

Our Vision: To improve public education for all students by including and supporting parents

Welcome to the New School Year 2008-2009

As the new school year begins BCCPAC will provide you with *NewsBytes* -- your source of news about education and parent involvement in British Columbia. *Newsbytes* is distributed every two weeks, during the school year, to members of BCCPAC, but it is intended to be shared with all parents—so pass it on. Archived issues are available on the BCCPAC website and are a good way to keep your finger on the pulse of education changes in this province.

<http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/resources/whatsnew/newsbytes.aspx>

Renew Membership by September 19 to Vote in Crucial By-election

In order to vote in the upcoming by-election, members must get their membership renewal forms to the BCCPAC office by September 19. Key positions, such as First Vice-president and Secretary, are to be filled in the by-election. The First Vice-President candidates are Trudy Court (SD# 62, Sooke), Stephanie Hotchkiss (SD# 36 Surrey) and Ann Whiteaker (SD#61 Victoria). The First Vice-President is very active in representing BCCPAC to the education partner groups and often stands in for the President if he is not available.

The nominees for Secretary include: Taleah Cristea (SD#70 Alberni), Fiona Delcourt (SD#78 Fraser-Cascade) and Liz Therres (SD#23 Central Okanagan). The Secretary is essential to the business of BCCPAC as she or he ensures that the records of the organization are maintained as required by law. Ida Middleton (SD#52 Prince Rupert) is the only candidate for Director. The deadline for membership renewal is necessary in order to send the ballots to all valid members by September 29. Members must return the ballots to the BCCPAC office by October 31. To see if your PAC/DPAC is a valid member check the members list on the website.

(link to come)

<http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/index/by-election.aspx>

Oct. 23-26 BCCPAC Fall Conference Features Team Work



Teaming Up for the Future is the theme of the BCCPAC Fall Conference being held at the Hilton Vancouver Metrotown in Burnaby, October 23 through 26. This is the opportunity for parents in PACs and DPACs to learn how to improve how they work together to achieve their goals. It is suitable for all parents who care about parent involvement in public schools.

The Conference kicks off with a keynote presentation by Neil Smith on “Dynamic Team Building.” Neil will explore the kind of leadership that sustains and enables dynamic teams. He will provide an overview of provocative perspectives, related to the nature of powerful teams, and the organizational myths and traps that sometimes restrict team potential.

Saturday will begin with a presentation by James Gorman, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education. This is the first time he has addressed BCCPAC Members and there will be an opportunity to ask questions. He will be

followed by Steve Dotto, of TV's DottoTech, who will demonstrate the new CyberSafe DVD, designed to help parents keep children safe online. Steve will also hold workshops on how to do the presentation. Each workshop participant will receive a free copy of the CyberSafe DVD that they can take back to their PAC or DPAC for future presentations. Steve Dotto's presentation, workshops and the CyberSafe DVD are sponsored by the [Virtual School Society](#).

For more information on the conference click on the link below:

http://www.bccpac.ca/index/event_calendar.aspx?cid=66

Implementing the Governance Audit Recommendations

One of the recommendations of the Governance Audit was that the membership revisits the purposes of the organization, as outlined in the BCCPAC Constitution. A committee is being established to oversee the process of collecting member feedback on the purposes and the redrafting the Constitution and Bylaws based on this feedback. To obtain membership input the Board of Directors has decided to hold six sessions in different regions of the province to allow as many members as possible to have input. Also, at the Fall Conference, Saturday morning, October 25, will be set aside for this purpose. The intent is to re-confirm, refine and, if necessary, re-identify BCCPAC's purpose(s) as stated in the Constitution of BCCPAC.

For more information see the article in *Our Voice*

<http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/UserFiles/File/Our%20Voice/SeptOVWhatif.pdf>

Member Mail-out Includes By-election Nominee Booklet

A mail-out was sent to members at the beginning of September. It included the By-election Nominees booklet, the Fall Conference program, with a conference registration form, a copy of the latest issue of *Our Voice*, an important letter regarding the Governance Audit, a call for volunteers and a hard copy of *Speaking Up! A parent guide to advocating for students in public schools*. If you would like additional copies of these documents you can access them online in the Members Only section of the website. You will require your login and password.

<http://www.bccpac.ca/resources/membertoolkit/membersinfo.aspx>

Back to School Message from Minister Bond

Minister of Education Shirley Bond has her annual back to school video message to all stakeholders, including parents, available at the following hyperlink:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/videos/sbond/>

School Playground Grant Program Eligibility Requirements Revised

Eligibility requirements for playground grants offered through the community gaming grant program have been changed. Under the new eligibility criteria, schools that do not have a functioning parent advisory council (PAC) can now have a service club or organization apply on the behalf of the school's students. In addition, the matching funds requirement has been eliminated. The maximum grant a PAC or service club can receive through the playground grant program is \$20,000. For details see the release below.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2008HSD0061-001358.htm

New Policy on School Closures and Disposal of Schools

According to a new policy passed September 3, Boards of Education must now seek the approval of the Minister of Education prior to selling or leasing school property, unless the Board is selling or leasing to another board or independent school. Boards must also engage in broad consultation regarding underutilized school buildings before they can dispose of them. The manner in which the consultation will be held is described in a new School Opening and Closure Order. Details regarding how boards may dispose of school property are outlined in a new Disposal of Land or Improvements Order. The rationale for this new policy is based on the government's intention to expand early childhood learning and encourage "Neighbourhoods of Learning" (see item below).

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/school_closure.htm

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m194-08.pdf>

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Neighbourhoods of Learning Pilot Projects

The government is investing \$30-million into a new Neighbourhoods of Learning pilot project, which will see education and community services brought together in a single neighbourhood hub. Three school districts will be participating in the Neighbourhoods of Learning pilot project. Vancouver school district will be the first. Queen Mary Elementary, General Gordon Elementary and Lord Strathcona Elementary will undergo renovations to restore their historical buildings or replacement, and include services on site for both students and the community.

The other two participating districts will be in rural areas and will be announced shortly. In one of the rural districts, a new school or one scheduled for replacement, will be designed and built from the ground up as a Neighbourhoods of Learning Model school. Examples of the services provided in these schools include early learning or child-care programs, office or meeting rooms for non-profit organizations, health clinics, sports programs, family resource or seniors' centres, industry training, or branch libraries.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2008OTP0216-001326.htm

Daily Physical Activity Program Guide Available

The *Daily Physical Activity Program Guide for Kindergarten to Grade 12* is now available on the internet. It outlines the responsibilities of school boards and school authorities, as well as the learning outcomes and suggested achievement indicators for kindergarten to grade 12. Among the responsibilities of school boards and authorities will be developing policies and procedures to track daily physical activity of all students. Schools are free to develop their own tracking tools or to use common provincial tools that will be available to schools and students.

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/drafts/dpa_program_guide_finaldraft.pdf

Mumps Outbreak Hits Chilliwack

An outbreak of confirmed and suspected cases of mumps has been reported in the Chilliwack region. The Ministry of Education is assisting with the handout of information on the virus to schools. The Fraser Health

Authority is offering vaccinations and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority will start a school-based vaccination program if deemed necessary.

For more information on the disease, please refer to the BCHealthFiles-Mumps <http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/pdf/hfile14c.pdf>].

Nominations Open for Premier's Teaching Awards

Nominations are now open for the second annual Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence. The Province will recognize up to 20 outstanding B.C. teachers who have made exceptional contributions to benefit their school communities and improve student achievement. An awards selection committee, chaired by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and made up of members of the education community, will choose the finalists, and an awards event will be held in spring 2009. If you wish to nominate a teacher, more information and nomination forms can be found at:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/teacherawards/>

NewsBytes is a regular e-mail communication sent to BCCPAC members to highlight items of interest. Others may also subscribe to NewsBytes. Contact BCCPAC at 604-687-4433, e-mail info@bccpac.bc.ca. Feel free to share this communication with others.