



Terms of Reference

Inclusive Education Parent and Community Advisory Panel

Effective Date: February 2022	Review Date: January 2024
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NAME OF PANEL

The panel shall be known as the Inclusive Education Parent and Community Advisory Panel.

VISION AND PURPOSE

The Inclusive Education Parent and Community Advisory Panel shall be a mechanism for ensuring continuing involvement of parent and community members in Parkland School Division’s (PSD) implementation of an inclusive education system. It will provide for two-way communication and dialogue between the Administration (PSD Executive, CFE Director/Division Principal, and/or School Administration) and panel members, relating to operational practices and PSD procedures regarding inclusive education.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the panel shall be to provide inclusive education advice, and/or action items for administrative consideration.

The work of the panel shall be considered as enhancing the work of PSD in its development of an inclusive education system, and as enabling parent and community voices to be included in this process.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE DIVISION

Parent and community members serve in an advisory role, with the level of participation falling in the *Consult* and *Involve* ranges as defined on the [Spectrum of Public Participation](#) by the International Association for Public Participation.

- *Consult* is defined as “to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.”
- *Involve* means “to work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.”

The panel has otherwise no decision-making power or authority, as advice from the panel to the Administration is to enhance understanding and consideration of parental and community perspectives.

Members of the panel may neither assume responsibility for work of PSD nor represent PSD, nor the panel, in any other forum. Members of the panel may not, in their role as panel members, act as advocates or mediators in any individual situation.

All panel members acknowledge that PSD is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP), and shall abide by the requirements of FOIP insofar as applicable to the operations of the panel. Accordingly, no discussion of named students or parents/guardians or PSD staff shall occur within panel discussions.

MEMBERSHIP

The panel shall consist of:

- no more than seven parent and/or community members, with urban and rural representation.
- up to three PSD Administration members, as appointed by the Superintendent, including a representative from the Executive team and a representative from Student Services and Supports.

Parent and community members normally serve a two-year term. The composition of parent and community members shall change by about 50 per cent every two years, with no member serving more than three consecutive terms (i.e., six years).

Public membership is considered to be a voluntary activity and members shall not be remunerated in any manner.

Application for Membership

Parents or community members interested in panel membership shall complete a formal application, outlining their interest, related skills or abilities, affiliation(s) with related community organizations/groups or advocacy panels, and include two character references that the Administration may contact.

As necessary, the Administration may solicit membership for the panel by placing advertisements on the PSD website, in school newsletters or in local media, asking for applications from interested parents or community members. Advertisements would normally occur near the end of each two-year period, when the intentions of existing panel members become known.

Selection, tenure and replacement of parent and community members shall be at the discretion of the Administration, using the preceding guidelines, and with the intent of seeking a balance of representation, both of parents with children currently attending PSD, and of other interested community members. Reference checks shall be completed for applicants who are being considered for membership. If a large number of applications are received, interviews may be arranged to assist in the selection process.

MEETINGS

Panel meetings shall be co-chaired by a member of the Executive team and a parent/community member. There shall be no expectations around quorum for a meeting; however, each panel member is expected to commit to attending each meeting during their membership period, and otherwise communicate any unexpected absences to one of the co-chairs in advance of the meeting.

Schedule of Meetings

The panel shall meet three times per school year (fall, winter, spring), with dates arranged at the discretion of the co-chairs. Meetings shall normally last about two hours each, and may be scheduled during the day or in the early evening at the Centre for Education. Duration of a meeting, however, may be occasionally extended, should a simple majority among all members vote for extension.

Structure of Meetings

The co-chairs shall solicit agenda items beginning two weeks prior to each meeting, and an agenda shall be prepared in advance for each meeting. Any panel member may, with reasonable notice, propose agenda items to the co-chairs, including during the meeting start up, when the agenda is reviewed and approved.

Criteria for Agenda Items

Agenda items shall include a balance of information and advice requests from the Administration and agenda items proposed by panel members. Agenda items not covered (due to time) shall be placed on the proposed agenda for the next meeting.

Standing agenda items shall include:

- information and requests for advice from the Administration
- issues, suggestions, or questions from parents and community members.
- a round table sharing session with a time allotment for each panel member to speak

The Inclusive Education Panel will not discuss specific cases regarding students or schools.

Role of Panel Members

To work constructively within the activities of the panel. PSD is committed to providing and promoting working environments that foster respectful and responsible behaviour. It is the responsibility of panel members to contribute to creating a positive working environment in all activities of the panel.

Role of the Co-Chairs

To solicit and collect agenda items; provide agendas in advance of meeting dates; co-chair meetings; facilitate the orderly discussion of agenda items; ensure positive and respectful conversation; and distribute meeting summaries and an annual panel activity summary to panel members and Administration. At sole discretion, the co-chairs may remove, either temporarily or permanently, any member from the panel who acts in contradiction to these Terms of Reference.

Recommendations

Recommendations and advice from the panel to PSD's Executive team shall be by panel consensus among the parent and community members. Minority opinion may, nevertheless, be communicated to provide a comprehensive overview.

COMMUNICATION

Meeting summaries shall be distributed to panel members and to the PSD's Executive Team (i.e., Superintendent and Associate Superintendents).

An annual panel Activity Summary shall be distributed to panel members and to the PSD's Executive Team. The panel Activity Summary shall be provided to the Board within the annual Student Services Department Report. Records and correspondence shall be maintained by Student Supports and Services.

DURATION

The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by the panel every two years – with advice to make modifications, or to continue or disband the panel – provided through the co-chairs of the panel to the Administration for decision.

RELATED POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Related policies and regulations that may inform the work of the panel include the *School Act*; Alberta Education's *Setting the Direction* (2009); *Action on Inclusion* (2010); *Inspiring Action on Education* (2010); [Board Policy 1 – Division Foundational Statements](#); [Administrative Procedure 250- Code of Conduct](#); [Administrative Procedure 210- Inclusive Education](#), and other existing district policies and regulations.