

OUR VOICE

BC CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

SPRING 2016

Parents: The Ultimate Volunteers
How Are You?

Frequently Asked Questions:
BCCPAC Team responds to your
most commonly asked questions

Financial Education at Home &
School

“Why I was a PAC Volunteer for 16
years...”

BCSTA - Boards Making a
Difference

PAC Spending

2016 Spring Conference and AGM



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Thank you to the BCCPAC Publications Committee for their hard work putting this edition of Our Voice together.

Thanks to staff for their continued support of BCCPAC committees. Current committee members are Cathy Jewett, Jocelyn Schonekess, Farah Shroff and Susan Wilson.

Who We Are

The B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) is recognized as the collective voice of parents regarding public school education in B.C. Every public school Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) in the province is eligible for membership. BCCPAC is a charitable non-profit organization registered under the BC Society Act.

BCCPAC purposes are to promote, support and advance meaningful parent participation throughout the public education system in order to advocate for the success of all students; and through our membership, to promote leadership, communication, cooperation, and representation in British Columbia, at the school, school district and provincial levels.

Our Voice

Subscriptions to Our Voice are included with PAC and DPAC membership. If you are not a BCCPAC member but would like to subscribe to Our Voice please contact our office. To submit article ideas please email info@bccpac.bc.ca

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Contact Us

Suite C - 2288 Elgin Avenue
Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 2B2

Tel. 604.474.0524
Toll Free. 1.866.529.4397
Fax. 604.474.0967

Email: info@bccpac.bc.ca
Visit: www.bccpac.bc.ca



FAREWELL FROM BCCPAC PRESIDENT MAKOHONIUK



This is my last opportunity to write a President's Letter for Our Voice Magazine. My term concludes June 1st, a month after our Spring Conference and AGM. As I started to read this issue it brought back so many accomplishments and learning opportunities we have had as an

organization.

The article *How Are You?* by Lisa DeBoer reminds me of how valuable a role we are as parents as we know our children. We know their needs, and most often we are their voice as to what is working and what is not. Lisa will be one of our speakers at this year's Spring Conference in Kelowna and as a Leadership specialist, I believe her knowledge will offer an incredible opportunity to learn.

BCCPAC is the biggest parent based organization in the province, with a membership of over 680 schools. Regularly, our members reach out to remind the Board of Directors that we as parents are leaders and have been afforded the opportunity to represent our membership on a provincial platform.

The Tracy Defoe article builds on that example of leadership and gives us tips on how to be great PAC leaders. I have taken her valuable advice and used it in so many other ways in my life; whether it be as Program Coordinator at Teen Junction Youth Centre or in my involvement at the Early Years Round table. It is always beneficial to get the reinforcements of what works and learn from others who have great deal of knowledge and experience.

Tracy inspired me to look at the work BCCPAC had to do internally to get focused and stay on track. It was time for our Board to become stronger, therefore; we worked with our committees to focus on a certain number of resolutions, we cleaned up some of our policies, and came up with a direction to steer our

organization to better suit our members as "Parent Advocates in Public Education"

The third article I wanted to touch upon is from the Trustees. This article reminded me that Trustees are hardworking community leaders who support student success. This is demanding, rewarding and vital work and we, as BCCPAC, strive to attain the same goals. Over my 4 year tenure as President I have enjoyed building upon a strong relationship with the BC School Trustees Association

Finally, I look forward to seeing you all at our 2016 Spring Conference and AGM where we are honoured to have our current Minister of Education Mike Bernier as well as one of our great past Ministers of Education George Abbott speaking on the value of parents in education and about the direction of BC's Public Education System.

Keep Smiling

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PARENTS - THE ULTIMATE VOLUNTEERS

It's a revolution.

Did You know that if you volunteer, you are likely to live longer than those who don't? Nearly one in every two Canadians does volunteering work, resulting in 2 billion volunteering hours every year. With the power to change everything! That sounds like a revolution, doesn't it?

You Are a Powerhouse

Here is the thing. You are a social powerhouse. When you see how your child's school needs support, funds, help, etc. in order to enrich, create or rebuild those community ties, you go into that "I want to do something" mode. You sign up and now all you need to do is engage with your community. Hmm...

The Catch

There is a catch though. Your parents' voice is directly competing with all the noise around you. Your PAC meeting competes with sport games, your fundraiser competes with tons of other fundraisers, your volunteering time competes with your family time, your PAC members compete with their own lives and your community's attention span competes with all the continuous information overload we are all exposed to every single day.

The Truth Is This

Yes, busy is the new default. But we still eat when we are hungry and still sleep when we are tired, right?

How do you add more time? Technology sounds like a safe bet. Emails, newsletters, websites, social media, advertising etc all sound promising. The only problem is that these are not designed with you in mind:

Emails get blocked or remain unread;

Creating newsletters takes time and then they end up in spam folders;

Websites sound like an easy way out, but they need setup, maintenance, content, privacy, protection, etc;

Social media is fast. So fast that hardly anything even registers;

Search engines, online ads mostly don't work because you are at computer algorithms' mercy.

By: Emil Zimmermann

2013 Winner of the BCCPAC Bev Hosker Awards, Community Volunteer and Co-Founder of Yuu <http://yuu.site>

Want it free? Good luck. You have all the time and patience in the world. Or not. And of course if you want to get it done properly, expenses skyrocket.

How do you deal with all this while trying to make a difference?

The Way Out

Technology is an amazing tool. And nothing more. Amazing Tool! Helping tool if you harness it, a wasting tool if it harnesses you. Things to consider:

Volunteering is only as efficient as your focus

Your community needs you, the real you

Distraction is the tomorrow that never happens.

Parents have the ultimate motivation to become volunteers. Their children. With a motivation that powerful, there is no mountain too high.

This is why I came up with the idea to serve volunteers. I started Yuu. With Yuu, You are in charge. Putting revolution back where it belongs. To You. You do your stuff by maintaining full focus, and leave the frustration and technicalities to us to manage. And it is all tailored to you. Including the fee. Just imagine letting someone else dealing with ALL the hassle of the online and technology world in your volunteering quests. And I mean ALL of it! Every day!

Fancy a revolution?



HOW ARE YOU?

At the start of every good conversation we ask others this casual question. But do we really want the answer? We often expect the other person to say “great”.. And then we move on to daily pleasantries and the latest highlight of our lives. But what happens when we dig deeper? What happens if the other person said “not very good” to our question of how are you? How prepared are we to have “that” conversation? When we assess the many discussions we have in a day, how many of those discussions are “meaningful”? What does it mean to have a “meaningful conversation”?

As many of you would probably attest, just because we have a conversation doesn't make it meaningful. And really, can we have meaningful conversations all day long? Would that be energizing or exhausting to you?

In a world where verbal communication is becoming more and more limited (thanks to our iPad, iPhone, iWatches, emails etc.) more and more communication is shared in cyberspace and not face to face. Many experts say that while we are the most connected the world has ever been, we are potentially the most “dis-connected” society ever.

The concept of meaningful conversation is not a new one, it is often something we take for granted as a part of what we do- we “go deep” when we need to, and we stay above the surface when we can. Some of you might actually dread those “deeper (and more meaningful) conversations” - and you would not be alone in that. So the question is why? Why do we often feel more comfortable having a surface conversation? Why is it uncomfortable to share our thoughts, feelings, fears, joys and sadness?

On the topic of vulnerability and empathy, researcher Brene Brown shares her insights about vulnerability as way to find deeper and more meaningful connection to each other, and to the world around us. She states, “Owning our story can be hard but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on love and belonging and joy—the experiences that make us the most vulnerable. Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light.”

In my session “The Value of Meaningful Conversations” I will share with you my insight on the power of

By: Lisa DeBoer SD22

Speaker at the 2016 BCCPAC Spring Conference

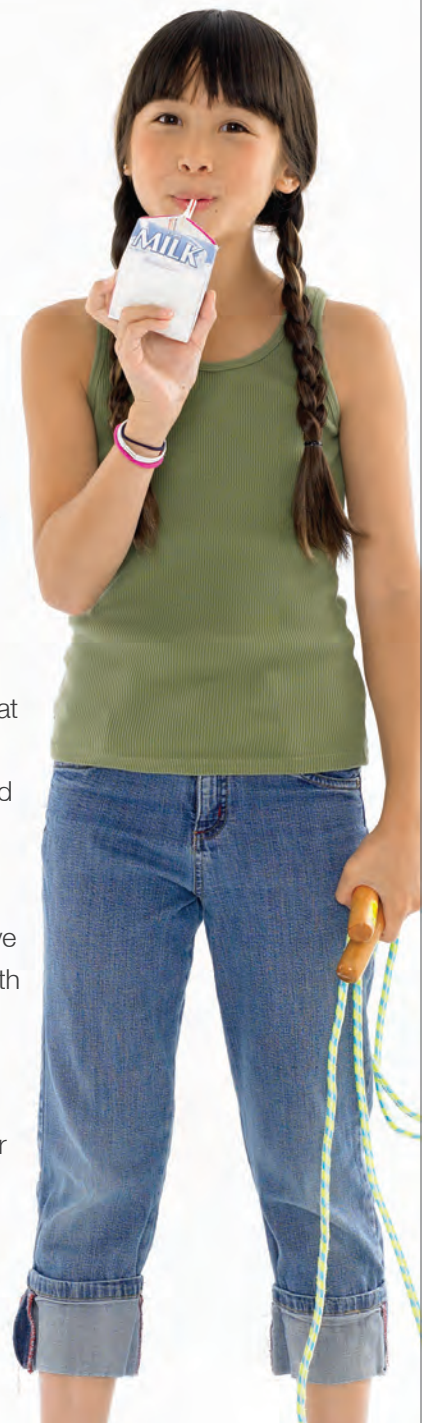
connection, and the value that comes from being willing to be vulnerable in our conversations. As a Mother, Wife, Leadership Specialist, Board Member and School Board Trustee, I hope to inspire you to think about how we communicate and how we can form deeper (and more meaningful) connections by being present and vulnerable.

Make the
healthy
choice
the easy
choice!

Be a Champion at your child's school and help organize a school milk program.

Children who drink milk at school are more likely to meet their recommended daily servings.

School Milk BC is a BC Dairy Association initiative that provides schools with tools and resources for serving milk at school. For more info email schoolmilkbc@bcdairy.ca or call 1.800.242.6455.

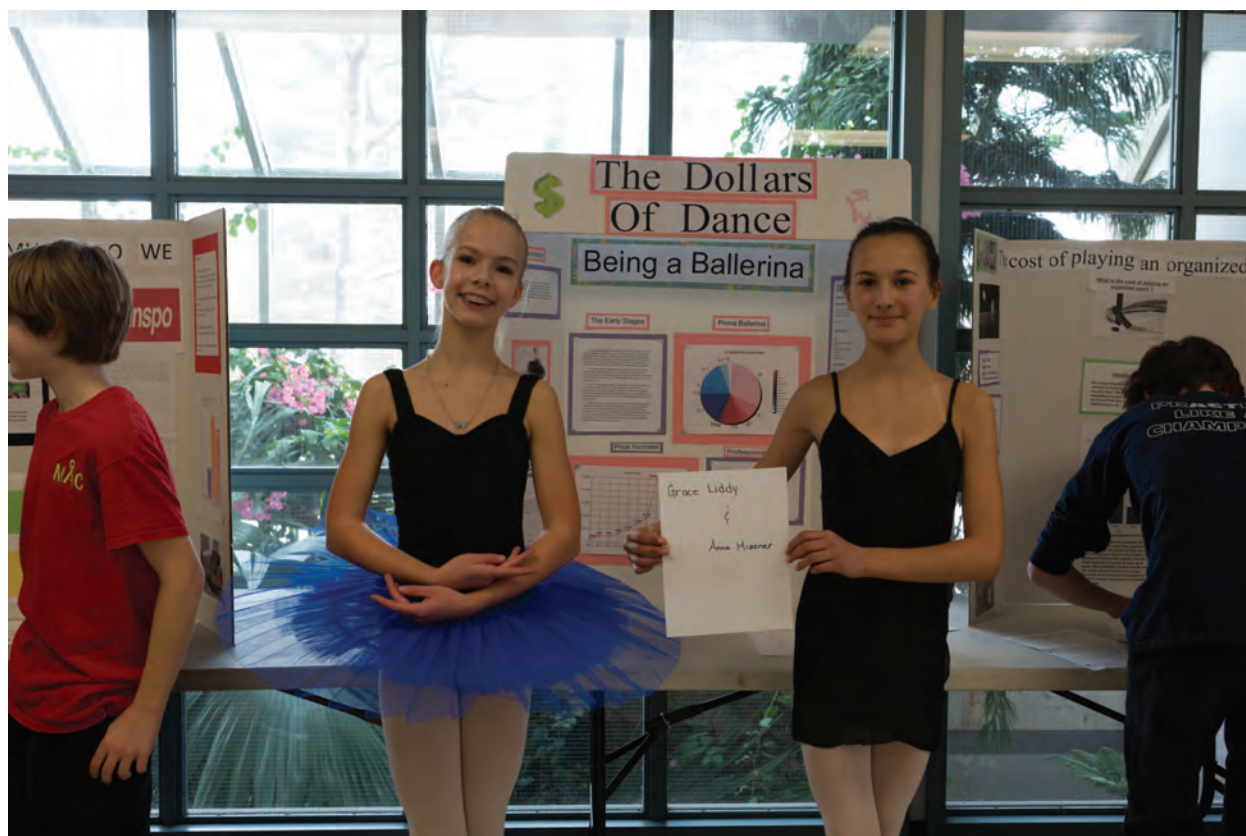


FINANCIAL EDUCATION AT HOME & SCHOOL

Kids love money and knowing about money is important to every student regardless of their background or circumstance. However, there is no consistent or strategic approach to teaching kids about money (State of Financial Education in Canada, TD Bank, November 2015.) Evidently, we are also waiting until children are too old to introduce the topic.

Money is an ideal topic for BC's redesigned curriculum, which emphasizes inquiry-based and project-based learning. Money applies to all subject areas and is popular with students. For example, students can explore monetary and environmental cost savings during an electricity unit in science; compare and contrast the nutritional and financial implications of eating out; study the motivations for the start up of the Hudson's Bay Company in social studies; or, create a collage of needs and wants during art class. Outside of school, parents can talk with kids about the costs of borrowing money to buy a home or the expenses involved in extracurricular activities.

<http://talkwithourkidsaboutmoney.com/>



Talk
with our kids
about money™

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A program of

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CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR ECONOMIC EDUCATION
FONDATION CANADIENNE D'ÉDUCATION ÉCONOMIQUE

ASK BCCPAC: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM PACS TO OUR OFFICE TEAM

What can PACs and DPACs spend their gaming grant monies on?

Parent Advisory Councils and Parent Organizations

PAC funding is intended to benefit students by enhancing their extracurricular opportunities, including for example:

Student publications: newsletters, yearbooks;

Student competitions: writing, debating, chess, music;

- Student computers: software, hardware, accessories;
- Student societies: drama club, student society;
- Student ceremonies: graduation, dry grad;
- Student conferences or educational field trips within BC;
- Uniforms and equipment for extracurricular activities;
- Sports or playground equipment;
- Awards and trophies;
- Scholarships and bursaries for post secondary education (paid directly to students);
- Capital acquisitions directly benefiting students, such as playground equipment;
- Student transportation and travel within BC;
- With prior branch approval, student transportation and travel outside BC, where the student group:
- Is representing its school as a result of merit achieved through organized competition;
- Is competing in a sport that involves cross border travel;
- Has been selected because of its level of creative achievement or success; or
- Is entered in a recognized competition in which there is a formal evaluation or adjudication process.

[Note: out of province field trip(s) are not eligible uses of PAC funds.]

Grant funds to PACs and parent organizations may be accumulated for up to three years without prior approval from the branch.

District Parent Advisory Councils

DPAC funding is intended to benefit students by supporting activities that foster parental involvement in the schools and effective communication between schools, parents, students and the community. Eligible uses of DPAC funding include:

- Educational and promotional materials
- Administrative costs, including British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) membership fees; and
- Travel for regular DPAC meetings.

How long can PACs save gaming funds for?

PACs can save gaming funds for up to 3 years, they should allocate the funds to a major project and report out the indented expenditure.

How long can DPACs save gaming funds for?

DPACs need to spend the funds within the school year to which they are associated.

Who do we contact if we are uncertain of a project or plan we have for our gaming funds ?

Lower Mainland Regional Office

Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch

Telephone: 604 660-0245

Facsimile: 604 660-0267

Interior Regional Office

Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch

Telephone: 250 861-7363

Facsimile: 250 861-7362

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WHY I WAS A 16 YEAR PAC VOLUNTEER... AND WHY YOU WANT TO BE ONE, TOO

I remember the moment I became a PAC volunteer at my sons' school. The eldest was in kindergarten and I was at maybe my second-ever PAC meeting. As a newbie, I didn't know many people in the room. The Chair asked for someone to present a letter to the school board on behalf of the PAC. We sat in silence as the request for volunteers went unanswered. Thirty seconds into that silence I realized that I was going to present that letter. I didn't know where the school board met, or when, but I was going to raise my hand. After that, I was a PAC volunteer, and stayed one until my second son graduated high school some 16 years later.

Why?

1. They needed me.
2. I could do what was needed.
3. It wasn't always easy, but it wasn't always difficult either.
4. The reward was tangible. My kids, and my neighbours' kids went to great public schools, partly because the schools had strong, informed, collaborative PACs.
5. The peer support was good. Parents need to compare experiences with other parents. PAC connections can be some of those supporters.
6. I got to know the administrators, teachers and staff.
7. As a DPAC, I served on district committees and got to know district administrators, trustees and the support staff who make the district run.
8. I learned a lot. For example I learned the way district and the school system deal with the everyday and the unusual. And then I helped other parents and PACs navigate the system, too.

They needed me (or at least they needed parent help), and I could do what needed doing. Some things I knew from the beginning. I could attend a meeting and understand the conventions of a meeting. I could chair a meeting long before I knew what a PAC was. I

By Tracy Defoe, former DPAC, PAC Chair, Co-chair and ready, willing and able parent volunteer in District 39

knew about by-laws and governance. But that isn't what mattered the most.

I care about education. I care about the place my children went to school. I could see that if parents want to be part of the equation, they just have to participate in productive ways. I even saw that there was a place for any parent, with any set of skills, to help make the school and every classroom, a stable, positive learning place.

You will notice I didn't say I had the time. I never had the time. No one ever has time. I made time. I showed up, took part and with some modesty I can say I know I made a difference. Most parents who read this are already devoted PAC leaders and volunteers. You know why you do it. You don't do it for the thanks, though I thank you. You do it for education, and for kids, yours, mine and all of ours.

Lessons Learned and Tips for PAC Leaders

Get the basics in order.

- Post your bank statements so everyone can see. I learned this from PACs that found themselves impoverished by crooked treasurers. The best defence is no secrecy or apathy about the money.
- Have an up-to-date constitution and by-laws. Get to know them. Give them out and make them easy to find. Post them on-line and post them on your PAC bulletin board.
- Make an annual calendar for your PAC and share it. Your PAC year has a routine (or it should) and making it predictable makes participation in your PAC easier. It also helps new members – and you have new members every year.

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Meetings make the PAC world go round.

- Executive meetings can get routine business done and tee up the general meeting for more exciting stuff. Your PAC Exec meeting can be done by email, by phone or in person.

i. Hold your exec meeting in the week before your general meeting.

Get all the updates out of the way that slow the general meeting. The things worth everyone's time at a general meetings need to get filtered and shortened at the exec level.

Your exec needs a spending limit so they can make small purchases without taking up general meeting time. Some of the complaints people have about PAC meetings is that they are all about money and they are too long. Take that to heart. Pass an amendment to put a 100 dollar or 200 dollar spending limit in your by-laws, and never take up PAC meeting time to vote on the little things. Report them as completed.

ii. Meet with the school administrator (or district liaison) before your PAC or DPAC meeting. Your meeting and your relationship with the school will be better for it. What do you do at this meeting? Ask questions. Your exec probably has questions about what is upcoming, what reports or info is new since your last meeting, about rumours. Ask the administrator what help she needs from you. Listen and learn. Ask "how can we make this work?" They are pros. They have leeway. Let them figure out how to use it.

- Your general meeting needs a makeover. It's too long and boring.

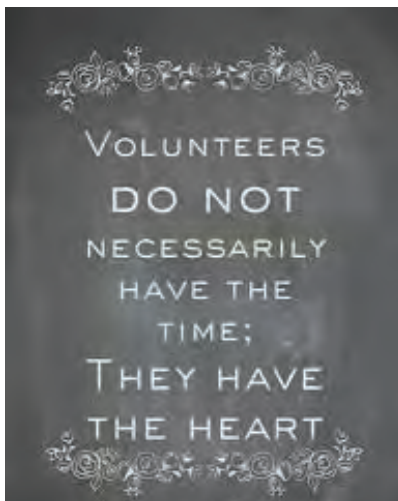
i. Have a speaker and a topic of interest every single meeting. Seriously. The administrator can be the speaker once or twice a year, to talk about class placement and report cards. Parents will turn up in droves. Sometimes ask the teacher representative to suggest a colleague to speak for a few minutes at the meeting. Department heads have information parents want. What does the math department think about tutors? What is our approach to reading? The counsellor has lots of hot topics, but don't overlook the academics, career prep, or the arts. If people know they will meet teachers informally and learn about the school, they will show

up, and sit through the short business meeting for that 5-20 minute talk.

ii. Work on routines. A predictable meeting is a short meeting. Short meetings are good. These practices will help.

Sign in – always have a sign in sheet. Your secretary needs names in case of motions, you want to know who is there, how to contact them and what grade their kids are in. You might also ask how they can help the PAC.

Your agenda should be visible to all. Use a white board or a flip chart to display a numbered agenda. Will you be calling for volunteers during the meeting? That can be slow. Put _____ spaces right on the agenda so people know that you will be asking for 3 people for a task on a certain date. Members will check their calendar and be ready to speak up when you get there. Some even just write their name in as they see the posted agenda and in doing so, shorten the meeting.



Issues and the big stuff need time in your meeting. With the minor stuff filtered out, and the call for volunteers shortened, you will be able to have time for table discussions on emerging or important issues. Take it.

Table all requests for funds to be considered and voted on at the next meeting. Make it a by-law, or a practice to table any request for PAC funds above the exec spending limit. Many a meeting has been hijacked by a last minute request outside the usual wish list and finance committee process. This policy of tabling, posting and having time next

meeting to discuss and vote on a financial request gives time for anyone interested to research alternatives or show up to the next meeting to vote. A time saver that democratizes spending is a good practice.

iii. These are some inclusive practices for parents who are speakers of alternative languages you should try out. Your PAC meeting might be conducted with translation, or only in English. Most of the tips above will make it easier for a new immigrant to follow the meeting. Before the meeting, the minutes, the agenda and any notices can be translated or posted in plain English. Some PACs encourage an alternate language caucus before the PAC meeting but that meeting doesn't vote or decide anything. The PAC meeting is where we vote. During the meeting the key visual of

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the posted agenda can make it easier to navigate what is going on. So will the brief and focussed reports and all the routines. After the meeting, translation of the decisions and any tabled items or upcoming info will bring your second language speaking members into better step with the PAC.

iv. Your PAC wants to socialize and even have fun. Serve tea, have cookies or fruit. Take a break or begin with a social time. One reason to come is to meet parents and meet the teachers. Plan in time to talk together. Ask people to introduce themselves at their table. Suggest parents get to know those in their children's grade and the grade above and below. Let the information flow and friendships form.

When your PAC is holding a special event, ask one grade or even a class to take the lead. Pulling together a thank-you or the decorations for an event will bring those parents closer together.

Head to the pub after the meeting. Before I chaired our elementary school's PAC meeting, we often went two and a half hours in the general meeting. I got that meeting under an hour most months, and my happy members would go the local for some PAC social time. The principal and teachers often joined us. We got more comfortable together, broke out of our cliques and had a PAC everybody was welcome to join.

Have a parent social when school activities bring parents to the school. Dropping off the grade sevens for camping? There is coffee and a parent social in the school or at a coffee shop. Grade 8 dance? Parent social at a PAC members' house. This really works. Try it and see what a little social interaction does for your PAC.

- At budget time, don't come late to the process. Someone in your PAC needs to know this year's budget, and maybe last year's so you can offer useful comments on next year's. If your PAC has discussed the big stuff, identifying priorities and taking part constructively will be easier.

Invite your MLA to a PAC meeting every year. They make great speakers and they need to listen to parents.

Invite your board trustee(s) at least once a year and hey, invite the mayor too. Don't be surprized if they all accept, and you have to start limiting these kinds of visits to every other year so there is only one meeting with a politician guest.

All of these non-budget crisis, 'we all care about kids' connections will make the budget time conversations

easier and less confrontational. It is very unlikely that elected officials are trying to undermine your child's education. It is possible that they don't get into schools enough, or they don't meet enough parents or have good frontline information. You can fix that. Being proactive in this way means you won't have to reactive to the budget process nearly as much as PACs sometimes are.

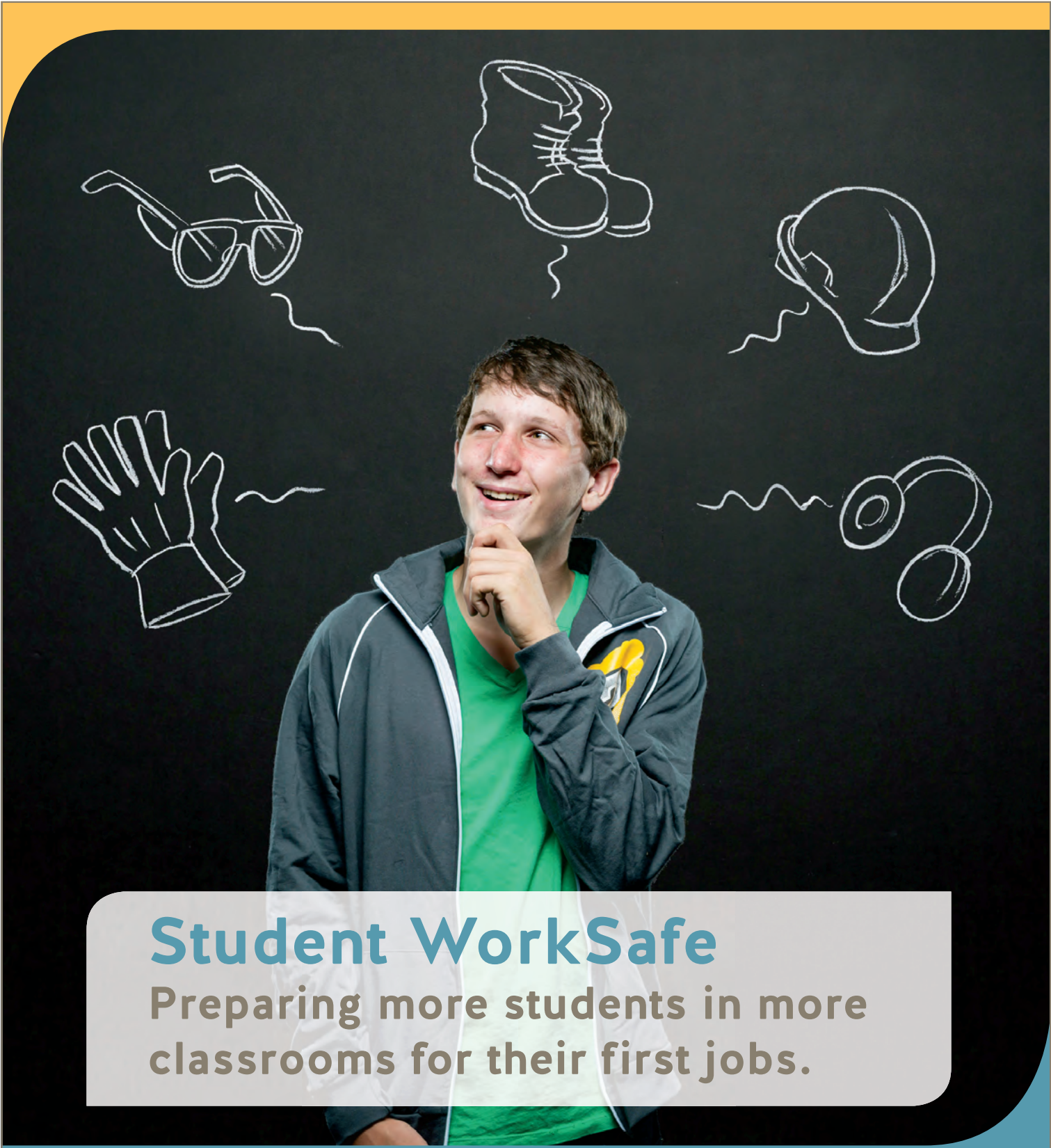
When you do go to committees or meet with administrators or trustees, don't cry. Don't talk about your own kids. Talk about kids like yours. For parents, their kids' schooling is personal. It's not personal for the administrators, teachers and trustees. They might not show it, but they will discount what you say through tears and anger. My first budget meeting I promised trustees that I would not cry, because so many of the parent speakers before me had come in mad and emotional, and misinformed. Be prepared, make it easy for them to hear and support your PAC's suggestions and input.

- Don't do it all. Share the work, share the jobs and pile on the thanks. Why do so many PAC leaders feel they have to do everything? Why don't people volunteer? Parents are not busier than they used to be. I think parent leaders hide their struggle. If you do that, no one will help you. They will see that you have it all covered and back off. Make it clear that the PAC has lots of small and larger tasks to do, and that the social, emotional and school rewards are there for those who make the time. Remember the bit about socializing and having a bit of fun? A fun PAC doesn't want for volunteers.

Remember, families graduate every year. You need to bring along new parents for leadership roles, and welcome the incoming families. Co-chair everything, have assistants in every role to learn how to be secretary or treasurer, or speaker host, or snack king. If you are a secondary PAC leader, meet the chairs and exec from your feeder school and let them know you have a place for them in your PAC when their kids get to your school.

- Face your problems head on in the PAC exec and with individual members. It is easier to deal with strong personalities that have well-defined roles than those that are freelance looking for something to do at the PAC. If you know the people involved even a bit, a phone call, a coffee or a heart to heart can take the steam out of a crisis. I was in some pretty high powered PACs and whenever we weren't channelling parent

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Student WorkSafe

Preparing more students in more classrooms for their first jobs.

Resources for teachers, students, and independent learners are available at worksafebc.com.



BOARDS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

STORIES FROM YOUR COMMUNITIES

LOCALLY-ELECTED SCHOOL BOARDS MATTER

WHO ARE SCHOOL TRUSTEES AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

Trustees are hardworking community leaders who come together in the context of a Board of Education in support of student success. The work is demanding but important and rewarding.

Each individual trustee brings personal values, beliefs, strengths and limitations. How trustees express their views, and the actions they take at the board table and in their daily interactions, demonstrate consistency with their values and beliefs. In the words of Freeman and Stewart, they “tell a compelling and morally rich story but also embody and live the story.” As publicly visible members of their communities, leadership by example is an excellent concept for board of education trustees. This evident consistency, this matching of hand and heart, inspires trust in their colleagues. Individual credibility is built. Through a “living conversation about ethics, values and the creation of value for stakeholders,” each member of the board of education demonstrates who they are and “where they are coming from.” It then becomes possible to build a collective board where there are shared values and strong mutual understanding.

BC is a large and diverse province with different priorities, needs, and special requirements in a variety of areas. School trustees work through their boards to address these local needs.

Local school trustee elections allow the community an important opportunity to lead and oversee our valuable investment in public education.

WHY DO BOARDS OF EDUCATION MATTER?

Excerpt from *The Report of the Pan Canadian Study on School District Governance - School Boards Matter, 2013*, Saatcioglu et al. have observed that there is a clear link between boards of education and financial and academic outcomes. They conclude that boards of education are successful because they manage the ambiguities that

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD?

Effective boards of education matter a great deal in the delivery of successful public schooling across Canada.

- They claim their rights and responsibilities as valid and legitimate elected governing bodies in their own right, and seek to find a reasonable balance between their role as advocates for children and communities.
- They are akin to ombudspersons. They are stewards of local interests, mediators between government and the local community, advocates for their respective regions, and they lobby to acquire educational services and resources that constituents feel are needed.

(continues...)

BOARDS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

STORIES FROM YOUR COMMUNITIES

arise as a result of outside pressures such as government mandates, monitor district progress, and hold individual schools accountable for student learning. Further, they propose that effective boards engender trust and a collective vision that serves to focus district energies and resources. Similarly, Sheppard et al. have concluded that boards of education matter a great deal to effective public school systems. While there are examples of individual schools that have been successful in bringing about meaningful improvements in student learning, their research shows that such cases are the exception. And even in those exceptional cases, success has been difficult to sustain when key leaders depart the school. They argue that if there is to be meaningful and sustained systems-level change among many schools, the pressure and support of an effective school district/board is essential. Further, they contend that ignoring the potential leadership role of boards of education and the districts they govern in bringing about meaningful continuous improvement of teaching and learning, or eliminating them altogether as has been the case in a number of jurisdictions, is poor public policy.

Clearly, setting priorities that are focused on improving conditions that will facilitate meaningful, authentic student learning, and making them the focus of board of education meetings are essential to board of education effectiveness. Boards of education must be constantly aware of their leadership role within a huge complex distribution of leadership that contains both positive and negative forces. Discovering their place as educational leaders in optimizing the potential of this distribution of leadership to facilitate learner success and acting upon it is a challenge that each trustee, board of education association, and CSBA must face if they are to remain (and perceived to be) truly relevant in the existing 21st century context."

A strong public education system ensures success for all learners.

“ Research is perfectly clear that to help someone succeed, you first have had to be successful yourself.

- DAVID E. LEE, 2015 NSBA CONFERENCE

- They have first-hand experience with community priorities and values and ensure that their governance of public education reflects those local values and priorities.
- They focus on developing their credibility and trust among constituents and are cautious not to extend their role into district management.
- They adapt successfully to a constantly evolving political landscape.
- They strive constantly to ensure high-quality communication networks.
- They value and engage in professional development that is focused on their trustee role and informed, data-driven decision-making.
- They are focused on improving student achievement across the district, the provision of responsible financial management, establishing programs and engaging in initiatives related to improving teaching and learning.
- They are concerned about the provision of safe and caring schools, improving the quality of teaching, and closing the achievement gap among various subgroups.

'FRIENDS' SKILLS PROMOTE HEALTHY SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

'FRIENDS' Skills Promote Healthy Social and Emotional Development

The prevalence and impact of mental health disorders on children and youth has prompted many educators to embrace school-based prevention programs that address mental health and wellbeing. Under the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) umbrella, these programs strive to meet the diverse needs of children who are identified with or are at risk of developing mental health problems and may ultimately reduce the cost and stigma associated with targeted treatment programs. Moreover, they provide educators with tools to build the social and emotional competencies of all students, promoting positive mental health outcomes and increasing academic success.

Approximately 25,000 children in BC experience clinical levels of anxiety (Waddell, et. al, 2014)

FRIENDS is an evidence-based, classroom delivered SEL program that is designed to reduce anxiety and build resiliency in children. It was brought to BC in 2004 by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) as a means to reduce the prevalence of anxiety among our children and youth. Lessons are taught by the classroom teacher or school counsellor and target the emotional and mental health of all children in the classroom. This method of universal delivery helps normalize feelings of stress and anxiety, build engagement, and create supportive, solution-oriented environments.

Improving children's social and emotional skills directly benefits their ability to learn and apply cognitive skills (Dalai Lama Centre for Peace and Education <http://dalailamacenter.org/about/heart-mind>)

Each letter of the FRIENDS acronym represents a set of skills designed to teach life-long strategies for coping with difficult situations and managing anxiety:

Feelings – Relax – Inner Helpful Thoughts – Explore Solutions and Coping Step Plans – Now Reward Yourself – Do It Everyday – Smile/Stay Strong Inside

By Ministry of Children and Family Development – FRIENDS Program

FRIENDS skills include the development of emotional awareness, relaxation, problem solving, self-management, goal setting, interpersonal communication, support networks, and more.

“Over the last decade, government has continued to expand and refine the FRIENDS program here in BC to ensure it is providing effective support – not only for children and youth, but for teachers and educators, and parents and caregivers.”

-Jane Thornthwaite, Parliamentary Secretary for Child Mental Health and Anti-bullying

FRIENDS positively influences classroom culture through the use of a common language that fosters empathy and respect and applying the skills can contribute to the reduction of emotional distress and impairment in social functioning. Teachers who use FRIENDS say it provides a guide for establishing norms and expectations in their class and allows them to share those expectations with families through information sharing and home activities, leading to the generalization of skills at home.

“I love this program. It's really taking off in my classroom, and we're using the skills outside of the FRIENDS lessons all the time. I hear students saying 'You can do it!' 'Try again,' or 'I can help you!' during spelling, math, and on the playground. It's really great to see.”

-Selina Heradine, kindergarten teacher

FRIENDS in BC is available to students at three developmentally significant stages: grades k-1 (Fun FRIENDS), 4-5 (FRIENDS for Life), and 6-7 (My FRIENDS Youth). It aligns with the core competencies of BC's Education Plan and provides teachers with a valuable framework for addressing thinking, communication, and personal and social competencies:

Thinking: FRIENDS fosters the development of

Continued on following page

Continued from previous page critical, creative, and reflective thinking skills, habits of mind, and metacognitive awareness.

Communication: FRIENDS provides opportunities for students to exchange ideas through discussion, exploration of non-verbal communication, conflict resolution, and written expression.

Personal and Social: FRIENDS encourages the development of positive personal and cultural identities through the exploration of strengths and limitations, feelings about self and others, choices, and goals for the future.

Teachers and educators who have completed the one day certification training are eligible to deliver the program and receive curriculum materials (leaders' manual, student workbooks and additional resources) free of charge. Training sessions are hosted by school districts or independent schools and facilitated by a certified BC FRIENDS trainer. There is no cost to schools or districts unless teacher release time is required.

Parents and families who want to be involved and learn more about the FRIENDS program and ways they can reinforce the skills at home with their children can access the BC FRIENDS Online Parent Program www.friendsparentprogram.com

“Fun FRIENDS has been really great at giving my son tools to articulate how he’s feeling and how to deal with challenges; and really, without a lot of time invested.” -**Davida, grade one parent**

BC FRIENDS and the FORCE Society for Kids’ Mental Health have partnered to develop an Online Parent Program that provides FRIENDS information to families. It is available for use by anyone, regardless of whether their child is receiving FRIENDS programming at school. Resources include videos of FRIENDS in action at home and at school, tips sheets, home activities and other mental health resources.

“The FRIENDS program is an amazing program that the Minister of Children and Family Development and I are both very proud of and over the coming year we are committed to raising its awareness and expanding its use to even more schools.” -**Jane Thornthwaite, Parliamentary Secretary for Child Mental Health and Anti-bullying**

Haven’t heard of the FRIENDS Program? Check out one of the new comprehensive videos that highlight the importance of FRIENDS and how it helps at school and home: Trailer video (3mins); Full video (10mins). More information is available at: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/friends.htm

Calling BC families to enter the 7th annual Hands-on Cook-off Contest!

RECIPE FOR A WINNING VIDEO

- * Gather your children, family or friends
- * Choose a recipe to make together
- * Video yourselves cooking together
- * Win cash prizes up to \$1000



Submit your video online between April 20-May 20 at bettertogetherbc.ca/contest



EDUCATION FUNDING

HOW MUCH? **WHERE DOES IT GO?** HOW IS IT SPENT?



\$5,308,638,000

2012/2013 FISCAL YEAR
BC PROVINCIAL K-12 EDUCATION BUDGET

\$46,638,000

MINISTRY of EDUCATION
SUPPORT & SERVICES

\$5,234,000,000

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

\$28,000,000

PUBLIC LIBRARIES



\$267,000,000

Independent Schools
350 Independent School Authorities

\$4,952,000,000

Public Schools
60 School Districts individually manage the funds

\$15,000,000

Early Learning and Literacy

OPERATING GRANT
(2012/13) FISCAL YEAR
\$4.632 Billion

LEARNING IMPROVEMENT FUND
\$60 Million

SPECIAL PURPOSE GRANTS
\$260 Million



Infrastructure Related
(AFG, Seismic, Leases etc.)

Funding of Support Staff
(Pay Equity, LTD, etc.)

Support for School Systems
(CommunityLINK, PRP's, PLNet, etc.)

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Visit the School District Profiles for a breakdown on funding, enrolment building projects, programs, graduation results and much more for each school district.

www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/ministries/education/factsheets/factsheet-school-district-profiles.html



Ministry of Education

PAC SPENDING SURVEY

For many years, British Columbia's school districts have had to cope with persistent budget constraints due to cost pressures from many different sources. To help our children's schools keep up with the challenges of changing technologies, outdated or outworn materials, or even crumbling buildings, BC's Parent Advisory Councils have consistently stepped in to help raise needed funds.

*By Shelley Courtenay, BCCPAC Director
COPACS President*

"No parent wants to see their child without the necessary tools or equipment for success," says British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Council's President, Nicole Makohoniuk, "our parents deserve huge thanks for their commitment to providing these resources for all our children. While these tools are an important part of the classroom, it's also important that Parent Advisory Councils have time to return to their original purpose of advising government of the needs of students, parents, and the education system as a whole."

This pressure to continue efforts to fundraise for new equipment is expected to intensify with the implementation of the revised curriculum, and our Premiers promise to introduce coding to every student from K-12. A large portion of the technology in BC's classrooms has been provided with private funding, either parent fundraising, or sponsorships from businesses or service groups.

Fundraising in schools can however also lead to large inequities between classrooms. Schools in more affluent neighbourhoods for example can end up with larger financial coffers with which to outfit their children's classrooms with cutting edge technology, while families in lower socio-economic areas may still be struggling to update the books in their school library. Hot lunch programs, family fun nights, magazine sales and the like simply aren't as profitable if there isn't much money to go around in the first place.

For the first time, BCCPAC is asking parents to answer a small survey regarding their PAC fundraising to get a better idea of the big picture of how PAC's are using their funds. Your input is very much valued and appreciated as we work to truly understand what our classrooms would be missing if not for the work of parents. Please keep an eye open for the survey, we are hoping to gain a solid understanding of what our PACs are saving for, hoping for, and planning for. The more survey results we have available to us the broader representation we can forward to the Ministry of Education.

Continued from page 10

energy into lots of positive tasks and projects, that energy would go negative and we would have a problem or an uprising. The only way I know to deal with this is to listen and ask questions until the issue is aired and we all do our best to take a positive step.

So there you have it, my reasons and some tips from the lessons I learned as a long time PAC and DPAC volunteer. During those years my youngest son identified my biggest character flaw, and truth told, he was mostly right. "Mom," he told me, "you care too much about too many things." There are a lot of things to pay attention to when you are a parent. Your kids' school is just one, but it is one that every parent cares about. As a parent leader, you can help people join and take part in your PAC, share the work and the fun, and make positive, collaborative contributions to our schools.



2016 SPRING CONFERENCE AND AGM LINEUP

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Time	Session Information
7:30AM	Registration, Exhibitors, Proxy Room
8:15AM	WorkSafeBC Sponsor Address (Continental Breakfast Provided)
8:30AM	Welcome Address
9:15AM	Plenary Session: Friends Workshop - Jane Thornthwaite
10:15-10:45AM	Coffee and Networking
10:45-11:45AM	Breakout Session A: Ministry of Education Chair Q & A
10:45-11:45AM	Breakout Session B: Tentative Session
10:45-11:45AM	Breakout Session C: PAC 101
10:45-11:45AM	Breakout Session D: Constitution and Bylaws
11:45-12:45PM	Encorp Sponsor Presentation and Lunch will be provided
1:00-2:00PM	Plenary Session: The Value of Meaningful Conversations (Conflict Resolution) - Lisa DeBoer
2:00-3:00PM	Breakout Session E: Bring your Great Ideas on how to get parents out to PAC meetings
2:00-3:00PM	Breakout Session F: Ministry of Education: Understanding the Parent Portal
2:00-3:00PM	Breakout Session G: Advocating for Your Unique Learner
2:00-3:00PM	Breakout Session H: BC Ed Plan
3:00-3:30PM	Coffee and Networking
3:30-4:30PM	Plenary Session: Parent in Public Education - George Abbott
4:30-5:00PM	Thank You and Closing
7:00-8:00PM	Meet the Candidates

AGM SCHEDULE

Saturday April 30th 2016

7:30AM	Registration and Proxy Room Opens
8:00AM	Breakfast Provided
9:00AM	BCCPAC Annual General Meeting Begins
12:30PM	Lunch Provided
4:30PM	Annual General Meeting adjourns for the day
6:30PM	An evening with Tim Nutt

Sunday May 1st 2016

8:00AM	Registration - Breakfast Provided
9:00AM	BCCPAC Annual General Meeting continues
12:30PM	Annual General Meeting Adjourns

Additional information regarding resolutions, nomination, travel, hotel bookings and registration can be found at www.bccpac.bc.ca

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Northern Regional Office

Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch

Telephone: 250 612-4122

Facsimile: 250 612-4130

Additionally you can call BCCPAC at our office;

604-474-0524 or 1-866-529-4397

What is the principals role within the PAC?

The school Principal is an intergral part of the school and as such brings a different perspective to the PAC. The Principal can be invited to provide an administrative report, attend purely to be informed or may be more involved. The level of involvement however; should be something that the PAC is comfortable with.

Can a parent who is also a teacher at the school sit on the executive of our PAC?

Absolutely, many PACs are concerned that there may be a conflict of interest or have come across the BCCPAC Constitution and Bylaws that states that school board staff in any capacity cannot sit on the BCCPAC Board of Directors. This should not be confused with local PACs and DPACs, many have parent/teachers sitting on their PACs and feel that they bring a beneficial insight to both the school and the process and will often recuse themselves from any votes or discussions that may be considered a conflict of interest. If a PAC or DPAC feels strongly that this would not benefit them they can update their PAC or DPACs Constitution and Bylaws to reflect their current perspective.

Can grandparents sit on the PAC?

With the constantly changing definition of family; many PACs include grandparents as part of their PAC as they bring with them a diverse perspective, experience and are sometimes the primary attendant at the school on behalf of the student.

A random parent keeps requesting a summary of our financials - can they do that?

Yes - every parent at the school is considered a member at large and has the right to request a copy of the budget and financial statements. Your PAC is considered to be an inclusive member based group, i.e. all parents at the school are de facto members of the PAC. Many PACs have a policy within their constitution and bylaws that states that financial

material must be provided within X time frame. This allows the PAC the opportunity to put together the requested information within a timely fashion.

Can the Principal request a financial review of PAC funds?

The PAC is under no obligation to provide a financial summary to the school be it at the Principal's or teacher's request.

Our PAC does not seem to have a Consitution and Bylaws, what should we do?

A common question, especially for new PACs or PACs that have been dormant for a few years. Once all avenues have been exhausted in searching; asking the Principal and administrative staff, reaching out to past PAC executive members and the DPAC (some DPACs have been known to maintain their schools C&Bs, but this is becoming less common). New PACs are different than PACs that have been operating without one for a few years. If that is the case the current PAC should form a committee, reaching out to the members at large for people interested in participating in re-drafting a new Constitution and Bylaws for the PAC. The BCCPAC Leadership Manual and staff can offer guidance as it is a lengthy process which will then need to be presented to the membership as a draft for comments and questions before being voted on and finalized.

New PACs are not really PACs until they have a Constitution and Bylaws, the interested parents should reach out to the parent population of the school similarly to above, seeking volunteers to help draft the initial version of the Constitution and Bylaws. At which point if approved they can then based on the outlined election process in their newly accepted Constitution and Bylaws move forward with the election process. Drafting the initial Constitution and Bylaws does not automatically make that group of parents the new PAC Executive, the outlined election policy should be followed.

When in doubt who do we call?

If every you are uncertain of what to do or in which direction to go, call the BCCPAC Team who can help you through the process or put you intouch with a board member if needed - info@bccpac.bc.ca or by phone 604-474-0524 or 1-866-529-4397. You can also reach out to your local area District PAC.



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TOP MARKS IN RECYCLING.**



Enrolling is easy and the program is free.



Support to make your bottle drives successful.



Track your **progress** to help motivate.



Get as many bins as you need.



Mobile pickup services where available.



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Keep all the money raised to benefit your school.



Official partner of BCCPAC.

**ENCORP IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT THAT HELPS SCHOOLS
LIKE YOURS RAISE MONEY BY RECYCLING.**

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