

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EDUCATION – TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose

The Provincial Advisory Council on Education (PACE) has the legislated mandate to provide the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) with advice and recommendations on:

- Matters referred to PACE by the Minister;
- Regional or local matters that affect education, including provincial programs, policies, and initiatives; and
- Other educational matters as PACE wishes to bring to the attention of the Minister.

Issues and opportunities identified by members may include, but should not be limited to, providing advice to the Minister on:

- Improving student achievement and well-being;
- Closing the achievement gap so that learners from all backgrounds find success through education; and
- Promoting and advancing policies, programs, and initiatives both pre- and post-implementation that:
 - Foster and grow an environment of equity for all learners.
 - Advance inclusive education and support all learners in Nova Scotia.

PACE has a duty to report to the Minister in its role as an advisory council. Members of PACE will develop advice to the Minister through respectful, culturally responsive, and inclusive dialogue that is informed both by evidence and their own expertise. PACE will provide this advice to the Minister through a unified voice, driven by consensus and that is representative of Nova Scotia's cultures, languages, families, regions, and communities.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Provincial Advisory Council on Education:

- Will work to ensure that advice and/or recommendations to the Minister is supported by research and evidence, and is culturally, linguistically, and educationally inclusive, and free from bias.
- Will respect the provisions in the Education Act, the Day Care Act, the Pre-primary Education Act, the Mi'kmaq Education Act and any related regulations.
- Will not make decisions, or provide direct advice, on the day-to-day operations of the regional centres for education or the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.
- May request information gathered by the department from any council or committee under the purview of the department.
- May form sub-committees consisting of members of PACE to examine a specific topic. Any subcommittee consisting of members of PACE that is tasked with examining a specific topic will report back to the committee of the whole.

Members of PACE that represent specific organizations (i.e., CSAP, CME, and CACE) will communicate the perspectives of their unique organizations to PACE and be the key point of contact between their organization and PACE.

- The role of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is to support PACE by:
- Providing members with requested materials that are pertinent to discussions in advance of meetings. This is intended to ensure that members have enough time to review materials.
- Providing members with information related to the mandate of PACE prior to public dissemination. This is intended to ensure that members are aware of, and able to speak to, programs and policies that relate to their work as members of PACE.
- Facilitating professional development and/or orientation opportunities as requested by PACE, in line with their mandate.
- Providing logistical and secretariat support. This includes posting both meeting agendas and meeting minutes online in French and English. Meeting agendas will be posted in advance of each PACE meeting. Meeting minutes will be posted once approved by the PACE Chair.

Membership

PACE is a fifteen member advisory council composed of twelve members appointed by the Minister and three members representing the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), the Council on Mi'kmaq Education (CME), and the Council on African-Canadian Education (CACE).

Members may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms. The term of appointment is two years; however, six of the original twelve appointed members of PACE will serve for an initial term of one year. This will stagger the end dates for the twelve appointed council members over the two-year period, ensuring a level of continuity and experience in representation on the council going forward. While six of the appointments will initially be for a one-year term, appointees may apply for reappointment for a subsequent two-year term.

The current members of PACE are:

- Marcel Cottreau, representing the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial
- Jocelyn Dorrington, representing the Council on African-Canadian Education
- Darren Gogoo, representing the Council on Mi'kmaq Education
- Archy Beals, Halifax Regional Municipality (two-year term)
- Michael Drew, Yarmouth County (two-year term)
- Shamus MacDonald, Inverness County (two-year term)
- Suzy Hansen, Halifax Regional Municipality (two-year term)
- Nastasya Kennedy, Kings County (two-year term)
- Lynn Levatte, Cape Breton County (two-year term)
- Joan MacDonnell, Pictou County (two-year term)
- Ashley Gallent, Hants County (two-year term)
- Stephen Parsons, Cape Breton County (two-year term)
- Maura Ryan, Kings County (two-year term)
- Hetty van Gurp, Lunenburg County (two-year term)

- Gin Yee, Halifax Regional Municipality (two-year term)

Officers/Chairs The Minister has made the following appointments with respect to PACE membership:

- Mr. Michael Drew, Chair
- Ms. Hetty van Gorp, Vice-Chair
- Mr. Gin Yee, Vice-Chair

The Chair or a designate will serve as the official spokesperson for PACE.

Meetings

PACE will meet on a regular basis, based on the agenda items before them. Meetings will be scheduled in advance by PACE members. The date for the next scheduled PACE meeting will be included in the minutes of the previous meeting.

PACE may choose to schedule a meeting sooner than the next planned meeting if there is a need to respond to a specific issue or if the Minister has requested that the council meet.

Conduct of Members

Expectations of Members

Members will treat each other with respect, understanding, appreciation, courtesy and consideration, and will work in the spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and harmony.

Members will work with their fellow council members to create an environment that is culturally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually safe.

Members will actively listen to one another and will show respect, and give fair consideration to, diverse and opposing viewpoints, ideas, and opinions.

Members will identify and participate in professional development and/or orientation opportunities that will support the work of the council.

Members will attend and be prepared for each meeting.

Decisions

Members will make decisions by consensus and will ensure that their advice is inclusive and representative of Nova Scotia's cultures, languages, families, regions, and communities.

Members will respect that council meetings may not be the appropriate venue for addressing each issue brought forward as a potential agenda item; members will respect the consensus process in determining which items will go forward for future discussion.

Confidentiality

Members will respect confidentiality and not share or disseminate confidential or embargoed information or materials, except when authorized by the council and the Minister. This includes posting, sharing, or commenting on information or materials via social media.

Conflict of Interest

Members will not place themselves in a position where they could derive a direct benefit from any matter about which, as members of PACE, they could influence decisions. This includes accepting a gift if it is intended to influence, or could be reasonably perceived that it was intended to influence, the member in the performance of their duties.

Where a member believes that they have a conflict of interest in a particular matter, that member will:

- Disclose the nature of the potential conflict of interest prior to any related discussions;
- Leave the room for the duration of time that the related matter is being considered/discussed;
- Not take part in the discussion or formulation of advice with respect to the related matter; and
- Not attempt in any way to influence the other members on the related matter.

Review of Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct

Members of PACE will review the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct at least every five (5) years.