



## 2.08 Parent Advisory Councils

### 2. School Administration - Administrative Procedure Manual

The Pine Creek School Division supports the establishment of a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) within each of its public schools, recognizing that these partnerships can be structured in a variety of ways as outlined in the provincial document ***School Partnerships: A Guide for Parents, Schools and Communities***.

The Parent Advisory Council is governed by the Division's policies and procedures, as well as by individual school policies. Each PAC is elected at an annual meeting and holds regular open and public meetings throughout the school year. Each of these meetings is expected to provide a forum and voice for parents and communities to discuss and present views, encourage parent participation and liaise with school administration.

The Division recognizes that involving citizens in meaningful ways provides students, parents, schools, and the community with a variety of significant benefits including:

- a) a healthy learning environment for all students
- b) a more common knowledge of the goals and objectives of education
- c) a greater community understanding of Board policies and processes
- d) improved academic performance
- e) improved student attitudes and behaviour
- f) improved working environments for educators

The school division will only recognize one group as the Parent Council from each public school. Any other parent groups (e.g. play structure committee, camp committee) must be authorized subcommittees of the recognized Parent Council. PAC membership may consist of: parents, community members (other than parents), students, teacher representatives and the school principal. The school's Principal is considered an ex officio member of each PAC within the Pine Creek School Division.

Sample activities of any established parent advisory council include:

- participate in school improvement activities
- discuss school plans with administration
- inform parents and community members of school activities
- promote community interest, understanding and involvement
- advocate for quality education and well-being of children and youth
- inform parents and community members of school activities and volunteer opportunities
- coordinate specific events such as Safe Grad, fundraising, fairs, and lunch programs

Parent Councils and their authorized subcommittees involved in raising and collecting funds and the disbursement of such funds must adhere to the financial responsibility guidelines within this procedure.

Under the *Public Schools Act*, the Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for the development of policy and for the total operation of the Division, including instructional activities in schools. The Board delegates the responsibility for these processes to employed personnel. Parent Advisory Councils are supportive to these processes and work with the Principal and staff in ways that are consistent with Division policy and procedures, provincial regulations and provincial guidelines.

The Division values consultation with Parent Advisory Councils. PAC delegations are invited to at least one regular meeting of the Board annually as part of the Board's strategic planning and annual budget consultation processes.

### **Financial Responsibility of Parent Councils**

Given the public association between parent councils and their schools and the public perception that providing funds to a parent council is to the benefit of a school, the Pine Creek School Division requires parent councils to adhere to the same financial standards as expected of its public schools.

Therefore, parent councils must comply with the standards set out below:

1. All funds for a parent council in a school must be accounted for in one bank account.
2. Complete and accurate records for all receipts and disbursements must be maintained by the appointed Treasurer.
3. The Parent Council must have three designated officers authorized to sign cheques.
4. Accounts require two signatures on all cheques. No cheque will be made out to a signatory of that cheque.
5. The updated bank account information, including the signing authority, is to be communicated annually to the school Principal and when any changes have been made to the banking arrangements. The Principal will maintain this information on files in the school office.
6. All activities held and funds collected or raised must be under the authority of the parent council through a passed resolution. Activities and fundraisers must comply with divisional policies and procedures.
7. Funds should be deposited on the day they are received. When this is not practical, funds are to be safeguarded by the Treasurer of the parent council.
8. In making a deposit the Treasurer will:
  - a) prepare a bank deposit slip in duplicate

- b) ensure the Council's copy of the deposit is validated by bank stamp
  - c) enter deposits in the financial records
9. Disbursement of funds (payments) are to benefit the school or student body as determined by motion of the Parent Council. Disbursements for personal expenses or purchases that could be seen as a conflict of interest<sup>1</sup> for any member must be reviewed by the PAC with that member recusing<sup>2</sup> themselves from the matter.
- a) All disbursements must be made by cheque, numbered and issued sequentially. Debit card transactions are not permitted.
  - b) All cheques must have two signatures. The pre-signing of blank cheques is prohibited. PACs are to establish procedures for the issuing of cheques that comply with this important security measure.
  - c) All disbursements must be supported by invoices and receipts.
  - d) All invoices shall be checked for numeric accuracy.
  - e) Each cheque disbursement is to be recorded in the financial records in cheque number order so that a running bank balance can be maintained.
  - f) Other miscellaneous items, such as interest expense, interest income or cost of cheque supplies, are to be recorded in the financial records on a monthly basis.
10. The parent council will remain current with its finances via the following Financial Reporting procedures.
- a) The parent council Treasurer will be responsible for reconciling the bank statement with the financial records and cheque book balance on a monthly basis.
  - b) The Parent Council, including the school Principal will review the original bank statement, the bank reconciliation prepared by the Treasurer, summary of receipts and summary of disbursements at regular meetings to insure accuracy and confirm the presence of the reported funds in the bank account.
11. Once per school year<sup>3</sup>, or more often if the Parent Council passes a motion to review the organization's finances, the Parent Council will secure a competent person at arm's length<sup>4</sup> to the officers of the parent council to review the financial records of the parent council to confirm that the books are an accurate record. The results of the review will be shared with the Parent Council, including the school principal. The parent Council will ensure that the completed review is shared with the Secretary-Treasurer of the school division.
12. At the close of each fiscal year, the complete financial and business records, including meeting minutes and original bank statements will be retained at the school, in the care of the school Principal, for the period of time as required by the Records Management procedure.

<sup>1</sup> A **conflict of interest** is a situation in which a PAC member, or a relative of a PAC member, is perceived to be in a position to derive a personal or business benefit from actions or decisions made by the PAC member in their official capacity.

<sup>2</sup> To **recuse** from a matter is to withdraw from the discussion and vote due to a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest, thus leaving the matter to be decided by those who remain impartial.

<sup>3</sup> The **fiscal year** refers to the period of July 1st to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> **At arm's length** refers to a relationship between two people or parties who are independent of each other, and without some special relationship, such as being a relative, having another deal on the side or one party having complete control of the other.