

Building String PAC's Presentation Overview - October 1st 2025

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1. Role of PACs & DPAC in supporting schools and students

- Every school in B.C. has a PAC. It's written in the school act. All Parents and guardians of children enrolled at the school are automatic members
- DPAC represents all West Vancouver PACs. It provides resources, training, and advocacy, collaborating with the school district to share parent perspectives and support a positive learning environment
- BCCPAC provides provincial-level resources and advocacy.

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2. PAC Foundations and Governance

Constitution and Bylaws — The PAC “Rule” book.

- They clearly define how meetings are run, how elections happen, and how money is handled.
- Make sure your PAC exec has read and understands them clearly.
- Refer to them when making decisions.
- Review and update them every few years so they stay relevant. A copy can be found at the SBO and should be on the parent pages of the school website. Many PAC's recently updated this document.

Understanding your PAC's financial responsibilities (bank accounts, signing officers, audits)

- PACs manage funds on behalf of the school community — transparency is key. A yearly **PAC budget** is created in collaboration with the school admin that is presented to parents and then voted on at the annual general meeting.
- Follow Best practices as presented in the Treasurer's handbook and or your bylaws. You could run into issues if you are audited and risk losing your gaming grant.
- Stick to your budget but remember it is a living document that can be changed by a vote at a general meeting.
- Manage PAC funds responsibly
 - Transparency builds trust:
 - Share budgets and spending reports at general meetings.
 - Conduct annual financial reviews/audits and present at AGM. (written in many bylaws)
- Parents should feel confident that funds are being used **fairly and wisely** for student benefit.

Roles & Responsibilities

- The PAC Executives represent the collective voice of all parents and **collaborates** with school administrators to support the school's goals.
- The Pac exec does not work in isolation and make decisions without consulting the principal and the general PAC population
- Provide job descriptions and checklists for each role. this helps with succession planning as well
- Members-at-Large / Committee Leads: Bring in new energy and share the workload.

Committees (Grad, Lunar New year, Nowruz, After school programs)

- Fall under the umbrella of the PAC and should report to the PAC at general meetings
- Committees work in collaboration with the Pac EXEC and Principal to ensure goals are met and expectations are kept in check.
- They meet regularly and provide a clear plan of events, a timeline and a budget. committees should update what's happening at monthly pac meetings
- The PAC will hold in trust any funds raised by committees which will be documented in the budget and transparent for all to see.
- Extra funds will be held in trust to be used the following year for that event or voted on in a PAC meeting to be used for a different purpose.

Collaborating with administration and staff in a healthy way

- Healthy PAC–Admin relationships are built on **mutual respect and clear boundaries**.
- PACs represent the **parent voice**; Admin represents the **school's operational needs**. Pac's have to help manage expectations: if a principal says no, it's often because they understand what is feasible within school resources and policies. Ask for clarification if needed.
- Collaborate on shared goals: student success, school culture, community engagement.
- The chair should Establish regular communication with the principal—by email or monthly meetings—and be clear and specific about their requests.
- Ensure principal is informed and included in any communication that is sent out.
- If disagreements arise, approach with **partnership language**: *"How can we work together to support students?"*

3. Running Effective PAC Meetings

Effective PAC and Executive meetings are structured, respectful, and purposeful. They run on clear agendas, encourage broad participation, and result in decisions that are well-documented and shared.

- PAC Executive and general meetings are run by the PAC and administrators are invited guests. Typically, the chair meets with principal, which informs the executive meeting which sets the agenda and priorities for the general meeting.

Agenda creation — keeping meetings focused and timely

- Distribute agendas in advance of meetings
- Include Chair's, Principal's, and Treasurer's reports, plus committee updates.
- Assign time limits to each report or discussion item.
- Ensure the room is welcoming and inclusive: seating arranged to face the front, treats available, and options like virtual attendance or childcare to increase participation.
- Adding an interesting guest speaker can boost turnout.
- Don't forget to acknowledge and recognize parent contributions publicly → encourages more participation.

Robert's Rules / simplified meeting procedures

- Simplify Meeting Procedures (Robert's Rules Lite) **Motion** → **Second** → **Discussion** → **Vote**.
- **If discussions run long or stall, table the topic and revisit later or assign to a subcommittee.**

Managing conflict and tricky conversations respectfully

- Common Hot Topics: hot lunch or fundraising priorities can be sensitive topics. Be sure to be clear and transparent and include all parents in the decision-making process. Sometimes tough decisions must be made, be able to explain why they are being made
- The Chair sets ground rules at meetings; respect, one speaker at a time, stay on topic.
- Acknowledge concerns, then redirect to group input (*"Thanks, let's hear other views."*).
- If conflict escalates, pause: table the issue and bring back with options.
- Use **active listening** and **neutral language** (*"I hear that's important; let's add it to the next agenda if we can't resolve it today."*).

Encouraging broad parent participation (not the same few voices every time)

- survey parents for meeting times
- Prevent the same few voices from dominating.
- Try **roundtable check-ins**: one quick comment per person.

- Offer alternative input formats: surveys, sticky notes, online polls.
- Publicly acknowledge contributions to encourage more engagement.

Record and distributing minutes

- Use a **simple template**: date, attendees, motions/decisions, action items.
- Summarize **what was decided, not every word said**.
- Distribute minutes within a week, while the meeting is fresh.
- Share minutes in a central, accessible place (school website, PAC email, WhatsApp)

4. Fundraising in Today's Climate

Fundraising should feel meaningful, inclusive, manageable and align with school goals in consultation with school admin. When it's well-planned and transparent, it not only raises money but also strengthens the school community.

Moving away from "fundraising fatigue" — fewer, bigger-impact initiatives

- Parents are busy and don't want to feel "nickel-and-dimed."
- Instead of running small fundraisers all year, focus on **fewer initiatives with bigger impact**. Examples: annual gala, fun run, read-a-thon, spring fling community event. Look at Cypress Park Funding futures website. (upcoming workshop with Natalie Quilty to set this up for your PAC)
- Pair fundraising with **community-building** so it feels rewarding, not just about money.

Inclusive fundraising (low/no-cost events, equity considerations)

- Not all families can contribute financially — ensure every parent and student feels welcome.
- Offer **low/no-cost events** like potlucks, movie nights, or family games nights.
- Be mindful of equity: avoid fundraisers that highlight financial differences (e.g., "who sells the most").
- Acknowledge **non-financial contributions**: time, skills, or donations in kind.

Navigating gaming grants and reporting

- Gaming Grants provide significant support but come with rules:
- Funds must directly benefit students (e.g., equipment, performances, field trips).
- Accurate bookkeeping and clear reporting are essential.
- Treasurer should keep a **separate line item** for gaming funds in financial reports.
- Use DPAC and BCCPAC resources for templates and deadlines.

Leveraging community/business partnerships

- Tap into **local businesses** for sponsorships, silent auction donations, or event partnerships.
- Frame it as a **win-win**: businesses get community visibility and goodwill.
- Invite community organizations (libraries, recreation centers, cultural groups) to co-host events.
- Always publicly recognize and thank partners — builds long-term relationships.

Digital fundraising tools

- Online platforms (e.g., munch a lunch , square etc make it easy for busy families to participate.
- Digital payments = transparency + convenience.
- Use social media and school newsletters to promote fundraising campaigns.
- Be mindful of privacy: ensure tools are secure and align with school district policies.

5. Recruiting & Retaining Volunteers

Declining volunteerism and increasing demands on fewer people is a very real challenge for PACs and dpacs!—especially now when many parents are juggling work, multiple kids’ activities, and just overall life fatigue

1. Shift the Mindset

- Focus on **quality over quantity** — it’s okay to do fewer things well.
- Shifting from “we need help” to “we have opportunities”
- Matching parents to roles that suit their skills and time

2. Rethink the Ask

- Avoid burnout — micro-volunteering & event-based helpers
- Break jobs into small, specific tasks 20 mins set upon Friday
- Short-term commitments
- Make it clear & manageable Provide job descriptions and a plan of the event

4. Make It Social & Fun

- Buddy system
- Community over chores
- Appreciate volunteers often — recognition keeps people coming back.

5. Meet Parents Where They Are

- Use multiple channels to reach out (email, WhatsApp, posters)
- Accommodate busy parents. Record meetings for treasurer. create jobs that can done at home
- Show impact on kids
- Avoid guilt messaging

6. Incentives & Perks

- Raffles, snacks, coffee
- Kid-friendly options
- babysitting

7. Build a Volunteer Pipeline

- Personal invites
- Engage new & “graduating” parents
- Kindie and ELL events
- Mentorship to pass on experience

6. Building Community & Supporting Students

PACs build more than funds — they build **community, belonging, and a supportive environment** where all students thrive

Hosting events that build connection (not just fundraise)

- Not every PAC activity needs to raise money.
- **Connection events** strengthen the school community and create a sense of belonging.
- These events make families feel valued and more likely to engage in PAC activities later.

Advocating for inclusion, accessibility, and cultural sensitivity

- PACs should reflect the **diverse voices** in their school community.

Mental health and wellness — how PACs can support the school environment

Fund or support wellness initiatives (guest speakers, mindfulness programs, parent education workshops).

- Advocate for a **safe, welcoming environment** where every child feels they belong.
- Support teachers and staff well-being too — appreciation gestures make a difference. staff appreciation day
- Partner with community organizations for resources and expertise