

## **PARENT/ADVISORY COUNCILS**

This administrative procedure addresses guidelines for the formation, organization and operation of Parent Advisory Councils (PAC) within the schools of the Swan Valley School Division.

### **SVSD Parent Advisory Council (PAC) operations are predicated by the following beliefs:**

1. The parent organization, so constituted, exists for the sole purpose of sustaining and enhancing a **positive home/school relationship**. A positive home/school relationship is critical to the success of student learners. The organization and the school must therefore commit and be accountable to this goal in their ongoing communications and activity.
2. It is expected in the ongoing discussion, activities and decision making of the Parent Advisory Council that such will be conducted always with a view to acting in the interests of **all children** in the school.

### **The Parent Advisory Council Mandate**

The Parent Advisory Council will work in cooperation with school staff, trustees, parents and community within the following mandate:

1. As an advisory structure to administrator and staff, presenting parental and community perspectives and concerns on issues related to programs, school planning and the general management of the school.
2. As a means of disseminating information about the school and parental priorities and promoting community understanding and involvement in the school.
3. As a liaison between the school, parents, community and other school support organizations for the purpose of information sharing and cooperation.
4. As an advisory structure to the school in matters relating to the School Division.
5. As a partner with the school in projects and activities which are identified by the school in its planning priorities.

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**Roles and Responsibilities of the Parent Advisory Council:**

1. To operate in accordance with Manitoba Education and Swan Valley School Division Policies regarding school partnerships.
2. May advise the administration on school matters as they pertain to school improvement, policies, organization and activities relevant to and involving the school community.
3. May participate in the development of the school and division improvement plans.
4. May participate in school reviews and receive feedback on actions taken (i.e. parent, and/or student school climate survey)
5. To promote community interest, understanding and involvement in the school.
6. To facilitate ongoing communication with all parents and guardians of the student enrolled in the school and with community members.
7. To establish a means of regular accountability to the school and community for involvement, activities, Parent Advisory Council expenditures and recommendations.
8. To engage in ongoing parental leadership development.
9. As requested, may provide recommendations to the school board with respect to the process of hiring and assigning principals.

The Board of Trustees will acknowledge annually one representative parent body for that school as being the legitimate Advisory Council for that school.

All parents within a school community must have an opportunity to become part of the Parent Advisory Council. Legitimacy is to be determined through the annual election of Parent Advisory Council members in accordance with an adopted organizational constitution.

An annual organizational meeting, advertised widely to the school community, must be held prior to November 30<sup>th</sup> of the academic school year.



The administrator is available to assist with the organization, planning and promotion of this meeting, which will host the formation of the Parent Advisory Council for the current academic year.

In order to be considered as an annual Parent Advisory Council organizational meeting at least seven parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school must be in attendance, plus the school administrator.

All parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school are eligible to stand for election. Parent Advisory Council members are elected through either ballot or acclamation.

The composition of the Parent Advisory Council should include a majority of parents with the administrator as advisor and at least one member of the teaching staff as a staff representative. Community membership is encouraged.

The order of business for this annual meeting shall be as follows:

1. Election of Parent Advisory Council members.
2. Election of Parent Advisory Council executive by the Parent Advisory Council members as outlined in the school's Parent Advisory Council Constitution. The administrator may preside over the first portion of the meeting until Council membership has been determined and an executive chosen at which time the meeting will be handed over to the Parent Advisory Council.  
It is suggested that the executive include a chair or president, vice-chair or vice-president, treasurer and secretary, the roles and responsibilities of which are clearly outlined within the adopted Constitution.
3. The newly elected chair or president will assume the chair of the meeting and preside over the election of the remaining executive positions.
4. The elected secretary will assume responsibility for recording the minutes of meetings and will read the minutes of the last regular meeting and the last annual meeting, if such are available, for adoption by the group assembled.
5. An accounting record of the funds for the organization is to be developed, in accordance with SVSD accounting requirements, such that the books of the organization can be reviewed on an annual basis (The Division is available in this area. Please refer to Financial Management Handbook for SVSD Parent Advisory Councils). The Treasurer will assume responsibility for all financial



transactions on behalf of the school Parent Advisory Council in compliance with SVSD policy.

Together with the chair or president, the treasurer shall arrange for a bank account in the name of the organization. The chair/president, treasurer and vice-chair/vice-president will serve as signing officers for the organization. All cheques must be signed by two of the three authorized executive members.

6. A letter from the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) following the annual meeting shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees requesting formal recognition as the Advisory Council for the school during the current academic year and should include the name of the organization, the names and addresses of the newly elected executive and a schedule outlining regular meetings.

A copy of the annual organizational meeting minutes and the Parent Advisory Council Constitution should be attached to this communication. An annual report outlining PAC activities during the previous academic year may also accompany this communication.

### **Parent Advisory Council Operations:**

1. The Parent Advisory Council shall operate from an approved constitution that includes provision for regular review.
2. The Parent Advisory Council will hold a minimum of three regularly advertised open meetings within the academic year.
3. The Parent Advisory Council shall conduct its meetings according to procedures which should include; a published agenda for the meeting, the maintenance and adoption of minutes and a treasurer's report on the current state of funds of the PAC.
4. When deciding on projects and activities for the school, the Council must consult with the administrator so as to ensure that Division requirements and school priorities are considered. The Parent Advisory Council is to have input into the development of school plans such that priorities are mutually understood.
5. When undertaking fund-raising projects, the Council must seek input from the administrator as to Divisional parameters and policy, as fund-raising is ultimately done in the school's name and reaches a common community.

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6. On an annual basis, the Council should arrange for a review of its finances in accordance with Division Policy. Copies of the approved annual financial statement and the written report of the annual financial review shall be submitted to the Swam Valley School Division Board of Trustees.
  7. For the annual organizational meeting, the previous Parent Advisory Council should prepare a report to be submitted to the annual meeting and to the Board of Trustees as to its activities during the academic year. Suggestions for Board consideration may form a part of this report once they have been approved by the new Parent Advisory Council.

### **The Role of the School Division with Parent Councils**

The School Division shall endeavor to make available to Parent Councils the information they require to provide effective input to their school. The Division's Improvement Plan, program priorities, procedures, budget and financial information and Policy Manual shall be made available through the SVSD website and the school.

The Superintendent and other senior staff shall make themselves available to attend Council meetings, upon request, to provide information and receive input.

Trustees are available to attend Parent Council meetings so as to provide and receive input. The local Trustee is welcome to attend all school Parent Council meetings. Trustees shall inform the Board as to their attendance at Parent Advisory Council meetings and make a brief report regarding Council activities.

The Board shall entertain a request from a Parent Council to attend a Board meeting and make a presentation as per procedures for receiving delegations.

The Board will receive an annual report from each Parent Advisory Council and will acknowledge the report by providing feedback. This report will be as indicated previously.

The Board shall invite the Parent Council to have input into the annual Division improvement planning.

**The Role of the Administrator with the School's Parent Advisory Council:**

With input from teachers, learning support staff, students and Parent Advisory Councils, the principal shall develop school improvement plans in keeping with the mandates, priorities and direction of Manitoba Education and the approved Swan Valley School Division Improvement Plan.

The administrator shall develop school based procedures for the local Parent Advisory Council and make provision for PAC correspondence and minutes to be accommodated within the school administrative area.

The administrator shall serve as an advisor to the Parent Advisory Council and arrange for teacher representation to the PAC.

The administrator will endeavor to ensure the Parent Advisory Council has access to the school level information required to provide adequate input to the school on issues of program, procedure and resource utilization.

The administrator shall facilitate communication between and among the school board, senior administration, school staff, parents and community and shall develop school level communication procedures so as to ensure a good public relations image of the school in the community.

**The Role of Teachers with the Parent Advisory Council in their School:**

Teachers shall support the establishment of Parent Advisory Councils as an integral part of the school and will strive to maintain positive communication by providing information, as requested, and responding to issues and concerns raised by the PAC. A teacher representative shall be named to attend Parent Advisory Council meetings. Teachers are welcome to attend regular Parent Advisory Council meetings as all meetings are open