

FALL 2017



# OUR VOICE

BC CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

## Information about Community Gaming Grants all PACs and DPACs should know!



Interview with Rob Fleming,  
Minister of Education

Essentials of Running a Meeting

Meet the 2017-18 Board of Directors

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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. Committee members who helped put this edition together are Cathy Jewett, Jocelyn Schonekess, Crystal Andrews, Karen Nordquist 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 B.C. Society Act.

One of BCCPAC's primary focuses this year is to ensure that our education system meets the learning needs of each student in a positive and respectful manner.

## 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](mailto:info@bccpac.bc.ca).

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents,

It is an honor and a privilege to be writing to you as President of BCCPAC for the 2017-18 school year. I continue to be inspired and amazed by the dedication and knowledge of parents and parent volunteers from all reaches of our province and the commitment they have to improving our education system.

Collaborative relationships with partner groups at the school, district and provincial level are key to effective parent engagement, and BCCPAC is focused on supporting and strengthening these relationships in the coming year.

With equity and inclusion as part of our guiding principles, the 2017-18 strategic plan includes specific goals to address advocacy for students with a learning difference, improving engagement of aboriginal parents, and supporting sexual orientation and gender identity inclusive school environments.

The article "Teaching to Diversity" challenges the status quo of class size and composition to include personalized learning based on the unique needs of the students. The Ministry of Education produced a policy guide that highlights three goals for supporting diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions. Details of this can be found in the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) article.

We are pleased that Minister of Education Rob Fleming took the time to share what his ministry has in store for districts this school year. We look forward to strengthening our relationship with the Ministry of Education as we bring forward the issues and concerns of parents in a positive and constructive way.

We are happy to have a full Board of Directors going into this school year and we've included a short article on running PAC and DPAC meetings. There are photos from our first annual Awards Gala Evening held during the 2017 Annual General Meeting in May, as well as the BCCPAC Education Award Winner's essay on the value of parent involvement in education. Planning is well underway for the annual BCCPAC DPAC Summit, bringing together parent leaders from districts across the province to engage in informative discussions about public education.

As parent leaders, we have a strong belief in public education as a cornerstone of a democratic society. We strive to improve equity and inclusion for all children, especially for our most vulnerable learners.

Sincerely,  
Jen Mezei, BCCPAC President

## BCCPAC Board of Directors

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Our Mission	To improve public education for all students by including and supporting parents
Our Purposes	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 level
Our Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Diversity &amp; Inclusion</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>
Who We Represent	Membership is made up of Parent Advisory Councils (PAC) and District Parent Advisory Councils (DPAC). Through our DPAC membership, BCCPAC represents 89.7% of parents in the public education system in BC.
Our Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPAC Summit</li> <li>• Our Voice</li> <li>• Outreach to PACs/DPACs</li> <li>• Spring Parent Engagement Conference</li> <li>• Briefs in Parent Friendly Language</li> <li>• Advocacy Support for Parents</li> </ul>
Our Strategic Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Strong Profile for BCCPAC</li> <li>• Develop Collaborative Relationships</li> <li>• Building Capacity of Parent Leaders</li> </ul>

# INTERVIEW WITH THE NEW MINISTER OF EDUCATION, ROB FLEMING

BC's new Minister of Education, Rob Fleming was first elected to the legislature 2005, and was re-elected four more times. He has been the NDP Education Critic since 2013 and on July 18, 2017 was sworn in as Education Minister. Minister Fleming was quick to jump in with both feet, meeting with school districts and superintendents across the province to get a feel for the issues plaguing public education in BC.

Minister Fleming's [mandate letter](#) from Premier Horgan provides direction to and highlights the expectations of the Ministry of Education. One area that the ministry will be working on is developing a stable and sustainable model for the K-12 education system. In early August, the ministry restored funding to Adult Basic Education and English Language Learner programs in BC. Minister Fleming confirmed special needs funding will be part of a comprehensive funding review and the ministry will be releasing details soon on how that consultation will take place. It's been almost 30 years since the last review of education took place with Barry Sullivan's "A Legacy for Learners: Report of the Royal Commission on Education" (aka the Sullivan Report) published in 1988. This comprehensive funding review will look at how well the current model is working and where the gaps are. Minister Fleming is looking forward to working with education partners in close collaboration and in a climate of respect to determine what a fair, strong and well resourced school funding model looks like.

A much anticipated item from the mandate letter instructs Minister Fleming to create an ongoing capital fund for school playgrounds. A 2013 [BCCPAC Member Resolution](#) urges the government, in part, to "...increase the annual facilities grant sufficiently to provide for the ongoing replacement of playgrounds as required." The ministry will be looking at options on how to set up this program such as a stand-alone program or perhaps new funding attached to an existing capital program. Minister Fleming is planning to make an announcement sometime this Fall regarding a pro-rated fund with a further announcement in the next school budget cycle in the Spring of 2018.



*Minister of Education Rob Fleming generously took time out of a busy day to be interviewed by Susan Wilson.*

Premier Horgan and the government are committed to this program because they have heard from people across the province that parent fundraising capacity has been pushed to the maximum. Parents are consistently being asked to fund raise for all kinds of basic capital items that are integral to a school. "We talk about play-based learning, how can we do that without a playground?" expresses Minister Fleming.

Parents will be very pleased with the expected announcement of new funding for capital projects including seismic upgrading. Minister Fleming's goal is to expend the money already budgeted for and look ahead to the 2018 budget and a three-year capital budget that will start to reduce the seismic upgrade wait-list. The ministry will also start to work with school districts with school replacement projects that stalled under the former government. This anticipated announcement falls in line with a 2015 [BCCPAC Member Resolution](#) insisting the government's commitment to an immediate significant increase in grants to school districts including "...adequate capital funding to school districts for facility improvements, seismic upgrades, and additional schools in rapidly growing communities."

With around 3000 new teaching positions being filled this Fall, Minister Fleming reached out to every school district over the summer to make sure what was probably the largest hiring of teachers in several generations proceeded as smoothly as possible. The first hurdle was to guarantee the ministry would resolve any disputes school districts had over the financial obligations under the restored language on class size and composition. Some school districts were reluctant to hire teachers as there were fears that the additional costs associated with meeting the restored language wouldn't be fully funded by the previous government.

Ministry Fleming feels school districts have done a great job recruiting teachers from across Canada and internationally while welcoming newly certified teachers.

Minister Fleming has every confidence in the quality of teachers that were hired and is looking forward to students and school staff experiencing smaller class sizes in Kindergarten and the early learning years and having access to more specialist teachers. More specialist teachers will give those students with different learning needs additional support, through the restored class size and composition language. Both of Minister Fleming's children attend public schools in the Victoria area and their local elementary school, where his son will be attending this Fall, will have an extra teacher/librarian which has been a long time coming.



Despite the negative chatter about the BC public education system, students continue to thrive and succeed due, in part, to the great professional teachers who are a critical part of the education team. Recent international reports identify BC students as some of the best in the world and Minister Fleming agrees, "We have a very good school system today in BC and our goal is to make it better."

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# TEACHING TO DIVERSITY

The recent Supreme Court of Canada decision in favour of the BC Teacher's Federation ruled that the Provincial government had illegally violated teachers' collective bargaining rights in 2002. This resulted in the restoration of fifteen year old contracts. The actual contents of these contracts, including its provisions limiting class size and composition, were not a subject of the Court's ruling.

The restoration of the old contract language is seen by many as an opportunity to improve the learning conditions of students through the hiring of more teachers and a reduction in class sizes. However, it has also brought concerns about the potential for unintended negative consequences, particularly for the most vulnerable students.

In the majority of school districts, the restored contract language places limits not only on class size, but also on class composition – in other words, a cap on the number of children in each classroom who are designated as having “special needs.”

In some districts the old contracts limit students with low incidence designations – which includes Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – to two or even just one per class. Meanwhile, since 2002, the number of children diagnosed with autism each year has more than doubled, in part because the diagnostic criteria has changed from including only “low functioning autism,” to including all students on the vast spectrum of ability under the label “ASD.”

There are a number problems with limiting the children allowed in a classroom based on diagnostic labels. In many cases, these labels tell us virtually nothing about the abilities and support needs of individual students. To use

*Generously submitted by Karen Nordquist, Director on the BCCPAC Board of Directors.*

autism as an example, an individual diagnosed with ASD can be fully able to communicate or non-verbal. They can have behavioural concerns or be docile. They can have sensory issues which can interfere with their ability to learn in a noisy setting, or they can thrive in a busy classroom. To place a blanket limit per class on students with a label of ASD is not only arbitrary and unfair, it isn't particularly helpful.

The notion of class composition is discrimination based on disability. Placing classroom caps based on labels singles out particular students as “problems” and creates divisive “us and them” thinking which does not reflect our country's values of inclusion, tolerance, and acceptance of differences. In 2017, we know that it is wrong to single out, label, and limit the number of children we allow in our classrooms based on any other individual characteristic – be it gender, race, religion, sexual orientation... many of which have explicitly excluded students in the not-too-distant past. Why do we still make an exception for students with physical or cognitive differences?

Human diversity, in all its many forms, is natural. It is the reality of today's classrooms, as it is in our larger society. Each unique individual has their own personal strengths and skills to contribute, as well areas they find more challenging. No label can adequately describe who a child is, what they need to thrive, and what they can achieve.

This diversity is recognized in the concept of personalized learning, a cornerstone to British Columbia's newly redesigned Kindergarten to Grade 12

(K-12) education curriculum. As described in the B.C. Government's [curriculum overview](#):

“Personalized learning acknowledges that not all students learn successfully at the same rate, in the same learning environment, and in the same ways. It involves the provision of high-quality and engaging learning opportunities that meet the diverse needs of all students. Schools may provide flexible timing and pacing through a range of learning environments, with learning supports and services tailored to meet student needs.”

In the last fifteen years, a lot has changed in terms of special needs designations, and in how we approach education in general. Looking forward to how we can best support all students to achieve their full potential, we need to reframe the conversation and focus on teaching to diversity, and personalized learning based on the unique and diverse needs of all the children in the classroom. We need to look beyond limiting the number of particular types of students, to matching the needs of the whole class with the appropriate supports, and to adequately resourcing each classroom's specific needs.

Education is a fundamental human right, and the right of each child, regardless of ability, to receive a full educational program in BC is enshrined in the School Act. In 2012, the Supreme Court of Canada (Moore v. British Columbia) affirmed the right of students with disabilities to receive the accommodations they need to equitably access public education, and acknowledged that such measures act as “the ramp that provides access to the statutory commitment to education made to all children in British Columbia.”

BCCPAC has heard from many parents across the province whose children are not receiving the accommodations they need to equitably access public education. Many students who struggle in school, and fall further behind academically, can wait years for the educational assessments which are necessary to determine the best methods to support their learning. Other children, who have been identified as having “special needs,” are regularly missing many hours of school each week due to a lack of appropriate supports and services.

BCCPAC is committed to working with the Ministry of Education to ensure that every student in BC is able to equitably participate in public education, as is their human right, and that no student faces a reduction in services or is denied equitable access to an educational program due to the restored contract language or a lack of adequate and appropriate supports.



**Another complimentary 2018 Spring Conference registration will be awarded to a PAC or DPAC who submits their membership form with payment by Wednesday November 1!**

**Those PACs and DPACs who submitted their membership forms with payment by the first early bird deadline in July will automatically be entered into this draw.**



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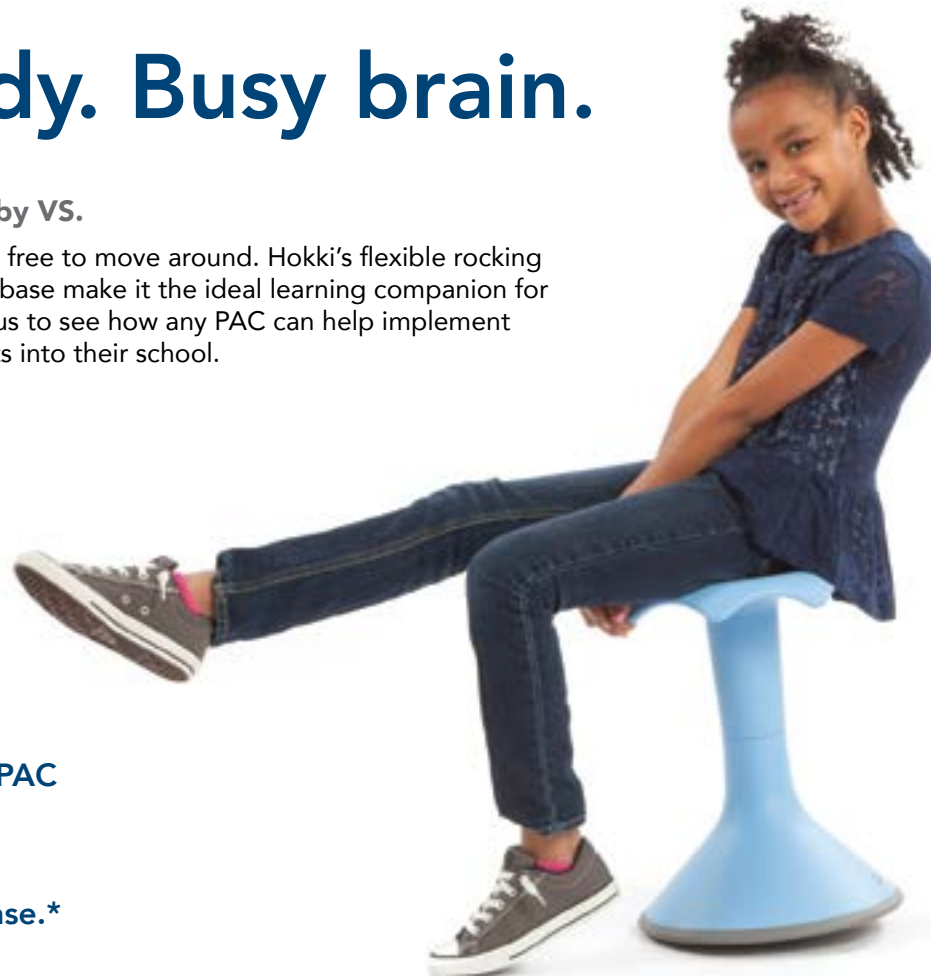
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## SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY (SOGI) EDUCATION IN BC

In our changing world, it is important that schools and communities reflect and celebrate the diversity found within them. All students and staff have the right to safe and welcoming environments where they can grow, develop and thrive as unique individuals. In January of 2016, the all-party Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth released its final report on Child and Youth Mental Health in B.C. This report identified sexual and gender minority youth as particularly vulnerable and stated that, "school districts should be required to support sexual and gender minority youth in schools through general and targeted programs to address child and youth mental health issues."

In July 2016, Bill 27- Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2016 was passed to include "gender identity or expression" among the protected grounds covered by the B.C. Human Rights Code. The B.C. Ministry of Education followed in September with its own directive asking that explicit references to sexual orientation and gender identity be added to the policies and codes of conduct in each school district.

The Ministry of Education has produced a SOGI Policy Guide that states that "policies and procedures that explicitly reference SOGI have been proven to reduce discrimination, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts for all students."

The Ministry of Education SOGI Policy Guide also includes three goals for supporting diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions:

- **Visibility:** The diversity of sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions are recognized and valued.
- **Protection:** The dignity of all people across the sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) spectra is intended to be preserved, as well as protected from harm.
- **Inclusion:** Equitable treatment and inclusion are a reality for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.

Many parents, teachers and administrators have been working for years to build the knowledge, skills and tools they need to support LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) students and families, however, many more are still unsure where to start. This lack of inclusive discussion contributes to recent research showing 64% of LGBTQ students across Canada still feel unsafe at school.

*Generously submitted by Jen Mezei, President of BCCPAC with Matt Carruthers, Provincial SOGI Lead for the Ministry of Education.*

According to Egale Canada (2011), the two school spaces youth felt most unsafe in are change rooms and washrooms:

- 52% of trans youth
- 41% of LGBTQ youth
- and 28% of non-LGBTQ youth identified their school washrooms as unsafe.

As the issue of gender-neutral washrooms has emerged at the forefront of the political debate on transgender rights, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the heart of the issue is that we need to protect the dignity and safety of all students. Single-occupant accessible washrooms provide a safe, private facility for anyone who feels uncomfortable using gender-segregated multi-stall washrooms.

Parents at the BCCPAC AGM in May agreed, approving resolutions that BCCPAC advocate for at least one single occupant inclusive washroom and changeroom in each school and any associated capital funding required. (1)(2)

Inclusion and Diversity are at the core of BCCPAC's guiding principles, and BCCPAC will continue to advocate for initiatives and processes that are designed not only to stop discrimination in our schools but also to provide opportunities to unlearn discrimination. (3)

In the coming year, BCCPAC is looking forward to working with our provincial partners towards creating school environments where all students not only feel safe, but embraced and empowered.

NOTES: *Matt Carruthers was an Elementary School Principal for 14 years in Delta and worked closely with district and provincial staff on SOGI initiatives. His current position is supported by funding from B.C.'s Ministry of Education and sits with the ARC Foundation, a philanthropic organization based in Vancouver.*



- (1) [Resolution 2017.2](#)
- (2) [Resolution 2017.3](#)
- (3) [Resolution 2016.17](#)

## EDUCATION AWARD WINNER MILA VANCIC



*Mila, pictured here with the BCCPAC Education Award Plaque, was invited to the 2017 Gala Award Evening to read her essay on the value of parent involvement in education (with reference to the role of PACs, DPACs and/or BCCPAC). Below is the essay in its entirety.*

The Lessons from Mr. Bell's Article

- by Mila Vancic

When I was in elementary school, I remember sitting and reading one of the monthly newsletters that was sent home to parents. On the front page, the principal (Mr. Monty Bell) had written an article on the importance of parent involvement in their child's education.

Essentially, Mr. Bell was trying to explain that there is a positive correlation between parental involvement/volunteerism and the success of children in school. While Mr. Bell's purpose was undoubtedly to encourage more parents to get involved (i.e. join the PAC, volunteer in the classroom, etc.), I came away with a greater respect and appreciation for my own mother.

When I was little, I had no idea that my mother's involvement was extra special. Rather, I just thought that every parent was like mine and volunteered a lot at school. Indeed, I thought of it as quite normal. But as I got older and sat down to read Mr. Bell's article, I started to understand that a big reason for my positive school experiences, academic success, extra curricular involvement and my own desire to volunteer and give back to others was in great part due to my mother's involvement in my school and her positive role modeling.

It is through my mother's involvement that I not only know what a PAC is, but that I understand and appreciate how important parent involvement is and how parents and PACs contribute to the overall success of the school and its students. PACs are inclusive bodies which provide a collective voice of parents in schools, providing support to teachers and students, and advice to School Planning Councils and School Boards. Without a doubt, parents' voices and contributions can make an incredibly positive impact and contribute significantly to the climate and culture of the school. This happened in my school, through the help of parent volunteers like my mother. When I look back on my most memorable and positive school experiences (music concerts, field trips, sports days) parent volunteers were there every step of the way, helping to make these events a success.

I would love to bump into Mr. Bell one day and let him know that his article had a profound effect on me. I would tell Mr. Bell that reading his article sparked in me a real sense of gratitude for all that my mother has done for me...all the days she volunteered to be a classroom helper, the seven years she organized (single-handedly) our school's Christmas Pancake Breakfast for 500+ people, and for being a parent chaperone on the grade 7 French Immersion trip to Quebec. I would also tell him that his article, together with my mother's rolemodelling, has made me want to give back to my own school and community. I would tell him that this desire to help others eventually led me to create a club in my own school, dedicated to helping the homeless and marginalized people in Vancouver's downtown eastside. And most importantly, I would tell Mr. Bell that my positive school experiences have made me want to make a difference in the world, and be a better person (and hopefully parent) in the future.

*BCCPAC is pleased to offer Grade 12 students of member schools the opportunity to apply for the Education Award which has a \$1000 prize. Students must be planning to pursue post-secondary studies and provide two letters of reference and a cover letter outlining good citizenship, leadership, sportsmanship and community service interests in addition to a 300-500 word essay. Completed details on this and our other awards can be found on our [website](#). Deadline for applications for all of our awards is February 28 every year.*

## 2017 GALA AWARD EVENING

Over 50 parents enjoyed light appies and drinks while honouring parent volunteers from several school districts. A heart-felt toast to the late John Bird was well received as was Education Award winner Mila Vancic's essay "The Lessons from Mr. Bell's Article."

Canadian Country Music Award winners, The Heels played throughout the evening as parents had fun with the photo booth. BCCPAC looks forward to continuing the Gala tradition for next year's Spring Conference and AGM to be held May 4-6, 2018



# COMMUNITY GAMING GRANTS - IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) or equivalent groups (e.g., parent support groups at public schools, Group 1 or 2 independent schools or First Nation band schools within B.C.) are eligible to apply for a PAC grant through the Community Gaming Grants program.

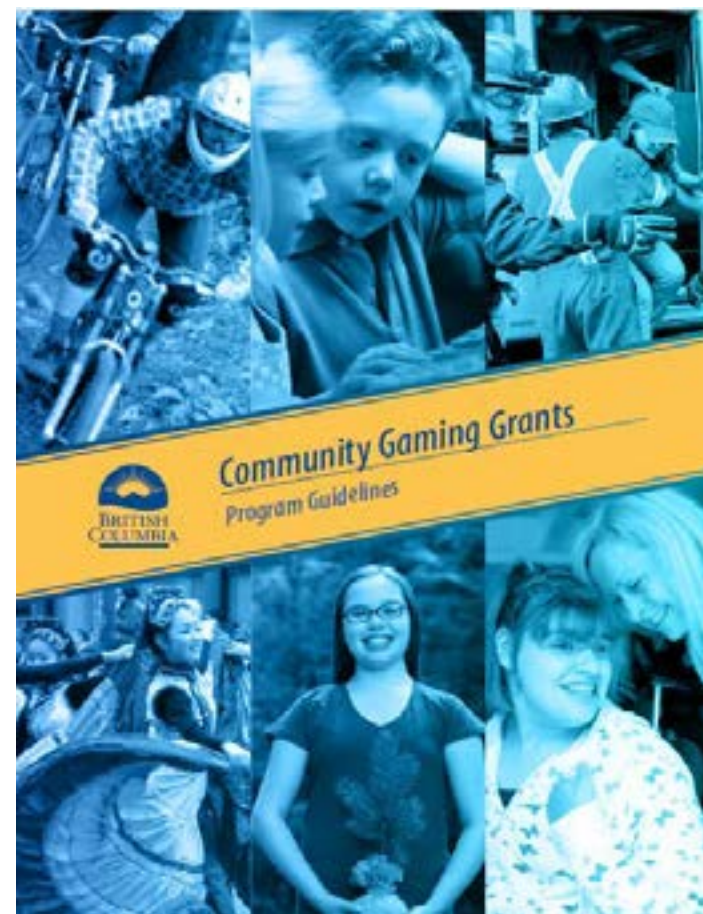
The PAC or equivalent must be an autonomous group whose membership consists of parents or guardians of students attending the school.

All PACs or equivalent groups are eligible to receive \$20 per student and must disburse funding within 36 months of receipt. The level of funding will be based on the school enrollment numbers for the current school year.

District Parent Advisory Councils (DPACs) can apply for a Community Gaming Grant as well. They are eligible to receive \$2,500 per year and must disburse the funding within 12 months of receipt.

## How and When to Apply

- Like all other Community Gaming Grant applicants, PACs and DPACs must apply online via the



## Generously submitted by the Community Gaming Grants Branch

[Community Gaming Grants Branch website](#). PAC/DPAC grant applications must be completed and submitted between April 1 and June 30.

- See the [PAC/DPAC Pre-Application Checklist](#) for detailed information on the application process, including the information and documents needed prior to starting an application.

## Eligible Uses of PAC/DPAC Grant Funds

Once a PAC has applied for and received a grant, there are conditions that govern the use of the funds. The grant conditions and eligible uses of funding are detailed in the [Community Gaming Grants Program Guidelines](#).

### Some eligible uses of PAC grant funds include:

- Student publications (e.g., newsletters, yearbooks);
- Student computers for extracurricular activities (e.g., software, hardware, accessories);
- Student ceremonies (e.g., graduation, dry grad);
- Uniforms and equipment for extracurricular activities;
- Capital acquisitions directly benefiting students (e.g., playground equipment); and
- Student conferences or educational field trips within B.C.

DPAC grant funds must be spent on things that foster greater parental involvement in schools and effective communication between schools, parents, students and the community. Examples include:

- Educational and promotional materials;
- Administrative costs, including BCCPAC membership fees; and
- Travel for regular DPAC meetings.

## Ineligible Uses of PAC/DPAC Grant Funds

It is also important to remember that there are some things that PAC/DPAC grants cannot be used for. Some common examples of ineligible expenditures include:

- Goods or services that should be provided by the school district for teachers in order to deliver curriculum or for students to complete curriculum requirements;
- Materials that are not required in the teaching or completion of curriculum, but which assist in doing so (e.g., smart boards and tablets);
- Past debt, loan or interest payments;
- Disbursements outside of the province unless approved



in advance in writing by the Community Gaming Grants Branch;

- Out-of-province travel, unless approved in advance by the Branch;
- Out-of-province or out-of-country aid;
- Teachers on call (to attend field trips to assist with supervision);
- Staff luncheons; or
- Professional development of staff.

PACs cannot use gaming funds for BCCPAC memberships; however DPACs can use their funds to cover the cost of theirs and their school PACs' BCCPAC membership.

## How to Remain in Good Standing with the Community Gaming Grants Branch

As PAC/DPAC grants are public funds, it is very important that the conditions of the grant are met and that records on the use of funding are maintained and reported.

The single most important rule for PACs and DPACs to remember is that they must complete and submit a Gaming Account Summary Report (GASR) to the Community Gaming Grants Branch every year within 90 days of their fiscal year end.

The GASR must list all deposits to, and all disbursements from, the PAC/DPAC's gaming account during that fiscal year. This is how PACs and DPACs show they are accountable for the grant and other money they received and spent. To learn more about GASRs and how to complete them visit the Resources section of the [Community Gaming Grants Branch website](#).

## Other Tips

The following tips will also help ensure that a PAC or DPAC stays within the rules of the program:

- Ensure that funds remain under the management and control of the PAC or DPAC that received them;

- Maintain a separate Gaming Account, specified in the organization's full name, for the exclusive purpose of receiving, holding and disbursing gaming funds;
- Obtain cheques for the Gaming Account that have the organization's full name and the words "Gaming Account" printed on them;
- Maintain Gaming Account records that clearly show the amount and purpose of each transaction;
- Ensure the cheques issued against the Gaming Account are signed by at least two of the organization's unrelated signing officials, at least one of which must be an officer of the organization;
- Only use electronic transfers and/or automated debits from the Gaming Account where two current, unrelated, board members have authorized the transactions in writing. This authorization must specify the purpose and maximum dollar amount permitted
- Cash transactions from the Gaming Account are not permitted; and
- Do not transfer any gaming funds to schools or school districts unless it is to reimburse a school or school district for an extracurricular purchase made on the PAC/DPAC's behalf and at the PAC/DPAC's request.

In the following circumstances, it is advisable to contact the Community Gaming Grant Branch to determine the best approach:

- In the case of a school closure or substantive downsizing; or
- If the PAC or DPAC is unable to fully disburse the grant funds within the allotted time period.

For more detailed information about the program and the rules as they apply to PACs and DPACs, visit the [Community Gaming Grant Branch website](#) or contact us at [cggoutreach@gov.bc.ca](mailto:cggoutreach@gov.bc.ca). We're happy to help.

# BCCPAC WELCOMES A NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2017



**President, Jen Mezei - SD 41 Burnaby**

This is Jen's second year on the BCCPAC Board. Jen has been involved with PAC and DPAC for over a decade – five years as the Burnaby DPAC Chair. She has been a parent representative on Education, Special Education, LGBTQ, Advanced Learning and Policy committees. Jen is passionate about providing parents with the opportunity to provide meaningful and informed input. She believes that the sharing of information is necessary to build capacity within our PACs and DPACs and to strengthen the parent voice in the collaborative process. Jen has three children and works in the renewable energy sector. She is the 2010 winner of the BCCPAC George Matthews award for excellence in Parent Leadership.

*Email [jenmezei@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:jenmezei@bccpac.bc.ca)*



**1st Vice President, Gord Byers - SD 33 Chilliwack**

As my journey continues with BCCPAC, I take on a new role as 1st Vice President. We have four children that have been part of the Chilliwack School District, number four is currently entering grade 10. I have been working for Shaw Cable servicing the Chilliwack area since 2000. I have been involved with PACs/DPACs in the Chilliwack area since 2009. I look forward to being that parent voice for BC as we navigate these waters of the education system, together a strong voice is a strong province.

*Email [gordbyers@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:gordbyers@bccpac.bc.ca)*



**2nd Vice President, Andrea Sinclair - SD 39 Vancouver**

Andrea's passion and strength is connecting people; she is committed to helping the Board more deeply engage with its members to amplify the parent voice. Andrea has been active in public education since 2004, advocating for seismically safe schools and sustainable funding and is a founding member of the Parent Advocacy Network for Public Education (PAN). Currently on the Tupper Secondary School PAC, she has broad PAC and Board experience and is well-versed in policies and governance. Andrea believes it's by working together and leveraging our collective strengths that we can effect positive change for public education.

*Email [andreasinclair@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:andreasinclair@bccpac.bc.ca)*



**Secretary, Kendra Mann - SD 08 Kootenay Lake**

Kendra joined the Board as Secretary in November 2014. She currently lives in Nelson with her family of three daughters in the K-12 system. Kendra works in the automotive parts industry, and enjoys volunteering around the community. She enjoys mentoring young girls through her Girl Guide unit and is looking forward to assisting in a Brownie unit in the upcoming year. Kendra believes that all children deserve a quality education, no matter where they grew up. She looks forward to working with the 2017/18 Board of Directors on advocating for a quality public education system for all BC students.

*Email [kendramann@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:kendramann@bccpac.bc.ca)*



**Treasurer, Gillian Burnett - SD 57 Prince George**

Gillian currently resides just outside Prince George, BC and is married to an incredibly supportive husband and has two fabulous kids, Katherine and Jake. She's been involved in the K-12 public education system as a volunteer since 2009 and has held the position of treasurer or chair at Nukko Lake Elementary for six of the past seven years. Gillian sat on the DPAC executive as Secretary, Treasurer or Chair for five of the past six years representing DPAC on numerous board committees.

*Email [gillianburnett@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:gillianburnett@bccpac.bc.ca)*



**Director, Crystal Andrews - SD 62 Sooke**

Crystal's built an expanded portfolio starting in PAC as a volunteer parent, working her way through all the positions from Secretary to President in Elementary and Middle School. From 2010 onward, she started attending the monthly DPAC meetings and by years end caught the BCCPAC bug. Two years ago Crystal was asked to join the BCCPAC Conference/AGM committee where she worked closely with other members to bring successful conferences to the membership on budget.

*Email [crystalandrews@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:crystalandrews@bccpac.bc.ca)*



**Director, Karen Nordquist - SD 44 North Vancouver**

Karen has two school age daughters and has been involved in multiple roles on her school and district PACs for seven years. A primary focus of her work has been on student rights and their welfare at school. She believes that parents, as the natural advocates for their children, need a stronger voice in public education to ensure that each child is learning to the best of their abilities in a safe and healthy environment. In her first term on the BCCPAC Board, she looks forward to working toward the goal of true meaningful consultation and collaboration between Parents, the Ministry of Education and Educators for the benefit of all students in public education.

*Email [karennordquist@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:karennordquist@bccpac.bc.ca)*



**Director, Suzanne Perreault - SD 35 Langley**

As a parent of three, a counselor, educational mediator/advocate and a dedicated Langley community member of a little more than six years, Suzanne is committed to improving the learning environment in our schools using her voice, skills and resources for the benefit of the children. Having two children graduating this year from the Langley School District, leaving one in the system who will be finishing his education soon to be at Langley Secondary School of which Suzanne was a strong advocate in the successfulness of keeping the doors of that school open.

*Email [suzanneperreault@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:suzanneperreault@bccpac.bc.ca)*



**Director, Tracy Wright - SD 35 Langley**

Tracy is excited to be starting the second year of her second term with the BCCPAC Board of Directors. She lives in Langley with her husband Craig and their three wonderful children. Besides having been involved with her children's school PAC(s) and the District PAC for more than decade; she has also served on the boards of the Learning Disabilities Association (LDAFS) Fraser South chapter and Learning Disabilities Association of British Columbia (LDABC). Tracy is excited to continue to serve our membership and can't wait to see what we as an organization accomplish for the parents and the children of this province.

*Email [tracywright@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:tracywright@bccpac.bc.ca)*



**Chief Executive Officer, John Gaiptman**

John has been in public education for 38 years. For the past fourteen years, he has been Superintendent of Schools; twelve of which were with the Victoria School District and two with the New Westminster School District. John is married with two daughters and two granddaughters. John is excited to be continuing as the Executive Director/CEO of BCCPAC. It is his hope, through his vast experience in public education, he will be able to support the causes of BCCPAC.

*Email [johngaipman@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:johngaipman@bccpac.bc.ca)*



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Your Guide Through Post-Secondary Education



## PLANNING FOR POSTSECONDARY: ARE YOU LEAVING FREE MONEY ON THE TABLE?

The day to day cost of raising kids can be expensive. However, there's a large, additional future expense looming on the horizon: post-secondary education. And while it is easy to get bogged down paying for the present, the benefits of planning ahead for college or university can be enormous. Historically, over the past 20 years, these costs have risen at a rate of 4.1 annually in B.C., which is more than double the 1.9% inflation rate during that time. This underscores the importance of saving early to provide as many education options for your son or daughter upon high school completion. It also assists them in avoiding reliance on large student loans and accumulation of massive post-secondary debt.

The Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) program provides the best option for putting money aside. The program, which received major enhancements in 1998, provides numerous advantages over saving in a non-registered investment vehicle, including:

**Tax free earnings growth:** Earnings grow without being taxed annually, providing an opportunity for ongoing compound growth. The longer the plan is open, the greater the potential for tax-free growth.

**Government grants based on contributions:** Through the Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG) the federal government tops up contributions 20% (to a maximum of \$500 per year). Better still, if your income falls below certain thresholds, you may be eligible for grants as high as 40% on the first \$500.

*By Murray Baker.*

*Murray is a financial workshop facilitator and coach with Family Services of Greater Vancouver and author of the bestseller [The Debt Free Graduate](#); How to survive college or university without going broke. Family Services offers RESP workshops, personal assistance with setting up RESPs and financial coaching.*

**Access to additional grants based on income:** The [Canada Learning Bond](#) provides an initial grant of \$500 and ongoing annual grants of \$100, provided your income is below a certain threshold.

**Access to additional grants based on age:** BC residents can access an additional \$1200 grant based on their child's age, through the BC government's, B.C. Training and Education Savings Grant ([BCTESG](#)).

**Taxation in the beneficiary's hands:** Earnings are taxed in the hands of the beneficiary (the student), whose income is likely to be lower than the person setting up the plan. As they will be taxed when they access the money, their lower student earnings, combined with tax credits will likely mean less tax paid.

Despite all these advantages, the RESP plan continues to be under utilized, as nearly half of families are leaving free government grants untapped. Many figure that if they don't have money to contribute there's no point setting up an RESP. However, dependent on age and income, they may be leaving as much as \$3,200 in free grant money, untapped, simply by not setting up an RESP.

**Start early:** Even small amounts invested now can facilitate tax free compound earnings until the money is accessed.  
**Compare fees and charges which some plans carry with them:** For example, some plan providers will charge a set up and/or annual administration fee, whereas others may not.

**Safety and returns:** The value of your RESP is dependent on the investments held within the plan. Risk and the return on your investments are important factors to consider when setting up an RESP. Work with a reputable provider to ensure your earnings goals and the safety of your investment are followed.

Family services offers free RESP workshops, which cover many additional details of RESP's along with offering one-to-one assistance in setting up an RESP at the plan provider of their choosing and one-to-one financial coaching. For more information please call 604.638.3390 ext.3166 or [vanceds@fsgv.ca](mailto:vanceds@fsgv.ca).



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## TREASURER TIPS

The role of the treasurer varies from council to council and should be clearly spelled out in your PAC or DPAC's bylaws. Some common duties of the treasurer are:

- Record all financial transactions of the council, including receipt and disbursement of funds;
- Issue cheques and deposit funds;
- Has signing authority;
- Assist with council budget preparation and
- Report at each meeting.

### Financial Authority

Council money should only be spent if authorized by a motion either through an approved budget or at each council meeting. At least two council executives should be signing officers to sign cheques and all cheques should have the payable line filled out – it's not a good idea to sign blank cheques and have them sit around! Signing officers should know what they are writing a cheque for and to whom.

### Financial Records

Financial transactions should be recorded in a ledger clearly indicating both revenue (deposits) and expenditures. A ledger can be done on paper or electronically with a spreadsheet program or accounting software. Financial records must be kept for a minimum of seven years including all supporting paperwork. The treasurer should report on bank balances, revenue and expenditures to the council at each meeting.

### Budgeting

The budget reflects planning for the year ahead. It should be a realistic plan and represent what the council will do in the coming year. Having a budget means the membership can hold the executive accountable, and should be approved at a general meeting and can be amended by vote at a general meeting. Reviewing last year's expenditures and surveying students, parents and school staff will provide a wish list of items and activities to discuss. Budgeting is also a good time to plan fund raisers in advance so there's no last minute organizational rush.

### Fundraising

Fundraising is not a requirement of a PAC or DPAC. It is completely up to the council whether or not to fund raise and how to disburse those funds. The Community Gaming Grant has very specific eligible uses of that grant

*Generously submitted by Susan Wilson. This information was compiled using the [BCCPAC Leadership Manual](#).*

(see the article on page 12 of this magazine). Councils can determine what to fund raise for and any advertising for a fundraising event should say what the funds will go towards.

Gambling licenses need to be applied for prior to holding any raffles, 50/50 draws, independent bingos, special occasion casinos, etc. There are three categories of gambling licenses ranging from \$10 to \$150 processing fees with various guidelines. Please consult the [Gambling Event License Fundraising website](#) for details on which license best suits your council's fundraising needs.

### Tips and Warnings

- Council money belongs to the council membership as a whole and not to the executive, school or school district. It should only be spent with the authority and approval of the membership.
- The president should be familiar with all financial records and regularly review the bank reconciliations.
- Whenever possible, cash received should be counted by at least two people and deposited within a day or two of receipt.
- Receipts should be given for money received.

For more information on PAC and DPAC finances please consult the [BCCPAC Leadership Manual](#) on the BCCPAC website.





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## MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS BENEFITS!

*Becoming a BCCPAC member means:*

1. Supporting the need for a parent voice at the provincial level.
2. Advocating for systemic changes to the education system.
3. Creating change in the education system through resolutions to the Annual General Meeting, for discussion and support.
4. Participating in nominating and electing BCCPAC Board of Directors at the annual general meeting.
5. Networking with other member PACs and DPACs to share information and successes via conferences, website and forums.
6. Receiving regular communications on current educational issues.
7. Receiving leadership education from skilled experts at our annual conferences.
8. Receiving travel subsidies through DPAC to attend the DPAC Summit and conferences.
9. Serving on various provincial committees, and providing feedback through focus groups and surveys.
10. Being part of the collective voice recognized by government and education partners, who involve BCCPAC as the provincial voice of parents.



## INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Many parents assume that they are covered by district insurance.

That is true... but only to a point.



The School Protection program (SPP) is a self-insurance program that is administered by the Risk Management Branch of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education. SPP provides coverage to districts against liability and loss. When it comes to parent volunteers, PACs and DPACs, however, the scope of coverage becomes much narrower.

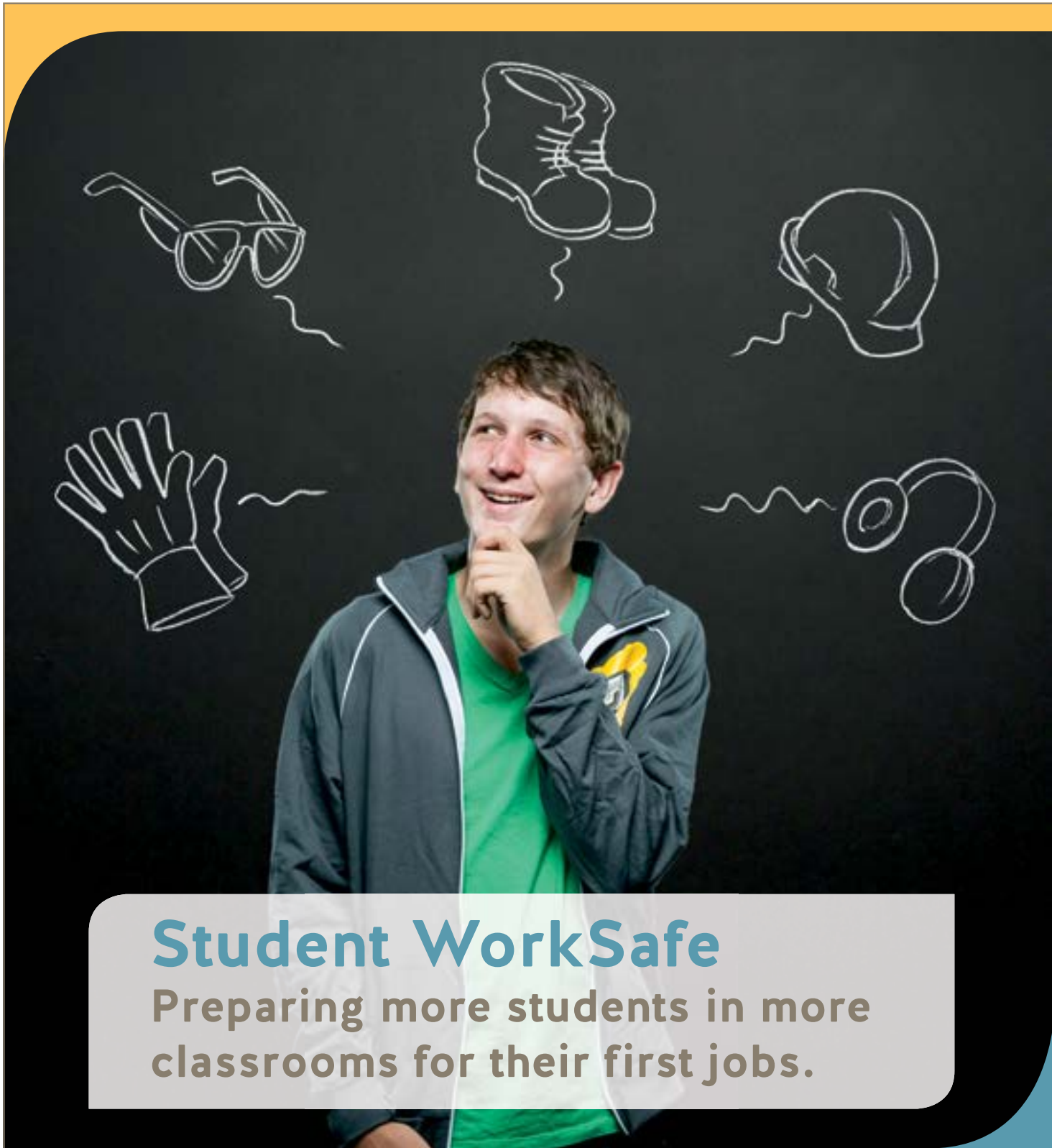
Here are some points\* that all parent volunteers, PACs and DPACs should know:

- Only district “authorized” activities are covered by the SPP. It is important that PACs and DPACs find out from school or district staff what their district policies and/or protocols are to ensure PAC and DPAC activities are “authorized”.
- Parent Volunteers, PACs and DPACs are covered by the SPP liability coverage only. The general SPP liability coverage does not provide any medical or disability benefits if you are injured while volunteering.
- If you get in a car accident when driving for a school activity, SPP provides third party liability insurance to you in excess of your policy. This means that if you get in an accident while on a school activity, your own liability insurance policy is the primary coverage.

SPP does not cover theft from a vehicle or damage to your vehicle as a volunteer.

For more details, the [Administrator's Guidebook](#) is a good summary of what is and what is not covered.

\*This is not legal advice, for actual coverage wordings contact your school district's Secretary-Treasurer or SPP directly.



## Student WorkSafe

Preparing more students in more classrooms for their first jobs.

Resources for teachers, students, and independent learners are available at [worksafebc.com](http://worksafebc.com).

**WORK SAFE BC**

# THE ESSENTIALS OF RUNNING A PAC OR DPAC MEETING

As busy parents participating in BC's public education system, we of course want effective meetings!

The basic purpose of any meeting is to conduct business in a fair and orderly way. Ask yourself these questions when planning your meeting. By following these paths you will achieve an overall effective meeting.

### Does the meeting:

- Have a purpose, with clear start end times?
- Have a manageable agenda of necessary business that can be accomplished in the time allotted?

### Is it clear?

- Decisions are made and business is completed, and remains on task.
- Follow up action is recorded to what and to whom is being tasked.
- Chair remains friendly and professional throughout.

Check your bylaws for terms of reference for specific requirements as to the form of notice and notice period of your meetings. Developing the Agenda is usually the President's responsibility. It should be done in consultation with the executive and membership.

Screening and prioritizing items is key you will attract more parents if the agenda are interesting and varied, and important items are dealt with in a timely fashion.

### Ask yourself:

- Does this item need to be discussed, or is it on the agenda out of habit?
- Has enough preparation been done to allow members to make an informed decision on this item?
- How urgent is this item compared to other business? Can it wait?
- Is this person best able to lead the discussion on the item available and prepared?

*Generously submitted by Crystal Andrews, Director on the BCCPAC Board of Directors.*

As a chair you want to be knowledgeable and prepared, patient and respectful with a good sense of humour! A great chair is a good listener but decisive and purposeful. You want to inspire others to participate as guided by the council's mandate, and the member's needs.

A successful chair will recognize the diversity of opinion as an asset and opportunity for growth.

### Parliamentary Procedure, What's that?

More commonly known as Robert's Rules of Order (RRO), these guidelines are designed to include all members in decision making. With everyone getting a fair and equal opportunity to participate and influence the group's decision your engagement and participation will grow. Parliamentary Procedure is meant to achieve fairness for all. While RRO can often be more complex than needed, you may use any procedure your council agrees on.

### Three tips on using Robert's Rules of Order

- Robert's Rules of Order aren't meant to be applied rigidly, use them to ensure fairness.
- Each organization is different, some of the rules you follow are set by RRO and some are set by your constitution. Arm yourself with information from both.
- Make all the information available and accessible to your members.

Resources for Using Robert's Rules of Order  
<http://www.robertsrules.org/>  
<http://www.afcs.ca/PDF/RobertsRules1.pdf>  
<http://www.robertsrules.com/default.html>  
<http://www.rulesonline.com/>



# 2017 DPAC Summit

November 24 and 25

Pacific Gateway Hotel

3500 Cessna Drive Richmond

Join the BCCPAC Board of Directors and the Ministry of Education in two days of informative public education discussions



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- Network with parents from across the province

- Participate in BCCPAC goal setting and planning

- Representatives from every District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) are invited to the DPAC Summit
- Travel and accommodation subsidies are available to DPACs who are BCCPAC members
- Watch for announcements and travel subsidy information at [www.bccpac.bc.ca](http://www.bccpac.bc.ca) and [facebook.com/YOURBCCPAC](https://facebook.com/YOURBCCPAC)