VSB**. The school district office (VSB Education Centre) is located at 1580 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V6J 5K8, telephone: 604-713-5000.
3. Operating under the authority of the School Act and the Board of School Trustees, the **Superintendent of Schools** is responsible for carrying out the provisions of the act and the policies of the board.
4. The **school principal**, reporting to the superintendent through the **associate superintendent**, is responsible for school policies which must be in accord with both provincial and school board policies. The district's *Ready Reference* publication lists all principals, school telephone numbers and addresses and is available from the Office of the Superintendent - Communications, 713-5075 or online at www.vsb.bc.ca under **"Frequently requested publications"** on the front page.

To obtain advice and assistance in locating information or finding out who best to speak to, please call the Office of the Superintendent - Communications at 604-713-5075.

Introduction

In 1975, the Vancouver School Board adopted a plan to bring about a significant increase in the involvement of parents and guardians in the education process. The plan, unprecedented among B.C. school districts, was designed to accomplish two main objectives.

The first was to enable parents and guardians to play an active role in educational decision-making, a role that parents and guardians had been seeking as increasingly sophisticated consumers of the education system. The second objective was to increase community awareness of school programs based on the assumption that knowledgeable parents and guardians would be strong advocates for Vancouver's public schools.

One feature that made this model of parental involvement unique was that it was incorporated as an important part of school board policy, and was supported at all levels of the organization.

The concept was simple. Each school, with the support of the principal, was required to elect a committee to represent all parents and guardians whose children were in attendance. Elected annually, each committee met regularly throughout the school year to consult with principals and staff on school matters except personnel. (Concerns regarding teachers and support staff are referred to principals and associate superintendents – area for resolution.)

Since 1975, the concept has worked well and the main objectives have been achieved. Parents and guardians have a strong voice in educational decision-making and they are more knowledgeable than ever with respect to school programs.

Over time the model has been strengthened to include parental representation at the school board level. Through the election of district parents, parents and guardians are represented at important committee meetings. These parent representatives also work to improve consultation at the school level.

In 1989, the Ministry of Education brought in changes to the School Act that mandated the parent consultation process in all districts. Additional changes to the School Act in 2002 added a role for parents on the newly established School Planning Councils (SPCs). In keeping with the language of the School Act, Vancouver school parent groups are now called Parent Advisory Councils (PACs), and the district group is known as the District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC).

The consultative model adopted by the Vancouver School Board is not perfect. Some schools find it difficult to enlist enough parents to maintain strong and effective committees, and participation varies from school to school. Nevertheless, an effective process for providing parents and guardians with an opportunity to actively participate in their children's education has been well established within the district.

II. Parents and Their Children's Schools

A. Overview

1. Parent Advisory Councils (PACs)
2. Organization of PACs
3. VSB Support
4. Functions of the PAC
5. General PAC Guidelines
6. School Planning Councils (SPCs)

Overview

Since the provincial government's adoption of the new School Act in 1989 followed with amendments in 2002, Vancouver school district staff have received numerous inquiries from school administrators and parent groups about names, activities and responsibilities of school parent groups. The following section should provide the information you are looking for.

Parent Advisory Councils

In 1989, the provincial government enacted a new School Act that gave parents in every district across British Columbia the right to establish and belong to a Parent Advisory Council at their children's school(s). Articles 7 and 8 of the School Act, as amended in 2002 [found in the *Policy Section* of this **Goldmine**] explain that a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of all parents/guardians of children in a school. The Act also established the right of the PAC, through its elected officers, to advise the principal and staff of their school "...respecting any matter relating to the school..."

Organization of Parent Advisory Councils

School communities throughout the Vancouver school district are quite varied, and they are organized within the framework of provincial and school board policy to best meet their individual needs.

The School Act now requires that PACs, "...in consultation with the principal, must make bylaws governing its meetings and the business and conduct of its affairs..." The district parent coordinator can provide you with a sample set of constitution and bylaws to consider. A sample set is also available online at the British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils' (BCCPAC) website at www.bccpac.bc.ca.

Membership

All parents/guardians of children in a school are members of the Parent Advisory Council and entitled to attend meetings. The principal or vice principal will be a member (ex officio) of the Parent Advisory Council. A teacher representative will be appointed and may also attend the meetings to provide information, answer questions, and discuss school matters and parental concerns. Many secondary PACs also include a student representative.

Executive

At an annual general meeting held in the spring or fall, PACs elect an executive usually consisting of a chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. Some PACs elect committee chairs (e.g., fundraising chair, volunteer chair) and members at large to the executive as well. Elected PAC executives often hold regular executive meetings between general PAC meetings to organize and carry out the day-to-day work of the PAC.

Voting

All parents/guardians of children in a school are entitled to vote at the general PAC meeting. The principal, teacher representative and student representative do not vote. If your PAC executive holds regular executive meetings, only elected executive members usually vote. Other parents, administrators, staff and student representatives may attend the executive meetings, but do not vote.

Elections

Election of the members of the Parent Advisory Council executive takes place at a general Parent Advisory Council meeting called for this purpose. Only parents/guardians of students who attend the school are entitled to vote for members of its PAC executive. In many Vancouver schools, this general election meeting of the PAC is held in May or June so that the executive is in place for the start of the next school year. Other school communities find it works best for them to hold elections in September or early October. It is up to each Parent Advisory Council to select the timing that best meets their members' needs.

Generally, members of the elected PAC executive will include:

- chair;
- vice-chair;
- treasurer;
- secretary; and,
- members-at-large.

Recently, many PACs have chosen to elect co-chairpersons to share the responsibilities and work load. Members-at-large often include parents responsible for particular areas: safe arrival program, hot dog days, sports day, library volunteers, fundraising, computers, safety and security, etc.

2002 amendments to the School Act call for PACs to also elect:

- three parents (one of whom must be on the PAC executive) to represent the PAC on the School Planning Council (SPC)
- one parent as the PAC's district parent representative. In Vancouver, this parent liaises between the PAC and the District Parent Advisory Council executive (DPAC). Some PACs designate their chair for this position; others choose another parent.

The amended School Act specifies that election for the SPC and the district parent representative be conducted by secret ballot.

District Parent Advisory Councils

Vancouver School Board policy establishes a group of elected parent representatives to represent parents at the district level — this is called the District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) executive. These district parents represent the parent viewpoint to the school board through their participation on committees, and share important VSB information with school parents

through meetings and publications. Section III of this **Goldmine** (*Parents at the District Level*) discusses the election and work of the District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC).

Vancouver School Board Support

It is the policy of the Vancouver Board of School Trustees to actively encourage and support the development of effective Parent Advisory Councils.

Through the office of the superintendent, the board encourages principals, teaching staff, support staff and officials to work with parents to develop an effective advisory process with PACs and their representatives.

At the district level, trustees, the superintendent and other officials of the board actively engage in encouraging and supporting the process. District-wide assistance is also provided through the office of one of the associate superintendents.

The board financially supports the activities of Parent Advisory Councils with funding administered through the office of the liaison area superintendent in consultation with the District Parent Advisory Council. This funding provides for:

- the part-time position of the district parent coordinator, who assists district parents in carrying out their role of supporting school parent involvement;
- city-wide parent meetings throughout the year, such as PAC executive orientation, budget information meetings, secondary PAC chair meetings, year-end PAC election meeting and reception;
- publications and brochures for PACs on topics of concern to parents; and,
- opportunities for parents to attend various education conferences around the province.

Trustees have also allocated monies for parent activities from provincial grants to support education change. These have included district parent sponsored initiatives such as:

- grants to PACs to pursue activities to increase parent involvement at their schools;
- creation of *Parents are Teachers Too!* video project; and,
- payment of PAC dues to British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, and payment of BCCPAC Annual General Meeting fees for PACs.

Function of Parent Advisory Councils

According to the B.C. School Act, the school parents, through their elected representatives on the Parent Advisory Council executive, may consult with the principal and staff of their school "...respecting any matter relating to the school other than matters assigned to the school planning council". Topics on which PACs offer advice and assistance may include:

- school philosophy and program priorities;

- school regulations and general student conduct;
- the curriculum, new instructional programs, facilities, equipment and learning resources;
- budget, alterations and renovations to facilities;
- safety programs and procedures;
- alternatives for identifying, communicating and meeting unique community needs;
- appropriate school evaluation matters;
- communicating ideas from the community to the board of school trustees and school staff;
- informing the community about decisions made at the school, district and ministry levels;
- methods to ensure racial and cultural understanding and improve the sense of community within the school neighbourhood;
- methods of resolving school-community differences and improving relations;
- the promoting of voter participation in school board elections, through non-partisan methods (PACs do not favour or support any party or candidate; they simply provide open forums in which all candidates can express their views); and,
- methods to encourage other community individuals and groups who do not have children of school age to attend meetings to express their ideas and share their concerns.

It should be noted that the Parent Advisory Council is not a forum for discussion of individual staff members or students. Such discussions should be arranged privately with the teacher, principal or associate superintendent - area by those concerned.

General Parent Advisory Council Guidelines

Each school community will adopt methods of operating that best suit the needs of the community. These methods will be adapted over time to meet changing circumstances. Following are a number of general guidelines that PACs have found useful:

- The Parent Advisory Council executive is made up of parent representatives elected from and by the Parent Advisory Council at a scheduled meeting of the parents/guardians of children who attend the school — all of whom make up the PAC. This meeting is usually the final spring meeting or initial fall meeting of the school year.
- The PAC executive is usually made up of the:
 - chair;
 - vice-chair;
 - secretary;
 - treasurer; and,
 - members-at-large.
- Some PACs prefer to elect co-chairs, rather than a chair and vice-chair. Some PACs also combine the role of secretary-treasurer in one officer. Members-at-

large may be assigned no particular function, or they may take responsibility for particular committees/programs such as Safe Arrival, Library Volunteers, Sports Day, Hot Dog Day, etc.

- Each year, the newly elected PAC executive should be fully briefed by outgoing members of the committee and the school administration about their job descriptions and on-going issues for their school community.
- Ideally, some members of the PAC executive will change every year, as new children enrol and children pass to higher grades.
- The members of the PAC executive represent and are responsible to the entire parent body that makes up the Parent Advisory Council. To keep the school informed, they post meeting minutes on bulletin boards, include regular items in school newsletters, and participate in annual general meetings. Generally, decisions affecting a major change to PAC policies or procedures or raising/ expenditure of large sums of money (see section on *Fundraising* for more information) are brought to a general meeting of the Parent Advisory Council for discussion and decision.
- The members of the PAC executive are advocates for their school community to the VSB, the city of Vancouver and the Ministry of Education. As advocates, the PAC executive members may consult with, and be consulted by, school parents, staff and administration, as well as VSB staff, trustees and district parents on any matter relating to the school.
- In consultation with the school principal, the PAC executive may form committees with parent representatives and schedule meetings as required to fulfil parent interests and needs.

School Planning Councils

In 2002, the Ministry of Education introduced guidelines for the development for a School Planning Council in every school in the province. The School Planning Council is an advisory body whose major responsibility is to consult with the school community in developing, monitoring and reviewing the School Plan for improving student achievement. The School Planning Council (SPC) must consult with the Parent Advisory Council in the preparation of the school plan.

Members of the School Planning Council are the school principal or annex vice-principal, one teacher, three parents from the PAC (one of whom must be on the PAC executive), and – at the secondary level – one student.

Details on the election of SPC members and on its mandate and operation can be found in the VSB publication School Planning Council Handbook: A Resource Guide for School Planning Council Members. There are two copies in every school. Check with your principal or PAC chair.

II. Parents and Their Children's Schools

B. How to Help Your PAC Function Smoothly

1. Chairperson
2. Other Members of the Executive
3. Some Questions Answered
4. Tips and Ideas
5. Assessing Interests
6. Improving Communication
7. Special Activities and Events
8. Issues to Address
9. Discussion Topics

The Executive

The Chairperson

The chairperson coordinates Parent Advisory Council affairs in cooperation with other executive members. The chairperson makes a sincere effort to understand local conditions in the school and community, and maintains a spirit of loyalty, cooperation and friendliness among the executive and general membership. The chairperson also:

- presides at all meetings (If he or she is unable to attend, the vice-chairperson fills in. If they are both absent, the secretary calls the meetings and an alternative chairperson is appointed.);
- conducts business meetings;
- establishes meeting rules with the executive members;
- helps the vice-chairperson and secretary prepare the agenda for all meetings and consults with the principal;
- is responsible for preparing the information and facts needed for a good discussion on agenda topics;
- keeps meetings orderly (To keep spur-of-the-moment decision-making to a minimum, the chairperson provides an opportunity for additions to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. However, some unexpected discussions may be important and should not be neglected. A quick vote at the meeting can decide this issue.); and,
- sets a timetable and sticks to it after the members decide the best time for beginning and ending meetings.

Homework for the New Chairperson

Spring elections of the PAC executive allow time for some preparation during the summer. Here are some suggestions:

- review the minutes of last year's meetings;
- obtain copies of past correspondence;
- skim the material for ideas that you want to explore further, and review the brochure **How it Works** (available from the office of the superintendent at 604-713-5075 and online at www.vsb.bc.ca under **communications/publications**);
- meet with other parents to get ideas;
- meet with the previous chairperson; and,
- meet with the district parents for your area.

Helpful Hints

- **Your best resources are the school principal and your area district parents.** They can contribute valuable information to help establish guidelines for your meetings, activities and topics for discussion.
- **Prepare a statement for other parents.** Meet with the principal at the beginning of the school year and prepare a simple statement on why parents should be involved and how their children can benefit. Include this statement in the school newsletter and invite parents to attend a meeting at a specific time, date and place. Ensure at least two weeks advance notice. If your school does not have a monthly newsletter, have the statement printed in a bulletin and distribute a copy to parents and guardians.
- **Encourage parents to become involved.** Ask the principal to request that teachers suggest a parent representative from each class who might be interested in getting involved. Teachers are often aware of parents and guardians who are interested in school activities.
- **Maintain or improve attendance by deciding on a regular day, time and place to hold your monthly meetings.** Place reminders of upcoming meetings in your school newsletter, along with a brief summary of the previous meeting and topics for future consideration.
- **Ensure good attendance by phoning members before each meeting.** Make this task easier by circulating a sheet of paper at meetings for parents and guardians to fill in names and phone numbers. You may want to consider establishing a telephone committee to assist you.
- **Prepare an agenda in consultation with your executive and the principal.** Circulate copies prior to the meeting if possible. Ensure that all members of the executive committee receive copies well in advance.
- **When problems arise, deal with them at once.** If there is concern among parents about a particular program or activity, don't let the dissension grow. Meet with your principal to discuss the issue. Explain the situation and ask your question.

Most problems can be solved within the school. If you feel you have exhausted the school's resources in dealing with your concern, the next step is to call the associate superintendent responsible for your area for help.

Other Members of the Executive

The Vice-Chairperson

The vice-chairperson fulfils an important role as an understudy to the chairperson and:

- reads and distributes all material received and discusses the information with committee chairpersons and members;
- learns duties and responsibilities of the chairperson in order to preside at meetings in her or his absence;
- takes over if the chairperson resigns;
- may be called upon to chair special committees or projects; and,
- may assume the office of chairperson the following year if there is support from the general membership

The Treasurer

The treasurer is the custodian of funds and:

- disburses money according to the rules of the group and notes transactions in the treasurer's book; and,
- presents a report of finances at each meeting for information (an annual report is usually adopted before the election of new officers)

The Corresponding Secretary

(This position can be combined with the recording secretary.)

The corresponding secretary:

- writes all letters;
- keeps a file of incoming correspondence and copies of outgoing correspondence;
- circulates attendance sheets during meetings and forwards to vice-chairperson; and,
- forwards list of executive names and positions to the board office (the VSB maintains a master list of all committee chairpersons).

The Recording Secretary

The recording secretary:

- records minutes of regular and executive meetings;
- presents and reads minutes for adoption at meetings; and,
- maintains a minutes book that may include:
 - rules of order
 - notebooks from past executives and committee chairpersons
 - school handbook

- general membership list
- teaching staff and their areas of interest
- school profile
- past submissions and correspondence to the board and the Ministry of Education.

Some of the responsibilities of the executive committee include:

- assessing the interest and concerns of people in the school community;
- preparing a program that reflects the priorities of parents and guardians;
- holding regular meetings to plan an agenda for general meetings;
- streamlining general meetings and making them interesting in order to encourage parent involvement; and,
- working with the principal and providing liaison with the elected area district parents.

Some Questions Answered

Former PAC chairpersons were asked to provide advice and suggestions for new chairpersons.

How would you define the role of a PAC chairperson?

I think the role is one of facilitator, coordinator, an advocate for students on behalf of parents and a co-operator with teachers. For some parents, especially those intimidated by the school system, the chairperson is another contact in whom they can invest confidence.

What would you say are the most important skills a chairperson should develop?

To be well-organized and able to work well with volunteers. To be cheerful and optimistic. A PAC chairperson, also, has to be someone who recognizes that power is limited — someone who won't get frustrated easily.

What was the most challenging task you faced as chairperson?

The most difficult challenge was how to handle issues and problems outside the school: wondering where to go, whom to contact, what the options were.

If you were a new chairperson, what would be your first steps to organize your committee?

I'd get in touch with other chairpersons who have been doing the job in neighbouring schools. Have coffee with them, go over what they've done and how they got started. I would invite our district parent to join us.

What is the best advice you could offer a new chairperson?

I'd stress that the PAC is a parent-based committee. I'd say the most important thing to do is spread the word that you want parent involvement and an executive committee. It's crucial to

work towards getting widespread parent support so that the PAC really does represent the school community — not just a small group.

What are some ways to generate parent involvement?

Establish a communications network to keep parents informed. Direct contact is most effective. Offering a variety of special presentations at monthly meetings will boost parent involvement. Variety prevents boredom.

How could a PAC develop parent involvement in a school that represents different ethnic groups?

The PAC needs to explore the community for representatives. Start by arranging small discussion groups in the neighbourhood in the parents' native language. Get them used to the idea that it is important to be involved in their children's education and that the school needs their participation, in addition to inviting them to PAC meetings.

What were some of the problems that affected your PAC?

A major problem is getting parents to come out. People have other priorities, parents are busy... and some parents will say that those people who do become involved don't really represent the rest of the parents. And occasionally, a parent presents a problem which appears to be a general issue when, in fact, it is a personal grievance related to a particular child or teacher. So it's important to emphasize that the PAC works on behalf of all students and reinforce the idea that the group's concern is with general principles and broad common interests.

In what way do you think the PAC can have a positive effect on the school community?

One of the benefits is that the kids see that their parents are interested in education — and that it's important.

Looking back, I would say we were useful in helping the school community come alive, in getting parents to take an interest in the community. If we helped the school make its goals better known — good. Being a part of the PAC was fun and it helped to teach me more about education.

Tips and Ideas

How to Start a School Parent Group

Parents should know that the responsibility for educating children **must be shared by parents and the school**. One of the primary functions of a school parent group is to create a forum to facilitate this process.

To Start:

- talk to the principal and staff;
- get a few parents together;
- arrange a meeting;
- invite your area district parent executive representative to the meeting; and,
- select a chairperson.

Tips for Meetings

1. **Be prepared.** Know what you are going to do and why. Know what your priorities are, the alternatives, the time frame and who will give reports.
2. **Have an agenda.** Know what business will be conducted and in what order. Direct the meeting toward the purpose established for the meeting.
3. **Delegate work.** Guide and lead the group. Don't do it all yourself. Take advantage of the talent and experience in your group.
4. **Don't cover too much ground.** Keep expectations realistic. Plan your agenda so that sufficient time is set aside for priority items. Always adjourn at the designated time.
5. **Learn by doing.** Not every meeting will run smoothly, but the job of chairing will become easier with each meeting.

Getting Acquainted Activities

Here are a few suggestions to help you organize activities that will get your meeting off to a good start and create a friendly, positive and productive atmosphere.

Greeting Sheet

Prepare a large piece of paper or cardboard that has greetings and starting instructions on it.

Example: *"Hello — Good Evening! Please help yourself to tea or coffee and sit with two or three people you don't know and become acquainted. Please talk about what you hope this meeting will accomplish."*

Paired Interview

As soon as two people have arrived, they are asked either verbally or by instruction sheets to interview each other regarding the number and names of children in the school, things that interest them and what they expect from the meeting. After the discussion, have members introduce their partners to the group.

Information Sheet

Post one large sheet of paper on the wall for each participant. If possible, put each person's name on his or her sheet.

As members arrive, hand each a felt pen and an instruction sheet (or have instructions posted on a large sheet).

The instructions might ask members to write on their sheets:

- their name;
- things they could help others with;
- their favourites activities; and,
- things they would like help with.

Assessing Interests

Determining the interests and concerns of your school community will help lay the foundation for a program that truly involves parents. Develop goals and select topics based on your assessment of the needs and interests of parents.

Goal and Priorities

Most problems in volunteer group meetings stem from lack of clear-cut goals. Assessing the needs and interests of your group will help you define the goals and priorities of your PAC. As well, **each meeting** must have **well-defined goals**. These should be reflected in the agenda and understood by the entire group so that everyone knows how to contribute.

Goals Meeting

In June or September, after the new PAC executive has been elected, you may wish to organize a special meeting at which parents work together to set the goals for the new school year. By doing the groundwork in the spring, you will be able to develop specific activities around your goals during the year.

Agenda

A productive meeting requires a well-planned agenda. Although the substance of the agenda will be based on the goals defined by your group, the chairperson and the executive committee will be responsible for seeing they are achieved.

Program

In order to streamline meetings, some PACs find it effective **to separate the business portion of the meeting from the main program** (a guest speaker, film, panel, debate). Some PACs hold two meetings a month: one for business and the other for a special program or event. Still others alternate the business with the main program — a business meeting conducted one month, program the next.

Improving Communication

- **Prepare a parent bulletin board at the school displaying:**
 - announcements and meeting dates
 - newspaper or magazine articles on education, school board reports like *Board Meeting Highlights* (available on the web or in the monthly news letter for staff, and other district memos
 - school newsletters
 - District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) executive reports and minutes.

- **Send minutes to your area district parent executive representatives**

- **Speak with your principal about the possibility of a regular column in the school newsletter**

- **Keep the liaison school trustee informed about:**
 - concerns of parents
 - what is working well in your school
 - suggestions for district activities

- **The positive response of principals and staff to parent involvement is the key to success.**

Encourage cooperation and establish direct and clear lines of communication with principals and teachers.

- **More sample activities:**
 - attend a DPAC executive meeting
 - hold brown-bag breakfasts or luncheons with parents
 - sponsor a display case for student and staff achievements

- compile a school history
- invite student council members to a business meeting
- hold a parent appreciation tea for volunteers
- attend a school board meeting
- contact colleges and universities for speaker lists, films and parent workshops
- organize programs for single parents, seniors or grandparents
- invite your area district parent executive representative to a PAC meeting.

Special Activities and Events

In September:

- organize a hospitality night;
- arrange small coffee parties to help parents new to the school meet other parents;
- promote an open house with students acting as a hosts and hostesses;
- plan a newsletter with contributions from staff, students and parents;
- follow the newsletter with a phone call if you've advertised special events, to encourage attendance;
- send a questionnaire home to determine other parents' interest; and,
- plan a viewing of *Parents are Teachers Too!* video and provide translators to help with discussion.

Meet a school need:

- plan some playground construction and end with a potluck supper;
- try a tree planting; and,
- organize events to raise funds for special items or projects.

Meet a community need:

- plan a block parent program;
- plan an all-candidates meeting if an election is imminent (Send the candidates a questionnaire on basic issues. Publish the findings and let parents know.); and,
- try dances, wine and cheese get-togethers, dinners or movies.

Learn what school is like now:

- have a meeting where school policies and procedures are explained;
- host a panel discussion; and,
- talk to your child's teacher about programs.

Issues to Address

Parent Interests

Recent studies have revealed the following parental concerns:

- **Communications** - How can I speak freely and easily with my child about subjects such as sex, drugs and smoking?
- **Warnings signs** - What are the early signs to watch for when a child is in trouble?
- **Advice** - When and where should I seek advice for a problem with my child?
- **Support groups** - What opportunities are there for parents to ask questions and discuss problems with other parents?
- **Seeking information** - Where can I find reliable information on health care, nutrition, diet, entertainment and programs suitable for children?

Discussion Topics

Based on recent survey results here are a few ideas for discussion at meetings:

1. Teamwork between parents or guardians and the child's teachers
2. Misbehaviour and discipline
3. Influence of TV on children and how TV can help children
4. Rivalry between siblings
5. How to help your child develop good study habits
6. How to help your child with reading
7. Parent-teacher conference ideas
8. School projects to raise funds
9. Where to find volunteers
10. Activities for a successful school open house
11. How to build children's self-esteem
12. Counselling techniques that work at the dinner table
13. School rules and family rules
14. Child development — social, intellectual, emotional, artistic and physical
15. New classroom teaching methods
16. Exceptional children
17. Drugs and alcohol — the influence on children
18. Managing a home with both parents working
19. Nutrition and health education
20. Developing positive race relations

II. Parents and Their Children's Schools

C. How to Run a Meeting

1. Planning Your Agenda
2. Minutes
3. Parliamentary Procedure
4. Effective Meeting Strategies

How to Run a Meeting

Chairing a meeting is a challenging experience. But with a carefully prepared agenda and a few basic organizational skills, you, too, can hold a successful meeting.

These guidelines can be used as a model for meeting procedures.

The meeting agenda:

- lets your PAC members know what to expect and how they might participate in the meeting;
- provides order and direction to the meeting;
- streamlines and shortens your meeting; and,
- makes the job of the recording secretary easier, thus improving the accuracy of the minutes.

An agenda is simply a brief outline of **what you intend to discuss and in what order**. A well-planned agenda reflects the concerns and interest of your school community and is based on mutually defined goals.

Planning Your Agenda

1. **Review previous minutes** for items that are pending and issues that were tabled or should be reported on.
2. Check each item on the agenda and **determine what action is required**.
3. Items on the agenda may be classified as follows:

For information

- items that keep your PAC informed, but don't require immediate action (e.g., correspondence, announcement of events, progress reports).

Discussion, referral or tabling

- items that require more discussion from your group before decisions are made;
- business that should be referred to a smaller sub-committee for further discussion; and,
- business that you choose to put aside (table) for the moment.

For decision and action

- items resulting from business referred to a sub-committee;
- business that you feel your group should act upon.

4. **Plan your time realistically.** Don't squeeze too many items onto the agenda. Set aside enough time for the important items. Other business may be postponed to another meeting, placed near the end of the agenda or referred to a smaller committee. In your closing activities, allow for the assignment and review of tasks.
5. **Provide brief statements on the agenda** outlining each item under discussion. This may be helpful to new members unfamiliar with the issues.
6. **Indicate when the meeting will start and end.** Try to stick to your schedule.
7. **Plan how and to whom you will distribute the agenda.** Check to see if members received their agendas and carry extra agendas for those who didn't receive them earlier.
8. **Don't forget to make people feel comfortable.** New parents may not know anyone. Introduce yourself and welcome everyone. Set the tone and make sure that people know you are happy they took the time to come to the meeting.

Most commonly, the order of business on an agenda is as follows:

1. call to order
2. introduction of new members
3. approval of minutes of previous meeting
4. adoption of the agenda
5. business arising from the minutes
6. committee reports
7. correspondence
8. new business
9. program (guest speakers, etc.)
10. suggestions for future topics
11. adjournment.

Here is each item provided in a little more detail:

1. **Call to order**

The meeting begins. Welcome the members, announce that the meeting is about to start and give them the opportunity to settle in their seats before you proceed.

2. **Introduction of new members**

Tell them your name, the number of children you have attending the school and their grade levels, the fact that you are the chairperson and that you anticipate a fruitful year with their help. Ask new members to introduce themselves.

3. **Adoption of the agenda**

Hand out the agenda that should contain the items in the order to be discussed at the meeting. Ask the other members of the committee if there are items they would like to add to the agenda. Once everyone has agreed to the agenda, the meeting can proceed.

4. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting — questions or amendments**

Some parent groups circulate copies of the minutes prior to the meeting. If everyone has read them, you can ask to deal with any questions, errors, omissions or amendments that arise. If they have not been circulated, ask the secretary to read them. Ask for someone to move the adoption of the minutes. Have the motion seconded, call for the vote and with the majority in favour, declare the minutes adopted.

5. **Business arising from the minutes**

This may include follow-up questions from the membership.

6. **Committee reports**

Prior to the meeting, remind the people who will be making reports. Encourage discussion of each report and allow members to ask questions.

7. **Correspondence**

Read aloud, circulate and discuss letters received since the last meeting. Items requiring action can be dealt with under new business.

8. **New business, questions and comments**

Use this time to give members a final chance to question or discuss any matters that have come up at the meeting or bring up new issues.

9. **Program**

Solicit ideas from other members and PACs, your principal and teachers or see sample ideas included in following pages. If you are using a guest speaker, make sure someone arrives early, especially if there is equipment to set up. Following the presentation, encourage discussion or questions and then thank your guest.

10. **Suggestions for future topics**

Ask members for ideas or have them write their suggestions down.

11. **Adjournment**

Thank the members for attending. Remind them of the date and the time of the next meeting.

Remember to call on the district parent executive representatives from your area for advice and assistance. They can help you in your role on the executive. Ask them to attend your meeting. Take advantage of their knowledge and support.

It is important to avoid subjects concerning teacher-student conflicts or parent-teacher conflicts. Such problems are not suitable topics for your meeting.

The following agenda checklist can help you make sure all the necessary steps have been taken to ensure a smooth-running and well-organized meeting.

(See *Sample* section of this **Goldmine** for a sample agenda, page 62.)

The Minutes of Your Meeting

The minutes represent the history of your Parent Advisory Council. Not only do they serve as the official record of previous policy and past actions, but as assurance that an issue, though put aside temporarily, is not forgotten. PAC chairpersons will find them invaluable when preparing the agenda and checking the background of particular issues. The minutes should be easily accessible to parents; let them know where to find a copy.

Minutes should be brief. Essentially they are a record of action rather than long descriptions of discussion.

Guide for Recording Your Minutes

Here are a few ideas to help organize the recording of the minutes.

- Place this heading at the top of the first page:

_____ Parent Advisory Council
(Name of School)
- In the first section, include:
 - date and time of the meeting
 - place of meeting
 - name of chairperson
 - names of members present (pass around attendance sheet)
 - whether the previous minutes were approved or corrected.
- Record ideas:
 - listen to the discussion and note only the main points
 - summarize
 - make the minutes brief and accurate.
- Record any motions:
 - name the member who makes the motion and underline the action
 - it is unnecessary to include that the motion was seconded
 - state whether the motion carried or failed and underline it (e.g., Motion Carried).
- Note correspondence and any action taken.
- Note treasurer's report.
- Note program speaker and topic.
- Note time of adjournment and date, time and place of next meeting.
- End minutes simply with recorder's name and title, e.g., Gordon Nowicki, Secretary.
- After the minutes have been approved, the secretary should write "Approved" with the date.

Additional Tips for the Recording Secretary

- Have the chairperson give you an agenda.
- Ask to have long, involved motions written out and given to you after the meeting.
- If a long report is read, get the notes from the speaker and summarize it.
- Write up the minutes within a few days after the meeting.
- Note the date, time and place of the next meeting at the end of the minutes.
- Under the notice of the next meeting, include items that need special preparation for that meeting.
- Review the minutes with the chairperson to ensure accuracy.

(Please see sample section, pages 63-64, for example minute forms)

Parliamentary Procedure

At first glance, parliamentary procedure might seem intimidating. However, parliamentary procedure is simply a set of rules to help people work together effectively.

When and how you use parliamentary rules will depend upon several factors:

- the size and nature of your group;
- the goals and objectives of your meeting; and,
- the degree of formality you decide upon.

Some Points to Consider

- PAC decisions are usually reached by consensus.
- For efficiency, parliamentary rules are used when a large group of people must reach decisions.
- Common sense is important because strict conformity to the rules will hinder, rather than help, most meetings.
- If you do use parliamentary rules, both the chairperson and the group should have a basic knowledge of the procedures to encourage participation by everyone.
- If you are concerned about meeting procedures, call one of your area district parent executive representatives for help or advice.

Although the chairperson is not expected to be a parliamentarian, he or she should know basic rules of order and how to:

- recognize a speaker;
- call for a vote;
- state a motion; and,
- announce a decision.

Basic Principles

These rules need not be strictly adhered to, but are presented here for information.

1. Only one subject may be discussed at one time.
2. Each item is entitled to full and free debate.
3. Every member has equal rights.
4. The will of the majority must be carried out, and the rights of the minority must be respected.

Motions:

When a member wants to accomplish action by the group, the following steps are put into place.

1. The member asks to speak and when her or his turn comes up, makes a motion by saying: "I move...."
2. Another member seconds the motion.
3. The chairperson should restate the motion clearly after it has been made and seconded: "It is moved and seconded that...."
4. Only one motion is addressed at a time.
5. Discussion or debate follows. The chairperson should not allow anyone to speak twice on a motion until everyone has had a chance to speak once.
6. The chairperson should give up the chair when he or she feels compelled to speak for or against the motion. In this case, the vice-chairperson or any other member may act as chairperson until the motion is voted on.
7. The vote is taken and the chairperson announces the vote and result.

Negative Motions

Negative motions are not acceptable. For example, "I move that we do not hold a bake sale next month" is not acceptable. A motion must be a positive statement.

Amendments

Amendments or small changes to a motion may be proposed at any time during the discussion. It cannot have the effect of nullifying the main motion. It must be relevant to the motion and can change the motion in only one of the three ways:

1. by leaving out certain words
2. by adding certain words
3. by deleting certain words and replacing them with others. (Not more than two amendments may be made to an open motion at one time. As soon as one amendment has been accepted or rejected another may be proposed provided that it is different from the one already defeated.)

Withdrawal of Motions

General procedure permits the withdrawal of motions if the mover and seconder consent. Amendments must be withdrawn in reverse order. If the mover or seconder refuses the consent, the motions must be voted on.

Notice of Motion

Advance notice is required for some motions, such as revision of the constitution or spending large sums of money. In these cases, a member should present a written notice stating the motion to be introduced a prescribed number of days in advance.

Voting

Voting on motions and their amendments is done in the reverse order to which they are made:

1. on the amendment to the amendment (the second amendment)
2. on the amendment
3. on the motion OR the motion as amended (Don't forget this if approved amendments have been added to the motion.)

Deciding Vote

Normally the chairperson does not vote except in the case of a tie. In such a case, he or she customarily votes against a motion on the assumption that if half the members are opposed, the matter should not be forced on them.

Rejected Motion

A rejected motion should not come up again during the same year unless at least **two-thirds** of the members present approve a motion that "*the question be reconsidered.*" This motion is not debatable and calls for an immediate vote.

Point of Order

Calling a point of order or point of privilege are the only legitimate means of interrupting another member while he or she is speaking. However, if the speaker consents, questions may be asked. If a member feels that improper language has been used or irrelevant argument has been introduced or a rule of procedure has been broken, he or she is entitled to "*raise a point of order*" and interrupt the speaker.

The point must be stated definitely and concisely. The chairperson shall decide without debate, though he or she may ask questions. The chairperson should state his or her opinion authoritatively. The ruling may be appealed by the member. If so, the chairperson states the decision and the point of appeal and then puts the question, which is **not debatable**: "*Shall the decision of the chair stand as the judgement of this meeting?*" A simple majority determines the issue. This merely settles a point of procedure and is not a vote of confidence in the chairperson.

Effective Meeting Strategies

Planning Effective Meetings

There are many different types of meetings ranging from formal (adhering strictly to Robert's Rules of Order) to the least formal (discussions that involve all members, such as round table participation and brainstorming).

In its dual role as an advisory committee and parent education group, the PAC can choose meeting formats to suit specific goals.

The foundation for good meetings with strong parental involvement requires recognizing the differences and similarities in your group and emphasizing the common interests, concerns and needs of your group. It is also important to understand the different roles people play in group situations and recognize the different social, economic and ethnic backgrounds.

Common Objectives and Needs of People in Groups:

- to share in planning so that goals represent the whole group (not just the wishes of a few);
- to know that group goals are realistic and within reach;
- to feel that the group makes a difference;
- to have clear expectations and rules (What are the limits of authority? How are decisions made?);, and,
- to be kept up-to-date on information.

Audio-visual Presentations

Information presented through video can have a strong impact and act as a catalyst for good open discussion. Contact your principal for a list of equipment available at your school.

Arrangements

1. Select a video.
2. Videos must be reserved and the equipment should be ordered through the school.
3. Preview the materials to make sure they are suitable to encourage relevant questions and comments.
4. Check and prepare equipment prior to meeting. Have the video ready to begin.
5. In special cases, your PAC may arrange to rent extra chairs or special equipment from the VSB.

Procedures

1. The chairperson introduces the person making the presentation and their topic.
2. The speaker gives background information on the material and points out important aspects.
3. A discussion period follows the presentation.

Roundtable Discussions

The roundtable style of meeting is an open discussion in which all members are invited to participate. Watch for problems such as:

- domination of discussion by one or two people; and,
- side discussions by two or three members.

Arrangements

1. Select a topic for open discussion. Try to ensure everyone has a chance to speak.
2. Arrange chairs in a circle or semicircle around tables.
3. Summarize comments at the conclusion.
4. If the members want to take action, the chairperson should help the group make plans and assign tasks.

Procedures

The meeting can be started by a thought-provoking question or statement. Throughout the discussion the chairperson should avoid dominating the meeting but keep the discussion on track.

Panel Discussions

A panel discussion consists of approximately three to six people who make a presentation on a selected subject. The chairperson introduces members, presents the topic and encourages participation. As well, the chairperson clarifies points in discussion, keeps the panel focused on the topic and summarizes the discussion at the end of the meeting.

Arrangements

1. Three to six participants are chosen to discuss a specific topic.
2. The panel researches and makes notes on the topic.
3. Place one or two tables in front of the group and set chairs behind them for the panellists.
4. Seat audience in a semicircle with the panel facing them. If the audience is large, auditorium-style seating may be used.

Procedures

1. The chairperson explains the procedures and presents the topic discussion.
2. The chairperson introduces the panel members and discussion starts with introduction from the chairperson. The panellists then begin.
3. The chairperson asks for questions from the group or audience and they are discussed by the panel.
4. The chairperson summarizes the major conclusions of the panel.
5. The chairperson thanks the panel members.

Debates

A debate offers an effective way to present both issues. The debating teams offer opposing views on a controversial topic.

Arrangements

1. Select two or three members for each debating team. Divide into two teams and give each group one side of the issue.
2. The debaters research the issue and develop a short presentation.
3. Place enough chairs for the teams on each side of a table.

Procedures

1. The chairperson announces the topic for debate.
2. One speaker for the affirmative begins with a two to four minute speech. The next speaker is from the opposing position.
3. Rebuttal may follow each individual speech or the leaders of each debate team may provide a rebuttal after everyone has spoken.
4. The chairperson accepts questions from the audience and the debate teams answer and discuss the issue.
5. The chairperson summarizes the major conclusions of the two teams.
6. The chairperson thanks the members of the teams.

Buzz Sessions

Buzz sessions are small open discussions consisting of two to eight people. All members have an equal opportunity to express their ideas easily. Discussion time is limited and doesn't permit complete examinations of issues, but it does generate ideas from everyone in a short period of time.

Arrangements

1. Buzz sessions are usually used with large meetings. The buzz session itself does not need special preparation, but the leader may prepare the questions and issues in advance.
2. Arrange chairs in a semicircle. Form several small groups.

Procedures

1. Buzz sessions may be at the beginning of a meeting or may be initiated later. The chairperson announces the formation of small discussion groups.
2. Each group goes off to a small area of the room and chooses a recorder.
3. The topic is introduced and members participate as they would in any small group discussion.
4. The recorder lists ideas and reports back to the larger group. Each group should have the time to give a short report to the entire group.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is another technique that encourages participation. Quantity is the object and all ideas are accepted. Later, the ideas are analyzed and reduced to those that seem most workable.

Arrangements

1. Because the major purpose of brainstorming is the encouragement of fresh ideas, no study program has to be initiated prior to the session.
2. Arrange the chairs in a circle.
3. Appoint a recorder or request someone to volunteer.

Procedures

1. The chairperson begins the session by explaining the rules and emphasizing that all contributions are wanted and accepted. Even if ideas seem unusual, members should contribute.
2. The topic or issue is explained to the group and the session begins.
3. The recorder writes down on a chalkboard all the ideas that come from the group.
4. After five or ten minutes, the group should analyze all the suggestions and pull out the best ones.
5. The chairperson summarizes the ideas.

II. Parents and Their Children's Schools

D. Money Matters

1. Different Ways of Handling Bank Accounts
2. If You Decide to Incorporate
3. Using VSB Charitable Tax Number
4. Signing Authority
5. When Deciding on a Fundraising Event
6. Successful Fundraising Ideas
7. Liability Insurance
8. Parent Partnership Funds

Money Matters

Different Ways of Handling Bank Accounts

Parent Advisory Councils raise funds in a variety of ways, with a variety of partners, for a variety of purposes. School board policy on ways to bank this money recognizes the diversity and uniqueness of school communities, and provides for three banking options. Your PAC, in consultation with your fundraising partners — usually school administrators and staff — should choose the method that best fits your needs.

One-Write System

A PAC may use its home school's One-Write System. A separate trust ledger card can be used with regular statements submitted to the PAC. The school will be responsible for banking monies and the ledger card will be available to parents upon request. Under this system, the principal will require written authorization of the PAC signing officers before the spending of funds.

If you are interested in seeing how this system would work for you, make an appointment through your principal to discuss this option.

PAC Bank Account

If a PAC wishes to handle its own funds, the PAC may open a bank account in its own name at the bank/financial institution of its choice. Any two of three designated members of the executive are named as authorized signatories of the account. Cash may be withdrawn, and checks written, with written authorization of any two of the authorized signatories. Should a problem arise, all members of the PAC as individuals may be held liable for the group's funds.

The PAC's treasurer should present regular financial statements to the PAC executive at its meetings, and to the whole parent body when it meets as the Parent Advisory Council.

If You Decide to Incorporate

The third way of handling PAC funds is to incorporate your PAC under the B.C. Societies Act.

Incorporation of the PAC Under the B.C. Societies Act

A PAC raising and handling large sums of money — for instance, a PAC who funds an annual Quebec exchange — may choose to incorporate under the B.C. Societies Act. This incorporation protects individual PAC members who act in a responsible way from being

personally liable for the funds. If a PAC chooses to incorporate, a bank account is opened in the society's name, with any two of three designated members of the executive as signatories.

If your PAC decides to incorporate, your area office should be able to provide you with sample documentation to use. When your PAC petitions to become a society, your constitution should include a section ensuring that your school principal is a non-voting member and is present at meetings. Your PAC should not be independent of the school.

Using the VSB Charitable Tax Number

If your PAC does not wish to incorporate, but wishes to take part in activities that require a registration number for tax deductibility purposes, you may wish to consider the option of using the Vancouver School Board's registration number.

Some fundraising activities involve the receipt of substantial donations and the establishment of trust funds. You may arrange to have the donations made to the Vancouver School Board where they will be held in a separate trust account by the board and later be returned to your school for administering. These funds will be acknowledged with the VSB's registration number for tax deductible purposes and be eligible for a tax receipt.

Funds raised of a permanent nature (as when the principal is invested to earn interest and only the interest income is spent) may be administered by the VSB Accounting Division in accordance with instructions given by the school. Scholarship funds fall under this category and it is recommended that scholarship funds be administered by the Vancouver School Board for schools.

Unincorporated PACs who wish to participate in a B.C. Gaming Authority casino may also use the VSB charitable tax number when such a number is required.

Your school principal will help you should your PAC choose this option.

Signing Authority

No matter what method of banking/tax deductibility arrangement your PAC chooses, authorized signatories are required. At your first PAC meeting after the incoming executive has been elected by the Parent Advisory Council, your PAC executive should designate authorized signatories by way of a motion that is recorded in your minutes:

THE (YOUR SCHOOL NAME) PAC DESIGNATES ANY TWO OF THE FOLLOWING

THREE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AS AUTHORIZED SIGNATORIES ON OUR (YOUR BANK'S NAME) ACCOUNT (NUMBER OF YOUR ACCOUNT): (NAME NUMBER ONE), (NAME NUMBER TWO), (NAME NUMBER THREE).

Allowing any two of three authorized persons to carry out banking transactions makes it easier to manage PAC business if one of them is ill or out of town.

When Deciding on a Fundraising Event

When your school community decides to undertake a fundraising event, it should make a number of decisions **before** any fundraising takes place.

Purpose for Raising the Funds

Why are the funds being raised? Are they for a specific purpose (scholarships, new computers, playground equipment, etc.) or for a general fund with spending decisions to be made later? Many PACs find it is easier to raise funds if they are for a specific purpose.

People Involved

Who will be involved? Will it be just the parents, or will school administration, staff and students be participating? How much administrative, staff, classroom, after-school time will be required? Have you consulted everyone participating and reached consensus on the nature of the event and the time commitments?

Spending the Funds

How will the funds be spent? Whether it is for computers, band uniforms, a staff room microwave, who will make the selection? You need not only decide that all funds will go to band uniforms, you also need to decide who will choose the uniforms.

If you decide to fundraise for general purposes and withhold a decision on specifics until the funds have been raised, you need to decide (**before raising the funds**) how decisions will be made on expenditure - i.e. will it be by consensus of administration, staff and PAC or PAC decision alone or will staff decide on 50% and PAC decide on 50%? There are many decisions possible — the important thing is to decide on the distribution before undertaking the fundraising.

Authority

Who will be authorized to make the final purchase, and what authority will they require? If the PAC chair is authorized to purchase the band uniforms, do they require written consent from the

PAC executive and other agreed-upon fundraising partners as to the colour, manufacturer, price, etc. or may they use their discretion?

Making these decisions before beginning any fundraising activities will prevent misunderstanding and ill feelings and help to ensure success.

Successful Fundraising Ideas

The best sources of successful fundraising ideas are your fellow PAC chairs/school DPAC representatives. Meetings are held two to three times each year of PAC chairs/school DPAC representatives in your area (North, Centre or South), area district parent executive representatives, and associate superintendents - area. As well, meetings of city secondary PAC chairs/secondary school DPAC representatives are held once or twice yearly. Dates for these meetings are announced in DPAC executive minutes followed by special notices distributed to PAC chairs by fax and email. They are also posted on the DPAC section of the VSB web page at www.vsb.bc.ca. These meetings are your opportunity to share information with fellow PAC chairs/school DPAC reps on what has - and has not - worked in your schools.

School communities vary widely as to what kinds of fundraising activities are acceptable, practical with the person-power available, and profitable. A district-wide survey carried out a few years ago indicated that the most successful (in terms of net funds realized) were:

- B.C. Gaming Authority casinos
- Thons of all sorts: walk-a-thons, spell-a-thons, math-a-thons, etc.

Your community needs to decide what the goals of your fundraising event are. If building a sense of community is equally important to the dollars earned, a labour-intensive school carnival involving parents, students, staff and neighbourhood businesses may be more desirable than a casino that raises more dollars per volunteer hour invested. The choice is yours, and will vary from school to school and year to year.

Liability Insurance

The Ministry of Education provides a self-insured protection program - called the Schools Protection Program - that includes coverage for school districts for comprehensive general liability. The program was recently extended to include Parent Advisory Councils, to the extent that the liability arises from activities in connection with the school district. (School crossing activities are excluded.)

Who is covered

The liability coverage provided by the Schools Protection Program applies to members of the

Parent Advisory Council only and not to outside volunteers. All parents/guardians of children in a school are members of the school's Parent Advisory Council. Other community volunteers - neighbourhood seniors, university students, etc. - are **not** members of the PAC and are **not** covered in the event they are negligent in causing an injury. This coverage also does **not** apply to claims brought by one PAC member against another PAC member.

What is covered

Coverage applies to all PAC activities "in connection with the school district". PAC activities **must** meet the approval of the principal, and **must** abide by school district policies/procedures to be covered under the Schools Protection Program. A manual of school board policies is available in every school office for PAC reference.

Coverage no longer demands that a school staff member be present at the activity, but it does require that the activity meet school board requirements with regard to the number of adults per student, and that it be in accord with school board policies and procedures. Be sure to check with your principal that a planned activity is covered before you proceed with it.

VSB policy recognizes that Parent Advisory Council meetings are district sanctioned activities, and recognizes that parents/students who provide on-site child care services during PAC meetings are volunteers to the school/district. **This means that SPP liability coverage extends to these child care providers during PAC meetings at the school.** The fact that a small honorarium may be paid by the PAC or the school to these volunteers does not change their status as volunteers to the school/district. The usual backup documentation (recording name of babysitter, date of service and authorization) should be retained for audit purposes.

If a principal considers a proposed PAC activity to be unacceptable due to its nature or inherent risks, and is unsuccessful in influencing the PAC to modify the proposed activity, the principal will disassociate the PAC activity from the school district. Such activity will not qualify for liability protection under the Schools Protection Program.

If an incident occurs during a covered PAC activity, a Schools Protection Program Incident Report Form must be filed promptly with the school, which will process the form through the VSB Secretary-Treasurer's office. An incident may include injury to volunteer, student, staff or the general public, or damage to school property (building or contents). Coverage may be denied if the PAC neglects to file an incident report form and fails to advise the school district of a claim.

What is not covered

This coverage does not resolve all PAC insurance concerns. As stated above, it will not cover a PAC-sponsored event that the principal has considered to be unacceptable due to its nature or

risks and has thus disassociated from the school district.

This coverage is for third party liability only, and other risks, such as property damage or embezzlement of PAC funds, are not covered.

PACs retain the option to independently obtain liability insurance on their own account.

Other questions

If your PAC has any questions about PAC liability coverage, they should be directed through your school principal to the office of the VSB secretary-treasurer.

Parent Partnership Funds

For a number of years, the Vancouver School Board received grants from the Ministry of Education to help plan for and implement a number of education changes. The VSB has in turn authorized the District Parent Advisory Council executive to allocate funds for activities which will further the role of parents as partners in their children's education.

District parents, in consultation with PAC chairs, have allocated \$110,000 for the production of parent videos for a number of parent audiences. "**Parents are Teachers Too!**" videos have been produced for First Nations parents and for parents whose first languages are English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Punjabi and Hindi. These videos show elementary parents being actively involved in their children's education at school and at home, and encourage other parents to join them in becoming partners with the school in their children's education.

As well, district parents have authorized grants to individual PACs for:

- annual membership dues in the provincial parent group British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC); and,
- PAC operating grants, in the amount of \$300 per PAC, to help improve parent participation in their children's education.

All grants are decided on a yearly basis by the current DPAC executive, usually in the fall.

PACs are notified of these grants, the procedures for receiving them and regulations for expending them in DPAC executive minutes and through letters from district parents to PAC chairs. It is important for PACs to know that, while Parent Partnership funds are deposited directly into school accounts, it is up to each PAC to decide how to spend them. A PAC that maintains its own bank account may wish to have the school write a check to the PAC for the amount of the grant for deposit into its own account. This decision is up to the discretion of the PAC.

II. Parents and Their Children's Schools

E. Communicating with Your School Community

1. PAC Section in Your School Newsletter
2. Phone Trees and E-mail Networks
3. Parent Bulletin Board
4. Parent Resources

Communicating With Your School Community

Members of the Parent Advisory Council executive are the main link from the Vancouver School Board and your school administration to the Parent Advisory Council, the parent population of your school. As members of the PAC executive, one of your most important jobs is to ensure that information from the district and school does not stop with you, but reaches your school community. There are a number of ways you can do this.

PAC Section in Your School Newsletter, or a Separate PAC Newsletter

Every school produces and sends home newsletters to parents/guardians on a regular basis. Elementary schools usually send them home with students; many secondary schools mail them directly to parents. PAC chairs or a designated member of the PAC executive should meet at the beginning of the school year with the administrator and school secretary to discuss:

- a regular schedule for newsletters. If parents know that a newsletter is sent home the third Thursday of every month, they can check with their children and retrieve it from their school bags.
- a deadline for submissions from the PAC. Find out from your school staff the time they need to prepare the PAC submission for publication in the school newsletter. The secretary will then know what date to expect any PAC information, by the second Thursday of the month, for example.
- the format in which the secretary would like to receive your submission. School secretaries are very busy, and any help you give them in making their job a bit easier will be appreciated.
- the space that will be allocated to PAC material. You want to ensure that there is space for PAC meeting notices and agendas, and for passing on information you receive from the DPAC executive and the provincial BCCPAC. You will want to reach an agreement as to whether PAC minutes will be included in the school newsletter or will be made available in other ways.

Some PACs have chosen to publish their own newsletters on alternate dates from the school newsletter. For example, the PAC newsletter comes home every first Thursday, and the school newsletter every third Thursday. Doing this on a regular basis ensures that parents know when to expect these communications. Some schools and PACs have found it useful to append any notices, permission slips, etc. to these newsletters so that parents know when to expect them and do not find an announcement of an important meeting crumpled in the bottom of a backpack weeks after the event.

Phone Trees and E-mail Networks

When practical, phone trees may be tools to remind parents of important meetings. They can be set up in a variety of ways. You may want to assign to a member of your executive the responsibility for phoning all room parents to remind them of PAC meetings. Room parents may then establish their own phone tree within their child's division to "spread the word." You may want to discuss this idea and ways to implement it with fellow PAC chairs at one of your area meetings. Parents must give written permission for their name and phone number to be included, in accordance with provincial Protection of Privacy legislation.

In addition, some schools have initiated an e-mail communication network to connect parents and share school information.

Parent Bulletin Board

Early in the school year, the PAC chair or designated member of the PAC executive should meet with the principal and agree on the best spot for establishing a parent bulletin board. This will vary from school to school: it could be in the main hall, inside the office, in the library, in the parent room.

The important thing is to establish a regular location easily accessible to parents to post news of interest to your parent community. Then, through an article in the parent section of your school newsletter, let parents know where to find it, and encourage them to consult it whenever they are in the school. Items to post include:

- PAC agendas, minutes and financial statements;
- notices of upcoming meetings, conferences of interest to your parents;
- copies of DPAC executive minutes;
- lists of new additions to your library parent shelf; and,
- sign-up sheets for volunteers for particular events.

Parent Resources

You will also want to meet with your administrator to discuss establishing a parent shelf in your school library or other convenient location in your school. Welcoming parents into the school makes them feel part of your community and encourages their interest and participation in their children's learning. Some things you might want to place on the parent shelf include:

- binders with copies of PAC minutes, DPAC executive minutes and the BCCPAC newsletter (if your PAC is a member);
- a copy of the School Planning Council binder;

- a binder with a copy of VSB brochures and publications of interest to parents - many of these are available in a number of languages;
- a copy of your school handbook and your school profile; and,
- books of particular interest to parents.

III. Parents at the District Level

A. Area Organization

1. Administrative Areas
2. Blue Bag Mail System
3. PAC E-mails
4. Abbreviations of Education Organizations

Area Organization

Administrative Areas

Vancouver schools are administratively assigned to three Associate-Superintendents-Area. The Associate Superintendents-Area report directly to the Superintendent of Schools. Working with the Associate Superintendents-Area are two education assistants who provide direct contact with - and act as a resource for – parents.

Each of Vancouver's 73 elementary schools, 18 primary annexes and 18 secondary schools is assigned to one of the three areas : North, Centre or South. If you are unsure where your school belongs, ask your school secretary or your principal.

The PACs in each area elect four area parents to represent them at the district level. This group of twelve parents is called the Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) executive. Individual members of the DPAC executive are called area district parents. Nominations and elections are held each spring

The offices of the associate superintendents-area are located in the main VSB Administration Building located at 1580 West Broadway. You may contact your area office for assistance or information by phone or fax. Consult the VSB publication **Ready Reference**, published every fall, for specific names and phone and fax numbers. You may also find this information on the VSB web site at www.vsb.bc.ca.

Blue Bag Mail System

As a member of your Parent Advisory Council's executive, you will want to send and receive mail related to your PAC to others throughout the school district: fellow PAC chairs, area district parents, your associate superintendent-area, your liaison trustee. The school board's blue bag mail system is a quick, easy and free way to do this. Ask your school secretary what days your school sends out/receives blue bag mail. Then, put the item you want to send in an envelope addressed with the recipient's name and VSB address:

1. **PAC chair**
PAC chair's name, title, and name of school
2. **Area District Parent**
District parent's name, title, VSB Education Centre

3. **Associate Superintendent**

Associate superintendent's name, title, name of area, VSB Education Centre

4. **Liaison Trustee**

Trustee's name, c/o VSB Education Centre.

Ask your school secretary to put mail for you received through the blue bag system in your mailbox at the school.

PAC E-mails

The VSB Learning and Information Technology department has set up email accounts on VSB web-mail for all Vancouver PACs. They have also created e-mail groupings for elementary school PACs, secondary school PACs, North Area PACs, Centre Area PACs and South Area PACs. All PAC chairs and principals have information on how to use/access this system, as does the DPAC coordinator.

Abbreviations of Education Organizations

Throughout the year, in conversations with school and district staff and in documents and newsletters you receive, you will encounter numerous abbreviations for parent, staff and district organizations. Here is a key to help you decipher them.

BCCPAC British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

BCTF British Columbia Teachers' Federation

DPAC District Parent Advisory Council

PAC Parent Advisory Council

DMT District Management Team

VASSA Vancouver Association of Secondary School Administrators

VEPVPA Vancouver Elementary Principals and Vice-Principals Association

VESTA Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association

VSTA Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association

VTF Vancouver Teachers' Federation

III Parents at the District Level

B. Parent Advisory Council at the District Level

1. Delegations to Vancouver School Board Standing Committee Meetings and School Board Meetings
2. Appeal Process
3. Liaison Trustees
4. District Parent Advisory Council

Parent Advisory Council at the District Level

Delegations to Vancouver School Board Standing Committees and to School Board Meetings

Members of your PAC may wish to bring issues of concern to your school community to the attention of your elected trustees and members of the board's senior management team. An effective and timely way to do this is to appear as a delegation at a standing committee meeting or a board meeting. Over the past few years, PAC members have addressed trustees and district staff at committee and board meetings on a number of topics:

- safety and security issues;
- supervision aides;
- playground improvements;
- on-site day care;
- proposed school renovations;
- parental role in transfer of administrators; and,
- budget concerns.

PACs usually find it preferable to appear as a delegation at a standing committee meeting, as association representatives (members of teacher and administrator organizations, DPAC executive representative, members of other staff associations) are members of these committees and can be part of the discussion of your issue. As well, you will be allowed more time for your presentation at a standing committee meeting.

On occasion, your concern will be of such an urgent nature that there is not sufficient time to schedule an appearance at a standing committee meeting. Then, the board may decide to hear your concerns as a delegation to a meeting of the Vancouver Board of School Trustees.

VSB standing committees and their areas of responsibility are:

Committee I.	Management Coordinating
Committee II.	Planning and Facilities
Committee III.	Education and Student Services
Committee IV.	Personnel and Staff Services
Committee V.	Finance and Legal.

To find out the dates of upcoming meetings of standing committees, and to register to appear as a delegation to a standing committee or board meeting, phone the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer at 604-713-5286. Meeting dates are also posted on the VSB website at www.vsb.bc.ca.

Remember, *notify your area district parent or the district parent coordinator when you are scheduled to appear as a delegation.* They will help you prepare your presentation if you wish. As well, they will contact the DPAC executive member who sits on the standing committee, so that the DPAC member is aware of your issues before the meeting.

Procedures for Appearing Before a Standing Committee of the Vancouver School Board

1. The request and all written supporting material must be received at the VSB Education Centre, 1580 West Broadway, at least four days before the next regularly scheduled committee meeting. This may be waived if the committee chair considers the matter to be an emergency item.
2. Delegations will be allowed ten minutes for their presentation. The committee may decide to extend this time if they feel it is required to allow the delegation to fully outline its position.
3. Committee members may ask the delegation questions of clarification. The matter will not usually be debated at this time, but more detailed discussion may be allowed than at a board meeting.
4. If the committee decides to debate the matter at the meeting at which the delegation appears, the members of the delegation may remain but may not take part in the discussion. If the debate is deferred to a future committee meeting, the delegation will be notified so that they may attend. They may not take part in the debate.

Procedures for Appearing Before a Meeting of the Vancouver Board of School Trustees

1. A written request to appear before the board and all written supporting materials, including the name of the spokesperson(s) for the delegation, must be received at the VSB Education Centre, 1580 West Broadway, before 4:30 p.m. on the Wednesday before the board meeting. The chair of the board may waive this requirement if s/he considers the matter to be an emergency item.
2. Delegations will be allowed five minutes for their presentation.
3. Only trustees may direct questions of clarification to the delegation. Association representatives do not sit at the table at board meetings and so do not take part in asking questions or discussing the issue. The matter will not be debated during the delegation's appearance.
4. The matter will not usually be considered by the board at the meeting at which the delegation appears. Exceptions to this procedure may be made by resolution of the board.

Once a decision has been made regarding their issue, the delegation will be informed in writing of this decision.

Please note:

Since issues can be considered and deliberated in more detail at the committee level, whenever possible the delegation will be requested to appear before the appropriate Standing Committee; however, if a delegation does not wish to do so or if urgent matters do not allow sufficient lead time for the delegation to present its brief before the Standing Committee, the Board will hear the delegation at a time to be set by the Board.

For further information, please access the police File BDDH: Board Governance and Operations: “Public Participation at Board Meetings and Committee Meetings” on the web at www.vsb.bc.ca/abouttheVSB/Boardpolicy.

Appeal Process

The Vancouver School Board has established policies for parents to appeal any educational decisions made by their child's school regarding their child, and, under Section 11 of the School Act, to appeal any decision made by an employee of the Vancouver School Board that significantly affects the education, health or safety of their child. Information may be obtained from your principal, associate superintendent-area, or your area district parents.

Liaison Trustees

Each of the nine elected school trustees serves as liaison trustee to two Vancouver secondary schools and their associated elementary schools. The liaison trustee is a link from the board to the school. Consider inviting your liaison trustee to a Parent Advisory Council meeting. If you are bringing an issue to the attention of a board standing committee, notify your liaison trustee and update them on your concerns. You may phone them at the numbers/ contact them at the e-mail addresses listed in the VSB publication **Ready Reference** (check with your school office if you don't have a copy) and on the VSB web page at www.vsb.bc.ca, or write them through the VSB blue bag mail system.

Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council Executive

Twelve parents (four each from North, Centre and South areas) are elected by Parent Advisory Council chairs to represent them at the district level on the Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council Executive. These area district parents liaise between PACs and the Vancouver School Board by sitting on the board's five standing committees and many of its representational committees. District parents also represent the parental voice on appeal committees and on shortlisting and interviewing committees for school and district administrators. District parents update parents at the school level on board activities through newsletters, faxed and e-mailed minutes and notices, area meetings of PAC chairs/school district parent reps at city-wide parent

meetings. All these will be discussed in the next section.

The district parent coordinator works to provide support for the activities of the area district parents, and serves as a resource for DPAC members and PAC chairs.

You will find the names and numbers of area district parents and the district parent coordinator at in the VSB **Ready Reference** publication, and on the VSB web site at www.vsb.bc.ca.

III. Parents at the District Level

C. District Parent Advisory Council Executive (DPAC)

1. Job Description
2. DPAC Executive Elections
3. Communication with PACs
4. Committees

District Parent Advisory Council

Job Description

According to Vancouver School Board policy,

The two main functions of the district parents are:

- a) To "bridge the gap" between board and parents by communicating board policy to parents on the one hand, and parents' points of view to the board on the other, through their presence at committee meetings.
- b) To plan and coordinate activities that will foster effective parental involvement in the schools.

The three district parents elected by Parent Advisory Council chairs in each area work to carry out these functions in a variety of ways:

1. District Parent Advisory Council Executive Meetings

District parents schedule their executive meetings twice monthly, September through June, usually on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the VSB Education Centre at 1580 West Broadway. Two to three times a year, district parents schedule meetings with their area PAC chairs and school DPAC representatives.

Parents are welcome to attend DPAC executive meetings as observers. Please phone the coordinator before you come to ensure that the meeting date or time has not changed. If you wish to have an item placed on the DPAC meeting agenda, write to the DPAC chair c/o VSB Education Centre, to explain your issue and to indicate whether you wish to speak to it at the meeting. District parents will then contact you regarding the date and time of your presentation.

Draft minutes of DPAC executive business meetings are faxed and e-mailed to all PAC chairs at their schools the week following the meeting. They are also posted on the DPAC section of the VSB web page at www.vsb.bc.ca. The date and time of the next meeting will be listed at the end of the draft minutes. You will also be contacted by fax at your school and by PAC e-mail before any area or city-wide parent meeting to confirm the date, location and agenda. Notices of these meetings are also posted on the parent section of the VSB web page.

2. Area Responsibilities

District parents in each area cooperate to maintain contact with area PACs in order to respond to needs as they arise and to act as resource persons for PACs. They help direct questions and actions through the appropriate channels, and coordinate district-wide activities with district parents from all areas with help from VSB district staff. They keep other DPAC executive members informed of area concerns through regular DPAC meetings, and they meet with associate superintendents-area to discuss items of interest in the area.

3. Committee Responsibilities

The twelve district parents select five DPAC executive members to represent the parental voice on the five standing committees of the Vancouver School Board; as well, district parents select DPAC executive members to sit on principal/vice-principal shortlisting and interviewing committees. District parents select DPAC executive members or other interested parents to represent the parental voice on VSB Advisory and other representational committees. Any PAC member interested in sitting on one of these committees should contact the DPAC coordinator for an application form.

District parents communicate committee items of interest to particular PACs and offer assistance to Parent Advisory Councils who are making presentations to VSB committees. They inform other DPAC members if and when a matter of particular interest to one of their area schools is to be discussed at a committee meeting.

4. Vancouver School Board Support

District staff assist district parents in planning area meetings and in communicating with area schools. An associate superintendent and the DPAC coordinator are available to offer advice on, and make arrangements for, such activities as communicating with parents and staff, printing of materials and organization of workshops.

DPAC Executive Elections

Elections for District Parent Advisory Council Executive members are held each spring. Vancouver School Board policy and DPAC bylaws provide for twelve parents equally divided among the VSB administrative areas to serve for three-year terms. Candidates are asked to commit to one year at a time, with the option of extending one year at a time, for a maximum of three years. Terms are staggered, so that every year there will be a combination of new and experienced district parents on the executive.

Nominations

Each spring, in March or early April, the DPAC coordinator sends nomination forms to each PAC chair and school principal. They are requested to share these with parents in their schools who are interested in running for election as an area district parent.

Any parent or guardian of a child in a VSB K-12 school is eligible to run as a candidate for the district parent executive from the area in which their child's school is located. District parents encourage parents who have experience on the PAC executive to consider this opportunity.

Ballots

Candidates for office fill out a nomination form, have it endorsed by their PAC chair on behalf of their PAC, and return it to the VSB district parent coordinator by the date specified on the nomination form. Ballots with background information on the candidates included are then sent to all PAC chairs in each area for them to mark in consultation with their executive. Each PAC chair receives one ballot to elect district parent(s) to the executive from their area.

Elections

PAC chairs bring marked ballots to a spring election meeting at the school board or fax them to the DPAC coordinator (date announced on the ballot).

Appointments

DPAC bylaws allow current district parent executive members to appoint parents to area DPAC executive vacancies that may occur from time to time. PAC chairs in the area(s) with vacancies are sent ratification notices so that they may agree/disagree with the appointment. The appointment is finalized at a DPAC executive meeting in accordance with the ratification results. District parents notify all parents of newly appointed DPAC executive members by fax, PAC e-mail and through the **DPAC Highlights** newsletter.

DPAC Communication with Parent Advisory Councils

District parents are the main link between the school board and Parent Advisory Councils. The DPAC executive uses a variety of tools to maintain two-way communication with their area schools. To make this process effective, they need PAC chairs to work as their partners.

1. Telephone

District parents phone PAC chairs throughout the year to remind them of area and city-wide parent meetings. They also call to consult on district issues that arise between area

meetings. DPAC executive members want PAC chairs to phone them with questions, opinions and requests for information.

2. **Area Meetings**

Area district parents schedule meetings to share information with area PAC chairs, school DPAC representatives and associate superintendents-area two to three times each year. These meetings are great opportunities for PACs to let district parents know their district concerns, and to share ideas and issues with other PAC chairs. District parents and associate superintendents-area update PAC chairs on district issues of interest. If you want to place an item on the agenda, phone one of your area district parents.

3. **Other Meetings**

District parents schedule meetings of interest for city parents throughout the year. In most years they plan a meeting of city secondary PAC chairs, a city-wide orientation meeting for PAC executives and a budget workshop for city parents. If you have a suggestion for an additional workshop, let your area district parents know about it.

4. **Fax outs, PAC e-mail**

District parents fax and e-mail minutes of DPAC executive meetings to PAC chairs after the twice monthly executive meetings. A cover sheet includes important Ministry and VSB news, information about workshops, etc. The minutes and notices of citywide meetings are also posted on the DPAC section of the VSB website at www.vsb.bc.ca. DPAC also faxes and e-mails to all schools a monthly news summary called **DPAC Highlights**. You may reprint any article in your school newsletter.

Committees

District parents represent city parents on the five VSB standing committees, on VSB advisory and representational committees, on VSB appeal committees, on administrator shortlisting and interviewing committees and on a number of community committees. A current list of committees and their parent representatives will be faxed to all PAC chairs every fall.

Only district parent executive members sit on the standing committees, appeal committees and administrator selection committees. From time to time, district parents appoint PAC members to represent parents on various representational and community committees. Interested PAC members may obtain an application form from the DPAC coordinator. District parents have established a number of guidelines for parent representatives.

Committee Guidelines

1. District parents update the DPAC on committee issues at regular DPAC executive meetings. Other parents let district parents know about committee business through

written or verbal reports to their area district parent. If you are asked to bring the DPAC position on an issue to the next meeting of your committee, be sure to place the item on the agenda of the next DPAC executive meeting. Non-DPAC members can do this by contacting their designated DPAC executive liaison.

2. It is important that the parent voice be heard around the committee table. Parent representatives must clearly state whose opinion they are presenting:
 - a) their own, as involved parent;
 - b) their PAC's, if the item has been discussed at a PAC meeting;
 - c) their area's, if the item has been discussed at an area meeting; or,
 - d) DPAC executive's, if they have taken a position on the issue.
3. Parent representatives who are asked for an official DPAC position at a committee meeting should reply that they will respond at the next committee meeting so that they may consult with the district parents.
4. Parent representatives who are unable to attend a committee meeting should phone and let the committee chair know. If an item of particular concern will be on the agenda, contact the DPAC chair and district parents will try to send a replacement representative to explain the DPAC position.

IV. Sample Forms

- A. Sample Agenda
- B. Minutes Forms
- C. Volunteer Recruitment Form

SAMPLE AGENDA

Wolfe Elementary School
Parent Advisory Council Meeting

February 3, 20 __
7:30 pm
Library (2nd floor)

Agenda

1. CALL TO ORDER ... welcome and introduction
2. AGENDA REVIEW
3. APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES
4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS ... report from school open house committee
5. COMMITTEE REPORTS ... report from committee on student evaluation
and introduction of guest speaker _____
6. NEW BUSINESS ... revisions to the science curriculum
7. ADJOURNMENT ...coffee and refreshments

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

- Attach:
1. copy of the agenda
 2. members attendance list
 3. information handouts
 4. minutes of meeting "by item"

Name of Organization or Committee: _____

Date of meeting: _____

Location: _____

Time: _____
(from / to)

Chairperson: _____

Secretary: _____

Minutes of previous meeting:

approved as circulated

approved as amended (attach minutes with amendment)

Next meeting:

Date: _____

Location: _____

Time: _____

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
(One page per discussion item)

Date: _____

TOPIC: _____

Handout: Yes No

Speaker (Name/Title): _____

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

MOTION (if any):

Moved by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Approved: _____

FOLLOW-UP ACTION: Yes No

Responsibility:

Due date: _____

NOTE: Use reverse side if additional space is required.

A REQUEST FOR PARENT VOLUNTEERS FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR
WE NEED AND ARE NOW REQUESTING YOUR HELP

There are many different ways in which individual parents can volunteer to help at the school. Many jobs call for different skills and effort and require little time. Most are not very demanding in terms of responsibility, but every contribution positively affects the quality of our children's education.

We have included below a description of the areas where we will need this year. Please take some time to review its contents, and consider the areas where you could help. Please then fill in as many areas as you can, and return it to your child's teacher by _____. If you wish, you may indicate your order of preference.

If you have any questions about any of the volunteer areas, please feel free to call

_____.

Many thanks to those of you who have already volunteered, and many thanks to all who intend to do so.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

1. **HOT DOG DAY** - Volunteers are needed for two hours on Monday afternoon to help count money and two hours Friday morning to serve, once a month. The counting days and Hot Dog Days have now been decided on for the whole year, so you may choose those that are convenient for you. (You may already have done so.)
2. **SAFE ARRIVAL** - To help staff the Safe Arrival desk for approximately one hour a month. (You may already have filled in the form from the newsletter.)
3. **FUND RAISING** - All kinds of assistance under the direction of a chairperson.
4. **STUDENT NEWSPAPER** - Help students put together some of their written works, projects, and achievements.
5. **STUDENT ART WORK FRAMING** - Help to hang new pictures chosen by the classroom teachers, twice a year.
6. **LIBRARY ASSISTANCE** - Under the direction of the Librarian _____ shelving, carding and processing new books.
7. **EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS** - We have a storage shed on the school premises with emergency supplies and equipment and we are looking for items and will purchase new items if necessary.

8. **CHRISTMAS CONCERT** - Assistance is needed with direction to be given by the teachers.
9. **JUNE BARBECUE** - Help is needed for planning, baking and entertainment.
10. **SPORTS DAY** - Assistance is needed in May for collecting money for lunches, cooking, etc.
11. **INDIVIDUAL SPORTS ACTIVITIES** - Help is needed for car - pooling children, supervising, etc.
12. **CLASSROOM ASSISTANCE** - Help will be needed for field trips and any other special events organized by the teacher.
13. **HOSPITALITY** - Help is needed for such social events as Kindergarten Tea Teacher Appreciation Week, etc.
14. **SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE** - Assistance is needed under the direction of a PAC committee.
15. **PARENT PARKING PATROL** - Help to ensure safe driving drop - off and pickups.
16. **BOOK FAIR** - Help to set-up, sell, etc.
17. **RESOURCE PERSON** - If you have specific skills, training or life experience that you think would be of interest to the children, we will place you on our "Resource List".
18. **VOLUNTEER AT LARGE** - If none of the above areas suit you but you would like to offer your time to the school, we suggest you become a Volunteer at Large. We will call upon you during the year when you are needed - e.g., short-term committees, special family events.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO YOUR OLDEST CHILD'S

TEACHER BY: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

CHILDREN	DIVISION	GRADE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

PLEASE CHECK OFF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS IN WHICH YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Hot Dog Day | _____ | 10. Sports Day | _____ |
| 2. Safe Arrival | _____ | 11. Individual Sports Activities | _____ |
| 3. Fund Raising | _____ | 12. Classroom Assistance | _____ |
| 4. Student Newspaper/
Newsletter | _____ | 13. Hospitality | _____ |
| 5. Student Artwork Framing | _____ | 14. School Open House | _____ |
| 6. Library Assistance | _____ | 15. Parent Parking Patrol | _____ |
| 7. Earthquake Preparedness | _____ | 16. Book Fair | _____ |
| 8. Christmas Concert | _____ | 17. Resource Person | _____ |
| 9. June Barbecue | _____ | 18. Volunteer at Large | _____ |