

# CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS FOR ASPENWOOD ELEMENTARY PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

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### SECTION 1 NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Aspenwood Elementary Parent Advisory Council, of School District 43 (Coquitlam), from now on referred to as the "PAC" or "APAC".

The PAC will operate as a non-profit organization with no personal financial benefit and shall conduct business without bias toward race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, financial status, or politics.

The PAC has been established with the authority granted in Bill 67 – 1989 School Act, Part 2, Section 7 and 8 and Bill 34, the School Amendment Act – 2002.

### SECTION 2 MISSION STATEMENT

APAC's mission is to advocate for excellence in education, the safety and well-being of our students and for the effective meaningful involvement of parents as partners.

### SECTION 3 OBJECTIVES (PURPOSE) OF THE PAC

The APAC is made up of the parents and guardians of students enrolled at Aspenwood Elementary School, and can only function because of dedicated volunteers. The role of the PAC Executive is to carry out the tasks which sustain the PAC and ensure the active and informed participation of parents in enhancing a healthy school community.

The objectives of the APAC are:

1. To support, encourage and improve the quality of education and the well-being of students of Aspenwood.
2. To provide a forum and the opportunity for the membership to openly review and discuss any matter related to the school (e.g. programs, policies, plans and activities) as stipulated in the School Act, and to relay suggestions or concerns to the Principal, staff, or other associated organizations.

*Note: The PAC does not discuss school personnel, nor individual students and parents. See 'Code of Conduct' section below.*

3. To promote effective communication and cooperation between the home and school, with respect to the education of the children.
4. To organize fundraising activities and/or revenue to fund special events, projects, activities, materials, etc. that directly impact the well-being of the Aspenwood community, as outlined in the PAC budget.
5. To organize PAC activities and events.
6. To promote the involvement of parents and other community members in PAC activities and events.
7. To provide educational opportunities for parents, as determined each year by the PAC.
8. To prepare an annual operating budget, and manage all PAC funds in accordance with the budget. (See separate Finances section)
9. To foster citizenship and promote a sense of social responsibility in the school community.

**SECTION 4 MEMBERSHIP**

Aspenwood PAC members are comprised of:

1. All parents and legal guardians of students registered at Aspenwood Elementary School. They shall be voting members of the group.
- AND
2. All administration and staff (teaching and non-teaching) of Aspenwood Elementary School. They shall be non-voting members of the group.

Aspenwood faculty that have students enrolled at Aspenwood are considered voting members; and are entitled to vote providing that the item being voted on does not pose a conflict of interest to their role as staff at Aspenwood.

Voting members are entitled to one vote per family, irrespective of the number of children enrolled at Aspenwood.

Students are welcome to attend and speak at PAC meetings, but are not entitled to vote.

**SECTION 5 GENERAL MEETINGS**

The Executive will determine a schedule of general meetings for the year. General meetings are for the purpose of conducting PAC business and discussion of issues as outlined in the objectives of the PAC, Section 3.

Members should meet each month during the school year to conduct current and on going business. The PAC should receive notice of a general meeting along with an agenda a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

Any member wishing to place an item on the agenda of a general meeting shall contact the Chair a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the meeting with their request. The member or a designate is then required to attend the meeting to speak to this agenda item.

Each member attending a meeting shall sign the Attendance Record so that a quorum and their eligibility to vote may be determined and recorded for any audit of PAC records. Each attendee name will be recorded for the purposes of the meeting minutes, however votes are counted only one per family.

Meetings will be conducted efficiently and with fairness to the members present.

The Principal and at least one staff member should attend meetings. This is encouraged but not mandatory to establish a quorum.

If procedural problems should arise, 'Robert's Rules of Order' will be used to resolve the situation, unless they are in conflict with the guidelines in the Constitution.

The Executive, with a minimum seven (7) days' notice, may call an extraordinary or 'special' meeting. These meetings are designed to address only one or two items of urgent business that cannot wait until the regular general meeting.

## **SECTION 6 VOTING & QUORUM**

The voting members present at any duly called General Meeting shall constitute a quorum. Members must be present at the meeting in order to vote. Voting by proxy is not permitted.

All matters voted on by the members shall be decided by a majority vote; with the following exceptions that will require a two-thirds (2/3) majority:

1. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws
2. Approval of the annual budget
3. Removal of an Executive member

All matters voted on by the members shall be decided by a show of hands, except when a secret ballot is ruled by the Executive or requested by any member at a general meeting.

In the event of a tie, a secondary vote will be conducted; and in the event of a second tie, the motion will be defeated.

## **SECTION 7 ELECTIONS**

The Executive positions will be filled via an election at the PAC meeting held in May or June.

### ***Term of Office for Executive***

The length of term for Executive positions shall be limited to two (2) consecutive years for any one office.

However, consideration shall be given to continuity of the elected PAC Executive officers. If there is no nomination for an Executive position that needs to be replaced, then the PAC may extend the term of the outgoing officer by one (1) year by a majority vote at the last meeting in June.

A member cannot occupy more than one Executive position at any given time.

Family members cannot occupy more than one Executive position at any given time.

A person may occupy a different Executive position immediately following their current Executive term, or run for the same Executive position after a minimum of one (1) year absence.

Term of Office shall take effect July 1 and end as of June 30.

### ***Nominations for Executive Members***

An adhoc 'Nominations Committee' shall be appointed annually before the Annual General Meeting in preparation for the election of a new Executive. This committee receives and presents the list of nominations at the last meeting of the year.

A letter of notice for nominations should be distributed to all families in the school at least thirty (30) days prior to the last meeting of the year.

Nominations may be received up to and during the last meeting of the year until declared closed by the Chair.

## **SECTION 8 PAC EXECUTIVE**

The PAC shall elect the Executive members from the voting members for each school year. Number and position of Executive members should be determined by local organizational needs, but should include the following:

### ***The Chair***

- Shall convene and preside at all membership, special and Executive meetings.
- Prepare an agenda for all meetings.
- Shall appoint committees where authorized to do so by the executive or membership
- Shall take such actions or ensure that such actions are taken by others to achieve the objectives and purpose of the organization.
- Will be one of the three signing officers of the Executive as per Section 14.
- Shall participate in forming, updating or reviewing the PAC yearly budget.

### ***The Vice Chair***

- Will assume the responsibilities of the Chair in the Chair's absence.
- Accept extra duties as required.

(Note: The Chair and Vice Chair positions may be replaced by two Co-Chair positions with the responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair distributed between the two Co-Chairs)

### ***The Treasurer***

- Will be responsible for and report on the accounts of the organization at each general meeting.
- Will be one of the three signing officers of the Executive as per Section 14.
- Will prepare an annual financial report for PAC members as per Section 14.
- Will assist the Executive with a draft budget and tentative plan of expenditures as per Section 14.
- Will manage and report on separate accounts for both the general PAC funds and PAC Gaming funds.

### ***The Secretary***

- Will record and post or distribute the minutes of general, special and Executive meetings.
- Will issue and receive correspondence on behalf of the organization.
- Will maintain accurate records for the PAC.

### ***District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) Representative***

- Shall attend DPAC meetings or designate another elected officer of the PAC who attends on their behalf, and report to the PAC regarding issues discussed.
- Shall seek input from the PAC for presentation at DPAC meetings, and shall vote the PAC's wishes at DPAC meetings.
- Shall maintain the PAC's information binders with DPAC meeting minutes and materials provided from DPAC, BCCPAC, and Ministry of Education, and make them readily available to the general membership.

### ***Past Chairperson / Past Executive (optional)***

- Shall help smooth transition between Chairpersons (act as consultant).
- Shall assist and advise the council.
- Shall chair the Nominations Committee as per Section 7.

### ***Additional Officers***

Titles and duties of additional officers may be added as determined by the needs of the PAC.

### ***Executive Meetings***

The Executive will determine a schedule for executive meetings.

### ***Vacancy on Executive***

If any officer resigns during a term of office or if any office is not filled at the time of elections, the PAC Executive may appoint someone to fill the vacancy until the next election.

(Note: The responsibilities listed above are the minimum responsibilities of each Executive position as required by the School Act. The Executive may create a separate document listing job descriptions for all PAC Executive and Committee roles.)

All Executive members must return all PAC documents to the school at the end of their term.

Each Executive member must sign the 'Statement of Understanding' document. (Addendum A)

## **SECTION 9 SCHOOL PLANNING COUNCIL**

Three (3) members of the PAC, one of whom must be a PAC executive member, will be elected annually to represent parents on the School Planning Council (SPC).

The Ministry of Education describes the SPC as a body of parents, teachers and principals that work to develop school plans to improve student achievement. School planning councils are advisory bodies; and their major responsibility is to develop, monitor and review school plans for student achievement in consultation with the school community.

The duties of the School Planning Council are to:

1. Strive to be informed about issues facing school planning councils.
2. Take direction from the general PAC membership and act in the best interests of parents and students.
3. Attend all SPC meetings to represent and speak on behalf of the PAC.
4. Report back to the PAC at general meetings with reliable, non-confidential information.
5. Be collaborative and respectful, and abide by the rulings of the SPC Chairperson.

SPC members may not be employed by any School District; and members shall occupy this position for one year.

The election of these members must take place by secret ballot at the last meeting of the year, even if only one candidate is running. This is intended to ensure fairness and allow members to exercise their choice privately and without the influence or judgement of others. The process is legislated as follows:

1. The PAC will appoint two members, called "tellers" to distribute, collect, count the ballots and report the vote to the Chair.
2. The election will require at least two ballots – the first for the election of the Executive SPC representative and the second for the remaining two positions.
3. One blank ballot will be given to each eligible voting member. The Chair can vote by ballot and nominated members can vote for themselves.
4. The name(s) of the candidate(s) will be written by the member onto the ballot. If a name is incorrectly written, it should still be counted if the voter's intention is clear.
5. The member will write a "yes" or "no" beside each of the candidate names on the ballot. A blank beside the name indicates an abstention and is therefore not counted within the vote tally.
6. When the tellers collect and count the ballots, two or more filled out ballots folded together

are recorded as illegal votes. A filled out ballot will be counted if it is folded with a blank ballot.

7. It is possible that a ballot may not elect any candidates, and further balloting is required.
8. The first ballot will include only the name(s) of Executive officers who have accepted nomination.
9. Only one "yes" can be recorded on the ballot for PAC Executive SPC representative. The rest of the candidates must be marked "no". More than one "yes" will make the ballot void.
10. When the PAC Executive SPC representative has been elected, nominations for the other two representatives will be taken. Unsuccessful candidates from the PAC Executive SPC election can stand again.
11. On the ballot for the other two PAC-SPC representatives, only two "yes" votes can be written on any ballot, more than two "yes" votes will make that ballot void.
12. A simple majority of members actually voting is required for elections. That is, when votes are tallied there are more votes for (yes) than against (no), with blanks or abstentions not contributing to the total of votes cast.
13. A majority vote is required for election and as a minimum will be 50% plus one of legal ballots cast.
14. If there is no majority of "yes" votes over "no" votes for any candidate, then the election has failed and the Chair announces "no election". New nominations are taken and another secret ballot held.
15. When balloting for the PAC Executive SPC representative, the highest majority number will be elected; for the ballot of the two other PAC-SPC reps, the two highest majority numbers will be elected.
16. When all balloting is completed, a motion will be made to destroy the ballots.

The Tellers' report should follow this format:

Number of votes cast.....	17
Necessary for election (majority) .....	9
Candidate A received.....	12
Candidate B received .....	11
Candidate C received .....	6, etc.
Illegal Votes	
One ballot containing two for Candidate C folded together, rejected.....	1
One ballot containing two "yes" votes for Executive SPC, rejected.....	1

The duties of the PAC School Planning Council are as follows:

- Strive to be informed about issues facing school planning councils.
- Take direction from the general PAC membership and act in the best interests of parents and students.
- Attend all SPC meetings to represent and speak on behalf of the PAC.
- Report back to the PAC at general meetings, but not disclose information designated as confidential – communicating only reliable information.
- Conduct SPC business in a collaborative and respectful manner and abide by the rulings of the Chairperson.
- Work to ensure that issues are resolved by due process.
- Be bound by the PAC Code of Conduct.

## SECTION 10 COMMITTEES

Committees are responsible to the Executive.

Committee member roles will be filled at the June meeting through a volunteer process. If there are too many volunteers for any given committee, then a vote by the members will decide which members will sit on that committee.

Additional committees may be established through the year by the Executive or upon recommendation of the general membership for set purposes. The members of those committees will be appointed by the Chair, after consultation with the Executive. The executive shall establish specific guidelines for each committee.

A member will reside on a given committee as long as the committee requires – this may be as short as a few days or through the entire year.

A member can reside on any number of PAC committees; however the PAC is encouraged to help share the workload among various parents.

A committee member may reside on this committee for multiple consecutive terms; however the PAC is encouraged to consider long term planning in the selection of committees and their members, and ensuring that 'seasoned' PAC members are partnered with 'new' PAC members for continuity year to year.

All committee members must return all PAC documents to the school at the end of their term.

Each committee 'representative'/lead must sign the 'Statement of Understanding' document.  
(Addendum A)

## **SECTION 11 REMOVAL OF AN EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR MEMBER OF A COMMITTEE**

Breaching the Code of Conduct, Section 17 may be cause for removal of an Executive officer or a committee member.

The removal of an Executive member would be done as a motion to rescind their election and it may be carried out by:

1. A two-thirds vote of the PAC Executive attended by three-quarters of the Executive (excluding the Executive member in question). The Executive member in question shall receive seven (7) days written notice of the motion prior to the meeting.  
OR
2. A majority vote of voting members at a duly called general meeting, where the notice of the intent of the motion has been presented in the agenda.

The removal of a member of a PAC committee member can be done through a majority vote by the PAC Executive.

## **SECTION 12 DISSOLUTION OF THE PAC**

In the event of the dissolution of the PAC, the PAC shall:

1. Pay all outstanding debts, plus any costs of dissolution.
2. Transfer any remaining funds and assets to another Parent Advisory Council(s) or DPAC within School District 43, Coquitlam, or a charitable organization(s) within British Columbia having similar objectives or purposes and registered under the provisions of the Income Tax Act (Canada). This shall be determined and voted on by the membership at the final general meeting of the PAC.
3. Place all records of the organization under the jurisdiction of the District Parent Advisory Council, School District 43, Coquitlam.

The redistribution of PAC funds would apply to both the general and gaming accounts individually. However, if the PAC cannot decide where to allocate the funds and there is no recipient noted in the final meeting minutes then the gaming funds would need to be returned to the provincial government.

## SECTION 13 SPLITTING OF THE PAC INTO TWO OR MORE PACS

In the event that the school divides and/or the PAC is forced to divide into two or more PACs, and no other agreement has been arranged by the voting members at the time of the split, then the following shall apply:

1. Any administrative costs to set-up the new PAC (e.g. banking fees) shall be financed from the original PAC account.
2. The PAC funds will be divided proportionately by the number of students who are remaining at the school versus the number of students who are relocating to the new school (i.e. if 40% of the student population moves to the new school, then 40% of the remaining PAC funds at the time of the split will be transferred to the new PAC).

The division of PAC funds would also be applicable if the school were to be closed and students were moved to another school or schools.

The division of PAC funds would apply to both the general and gaming accounts individually.

## SECTION 14 FINANCES

A budget and tentative plan of expenditures should be drawn up by the Chairperson and Treasurer; and (after agreement with the Executive) presented to the PAC at the first meeting of the school year for modification and approval of the PAC. The PAC budget must be approved prior to the end of November of each year.

All funds of the organization will be on deposit in a bank or financial establishment registered under the Bank Act in appropriate account(s) for Aspenwood Elementary School Parent Advisory Council.

There shall be a minimum of three (3) signing officers for banking and legal documents. These shall include the PAC Chairperson, the Treasurer, and one or more other Executive officer as decided by the Executive. Bank statements are to be reviewed by the Treasurer and a second member of the PAC (as determined by the Executive) on a monthly basis. Statements can be reviewed either via paper statement or on-line. Passwords for on-line access should be changed annually, or sooner as deemed necessary. The Executive officers shall not have any powers to borrow monies from banks or other financial institutions.

The Treasurer is authorized to collect and disperse monies as directed by the members as expressed at executive and general meetings. Two PAC members must verify and account for monies collected from events or fundraising – one of which shall be from the Executive or the Chair/Lead of a PAC committee. ALL monies collected must be promptly deposited into a PAC account; and, where possible, bank deposits will be made by a member of the PAC Executive.

All money paid out of the PAC accounts will be in the form of a cheque. Payments will only be made upon receipt of a detailed invoice or receipt and accompanied by a "cheque request form." Signing officers must never sign a cheque where the payee is left blank. All issued cheques must bear the signatures of two of the authorized signatories.

The PAC Executive will provide a budget for expenses related to PAC events and fundraisers to each Committee Member. The PAC will need to approve any expenditure over their budget. Preferably this should occur at a general meeting if one is held prior to that expenditure being made. If this is not possible, an expense up to 10% of the budgeted amount or \$500, whichever is lesser, can be approved by the Executive. The PAC is not obligated to reimburse individuals who exceed these guidelines without prior approval.



Each PAC Committee must submit to the Executive a mini 'budget' of how they intend to raise and spend PAC funds for this event. This must be approved by the Executive prior to any expenses incurred by that committee this includes, but is not limited to the Grade 5 leaving committee.

The Treasurer will present a financial report at each general meeting. This report can be written or verbal, however must be in written form a minimum of once each three months. The Treasurer will submit a complete annual statement either at the last meeting of the school year, or the first meeting of the new school year.

A review or audit of the account by two members of the PAC (excluding Treasurer and any other person with signing authority on the account) must be done at the end of each fiscal year. A review or audit is also mandatory at the change of Treasurer. Audit for this purpose refers to an independent review and verification of all records during the period under review, i.e. budget year.

All financial records are the legal property of the PAC and must be kept for a minimum period of seven (7) years and turned over to the Executive on demand. Any PAC member who makes such arrangements with the Treasurer can view the PAC financial records.

A contingency or reserve fund shall be set up and maintained for the administration of PAC activities. The amount shall be a minimum of \$1,000 dollars. This amount must be carried forward to each new term.

The Treasurer must ensure current regulations for use of gaming funds are met by PAC committee members.

A copy of all PAC banking statements must be stored at the school; and available to the Executive.

PAC committee members are responsible for ensuring that they spend funds only within their allotted budget. Costs that are in excess of this amount may not be reimbursed unless the excess is pre-approved by the PAC Executive, or if the expenditure was the result of an emergency situation.

## **SECTION 15 FUNDRAISING**

Fundraising activities will be undertaken when there is a clearly identified need agreed upon by the PAC. Funds raised should be dedicated to providing the most, and ideally lasting, benefit for the greatest number of students as decided by the parents. Fundraising activities should not become, nor be viewed as, the most significant contribution the PAC makes to the school.

It shall be stated to the membership how the proceeds of any fundraiser will be directed. It may be towards a specific project or item or to build a contingency for future needs.

Fundraising by the PAC will be undertaken in consultation with school administration and the approval of the membership.

Fundraising should be sensitive to the fundraising of other groups within the community and resources of our members and community.

No school family shall benefit financially from fundraising at the school without the full disclosure to, and approval by, the PAC.

## SECTION 16 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Amendments to the constitution and bylaws of the Aspenwood Elementary PAC may be made at any General Meeting at which business is conducted providing:

- Written notice of the meeting has been given to all members, seven (7) days' notice
- The notice of the meeting included notice of the specific amendments proposed.
- A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those voting members present at the meeting will be required to amend the Constitution and Bylaws.
- General review of the Constitution and Bylaws every three years by Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary

## SECTION 17 CODE OF CONDUCT

PAC members are expected to abide by the Aspenwood Elementary PAC Bylaws & Constitution as outlined in this document.

Aspenwood Elementary PAC is not a forum for the discussion of individual school personnel, students, parents, or other individual members of the school community. Open discussion is encouraged, but orderly conduct and respect for alternate points of view is mandatory for all members.

An Executive member who is approached by a parent with a concern relating to an individual in a privileged position and must treat such discussion with discretion, protecting the confidentiality of the people involved.

All members must refrain from discussing, influencing and voting upon any matter before the PAC in which they or their families have a pecuniary (financial) interest and are therefore in a conflict of interest. A concern raised by any member regarding a conflict of interest or a perceived bias of another member(s) shall be referred to a Conflict and Bias Committee for a ruling should the member in question not voluntarily step aside. A Conflict and Bias Committee will be formed each year, and:

- shall meet as needed to review circumstances where a member or Executive officer is questioned regarding their involvement on an issue being in a conflict of interest, a possible position of bias or a breach of the Code of Conduct.
- shall rule if the member or Executive officer must refrain from participation on the issue as per the Bylaws. The ruling must NOT be made on a personal basis, but solely on whether the member is compromised by association, employment or conduct.
- shall be comprised of three members, who are not employed or elected officials of any School District or the Ministry of Education, and by association or employment are clearly free of conflict of interest or perceived bias in relation to the issue of contention.

Individual members of the PAC and PAC Executive are not to abuse their position in advocating for the personal well-being or favour of a member of our Aspenwood Community, as a representative of the PAC or PAC Executive, without the approval of the PAC.

A person who accepts a position as a PAC Committee and/or PAC Executive member:

- Upholds the constitution and bylaws, policies and procedures of the PAC;
- Performs duties with honesty and integrity and meets agreed upon deadlines on projects;
- Works to ensure that the well-being of all students is the primary focus of all decisions;
- Is considerate of differing opinions or operating styles of various PAC members;
- Takes direction from the members, ensuring that representation processes are in place
- Respects the rights of all individuals;
- Encourages, supports and provides information to parents and students with individual concerns on how to advocate on their own behalf;
- Is respectful towards other PAC members, faculty and students;
- Respects the need for confidentiality, unless confidentiality will cause harm or perceived harm to a student or individual, and respect all confidential information;

- Respects the need for confidentiality, unless confidentiality will cause harm or perceived harm to a student or individual, and respect all confidential information;
- Works to ensure that issues are resolved through the appropriate process;
- Strives to be informed and only passes on information that is reliable and correct; and
- Supports public education.

*The Aspenwood PAC Constitution and Bylaws have been prepared to the best of our knowledge in compliance with the rules and regulations set out by B.C. provincial educational governing agencies and School District 43. It is understood that these rules and regulations may change over time and that this document will be subject to these changes.*

Aspenwood Elementary Constitution and Bylaws adopted by the membership at the General Meeting held November 18, 2014



PAC Chairperson – Erin Schneider



PAC Treasurer – Diane Macleod

**ADDENDUM A:**

**Aspenwood PAC Committee Member Statement of Understanding**

A person who accepts a position as a Council executive member or committee member lead shall:

- Uphold the constitution and bylaws, policies and procedures of the electing body.
- Perform duties with honesty and integrity and meet agreed upon deadlines on projects.
- Work to ensure that the well-being of all students is the primary focus of all decisions.
- Be considerate of differing opinions or operating styles of various PAC members.
- Take direction from the members, ensuring that representation processes are in place.
- Respect the rights of all individuals.
- Encourage, support and provide information to parents and students with individual concerns on how to advocate on their own behalf.
- Shall provide the Executive/PAC with a mini-budget for their committee, and ensure that funds do not go in excess of this budget unless prior approval has been given by the Executive/PAC.
- Shall abide by the accounting regulations as set forth by the Treasurer, including utilizing appropriate forms as necessary.
- Be respectful towards other PAC members, faculty and students.
- Respect the need for confidentiality, unless confidentiality will cause harm or perceived harm to a student or individual, and respect all confidential information.
- Work to ensure that issues are resolved through the appropriate process.
- Strive to be informed and only pass on information that is reliable and correct.
- Support public education.

I, the undersigned, in accepting the position of \_\_\_\_\_ for Aspenwood Elementary PAC have read, understood and agreed to abide by the Statement of Understanding statements outlined above. I understand that failure to comply and/or participate in any dispute resolution process (that has been agreed by the electing body) should concerns arise about my position, that I may be asked to resign from this committee.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Executive Member, Committee Member or Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Executive Member, Committee Member or Representative

Date \_\_\_\_\_