



Langley District Parent Advisory Council

4875 - 222 Street,
Langley, B.C.,
Canada V3A 3Z7

Langley School District 604-534-7891 Local 238 • www.langleydpac.ca • office@langleydpac.ca

How should PACs hold elections for executive positions?

The First step: Check your PAC constitution and bylaws for direction,

The Bylaws will tell you when to hold your AGM, at which elections should be held for the PAC executive.

The bylaws will state what your executive positions are. Traditionally that includes a Chair or President, Vice-Chair or Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Members-At-Large. PACs will have SPC and DPAC Representatives and may also include other named positions such as Lunch Program, Fund Raising, etc. The bylaws will also determine who is eligible to run for these positions

PACs should form a nominations committee prior to the AGM to search out candidates. (A PAC president should not be on a nominating committee) Ideally at the AGM, a nominations committee should forward one name per position. If a committee finds more than one suitable candidate it should put forward their majority choice and then have another member of the committee nominate the other candidate "from the floor"

Determine that you have quorum to hold the meeting and the election (quorum must be maintained until the elections are complete, if quorum is lost during the election process the meeting shall be suspended until quorum is regained. Any elections made with a quorum stand, any election after a quorum is lost is invalid.

The Chair of the nominations committee should conduct the election

The bylaws may allow an election by show of hands but usually elections are held by secret ballot. A secret ballot preserves the anonymity of the voter and allows the voter to vote for whomever they choose, even for an eligible person who has not been nominated publicly.

Legislation (School Act) requires that DPAC Reps and SPC members are always elected by secret ballot. These positions cannot be appointed. If a vacancy occurs during a term, a replacement must also be elected (in a special general meeting).

Preparing for a ballot vote

- As a rule of thumb, your council should always be prepared to conduct a ballot vote at a meeting. Whether or not your bylaws say so, members can request a ballot vote on any motion or election. All this requires is mover and a second, it is not a debatable motion
- Come to the meeting prepared with supplies, ballot paper, pens etc.
- Appoint two members, as “tellers”, to distribute, collect, and count the ballots.

Individual or Slate elections

- In smaller groups slate elections can be held. On a single ballot all the positions are listed in the order they are listed in the bylaws or, in rank, beginning with the highest office first. The Chair calls out the nominees in this order stopping long enough for the voters to write down their choice. A candidate can run for any or all positions and if elected to multiple positions is given the choice of which office to take.
- In individual elections conduct elections for different positions, separately, in the order in which the positions are listed in the bylaws.

Requesting nominations

- State the position or positions to be filled, and state the nominee from the nominations committee first then call for nominations “from the floor”. Nominations do not need to be seconded.
- When no further nominations are forthcoming, declare nominations closed.
- If there is only one candidate for a position, it is important to still hold the ballot election. This preserves the anonymity of the voter and allows the voter to vote for whomever they choose, even for an eligible person who has not been nominated publicly
- A voter casts their ballot for one of the nominees or any other eligible member. (Remember any eligible member can receive votes, they do not need to be nominated beforehand.)

If more than one SPC candidate is a PAC executive member

- One of the three representatives to the SPC must be a PAC executive member [School Act, s. 8.1(4)]. The other two (or either one of them) may also be PAC executive members or not.
- If more than one SPC candidate is a PAC executive member, then conduct the SPC election in two rounds.
- First, conduct the election for the person who will act as the PAC executive representative. Then conduct the election for the other two representatives. The unsuccessful candidates the first round may enter the second round.

Appointing scrutineers (or tellers)

- Appoint tellers to conduct the election and counting the ballots.

Taking the vote

- Distribute one blank ballot to each voting member present, including the chair.
- A slate ballot should list each position by name, if there are more than one similar position ie member at large, then the ballot should have corresponding number of numbered spots to write in the voters choice
- Remind members how many candidates they may vote for.
- Call out the list of nominees, in the order they were nominated beginning with the nominations committee choice.
- Members will write the names of the candidates they wish to vote for on the ballot,
- Members are not required to vote for all positions, only those they wish to.
- A member may vote for any eligible member of PAC and are not limited to only the nominees

Counting Ballots

- The tellers will collect and count the ballots, blank ballots are not counted. If a name is incorrectly written, it should be counted if the voter's intention is clear.
- On a slate ballot, each position on the ballot slip is considered a separate election and the total number of votes cast is recorded for each position. Each position winner must receive a majority of 50% plus one of votes cast for that position.
- The tellers will report the result to the chair who will announce it to the meeting.
- A candidate must receive 50% plus 1 of the votes cast (excluding blank ballots) to be elected. Any candidate who does not receive the required number of votes is not elected, even if this results in a position not being filled.
- If a position is not won by majority then a second election takes place with the same nominees, no one drops off the ballot. (it could be that the low vote-getter in the first round could become the best alternative in a second election.
- A motion is usually called for to destroy the ballots after the election.

What if there are not enough candidates to warrant an election?

- You must conduct the ballot vote anyway! Under the School Act, a secret ballot vote for PAC representatives to the SPC and DPAC is mandatory. A PAC may not appoint or acclaim a parent to any of these positions. [School Act, s. 8(6)]
- The purpose of the ballot vote is to ensure fairness and to allow members to exercise their choice privately, without influence from others. Even with enough candidates, a ballot vote may result in one or more candidates not being elected and a position remaining vacant. This is the will of the membership, expressed secretly and without influence.

Filling a vacancy

- If a position is vacant after an election, or becomes vacant part way through a term, consult your PAC bylaws for direction on filling vacancies.
- It is always preferable to hold an election at a general meeting to fill a vacancy, avoid appointing successors by committee. If a position remains vacant after an election at a general meeting then that is the will of the members at the time. The position should remain empty until the next opportunity to elect at a general meeting.
- Subject to the bylaws, candidates elected to fill a vacancy hold office for the remainder of the term (until the next agm)
- Keep in mind that an election to fill a vacancy on SPC or DPAC must be done by secret ballot.
- Under the School Act, the school board may appoint a person to fill a vacancy on a school planning council. [School Act, s. 8.1(5)]

Taking Office

- The bylaws should indicate the dates of the term of office. If the term is not described in the bylaws the term begins immediately upon election and ends with the election of a successor at the following year's agm.

Other Information

- The bylaws should always provide clear rules as to the process that should be taken in elections. If the bylaws do not give clear direction then the PAC should work together to revise them. If the bylaws are vague on elections check and see if they adopt rules for order. Generally the bylaws refer to Roberts Rules of Order or a similar publication. Roberts Rules provides clear direction on how to conduct your elections.
- Contact your DPAC liason for assistance for further information or clarification.