



F. VOTING, MOTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

VOTING MEMBERS

The constitution should outline what the minimum and maximum numbers are for voting members on a PAC. For example, if the constitution states that there should be a minimum 5 and a maximum 15 voting members, then that is the number range that you would follow. **Please note that if you only have 10 parents wanting to hold a vote that does not mean that you necessarily have to fill the other 5 voting spots.**

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR PACS TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER WHO WILL CARRY VOTING RIGHTS ON THE PAC.

Typically, it is not appropriate for the principal, teacher representative, or trustee representative to hold a vote, as they can be perceived as having undue influence over the vote. However, MAPC recognizes the need for a school community to have autonomy to make these local decisions to address concerns such as staff of the school or division who also have children in the school, team building, and other unique situations. MAPC recommends that if school staff is able to hold a vote, that PACs take the time to review their constitutions and discuss questions such as:

- How many staff are permitted to sit on a PAC, and in what capacity?
- Are they permitted to sit on the Executive?
- Can staff members equal or outnumber the parents on the council who are not employees of the division or school?

Coming to a decision together to address topics such as this will help to address any concerns that may come up in the future relating to the topic.

THERE ARE TWO COMMON BELIEFS HELD IN MANITOBA ABOUT WHO IS ALLOWED TO VOTE AT A PAC MEETING.

The first is that every parent of a child attending the school has the right to vote in all matters related to the PAC. This method encourages participation by individuals who may not normally attend the PAC and promotes inclusive communities. However, it runs the risk of having a stacked vote, where participants may not have the full understanding of the issue – only a position based on friendships or personal feelings.

ALL parents within a school community are allowed a VOICE. PACs must consult with their school and parent community to determine voting privileges for their community.



The second recognizes Voting Members as having a formal position on the PAC. A Voting Member would be expected to attend meetings regularly so as to have a full understanding of items being voted on and helps to ensure there is always quorum at the meeting. However, some groups experience difficulty recruiting the number of people required to fill the positions or run the risk of having other parents feeling left out when they are unable to vote on issues of importance to them.

In both cases ALL parents within a school community are allowed a voice. The only question is whether they all have a vote or not. This is a local decision that must be made by the PAC in consultation with the school and school division, to ensure they are addressing the community's needs and philosophy to the best of its ability.

If a voting member of PAC needs to leave their position for any reason during the year, the PAC has the option of filling that spot for the duration of the year. The individual would typically be voted in during a PAC meeting. MAPC does, however, recommend reviewing your policy or constitution in advance of holding a vote. Whatever the constitution states would be the rule to abide by.

Serious consideration needs to be made by anyone holding a vote on a PAC. These considerations would include:

- Voting members need to attend meetings regularly
- Only voting members have the ability to put forth motions and to second motions
- Voting members and non-voting members are able to speak and be involved in all discussions – except in the case of in-camera discussions
- Voting members must understand that non-attendance affects quorum

QUORUM

Quorum is the minimum number of voting members that must be present in order for voting to take place. Quorum is normally considered to be more than half of the voting council members. If there is no quorum at the meeting, then the meeting becomes an “informational” one where discussions can be held but no motions, formal votes, allocations of funds or expenditures can be decided on.

Ex officio members (such as a principal, teacher or trustee representative) are not counted in quorum, unless they are permitted voting rights.

PACS OFTEN STRUGGLE WITH A LACK OF QUORUM AT MEETINGS AND HOW TO ADDRESS THE ABILITY TO CONDUCT BUSINESS WHEN THIS HAPPENS. THERE ARE CERTAIN STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE CONSIDERED AND MAPC MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTACT MAPC TO CONSIDER SOME OPTIONS WHICH MAY WORK IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.



CONDUCTING A VOTE

New PACs need to decide how voting will take place within their respective groups. It should be agreed that all votes pass either by a majority (where a vote has the majority of the group in favour or against passing it) or by consensus (where the whole group must be in agreement with the direction that a vote takes). A majority vote should be conducted either by ballot or a show of hands – it is a local decision and there is no “right” way.

Consensus also differs from Formal Voting

Formal voting requires a motion with a seconder so that the topic is put in front of the PAC to discuss and explore until members are ready to make a decision. The decision is made through a formal vote. PAC members vote in favour of or against what is being presented to them. The result is then recorded and may result in an action item that is noted in the minutes.

NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS AND HOW THEY VOTED ARE NOT NECESSARY FOR INCLUSION IN THE MINUTES.

Consensus voting is slightly different and less formal. A discussion may be held, facilitated by the PAC chair. They may “go around the table” to see where members stand on the issue and if there is a general consensus (agreement) the PAC chair can say that the PAC supports the decision and there is no need for a formal vote to be held.

MAPC STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT ANY MOTION CONCERNING FINANCES REMAIN FORMAL, TO PROTECT THE PAC FROM ANY LIABILITY (SEE FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIALS)

MAKING MOTIONS AND SECONDING MOTIONS

When a proposed item comes up on the agenda, a voting member would then move the motion. (“I move that we spend up to \$500 on books for the school library.”). A seconder then supports the item presented (“I second the motion.”). It is critical that the secretary record the full name of the individuals involved in making the motion! The Chair would then open the motion for discussion by the members present. There may be questions or comments needing to be addressed prior to a vote being held. If the Chair feels that the discussion has run its course, he/she calls for a vote. He/she asks first for all those in favour, and next all those opposed – and the motion is then recorded as either adopted or defeated. There is no need to record numbers – unless a PAC’s practice requires it to do so.

Reports such as the Treasurer’s report are usually accepted in the minutes and are filed. If your PAC uses an auditor or your school division’s policy dictates such, an Auditor’s report must be formally adopted.

HINT!
PACs may want to create Motion Forms to assist in the accurate recording of motions made during meetings



Motions to approve, adopt or amend (correct) the agenda and meeting minutes are also required, but can be stated by anyone on the PAC.

SEE APPENDICES: [Error! Reference source not found.](#)

ABSTAINING FROM A VOTE

Abstentions (not participating in a vote) should only ever be allowed when a PAC member is in a position of Conflict of Interest, or when they were not privy to vital information regarding the item being voted on. Abstentions should never be used as a means of non-committal for fear of offending a fellow PAC member. A secret ballot should be considered if this is the case. Abstentions should not be recorded unless a person specifically requests that this be done.

ASSIGNING ACTIONS

The end result of a voted item usually results in an action. This means that someone needs to do something! Sometimes, decisions are made and quickly forgotten by the next meeting – especially if the meeting minutes do not come out to our members in a timely manner.

It is important to make a note of any items or discussions resulting in an action to be taken. For example, *“Follow up with teachers on their wish list – PAC Chair”* This helps individuals remember what was decided and what needs to be done and who is the person responsible.