

Tab 17 ~

Building Partnerships

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Building Partnerships

In public education, there is a large body of research confirming that students do better in school when families, educators, and community members work together to improve schools, strengthen families, and enhance student learning and development.¹

In this **Tab 17**, you will find information about our education partners, along with ideas and sample practices for building effective partnerships in our schools.

Who Are Our Education Partners?

The most powerful outcomes appear to develop when there is true mutuality between the school and the community, such that each party learns to value and respect the knowledge, skills, and goals of the other.

Benjamin Levin, 1995

Everyone who supports or contributes to public education is an education partner. Depending on what we are involved in at any given time, our education partners are those people or groups who can assist or join us in achieving our goals.

On page 4, you will find a chart of education partners at different levels in the public school system. Many of these partners have duties, rights, and responsibilities defined by the Ministry of Education in its *Statement of Education Policy Order*,² reprinted on page 13.

Many partners have professional associations that speak for them as a group and will provide information to parents. Parents are encouraged to contact them with questions or concerns. A list of associations and their websites can be found on page 15.

Many schools and districts have policies with important implications for partnership among parents, students, educators, business, and the community. It is important for parents to be aware of policies on

- volunteering
- communication
- extracurricular activities
- field trips
- homework

¹ Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Johns Hopkins University, www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm

² OIC 1280-89, effective September 1, 1989. Available at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic_1280-89.pdf.

To find school and district policies, ask your PAC, DPAC, principal, or district administration office. Or go to your school or district website, or the website of the BC School Trustees Association at

www.bcsta.org/policy/polindex.htm

- resolving concerns
- PACs and DPACs
- school planning councils
- community involvement
- school-community relations
- business and community partnerships
- advertising
- fundraising
- use of facilities.

Working with Education Partners

Successful partnerships share certain key elements:

- mutual understanding and respect of each partner's roles and responsibilities
- effective two-way (or more) communication
- clear, easily understood language and processes, capable of being used by everyone
- equal opportunity to speak and be heard
- equal access to relevant information, resources, and expertise
- joint planning, goal-setting, and evaluation
- shared desire to work in the interests of students and public education.

The remainder of this **Tab 17** contains many ideas for working effectively with our education partners. As you consider these ideas for your council, school, or district, keep in mind that people who are informed and have the opportunity to be involved in decision-making are more likely to support the decisions made and participate in action.

Education Partners

When acting as	Your education partners are
An individual parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your PAC and DPAC ▪ Your Band Council ▪ BCCPAC Advocacy Project ▪ Your children’s teachers ▪ Your school principal, vice-principal, and counselors ▪ Your district superintendent and, in larger districts, the assistant superintendent responsible for your school ▪ Your Board of School Trustees ▪ BC College of Teachers ▪ Ministry of Education
A PAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your DPAC ▪ BCCPAC Member Services and office staff ▪ BCCPAC Advocacy Project ▪ Your School Planning Council ▪ Local Band Councils ▪ All school staff ▪ Student Council ▪ District superintendent and, in larger districts, the assistant superintendent responsible for your school ▪ District teachers’ association ▪ District principals’ and vice-principals’ association ▪ District support staff associations ▪ Board of School Trustees ▪ BC College of Teachers ▪ Local community groups ▪ Local police ▪ Ministry of Education
A DPAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member PACs ▪ BCCPAC Member Services and office staff ▪ BCCPAC Advocacy Project ▪ Local Band Councils ▪ District student groups ▪ District superintendent ▪ District teachers’ association ▪ District principals’ and vice-principals’ association ▪ District support staff associations ▪ Board of School Trustees ▪ BC College of Teachers ▪ Local community groups ▪ Local police ▪ Ministry of Education

Epstein's Six Types of Involvement³

Researchers such as Joyce L. Epstein⁴ and Anne Henderson⁵ are well known for their research on school, family, and community partnerships and the benefits of parent and community involvement in public education.

Based on more than a decade of research and the work of many educators, parents, students, and others, we know it is possible for all elementary, middle, and high schools to develop and maintain strong programs of partnership.

*Joyce L. Epstein, Director,
Center on School, Family,
and Community
Partnerships
[www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/
default.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/default.htm)*

Epstein has identified six types of involvement that, if practiced effectively, enhance school, family, and community partnerships:

Type 1

Parenting ~ Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.

Type 2

Communicating ~ Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

Type 3

Volunteering ~ Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.

Type 4

Learning at home ~ Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.

Type 5

Decision-making ~ Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PACs, DPACs, school planning councils, committees, and other parent organizations.

³ Epstein, Joyce L., Six Types of Involvement. www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/sixtypes.htm

⁴ Joyce L. Epstein, Director, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland

⁵ Anne Henderson, Senior Consultant, Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University, New York

Type 6

Collaborating with the community ~ Coordinate resources and services *for* families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services *to* the community.

What Works in Each Type of Involvement

Type 1 ~ Parenting

Schools are recognizing that parents need and deserve support in providing basic needs to children and creating a home environment that supports children *as students*.

Many schools have become a community focal point for resources, information, and counselling for parents and families seeking support. In providing this support, these schools gain a better understanding of the family cultures, goals, and needs of their community, and in so doing contribute to the potential success of students.

Suggestions for enhancing *Type 1* involvement ~ *Parenting*:

- Workshops on parenting, child-rearing, and helping children at home, offered to accommodate both working and non-working parents. Consider parents who cannot come, or do not feel comfortable coming, to the school by using audio and video tapes, summaries or newsletters, computerized phone messages, websites, and cable TV.
- Programs for teen parents
- Family support programs such as clothing exchanges, food co-ops, and parent support groups
- School meal programs
- Parent library or resource centre containing books and information on parenting, how to help your child learn, ministry and school district programs and resources, and community programs and resources
- A designated resource person within the school to field parents' questions and direct them to appropriate resources.

In order for families and communities to become informed about and involved in children's education at school and at home, partnerships must be viewed as an essential component of school and classroom organization.

*National Network of
Partnership Schools
[www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/
program2.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/program2.htm)*

Type 2 ~ Communicating

Effective partnerships begin with effective communication. Good communication

- helps parents understand and support the school and district
- helps students make better decisions about their programs and coursework
- helps educators, parents, and students find common ground to discuss a student's progress and behaviour.

No longer an optional activity or a matter of public relations, school, family, and community partnerships are essential for student learning and success in school. It takes time, organization, and effort to develop a good program.

*National Network of
Partnership Schools
[www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/
program2.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/program2.htm)*

Suggestions for enhancing *Type 2* involvement ~
Communicating:

- Language translation for all forms of communication in schools where there are parents with limited English language skills
- Teacher/parent/student conferences, in person or by phone, with follow-up as needed
- Student work sent home on a regular basis for parent review and comment
- Frequent informal contact between teachers and parents through notes, agenda books, phone calls, or e-mail, for positive feedback as well as issues of concern
- Student agendas to record homework assignments
- A 24-hour event hotline for students and parents to keep track of upcoming events
- Regular newsletters and calendars of events, translated where appropriate
- An up-to-date parent handbook, also translated
- PAC, DPAC, school, and district websites and e-mail lists
- Outreach to parents and students of different cultural backgrounds, using community and cultural centres and language schools
- Satisfaction surveys of parents and students.

Type 3 ~ Volunteering

Volunteering in schools is vitally important to many people.

Students benefit from the attention of volunteers, and learn to communicate with more adults. Teachers benefit from volunteer expertise and help, and often try new programs because volunteers are available. Volunteers benefit from the opportunity to participate in the education of their own children and all children.

The **School Act, s. 7.1**, says

Subject to this Act, the regulations and any rules of a board, a parent of a student may provide volunteer services at or for a school.

Better recognition and use of volunteers improve the school/volunteer partnership. Volunteer work includes attending school functions, performances, and teacher conferences. Creating volunteer opportunities beyond the classroom lets working parents and other community members contribute to the school. Epstein would like to extend the definition of *volunteer* to everyone who gives time anywhere to support school goals and student learning.

Suggestions for enhancing ***Type 3*** involvement ~ ***Volunteering***:

- Parent/community survey to see where people would like to volunteer
- Volunteer opportunities that meet the interests, skills, and availability of as many community members as possible
- Volunteer opportunities that address the language and cultural needs of the community and facilitate outreach and communication to parents from different cultural groups
- Effective recruitment to ensure that all who wish to participate can do so
- Appropriate volunteer orientation, training, and support
- Space in the school for volunteer work and meetings
- Volunteer recognition, both public and private.

Type 4 ~ Learning at home

Epstein has found that parents want to know how to participate in learning activities at home.

When parents are oriented to the teacher's policies and patterns of homework and grading, they know how to help and how not to help.

*Joyce L. Epstein, Director,
Center on School, Family,
and Community
Partnerships.*

Teachers can help by designing homework that includes parents *on purpose*. At regular intervals, students can be required as part of a homework assignment to talk to someone at home about a particular topic. Weekend assignments can be different from weekday work—more enjoyable, interactive homework or long-term assignments that require some discussion or exchange.

Suggestions for enhancing *Type 4* involvement ~ *Learning at home*:

- Information for parents on skills (or expected learning outcomes) in each subject and grade
- A regular homework schedule or calendar requiring students to discuss a schoolwork topic at home
- Workshops on ways to help children at home at all grade levels, scheduled to accommodate both working and non-working parents. Offer information through audio and video tapes, summaries or newsletters, websites, and cable TV.
- Student work sent home on a regular basis for parent review and comment
- Student agendas to record homework assignments
- Frequent informal contact between teachers and parents through notes, phone calls, or e-mail
- Parent consultation and involvement in setting academic goals and preparing their children for transition from elementary to secondary and secondary to post-secondary or work.

Type 5 ~ Decision-making

Through PACs, DPACs, and SPCs, parents are an integral part of the decision-making process in our public schools. The School Act gives parents the right to advise their school board, principal, and staff on any matter relating to their school or education in their district, and to participate in school planning.

Suggestions for enhancing *Type 5* involvement ~ ***Decision-making:***

- Training, resources, and mentorship for parent leaders on leadership, inclusivity, cultural awareness, and collaborative decision-making
- Defined processes for providing advice. These processes should be developed, reviewed, and publicized by parents, the school, and district in collaboration.
- Parent positions on school and district committees
- Regular updates by school and district staff on how parental advice and resources are being used.

Type 6 ~ Collaborating with the community

As our schools take on greater responsibility for the educational, social, and emotional needs of all students, stronger partnerships between the school and community have become essential.

All schools and districts make use of government services; many are also working with local businesses and charitable organizations. These partnerships bring resources and opportunities into the schools to complement and expand the regular curriculum. Many students can trace career decisions to programs and opportunities made possible through community and business partnerships.

Suggestions for enhancing *Type 6* involvement ~ ***Collaborating with the community:***

- Encourage parents to support or contribute to schools through their own businesses, professional groups, community or cultural groups, and charitable organizations.
- Make information freely available to parents and students through a parent resource centre or library, newsletters and

websites on social, health, cultural, recreational, and athletic programs and opportunities in the community.

- Encourage and help students to serve the community through drama and music performances, recycling, neighbourhood cleanup, murals, and tutoring.
- Canvas local businesses for financial sponsorship.

Planning for Action

Building partnerships in your school and district requires planning and action involving all members of the community.

When your PAC, DPAC, or SPC identifies a goal as part of its annual plan, consider how activities from the six types of involvement will help you reach that goal. Discuss with other members of your school or district community how each partner can help reach the goal.

On the next page, you will find a sample list of activities from each of the six types of involvement that will help your council and school work together toward the goal, *To Promote a Climate of Partnership in the School*. These activities involve all members of the school community—the key to building partnerships.⁶

For more information, see **Tab 13, Effective Planning in PACs and DPACs**.

⁶ Epstein, Joyce L. *Successful Partnerships, Successful Schools, Successful Students*, presentation to Langley School District Professional and Community Services, October 10, 2002

**Sample Activities from the Six Types of Involvement to Help Achieve the Goal:
To Promote a Climate of Partnership in the School**

Great Elementary School PAC Goal: To Promote a Climate of Partnership in the School	
Type of Involvement	Activities
Type 1: Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host a school-sponsored workshop on <i>Parenting Your Pre-Teen</i>, open to all parents in the school and community. Invite school staff.
Type 2: Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote student-led conferences through the PAC newsletter, website, e-mail, and phone fan-out. ▪ Set up a PAC information display at the school entrance on conference day. ▪ Invite PAC executive members and other interested parents to be available in the hallways on conference day to greet and direct parents and answer questions. ▪ Invite student council representatives to PAC meetings (on a regular basis or several times a year) to talk about courses, special events, or leadership opportunities.
Type 3: Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a volunteer directory, listing volunteer opportunities for parents and other community members. Include classroom, field trips, sports and recreation, music, shop, library, school dance, school concert. ▪ Advertise volunteer opportunities through the school and PAC newsletter, website, and e-mail.
Type 4: Learning at Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite the principal and a teacher representative to talk to parents at a PAC meeting about the school's homework policy, how to help at home, and whom to call with questions.
Type 5: Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite non-parent members of the School Planning Council to a PAC meeting to hear parents discuss the draft school plan.
Type 6: Collaborating with the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite local artists to showcase their music, painting, crafts, and information on art programs, museums, and lessons in the community.

Duties, Rights, and Responsibilities of Education Partners
Ministry of Education Statement of Policy Order, OIC 1280-89, effective September 1, 1989
 Available at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic_1280-89.pdf.

Education Partner	Duties, Rights, and Responsibilities
Students	Students have the opportunity to avail themselves of a quality education consistent with their abilities, the opportunity to share in the shaping of their educational programs, and the opportunity to determine their career and occupational goals. They have the responsibility to make the most of their opportunities, to respect the rights of others, and to cooperate with fellow students in the achievement of their goals.
Parents	Parents have the right and responsibility to participate in the process of determining the educational goals, policies, and services provided for their children. They have the primary responsibility to ensure that children are provided with the healthy and supportive environment necessary for learning. They have a responsibility to help shape and support the goals of the school system and to share the task of educating their young
Teachers	Teachers have the right to exercise professional judgment in providing instruction to students in accordance with specified duties and powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure that each student is provided with quality instruction, to participate in all normal school activities, and to monitor the behaviour and progress of each learner in accordance with provincial and local policies. They have a responsibility to communicate with students and parents, and are accountable to the School Board and its delegates.
School Principals	School principals the right to exercise professional judgment in managing the school in accordance with specified duties and powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure that each student is provided with opportunities for a quality education. Principals are to provide administrative leadership, in consultation with teachers and the community, that reflects the aspirations of parents and the school community and that is consistent with provincial and district guidelines. They cooperate with parents and the community in the delivery of non-educational support services to students, and focus on the following areas of school concern: (1) student access and achievement; (2) quality teaching; (3) communication with parents and the community; and (4) accountability to parents and to the Board.
School Boards	School Boards have a duty to govern districts and their schools in accordance with specified powers in a fiscally responsible and cost effective manner. They have a responsibility to ensure that schools provide students with opportunities for a quality education; to set education policies that reflect the aspirations of the community and that are consistent with overall provincial guidelines; to provide leadership and encouragement to schools and the community; to cooperate with the community and social service agencies in the delivery of non-educational support services to students; and to focus on the following areas of district concern: (1) implementation of provincial and local education programs; (2) school finance and facilities; (3) student access and achievement; (4) teaching performance; and (5) accountability to parents, taxpayers, the community, and to the Province.

District Officials	District officials have a duty to exercise professional judgment in managing the district in accordance with specified powers and duties. They have a corresponding responsibility to provide professional leadership in the design and implementation of education programs in districts, and are accountable to the local school board.
The College of Teachers	The College of Teachers has the duty to establish and apply standards of fitness and qualifications governing admission to the teaching profession. The specific duties of the Council of the College are to approve, for certification purposes, teacher education programs established by provincial Faculties of Education, to define bylaws and policies related to the academic and professional qualifications of teachers, to issue teaching credentials, to investigate allegations of professional misconduct, and, if necessary, to exercise professional judgment in disciplining its members. The College has the responsibility for encouraging and facilitating programs of continuing teacher education, professional development, and inservice designed to ensure general teacher competence, and to improve the quality of teaching in provincial schools.
The Community	The community has the right to expect that every child will have access to quality education provided in a fiscally responsible and cost effective manner. The community, through local volunteer groups and private and public agencies, has a corresponding responsibility to support the family and school by providing children with a healthy and supportive environment in the community.
The Ministry of Education	The Ministry of Education has a duty to set policies for the British Columbia public school system in accordance with specified duties and powers. The Ministry has a corresponding responsibility to ensure that the education system provides students with opportunities for a quality education in a cost-effective manner; to set standards and overall directions for the education system; to provide leadership and encouragement to all educational agencies in the province; to cooperate with provincial agencies in the delivery of non-educational support services to students; and to focus at a high level of provincial concern on the following areas: (1) finance and facilities; (2) program direction, development, and implementation; (3) student access and achievement; (4) teaching performance; and (5) system evaluation and public accountability.
Other Government Ministries and Agencies	Other government ministries and agencies have a duty to set policies in accordance with specified powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure that provincial policies and resources support the family and local community in providing a healthy and supportive environment necessary for children's learning.
The Public	The public of British Columbia has the right to expect that schools operate effectively and efficiently and are accountable for evaluating and reporting their progress on a regular basis. The public has the corresponding responsibility to provide schools with the necessary resources and moral support to fulfil their mission.

Acronyms and Websites of Education Partners

AMSAA	Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC	www.amssa.org/
BCASAA	BC Association of Student Activity Advisors	www.bcasaa.bc.ca/
BCASCD	BC Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development	www.ascd.org/cms/index.cfm?TheViewID=808
BCCPAC	BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils	www.bccpac.bc.ca/
BCCT	BC College of Teachers	www.bcct.ca/
BCPSEA	BC Public School Employers' Association	www.bcpsea.bc.ca/public/index.html
BCPVPA	BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association	www.bcpvpa.bc.ca/
	BC Safe Schools & Communities Centre	www.safeschools.gov.bc.ca/
BCSDSTA	BC School District Secretary-Treasurers' Association	www.bcsdsta.ca/
BCSS	BC School Sports	www.bcschoolsports.ca/pages/news.php
BCSSA	BC School Superintendents' Association	www.bcssa.org/index.html
BCSTA	BC School Trustees Association	www.bcsta.org/
BCTF	BC Teachers' Federation	www.bctf.bc.ca/home.shtml
BCTLA	BC Teacher-Librarians' Association	www.bctf.bc.ca/PSAs/BCTLA/
CASE	Council of Administrators of Special Education	www.bctf.bc.ca/PSAs/BCTLA/
CEA	Canadian Education Association	www.cea-ace.ca/
CHSF	Canadian Home and School Federation	www.canadianhomeandschool.com/
CMEC	Council of Ministers of Education, Canada	www.cmec.ca/index.en.html
CUPE	Canadian Union of Public Employees	www.cupe.bc.ca/
DASH	Directorate of Agencies for School Health	www.dashbc.org/
EAC	Education Advisory Council	
FISA	Federation of Independent Schools in Canada	www.kingsu.ab.ca/~fisc/province.htm
FNESC	First Nations Education Steering Committee	www.fnesc.bc.ca/
LATA	Learning Assistance Teachers' Association	www.bctf.ca/lata/
MoE	Ministry of Education	www.gov.bc.ca/bced/
OLA	Open Learning Agency	www.ola.bc.ca/
PEEPAC	Parent & Education Engagement Partnership Advisory Committee	www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/reports/parent_engage.pdf

Resources

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships. Johns Hopkins University. Joyce L. Epstein, Director. Online at www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm

Epstein, Joyce L., Six Types of Involvement. Online at www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/sixtypes.htm

Henderson, Anne T. and Karen L. Mapp. *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002. Available online at www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf

National Network of Partnership Schools. Established by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, the NNPS brings together schools, districts, and states committed to developing and maintaining comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships. Online at www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/default.htm