



# EEPSA

Environmental Educators  
Provincial Specialist Association

Forming a Local Chapter of EEPSA

[eepsa.org](http://eepsa.org)

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## What is EEPSA?

EEPSA is one of the 33 Provincial Specialist Associations within the BCTF that supports teachers to network, collaborate, influence and implement curriculum, and share resources. PSAs provide workshops, host conferences, review resources, write curriculum, facilitate collaboration, and empower teachers to lead professional development for their colleagues. EEPSA began in 1981

A new provincial specialists' association is born! The Environmental and Outdoor Educators' Conference of B.C. held in Vancouver March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> attracted a host of participants concerned with developing directions and material for integrated studies in the out-of-doors. This gathering of so many enthusiastic people affirmed the need to form a central organization which would facilitate sharing and discussion. It was, in fact, the initial event in the life of the Environmental and Outdoor Education Association of B.C. The 235 attending have become its first members. Credit goes to a steering committee of the Outdoor Educators of B.C. (now merged with us) for arranging the conference, drafting our constitution and organizing our first A.G.M., held Friday at the conference. At a meeting April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, the newly-elected executive set in motion plans for a conference next spring, a journal, and liaison with similar P.S.A.s in other provinces.

We're off at a good clip. If we are to become a vigorous and worthwhile association we need your active involvement. The items in this newsletter suggest many ways you can contribute. Let's hear from you.

Ruth Foster

Environmental and Outdoor Education Association of BC Newsletter, Volume 1  
1981

EEPSA has kept much the same purpose for the last 36 years, perhaps with a slight shift in language. Today's EE is about place-based learning that helps teachers connect with community partners to introduce their students to their local physical, social and cultural places, and get involved in a path of action forward to live wisely in those places. We strive to empower teachers to take their students outside of the traditional walls of the classroom to experience their learning in the context of their living ecologies.

## EEPSA Executive roles

President  
Past-president  
Vice President  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Pro-d Chair  
Communication Chair  
Member(s) at Large

All EEPSA executive members can be contacted via the email addresses listed here: <http://eepsa.org/contact/>

## What does Environmental Education look like?

EEPSA members teach all grades and all subject areas. A small few teach entirely outside, in experiential education programs, but most teach in conventional classrooms. This means different activities at different developmental stages.

In primary grades, environmental education can look like outdoor play, outdoor exploration, caring for animals, growing gardens, recycling, composting, litter-less lunches, stories about powerful places, First Nation stories of place, and an introduction to environmental inquiry.

In intermediate grades, we can add an introduction to extended outdoor pursuits, leadership in school caring for animals and habitat, more complex environmental inquiry, citizen science, leadership in school garden use, and an introduction to environmental justice issues.

In secondary grades, students are ready for extended outdoor pursuits, citizen science in their larger community, involvement in local habitat protection, deeper understandings of environmental justice issues, active participation in community consultation, critical thinking on controversial issues, leadership in school and community gardens, and the creation of personal stories of powerful places.

Through all stages, the purpose of EE is to help students develop a powerful relationship with the natural world, understand ecological systems, and develop the communication and negotiation skills to speak for those systems within the social and political structure of our built societies. EE is everything from developing the physical literacy and resilience to hike a backcountry trail, to understanding the complicated chemistry of climate change, to experiencing the integrated wisdom of the symbols in a potlatch ceremony, to practicing the communication skills required to speak eloquently and thoughtfully at a town council meeting.

## How does a Local Chapter work?

A Local Chapter is a local, teacher-driven organization that helps teachers come together to collaborate, engage in professional development and influence curriculum.

Each Local Chapter should be made up of a majority of EEPsA members. You can invite administrators and community educators to be involved, but it should be led by BCTF members. Local Chapters and PSAs exist under the auspices of the BCTF.

PSAs are an integral part of the BCTF. The 33 PSAs of the BCTF carry on their operations and activities in accordance with BCTF policies and procedures and their own constitutions. Individual PSAs are represented on the PSA Council (PSAC) through their presidents. The PSAC advises the BCTF Executive Committee on matters of particular concern to PSAs and on educational policy and professional development.

By working together in a Local Chapter you can:

- strengthen professional autonomy
- develop your leadership within the district
- share your ideas with other Locals
- learn from others regions and take their ideas to your staff and administration as encouragement
- form collaborative relationships with like-minded teachers across the province
- have the opportunity to attend and present at Regional and Provincial conferences
- apply to write curriculum
- lead local workshops on curriculum implementation
- have access to EEPsA funding for Local meeting expenses, professional resources and workshop delivery
- have access to Provincial EEPsA and BCTF grants, as they come available
- influence the direction of provincial education
- shape the future of BC

## Organization of a PSA Local Chapter and/or Local Specialist Association (LSA)

1. Any interested group may form a chapter. As soon as members have made a decision to organize, they should inform the local PD chairperson and the provincial specialist association's president or chapter coordinator.
2. The majority of chapter members must belong to the PSA with which the chapter is affiliated.
3. A chapter has certain responsibilities to its local union. It should keep the executive informed of its plans and projects and go through the local union in any business with the school board or superintendent.
4. The executive of a chapter is elected from the membership at a general meeting of members held annually [usually in the late spring for the following term]. All members of the chapter executive must be PSA members and active BCTF members.
5. Finances for the chapter:
  - a. A fee may be charged all members of a chapter.
  - b. A registration fee may be charged for workshops.
  - c. The local teachers' union may have an additional LSA budget; consult the PD chairperson.
  - d. The school board may allow in-service education expenses for groups or individual teachers. Apply through the PD chairperson.
  - e. The PSA may offer grants to its chapter on behalf of members who are PSA members and BCTF members (see below).
6. Attendance at meetings: A chapter may invite any people it wishes to attend its meetings, but only members of the teachers' union local and the PSA may vote and/or hold office.
7. Notices of meetings should go to all members. Duplicated minutes or reports of meetings might be sent to the members. It helps everyone to keep in touch with the group, especially if it is not convenient for all the members to attend every meeting. It is important that material sent out by a chapter be carefully prepared, neat, and accurate.
8. The executive will assume the responsibility of organizing activities, but the members should be informed of its plans and decisions. The membership is free to question or to offer suggestions at any time.
9. Each chapter determines the offices needed (see below).
10. Meeting dates should be set well in advance and should be well publicized. Choose times and places that are convenient for the majority.
11. It is better to have a few good meetings than many poor ones.

Each chapter of a provincial specialist association is expected to:

- maintain a legislative organization and ratify a constitution.
- ensure that as many local members as possible join the PSA.
- study the PSA's constitution and literature.
- promote professionalism as interpreted by the PSA.
- communicate and co-operate with the parent provincial specialist association (EPPSA).
- direct appropriate action through the PSA executive.
- direct appropriate action through the local teachers' union (PD chairperson).
- keep information flowing.

## Local Chapter Executive Roles

The executive of a PSA and its chapters is non-hierarchical and operates on the basis of collegiality and consensus. The responsibilities of each person are as follows:

- a. **The president shall have general responsibility for all matters and affairs of the Local Chapter and be responsible for liaising with the EEPSA executive and local teachers' association. The president shall plan agendas for all meetings.**
- b. The past president shall act in an advisory capacity to the executive.
- c. The vice-president, in the absence or disability of the president, shall perform the duties of the president. The vice-president shall assist the president in planning agendas for executive and general meetings. The vice-president shall chair executive and general meetings.
- d. **The secretary shall prepare and send out minutes of each meeting to the EEPSA executive, to the Local PD chair and to Local Chapter members.**
- e. **The treasurer shall set a projected budget for the Local Chapter, keep a record of all financial transactions, and prepare a financial statement for each executive meeting and annual general meeting.**
- f. The professional development chairperson shall oversee the planning and execution of the professional development activities.
- g. The membership coordinator shall encourage membership in EEPSA.

## Meeting Agenda Template

# EEPSA Local Chapter Meeting Agenda

Date

Location

In attendance

1) Catching up (all)

**2) EEPSA business**

EEPSA update (president)

Financials update (treasurer)

**3) Previous business**

**4) Upcoming business**

Next meeting:

# Local Chapter Constitution Template

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

The name of this association shall be \_\_\_\_\_,  
subsection of the \_\_\_\_\_ [local teachers' union] and chapter  
of the Environmental Educators' PSA.

## GOALS

The goals of this association shall be:

## Base of operation

The operations of the association are to be carried on in \_\_\_\_\_ [SD or area].

## By-Laws

### Article 1—Membership

Membership shall be open to any person who is a member of the local teachers' union and the PSA. The membership year shall be \_\_\_\_\_.

### Article 2—Fees and Financial Records

- a. Membership fees shall be established by resolution at each annual general meeting of the association.
- b. The financial records of the association shall be maintained by the treasurer and shall be open to the membership and to the executive of the parent provincial specialist association.

### 3—Officers

The officers shall be president, vice-president, past president, secretary, treasurer, professional development chairperson, and membership coordinator.

Officers shall be elected for a term of one year at the annual general meeting.

### Article 4—Committees

- a. The executive committee shall be the officers of the association.
- b. Committees may be appointed by the executive committee from among the members of the association. Such committees shall be responsible to the executive committee.
- c. Wherever a vacancy occurs in the executive committee through any cause, the executive committee shall

name a member to fill the vacancy until the next general meeting.

Article 5—Meetings

- a. The annual general meeting of the association shall be held each year at a time and place to be designated by the executive committee.
- b. Other general meetings of the association shall be held from time to time as ordered by the executive.

Article 6—Representations to outside agencies

Any representations made by the chapter to an authority outside the local teachers' union (on a local issue to the school board) or PSA (on a provincial matter to the Ministry of Education) should be conducted through the local teachers' union or the EEPSA executive.

## Local Chapter Budget and Finances

### EEPSA grants to Local Chapters

EEPSA allocates funds each September to support Local Chapters. You can use your EEPSA funding to encourage teacher-driven collaboration in professional development in your Local. This could include release time, costs associated with hosting meetings, costs associated with hosting professional development events, or stocking a professional library for member use. It should not be used to fund field trips or buy supplies for your students' use.

Please send the EEPSA treasurer a projected budget for the year by September 15<sup>th</sup>. The EEPSA executive will use this projected budget to allocate up to \$1000.00 to your Local Chapter to be used between September and June. These budgets will be allocated on a per-capita basis.

Once your budget is approved, you can start spending your money. Expense Voucher forms are available from our treasurer. Once filled and saved, they can be mailed to EEPSA's treasurer with original receipts attached. Our treasurer will send them into the BCTF and they will mail you a cheque. This process usually takes less than a month.



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**Please submit by September 15.**

**Proposed budget for: \_\_\_\_\_ Local Chapter.**

<b>Expense category</b>	<b>Amount requested</b>
Meetings	
Responses to curriculum or development of resources	
Professional Learning / Conference attendance (travel and accommodation)	
Publications / subscriptions/ learning materials	
Operating expenses (postage, supplies, etc.)	
Chapter-sponsored conference	
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>	

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ (Local Chapter treasurer)

**EEPSA USE ONLY**

**Amount of base grant approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total number of EEPSA members in the local:** \_\_\_\_\_ X \$20= \_\_\_\_\_

**Total amount approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved by** \_\_\_\_\_ **(EEPSA treasurer)**



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# Rich Professional Development...

## Encourages Collaboration

- School
- District
- Regionally
- Provincially
- Nationally

## Inspires

- Share stories of success
- Use art (music, theatre, poetry, painting)

## Walks the Talk

- Location (be connected to a powerful place)
- Food (eat local, eat green)
- Pedagogy (model best practices)

## Builds a network

- Help your network get to know each other
- Give a lot of time for discussion and group breakouts
- Connect to the next meeting
- Connect to the next event
- Plug people into a collaborative group
- Show them where to access resources

## Respects everyone's time and attention span

- Start on time
- Give breaks
- End early to allow for individual goodbyes