



BC CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

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October 1, 2014

The Honourable Peter Fassbender
Ministry of Education
PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
Email: educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

RE: 2014 B.C. CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS - MEMBER RESOLUTIONS

Dear Minister Fassbender,

At the 2014 BCCPAC Annual General Meeting, member delegates representing Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) and District Parent Advisory Councils (DPACs) gathered together from around the province to discuss important issues vital to student success and approved several resolutions.

At this time, we would like to bring to your attention the following resolutions; we kindly ask that you review the resolutions **listed in Section A** and provide a written response indicating steps you are prepared to take to address the concerns expressed. We also welcome an opportunity to discuss them in person with your organization at your earliest convenience.

Section A:

2014.3 Helping, Not Harming: Supporting Young People in Schools through Effective School Policy

BCCPAC insist the Ministry of Education demonstrate leadership in mandating and supporting school boards and districts to adopt evidence-based policies and practices that can better support young people who may be contravening district policies (i.e., alternatives to suspension).

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:

Education research consistently shows that high rates of suspension are related to a number of negative outcomes for both suspended students and schools, including elevated rates of school dropout, poor school climate, and low academic achievement (Norden, 2005; Rosch & Iselin, 2010). What is more, increases in suspension rates do not contribute to increased school safety (Skiba, 2004). Research also suggests that there are various ways to minimize or replace the use of suspensions, keeping students connected and schools safe (Mochrie, 2012). The suggestions on the attached (Centre for Addictions Research of BC at University of Victoria, 2013) are among the promising practices available to schools seeking alternatives to suspension. Studies show implementing a range of strategies at multiple levels (e.g., administrative, school personnel, individual student) is likely to benefit not only individual students but also the broader school community (Rosch & Iselin, 2010; Skiba, Rausch, & Ritter, 2004).

2014.4 Mathematics Curriculum Prior to Grade 6

BCCPAC urgently request the Ministry of Education to make the following changes to the math curriculum:

1. All students will demonstrate mastery of the math facts, including multiplication tables to 10.

2. All students will demonstrate mastery of the four standard vertical algorithms (addition, subtraction with a borrow, multiplication and long division). These algorithms must be taught using effective conventional methods.
3. All students will demonstrate mastery of basic fractions.

Mastery can only occur through daily practice in the classroom and there must be ongoing assessment throughout the school year to determine where progress is made and intensive intervention where improvement is required for each student. Students with an IEP/LP may demonstrate this mastery in accordance with their IEP/LP. Every effort must be made to support student master of these skills prior to Grade 6.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:

There is widespread concern among parents that the current math curriculum (MMS) is leading to poor results for too many students, including students that do well using other approaches and that parents have to provide unreasonable amounts of support at home and through costly tutoring.

Mastering math fundamentals, using proven, effective teaching methods suited to the individual learner is something that all BC students deserve so that their future paths to success are not limited by inadequate numeracy.

We note here that there is currently still an outstanding Mathematics resolution on BCCPAC's books (2002.6 – Mathematics Curriculum). Mathematics must be addressed!

2014.23 Board of Education Budget Clarity

That BCCPAC call on the BC School Trustees' Association, the BC Association of School Business Officials and the Ministry of Education to, in conjunction with BCCPAC, develop and implement standardized processes to improve the transparency and clarity of preliminary budget information to support parent consultation during the district budget process.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution: Parents, PACs and DPACs, often participate in the annual district preliminary budget process. Frequently the information provided by the boards to aid in the consultation is complex, incomplete and lacking in options. The consultation process is reduced to pleas to keep certain programs or measures and offer little or no choice to parents as to what measures they prefer or other programs they may no longer want. The information provided is not in a standard format, nor directly comparable between districts or sometimes even with prior years in the same district. Parents are often provided with the proposed budget but days before the final budget decisions must be made again negating the possibility of meaningful feedback.

This makes it more difficult for parents to provide important feedback to boards regarding which choices for the final budget they prefer. This resolution is designed to provide parents with accurate information, choice and the time for careful consideration of the alternatives. This will lead to boards making better decisions about what parents want in their children's schools and a better education system.

The provided information should be:

- Complete
- Easy to understand
- In a standard and comparable format for all districts
- Include a list of all budgetary items and amounts that are not mandated by the Ministry of Education
- Provide significant choice in measures that will increase or decrease the size of the district budget.
- Provided to parents before February 28th of each year.

In addition we have listed the following related resolutions (Section B) brought forward by various parties that may be of interest:

Section B:

2014.2 Equitable Funding of Provincially Negotiated K-12 Education Public Sector Employee Wage and Benefit Increases.

BCCPAC urge the BC Government to fully fund all provincially negotiated K-12 education public sector employee wage and benefit increases through a corresponding increase to the School District Operating Budgets.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:

It should be incumbent upon the BC Government to fund any provincially negotiated increases in wage and benefits of public education employees regardless of which union they belong to, through a comparative increase in the operating budgets provided to School Districts.

The recent provincially negotiated wage and benefit settlement for CUPE and other unionized support workers in School Districts gives an example of how Boards of Education were placed in the difficult position of having to amend operating budgets part way through a school year, which will inevitably impact the level of services they are able to provide to students.

The current funding formula should be reviewed in order to ensure students are given the quality education they deserve.

2014.8 New Public School Funding Model

BCCPAC advocate for revisions to the public school funding model to ensure that student services and classroom supports are protected.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:

The current funding model rolls the majority of expenditures into a single per student funding formula. This funding is supplemented by additional revenues based on certain special needs designations. Cost increases from any sources can have a dramatic effect on available funds for classrooms.

This resolution originates with VCPAC's document "*Classroom Support Fund: A Collaborative Approach to Effective Classrooms*, January 24, 2012". The document can be viewed at <http://www.vcpac.ca/joomla/index.php/documents/Issues/Classroom-Support-Fund/VCPAC-Proposal-for-a-Classroom-Support-Fund/>

Here is an excerpt articulating the underlying principles and concepts. "*Decisions based on the unique needs of each student are sound educational practice. Decisions based on group characteristics are inherently discriminatory. Belonging in a classroom is an individual right and should be supported unconditionally. The moment we fail to develop our classrooms based on the needs and rights of each student, we are failing to meet their needs and we are violating their rights.*

To accomplish this task, we recommend that additional and separate funding be provided to schools to ensure that their classrooms are able to deliver the required services to all students."

2014.9 Defining and Advocating for Learning Conditions

BCCPAC develops a functional definition for "learning conditions" and as a result of this information, BCCPAC actively seeks to be consulted by the Ministry of Education on issues related to learning conditions.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:

In the political arena that is public education; "working conditions" and "learning conditions" are often represented as if they were the same thing. It is important that parents are able to advocate for learning conditions for their children just as employees exercise their right to negotiate wages and workload.

The following is an excerpt from VCPAC's document, "*Classroom Support Fund: A Collaborative Approach to Effective Classrooms*, January 24, 2012". The document can be viewed at

<http://www.vcpac.ca/joomla/index.php/documents/Issues/Classroom-Support-Fund/VCPAC-Proposal-for-a-Classroom-Support-Fund/>

*“It is important that we start separating the concepts of learning conditions and working conditions. The number of students for which a teacher is responsible is a working condition. The number of students with an individual education plan or any other grouping or category of students, however, is **not** a working condition. The appropriate resources required to ensure each student’s educational success is a learning condition. Employees have the right to negotiate their working conditions. Parents have the right to be involved in decisions that relate to our children’s learning conditions.”*

2014.11 Reporting on the Use of Restraint

BCCPAC advocates for processes to ensure, when restraint is used on a student, that the parents are informed as soon as possible that a detailed report of the incident is included in the student’s file and sent directly to Principal and District Superintendent.

Proposer’s Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:

Except for extreme circumstances involving safety, restraint should not be used on students. When restraint is used, parents have a right to be informed as soon as possible. When a student has difficulty in the school environment, parents need to be involved. This not only provides accountability for the education system but it also frequently leads to better solutions to meet the needs of the student.

2014.13 Reporting on Student Removal from Classroom

BCCPAC advocates for processes to ensure that when a student is removed from a classroom for non-educational reasons, the incident is recorded and the parents are notified.

Proposer’s Position Statement Supporting the Resolution: Removal from a classroom is sometimes used as a punishment designed to regulate certain behaviours. Considerable research in the neuroscience field is showing us that self-regulation is the key to behaviour management.

It is becoming apparent that behaviour management techniques that are based on external control simply don’t work and frequently result in students becoming disengaged with their learning.

2014.14 History of Residential Schools in the Curriculum

BCCPAC advocates for the inclusion of the Aboriginal Residential School experience in Social Studies curriculums for all school levels using age appropriate education materials.

Proposer’s Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:

The resolution is based on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Interim Report.

The Commission’s report can be found at:

http://www.attendancemarketing.com/~attmk/TRC_jd/Interim%20report%20English%20electronic%20copy.pdf

Here is an excerpt relating to the education system:

“Canadians have been denied a full and proper education as to the nature of Aboriginal societies, and the history of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

- *Canadians generally have been led to believe—by what has been taught and not taught in schools— that Aboriginal people were and are uncivilized, primitive, and inferior, and continue to need to be civilized. Canadians have been denied a full and proper education as to the nature of Aboriginal societies. They have not been well informed about the nature of the relationship that was established initially between Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal peoples and the way that relationship has been shaped over time by colonialism and racism. This lack of education*

and misinformation has led to misunderstanding and, in some cases, hostility between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians on matters of importance.”

The BC School Trustee Association passed resolutions 5 through 9 at their April 2013 AGM relating to this topic. See the resolutions at the following link.

https://dsweb.bcsta.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-72982/Report_of_Proceedings_2013.pdf

It is time to support our first nations and the reconciliation process through appropriate education of our next generation.

2014.15 Expanded Basic Training and Professional Development for Teachers

BCCPAC advocates for expanded training at Universities to better equip new teachers to teach to our diverse population.

And be it further resolved that BCCPAC advocates for support and resources for classroom teachers to expand their professional skill sets with respect to teaching to diversity and managing student behaviors.

Proposer’s Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:Our education system is still primarily based on the special education model. Too often we still see special education teachers working directly with students instead of assisting teachers to adapt their teaching practices. Research shows that learning is enhanced for all students when they learn together. It is our belief that if new teachers have a broader skill set that can be augmented by specialist teachers to assist and mentor them, then our schools will be more inclusive and student learning will be enhanced.

2014.16 Accountability for School Related Associations

BCCPAC advocates to ensure that all school related associations consult with parents on policy issues and that they have an appeals process that provides for the inclusion of parent representation.

Proposer’s Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:There are various associations that exist to set policies and rules for competition between schools within and/or between schools districts. These organizations are not accountable to the school system and parents have no input into their policies or decision-making.

A recent example was a case involving the Oak Bay Jr. Girls basketball team being denied entry into a provincial championship tournament. Here is the link to the initial story: <http://blogs.theprovince.com/2014/02/23/no-mercy-on-oak-bay-ruling-breakers-denied-jr-girls-b-c-berth-plus-full-bcssgba-official-response/>

After an incredible amount of lobbying and political pressure, the decision was reversed. Here is the story: <http://blogs.theprovince.com/2014/02/24/last-second-reprieve-oak-bay-junior-girls-allowed-to-compete-at-bcs-following-11th-hour-meeting/>. There was, of course, no guarantee that the lobbying would be successful.

Our view is that with proper accountability and parent representation, this scenario would have been unlikely to occur.

2014.17 Advocating for Counselling Resources in BC Schools

BCCPAC be directed to actively advocate for increased counselling resources in BC schools.

Proposer’s Position Statement Supporting the Resolution.Addressing Mental Health concerns early on in our schools through prevention, resources and support is crucial to a proactive and long term solution to issues facing BC adolescents. The recently released 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey contacted 30,000 students from 56 school districts, with results considered representative of 98.5% of mainstream school students in BC. Results indicated that 11% of BC youth did not access mental health care or counselling services when they needed it in the past year, and another 8% didn’t get medical help when they needed it. BC School Counsellors Association states that current ratio of counsellor to students could be as high as 1 to 500 or more in some districts. These figures are unacceptably high and can be reduced through advocating for increasing accessing to counselling services to students, starting from elementary schools. We would therefore like to reaffirm Resolution 1998.9.

Previous Resolution- 1998.9 Violence Prevention

That the BCCPAC actively lobby the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Families, as well the Federal Ministry of Health and Welfare through the Canadian Home and School Federation in order to provide resources for increased counselling in our elementary schools.

2014.18 Alert Process for Mental Health Conditions

BCCPAC advocates for an alert process which requires that a student's diagnosed mental health conditions be documented in a restricted file. This file must be reviewed and its contents duly considered when making decisions affecting the student.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution. This resolution is based on recommendation #1 from the coroner's report into the death of Freya Milne, a Victoria student. As stated in the report, this process *"would ensure that designated staff of the school are aware and know the mental health issues of each child/youth and these are considered in decisions surrounding academic planning."*

2014.19 Decisions Related to Expulsion from Classes or Programs

BCCPAC advocates to have parents informed prior to a student being expelled or disqualified from a class or a program.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution. This resolution is based on recommendation #4 from the coroner's report into the death of Freya Milne, a Victoria student. As stated in the report, this process *"would ensure parental input and awareness of the decision being made."*

2014.20 Support for the Draft Curriculum

BCCPAC supports the direction of the new draft curriculum as presented on the website:
<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca>

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:

The Ministry of Education in conjunction with the BCTF have or will be putting forward draft curriculum for the entire K-12 program for comment and eventual implementation. The process has been and continues to be open and consultative. There have been many presentations to parent groups including to several of the past BCCPAC conferences. In general, the direction and approach has been well received and supported by BC parents. We should step forward and formally say so.

2014.21 Requirement to maintain Currency for Teachers

BCCPAC call on the BC Teachers' Council to require that all teaching certificate holders update and maintain their skills to the standard level expected of newly certified certificate holders.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution.

Under teaching certificate standards now in effect, a teacher is considered to meet current standards and possess skills if they have taught continuously in the classroom since first receiving their certificate. This is true even if the teacher has had no formal training to bring their skills up to the current standards expected of newly certified teachers. As a result teachers now teaching in BC classrooms may have no skills or training in Special Needs instruction, any further standards that might be created, and other areas now mandated by the teaching standards for new teachers. This lack of skills directly impacts the ability of those teachers who lack them to conduct classes in the best way possible for our children.

2014.22 Updating Teaching Standards

BCCPAC call on the BC Teachers' Council to complete their review and update current teaching standards for teaching certificate holders prior to the start of the 2015/2016 School Year.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution. In 2011 when the BC College of Teachers was dissolved and replaced by the BC Teachers' Council by Bill 12 and the resulting Teachers' Act, the regulations governing teacher conduct and certification were transferred to the BC Teachers' Council. The task the Council was given was

to review and update these standards. It has been nearly two years and, while much talk and consultation has occurred, standards remain essentially unchanged from those of the old College. This means that newly qualifying teachers are not required to have any training in a number of important areas. It is of urgent importance that the Council complete this important task and bring the standards up to date.

2014.24 Reporting on the use of Seclusion or Isolation

BCCPAC advocates for processes to ensure, when seclusion or isolation is used on a student, that the parents are informed as soon as possible and that a detailed report of the incident is included in the student's file and sent directly to the principal and the district superintendent.

2014.25 Alternatives to Seclusion or Isolation

That BCCPAC advocate for evidence based alternatives to the use of seclusion and isolation that provide effective resolution and preserve and protect the rights of students.

We have included a compilation of all the approved resolutions from our 2013 annual general meeting and corresponding rationale for your convenience.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution:

Based on the following information, we believe that it is time for these practices to end. Inclusion BC has produced a report entitled, *"STOP HURTING KIDS: Restraint and Seclusion in BC Schools - Survey Results and Recommendations"* The full report can be found at:

<http://www.inclusionbc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/news/releases/StopHurtingKids-Report.pdf>

The report includes definitions for seclusion and restraint. Here are the excerpts:

"Seclusion: Placement in an isolated area for an extended time and prevention from leaving the area. *"Example: Placing an individual in a locked room or closet, or where a person of authority blocks exiting this room."*

"Restraint: The use of physical procedures by one or more individuals or mechanical devices to limit freedom of movement. *Example: Holding an individual in an immobile position for a time.*

The report also elaborates on restraint practices as follows:

"It is generally accepted that brief physical intervention used to interrupt an immediate and serious danger to the child or others may be called for in the case of a safety emergency. This is different from the ongoing use of restraint as punishment or in the guise of treatment for a child's disability or behaviour. Frequent use of emergency restraint is an indication that program revision is needed, even if the program is considered positive."

Inclusion BC commentary can be found at:

<http://www.inclusionbc.org/pressroom/newsreleases/stop-hurting-kids-inclusion-bc-and-family-support-institute-release-survey-re>

We have included a compilation of all the approved resolutions from our 2014 Annual General Meeting for your convenience.

If you have any comments or questions please respond to info@bccpac.bc.ca

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Makohoniuk", is centered on a light yellow rectangular background.

Nicole Makohoniuk, BCCPAC President
On behalf of the BCCPAC Board of Directors
nicolemakohoniuk@bccpac.bc.ca