

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 71 (COMOX VALLEY)

POLICY MANUAL

POLICY:	1022R
Date:	November 20, 1990
Revision:	0

Sample Parents' Advisory Council Bylaws

(These bylaws are intended to serve as guidelines. Each council is encouraged to develop bylaws consistent with this document with alterations to suite the unique needs of the community the school serves.)

1. **Purpose of the Council**

The purpose of the council is to support and promote the involvement of parents in the education of their children, and not to discuss individual students or staff members.

2. **Role of the Council**

The council will endeavour to achieve this purpose by:

- (a) advising parents about school programs and services;
- (b) involving parents in school activities;
- (c) making recommendations to the principal on school programs and services;
- (d) organizing, in conjunction with the principal, volunteer programs and activities which support the school;
- (e) working with the principal, staff, parents, and community organizations to provide a healthy, safe, and supportive environment;
- (f) sharing information to assist parents in providing educational opportunities for their children;
- (g) providing a forum for the discussion of educational programs and services;
- (h) promoting a spirit of tolerance and cooperation within the school community.

3. **Membership**

- (a) A parent of a student attending the school is a member of the council unless the parent otherwise indicates in writing to the secretary of the council.

(In accordance with Section 8 of the School Act, all parents of students attending the school are entitled to be members of the council. In recognition of the fact that some parents may not wish to be members, provision is included for withdrawing from membership in the council.)

- (b) A parent means, in accordance with Section 1 of the School Act, the guardian of the person of a student, the person legally entitled to custody of a student, or the person who usually has the care and control of a student attending the school.

(The definition of parent that is contained in the School Act has been included directly in the bylaws to clarify who is entitled to be a member of the council; however, the School Act does not restrict membership in the council to parents of students in attendance at the school; therefore, the council may wish to include provision to allow other persons to participate in the activities of the council. This could be accomplished by allowing persons other than parents to attend council meetings or by making them non-voting members of the council.)

- (c) The principal shall be a non-voting member of the council.

(The principal may be appointed as a non-voting member of the council in order to enhance communication between the council and the school.)

4. **Responsibilities of Members**

The council member should:

- (a) attend council meetings when possible;
- (b) become knowledgeable about the educational programs and resources of the school;
- (c) promote positive attitudes about the school and its educational programs and services; and
- (d) support the council's purposes and objectives.

5. **Responsibilities of the Principal**

A principal should:

- (a) facilitate the organization and operation of the council;
- (b) encourage the participation of parents in the council;
- (c) assist in the development of council objectives;
- (d) provide to the council information contained in the annual report on the general effectiveness of educational programs in the school; and
- (e) attend council meetings or designate another staff member to attend.

(The purpose of bylaws 4 and 5 is to define and focus the respective roles and responsibilities of the council members and the principal of the school.)

6. Meetings

(The procedure for conducting meetings of the council can be adapted to the particular requirements of the council. The following bylaws indicate the kinds of matters which should be addressed.)

- (a) The chairperson shall call regular meetings of the council.

(For procedural convenience it is provided that the chairperson call regular meetings of the council. Alternatively, the bylaws could provide for the appointment of an executive committee and delegate the responsibility of calling regular or special meetings to that committee.)

- (b) Following consultation with the principal, the calendar of regular meetings for the school year shall be set at the first regular meeting of the council in the school year and shall be sent to all parents and to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Board.

(The establishment of a calendar of regular meetings that is distributed at the beginning of each school year will allow parents to plan to attend council meetings and may avoid the need to distribute a notice of each meeting to council members.)

- (c) Special meetings may be called by the chairperson.
- (d) Special meetings shall be called by the secretary, after consultation with the principal, at the written request of _____ members or such number as the council may set at a regular meeting. The written request shall contain the reasons for the meeting and only that business may be dealt with at the special meeting.

(Special meetings are normally called to consider matters of particular importance or urgency. Since the chairperson serves as the liaison with both the school and parents, he or she is normally the person who can assess whether the matter requires the immediate attention of the council; therefore, these bylaws vest the chairperson with the

discretion to call a special meeting. In addition, provision is made for council members to compel a special meeting when, in the opinion of a certain number of those members, there exists a matter of sufficient importance and urgency that it requires the immediate attention of the council.)

- (e) The notice of regular meetings contained in the calendar shall serve as notice to all members of all regular meetings of the council.
- (f) Notice of a special meeting shall be sent to all parents and the principal at least _____ days prior to a special meeting, except in the case of urgency as determined by the chairperson, and shall contain a statement of the general nature of the business to be dealt with at the special meeting.

(To reduce cost, the council could discuss with the principal the possibility of sending such notices home with the students rather than using the mail; however, there is a possibility of a notice not reaching the parent if this method is used.

Provision has not been included for the preparation and distribution of an agenda for council members. This responsibility could be vested in the chairperson. Some councils may wish to prepare a standard agenda to be followed at every regular meeting, with specific topics to be submitted to the chairperson a certain minimum time prior to each regular meeting.)

- (g) The inadvertent omission to give notice of a meeting or the failure to receive a notice by a parent does not invalidate proceedings at that meeting.

(It is necessary to include a provision whereby the actions of the council are not invalidated by reason only of a minor procedural irregularity. For example, a parent may not receive a notice of meeting because his or her child has neglected to bring it home.)

- (h) The rules set out in _____ Rules of Order shall govern all procedural matters not addressed in these bylaws.

*(Robert's or Bourinot's Rules of Order **can be used** to supplement the procedural rules set out in the bylaws.)*

- (i) Each member may attend any meeting of the council.
- (j) At the discretion of the council, school staff other than principals may attend council meetings but shall not be eligible to vote on any matter before the council unless they are also parents of children in the school.
- (k) At the discretion of the council, other persons may attend meetings of the council but shall not be eligible to vote on any matter before the council.

(This provision allows the council to authorize persons other than members to attend council proceedings. This provision does not, however, allow them to vote as they are

not member of the council. The council can thereby restrict or expand attendance at meetings, depending on the nature of the issues before the council.

The council may also wish to include a provision whereby the chairperson may expel a person or member from the meeting if they are unduly disrupting the proceedings.)

- (l) Each member present at a meeting of the council shall be entitled to one vote.
- (m) Voting shall be by a show of hands or, at the discretion of the chairperson, be secret ballot.
- (n) All business or matters coming before the council shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast by the members who are present at the meeting, except as otherwise provided herein.

(Alternatively, the bylaws could establish a quorum for conducting council business.)

- (o) The chairperson may postpone a vote for one meeting to allow additional participation by members.

(This bylaw is included in the event that a matter of some importance is raised at a meeting that is not well attended. It thereby allows the council to defer any action on the matter until there has been further notification of the matter.)

- (p) Minutes of the previous meeting shall be prepared by the secretary of the council for approval at the next regular meeting.

(The council may wish to include a bylaw which addresses the minutes of committee meetings and a bylaw governing confidential information received by the council.)

- (q) When making representation on behalf of the council, a quorum of members shall be present during the vote.

(A suggested number for a quorum is one that is equal to half the number of divisions in the school.)

7. **Financial**

- (a) All financial decisions, including the decision to raise funds and decisions regarding the disbursement of any such funds shall be made by a majority vote.
- (b) The council may raise and spend money in furtherance of its purposes and objectives. All funds raised shall be used only for legitimate council and school purposes.

- (c) As required by Board policy, all funds raised on school premises or at school events must be deposited and disbursed through the school trust fund established under the policies of the Board of School Trustees.
- (d) As required by Board policy, the council shall take the necessary steps to form a society should it wish to embark upon fund-raising activities, such as bingo, that are not connected with a school-sponsored event.
- (e) Disbursement of funds raised per 7(b) or (c) for school-related activities or items is subject to acceptance by the principal and, in the case of capital items, acceptance by the Board.

(School staff will not be involved in administration of or accounting for funds raised per 7(d).)

8. **Officers**

- (a) A chairperson, secretary, and treasurer shall be elected as officers from amongst the members.

(The draft bylaws refer only to three officers. The council may wish to include a provision appointing additional officers (e.g. vice-chairperson).)

- (b) Officers shall be elected by majority vote at the first regular meeting of the council in the school year and shall hold office until the first regular meeting of the council in the next following school year, unless they should resign, cease to be a member, or be removed from office.

(A school year is defined in the School Act as commencing July 1 and ending on the following June 30. This reference could be expressly provided for in the bylaws. The council may wish to consider whether a nominating committee is required and what nomination procedures are suitable for council elections.)

- (c) Should an officer resign, cease to be a member, or otherwise cease to hold office, a replacement shall be elected at the next regular meeting of the members.

(In the interest of simplicity, no provision has been included for notice of elections. The council may wish to provide that a notice of election will be distributed at least _____ days before the next regular meeting at which the election is to be held. The council could also adopt a bylaw whereby the chairperson appoints a member to serve the remainder of the term of a vacated position.)

- (d) Should an officer fail to attend to the duties of the office, the officer may be removed by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members who are present at a meeting and vote on the resolution.

- (e) A member may not hold any office for more than _____ consecutive school years.
- (f) The officers may establish committees and appoint members to serve on committees and delegate tasks to those committees.
- (g) The officers may conduct the business of the council between regular meetings of the council.
- (h) The chairperson shall chair all council meetings, prepare agendas in consultation with the principal, represent the council at meetings with the principal, and consult with the principal as requested by the principal.
- (l) In the absence of the chairperson, the members shall elect a vice-chairperson to act as chairperson for that meeting.

(The members may alternatively annually elect a vice-chairperson. (See Article 8(a).)

- (j) The secretary shall;
 - (l) record, prepare, and distribute minutes and notices of all council meetings;
 - (ii) have custody of all records and documents of the council, such records to be kept at the school.
- (k) The treasurer shall keep financial records and render financial statements to the officers, members, and others when required.
- (l) No staff member may hold office on the council.

(These bylaws reflect the traditional duties assigned to the chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. The duties may be increased depending on the requirements of each council.)

9. **Dissolution**

- (a) In the event that the school is permanently closed, the council shall be dissolved.
- (b) Upon dissolution of the council, any assets remaining after all debts have been paid or provision for payment has been made shall be paid, transferred, or delivered to the school board of the school district in which the council of the school is located to be used for an educational purpose(s) in the community of the school.
- (c) The records of the council shall then become the property of the school board.

(The School Act requires that council bylaws include a provision governing the dissolution of the council. The conditions for dissolution noted in these bylaws may be varied according to the requirements of each council.)

10. **Bylaws**

- (a) The bylaws of the council may be amended, after consultation with the principal, by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members who are present at and vote on the amendment at a regular meeting of the council, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.
- (b) Upon request, each member is entitled to and the council shall give the member without charge one copy of the bylaws of the council.
- (c) A copy of the bylaws of the council shall be provided to the secretary-treasurer of the Board.

(Should the council's proposed bylaws not be consistent with these recommended bylaws, a copy of the council's proposed bylaw should be forwarded for comment to the Board and officials prior to adoption by the council.)