
PAC + Treasury 101

— Vancouver DPAC Citywide —
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PAC 101

Nathan Wilkes

What is a PAC?

A PAC (Parent Advisory Council), through the BC School Act, is the official collective voice of the parents and guardians of a particular school's student community. The PAC will often:

- Provide input to the school.
- Learn about (and participate in) school-based activities.
- Advocate for all students of the school community.

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

What is DPAC?

DPAC represents the collective parent voice of all schools PACs within a particular district. In Vancouver, all school PACs are members of Vancouver DPAC automatically.

See <http://vancouverdpac.org>.

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

PAC executive officers

The PAC bylaws and constitution will determine the method, eligibility, and timing of the election of PAC executive officers, often constituting a:

- Chair
- Vice-chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary

By-laws will also specify who can vote. Regardless of the formal rules, it is best practice to announce the election (or AGM) date well in advance, encouraging as much parent or guardian participation as possible.

PAC succession planning

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

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

Always leave your school PAC better than when you arrived.

PAC meetings: best practices

- Publish an agenda, with timings or a set end time, ideally in advance.
- Ensure all parents have a voice (this is the chair's greatest responsibility).
- Arrange for child care, if appropriate.

PAC by-laws may dictate formal meeting protocol (eg Robert's), but if not the following monthly meeting motions are recommended:

- Approve the meeting agenda, after review + feedback.
- Approve last meeting's minutes, after review + corrections.

PAC meetings: best practices (2)

Also, take care (eg follow by-laws) with important decisions:

- Approve (by vote) and minute any budget or financial change.
- Ensure officer elections (often a case of recruitment and attrition) are handled with respect, following the bylaws carefully.
- Approve (by vote) and minute the addition or removal of signing officers for the banking accounts diligently.

Transparency and permanency of record are important principles.

The PAC online

Best practices:

- Register for a domain and maintain a website for agendas, minutes, and important information, such as the PAC's bylaws.
- Create a PAC email address (for continuity), either using gmail or the registered domain.
- Optionally, create Twitter or Facebook accounts (this varies by community and parent volunteers).

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

Some recommended online vendors (2016)

- Domain registrar: **Namecheap**
- Website host: **Squarespace**
- Email: **Google** or **Namecheap**
- Mailing list: **MailChimp**
- Storage: **Google Drive, Dropbox, or Box**

Use primary PAC email as “owner” of all cloud services, never a personal email address.

Advice: do not rely on technically-minded parents: use services that all future parents can use easily.

Starting or reviving a PAC

Sandra McPeake

Starting or reviving a PAC

Make connections immediately in September: this is when parents want to get involved! Have sign-up sheets ready for Sept 6th - perhaps a Welcome Coffee in the gym and be visible at Meet the Teacher night

Make sure you clearly communicate details for each PAC event - everyone likes to know what to expect - parents thinking about PAC are taking note.

Very important to communicate two things: babies and toddlers are very welcome at PAC meetings and ESL assistance is always available.

<http://bccpac.bc.ca/faqcategory/faq-pac/>

Some strategies...

Welcome parents to every event, thank parents for coming, give parents direction, always wear a name tag, mention the fun.

Make sure to get emails! Offer to send / follow up on any topic discussed.

Plan a 'What does PAC do?' session and invite interested parents to this when you have a large audience (perhaps winter holiday concert).

Strive to very clearly define each position - details of what needs to be done and the time commitment is very important to help parents decide to join.

Hesitations before engagement...

Parents will say they've thought about PAC but don't want to take on too much commitment - let them know PAC is flexible (if something comes up and you can't make it, that's ok! everyone helps everyone out).

Parents will say they've thought about PAC but don't know how to do it - let them know you work together as a team and you learn as you go!

Give a list of tasks that are specific and manageable (pick up cream and milk rather than help set up).

HAVE FUN!! It's PAC after all :)

Treasury 101

Nathan Wilkes

Gaming Grants

British Columbia PACs are eligible to apply for Gaming Grants from the BC government of approximately \$20 per student (as of 2016). Some key points:

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

Gaming Grants: what is eligible?

Eligible examples

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

Not eligible examples

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

Gaming Grants schedule

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

Gaming Grants: best practices

- Ask the school community (parents, guardians, teachers, staff) for project ideas to fund, ensuring that any project is allowable under the BC Gaming rules.
- Always pay any vendor directly, rather than through the school. This ensures appropriate separation of jurisdiction in case of audit.

Treasury: best practices (1)

- Utilize two bank accounts, one for gaming grants and one for unrestricted funds.
- Always use two signatures for cheques.
- Limit online bank access to reporting functions only.
- Present and publish monthly financial statements at PAC meetings.
- All PAC officers are normally signatories at the bank.
- Use a low cost bank, like VanCity.

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

Treasury: best practices (2)

- When electing a treasurer, some accounting experience is helpful but not mandatory.
- When in doubt, ask for help (DPAC will connect you with someone who can help)

Aim for maximum transparency and clarity.

Treasury: other

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

V. 1, October 2016

Please edit and improve, and teach future parents. Nathan WILKES, 20161012

Colophon