



MERIT SELECTION PANELS

1. INTRODUCTION

Merit selection is one way in which school staff can be appointed to positions within a school. Not every position on staff is filled in this way. Generally, positions will be filled in the first instance through incentive transfers and if the position is for a classroom teacher then, priority will be given to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicants. If there are no applicants that fit the criteria then the position will be filled by merit selection.

The procedure for merit selection is detailed in the *Selection Panel Procedures for School Teachers 2013*, which is located on the Department of Education website (see **reference 1** at the end of this document).

2. THE ROLE OF THE P&C

When permission has been given for a merit selection process to be run, the schools P&C Association, if one exists, **must** be contacted in order to nominate a P&C representative for any merit selection panel.

If the position is for a classroom teaching position the P&C Association has the **option** not to participate in the panel process.

If the position is for an Executive or Principal position, then the P&C Association **must** provide a P&C appointed representative.

IMPORTANT: In both cases the P&C Association has 10 working days in which to nominate its representative.

If for any reason the school does not have a P&C Association then the Federation of Parents & Citizens Associations of NSW (P&C Federation) should be contacted and given to option to nominate a representative.

3. THE ROLE OF THE P&C REPRESENTATIVE

The P&C representative's role is to represent the interests of the students, parents and the school community in the selection of school staff and to provide a degree of balance and fairness to the process. It is important to remember that the parent representative is an **equal** participant in the discussion, assessment and decision making process.

4. SELECTING A P&C REPRESENTATIVE

The P&C representative is to be a parent or community representative **nominated by the P&C Association**, and if one exists, endorsed by the President of the School Council.

The P&C representative should be nominated and accepted by a majority decision at a P&C Association general meeting.

It is up to the school to cater for the appropriate gender representation on a panel, not the P&C Association.

P&C Representatives should be aware their availability within school hours should not be a factor in selection for a panel, as the process can take place out of school hours.

IMPORTANT: The school Principal or panel convenor cannot be selecting or appointing a parent representative directly. The P&C Association is to be approached to nominate a P&C representative. Equally so, the P&C President should not nominate a P&C representative without majority approval of the members at a general meeting or special meeting called for the purpose. A breach of process in either case can result in an appeal by an applicant or the P&C Association, which could result in the appointment being overturned and the panel being rerun.

5. PANEL TRAINING

Anyone for a merit selection panel must be trained in the Department of Education merit selection procedures before being able to take part in the process. However, a P&C representative doesn't need to be trained prior to being nominated to be the P&C representative, they must be trained however prior to participation in the panel.

The training generally consists of a walkthrough of the merit selection process with the opportunity to ask questions. Training is usually arranged by the Principal or Director, Public Schools. Panel training can also be done on-line using the Department's web based merit selection training tool, which will provide a printable certificate at the successful completion of the course.

Panel members who have received training related to the *Selection Panel Procedures for School Teachers 2013* do not need to be retrained. However, they need to ensure they have read the updated *Selection Panel Procedures for School Teachers 2013*.

IMPORTANT: *It is not appropriate for Principals, Directors Public Schools or Executive members of staff to train members of a selection panel for which they are the convenor or about to become the convenor once a vacancy is known. A breach of this process can result in an appeal by an applicant or the P&C Association, which could result in the appointment being overturned and the panel being rerun.*

6. SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

Before selecting a P&C representative, the P&C Association should consider the position being advertised and whether or not a person with previous panel experience is required. When selecting a representative for an Executive or Principal position, the P&C Association could consider using an experienced panellist, or if nobody has panel experience, then someone with some experience in interviewing employees. The P&C Association members should use their best judgement in any event.

IMPORTANT: *It is not necessary for a nominee to have had panel training as this can be organised through the Principal or Director, Public Schools.*

It is important that individuals are given the opportunity to gain experience with the panel process, so the P&C Association should consider new or inexperienced representatives to be nominated.

It is good practice for P&C Associations to have a number of people trained in the panel selection process so that at least one is available when requested by the school. The P&C Association may consider keeping a register of individuals who are panel trained or willing to be trained to aid in the choice of representative.

7. MINORITY REPORT

P&C representatives involved in the panel process may not be in agreement with other panel members as to the most appropriate candidate for the position and may decide to submit a minority report. A minority report(s) may be submitted by any panel member(s). The report can be submitted online through iworkfor.nsw and must be submitted at the same time as the selection process outcomes. There may be more than one minority report.

The minority report(s) should include the reasons for a dissenting viewpoint in relation to the selection criteria, together with the name of the preferred applicant and the reasons for supporting that applicant based on the selection criteria.

IMPORTANT: *If a P&C representative decides to submit a minority report they should not be asked to sign nor sign any document that states that they are in agreement with the panel decision.*

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Should you require additional information or clarification please contact the P&C Federation either by email mail@pandc.org.au or phone 1300 885 982.

9. REFERENCES

The following publications or URLs are referenced in this document

1. [http://www.teach.nsw.edu.au/documents/sel_panelproc.pdf - Selection Panel Procedures for School Teachers 2013]

DISCLAIMER:

The information provided in this document is guidance only and is only current at the time of its publication (refer to the date in the footer of this document). Guidance is given on the understanding that the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW is not engaged in providing legal or other professional advice. Care and due diligence should be exercised in evaluating the accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance of this material and seek independent legal or professional advice if you have a particular question or require confirmation of the content of this document.