



BC Confederation of
Parent Advisory Councils

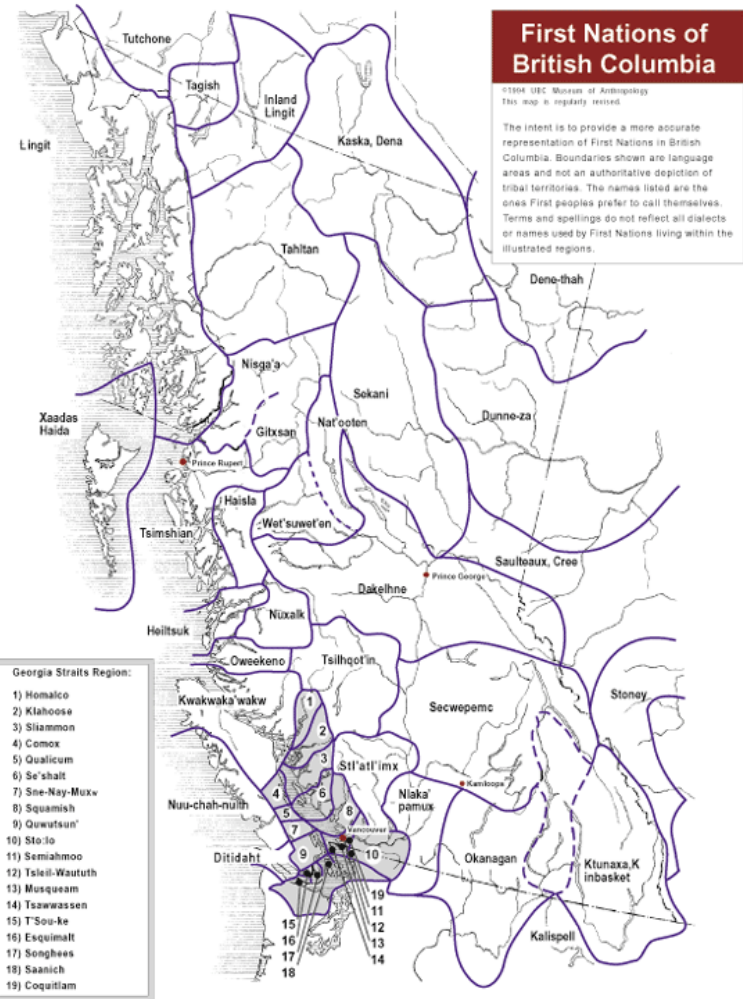
(District) Parent Advisory Council — “A TO Z”

ANDREA SINCLAIR, PRESIDENT

MAY 3, 2019

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

I would like to acknowledge that I am speaking here today on the unceded territories of the Tsawwassen, Tsleil-Waututh, Stó:lō, Kwantlen, and Stz'uminus Nations.



Acknowledgment of Aboriginal Territory



BC Confederation of
Parent Advisory Councils

Our Session

General Overview & Understanding

Understanding Role and Responsibilities

Transparency and Communication

Social Media and Media

Advocacy vs Activism

Constitution and Bylaws

Information and Privacy

Conclusion

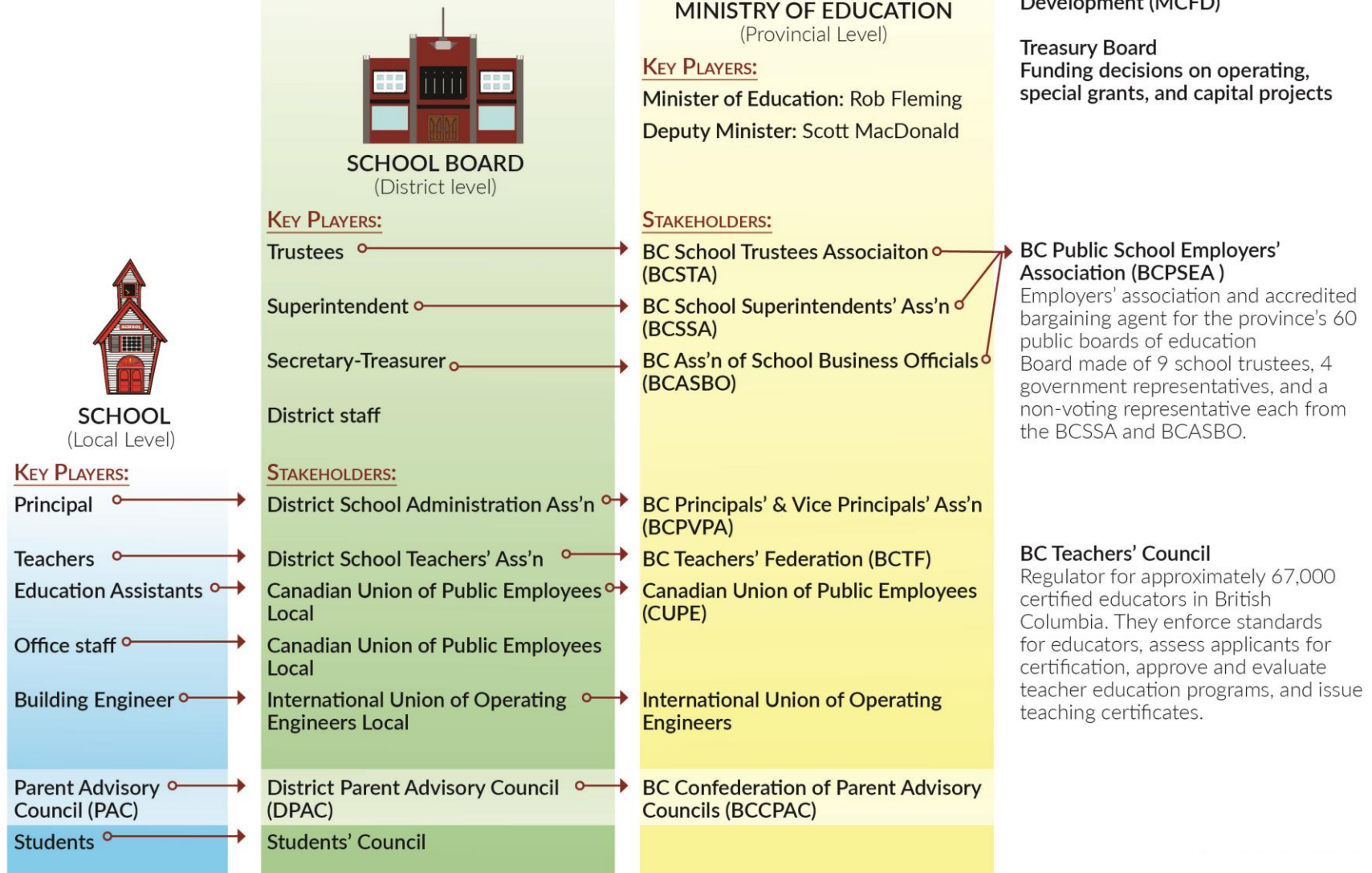


A bit about me

Andrea Sinclair, President

- Active advocate within public education since before my twins were born in 2004
- In addition to role on BCCPAC Board, also a Member at Large on the PAC at my children's high school
- Have extensive experience serving in various roles on PACs and on non-profit boards
- During my tenure as PAC Chair, I increased parent engagement and parent communication, ensured documentation of our processes, created structure for succession, and led the governance and revisions of Constitution and Bylaws

Key Players in BC Public Education





School Act

This document is important – covers EVERYTHING

Parents should read & understand relevant parts

It lists the most important rights and responsibilities of parents & students, both individual and collective

Rights of students with special needs under the Special Needs Students Order of the Minister of Education

[School Act \(PDF\)](#) housed on our website

SCHOOL ACT

Preamble

WHEREAS it is the goal of a democratic society to ensure that all its members receive an education that enables them to become literate, personally fulfilled and publicly useful, thereby increasing the strength and contributions to the health and stability of that society;

AND WHEREAS the purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable all learners to become literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy;



Parent Rights and Responsibilities

- The right to be informed of their child's attendance, behaviour, and progress in school
- On request, to receive a copy of the school plan for the school
- To belong to the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) in their school
- To consult with the teacher, principal, vice-principal, or director of instruction with respect to their child's educational program. Conversely, parents are required, if requested, to consult with the teacher, principal, vice-principal, or director of instruction on their child's educational program



Parent Rights and Responsibilities

- To provide volunteer services at or for a school
- To examine all student records kept by a board pertaining to their child - on payment of a fee, if any, to receive a copy of any student record they are entitled to examine under the above section
- Can be held liable, with or separately from their children, for property of a school board that is destroyed, damaged, lost, or converted by an intentional or negligent act
- To appeal to the school board a decision, or failure to make a decision, by a school board employee that significantly affects the education, health, or safety of their child

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PAC, DPAC and BCCPAC?

- PAC advises the school administration on any matter relating to public education, supports parents
- DPAC advises the school district on any matter relating to public education, support PACs
- BCCPAC is the provincial voice of parents on K-12 public education and related issues, supports DPAC and PAC members



District Parent Advisory Councils (DPAC)

Recognized in the School Act, Section 8.4, 8.5

Is the official representative body of
parents/guardians of children in district

School Act provides DPACs the power to advise
the board of education respecting any matter
relating to education within the district including
educational policy

Required to have Bylaws under which they
operate – governing meetings, how business is
carried, dissolution

Composed of, run and managed by parents



DPAC

The business of the DPAC shall be unbiased in respect of race, colour, religion, politics, family status, gender, sexual orientation or physical or mental ability

DPAC is not a forum for the discussion of individual school personnel, parents, or other individual members of the school community



District Stakeholder

In addition to the power granted by the School Act, your DPAC has “stakeholder” status

Being a stakeholder entitles DPAC to:

- Have representation (on behalf of parents) on all Standing Committees
- Have representation on advisory and ad hoc committees plus any working groups



Role of DPAC

- Comprised of elected parent representatives from PACs and serve as an umbrella organization for district PACs
- Assist parents in forming a PAC in every school
- Assist members in obtaining information and communicating with district personnel
- Help parents navigate the school system locally



Role of DPAC

- Advocate for parental involvement in the education system
- Support & encourage PACs and parents in accessing the school system at all levels by providing regular forums for the exchange of ideas and information to ensure that public education serves the best interests of all students



Representation within DPAC – 3 Levels

1. DPAC Execs

- Public representatives of DPAC
- Responsible for DPAC governance
- Have voting power at executive meetings

2. PAC Reps

- Represent their PACs to DPAC
- Help form DPAC policy through motions
- Have voting power at general meetings & DPAC elections

3. Any Parent/Guardian

- Contact DPAC with an issue requiring representation at the district level
- Attend any DPAC meeting



Elected DPAC Representative

The roles, duties and responsibilities of elected DPAC representatives (elected at PAC level) vary but generally:

- Act as a liaison between the PAC and DPAC by attending DPAC meetings
- Communicate and obtain information to and from PAC
- Bring forward issues that may be common to more than one school



Parent Advisory Councils (PAC)

Recognized in the School Act, Section 8

Required to have Bylaws under which they operate
(self-governing)

Official collective voice of the parents/guardians of
the school community

Composed of, run and managed by parents

Can advise school staff/board of education
respecting any matter relating to the school or
provincial education



PAC

The business of the PAC shall be unbiased in respect of race, colour, religion, politics, family status, gender, sexual orientation or physical or mental ability

PAC is not a forum for the discussion of individual school personnel, parents, or other individual members of the school community



Purposes of a PAC

- Advise the school principal & staff on parents' views and feedback about school programs, policies, plans and activities
- Organize PAC activities and events and endeavour to provide parent education
- Encourage parent involvement in the school, and to support programs that promote parent involvement
- Communicate with parents, and to promote co-operation between the home and the school in providing support for the education of children
- Assist parents in accessing the system (could mean connecting to DPAC) and to advocate on behalf of parents and students
- To provide financial support for the goals of the PAC, as determined by its membership
- **To advise and participate in the activities of the DPAC**

FACT:

PACs and DPACs are NOT required
to register as a non-profit
or under the BC Societies Act



Meeting 'Guests'

DPAC can (and should) set up meetings with whomever they think is appropriate within the district

- They should have regular meetings with senior management staff
- If there is ever opposition to a meeting btwn the Superintendent & DPAC, that issue must be resolved between the Superintendent and Board
- Trustees are welcome to attend PAC and DPAC meetings as invited guests
- PAC/DPAC bylaws provide direction on the level of participation of invited guests and what to do if a trustee or school district employee is also a parent at a school



Meeting 'Guests'

- PAC and DPAC meetings are for parents of children at that school and/or district
- School administrators and staff representatives should be welcomed to attend PAC meetings as regular invited guests (they cannot vote)
 - Similarly PAC Executives should be meeting regularly with their admin teams AND request to present to staff meetings as needed to share information, inform etc
- PAC/DPAC bylaws provide direction on the level of participation of invited and what to do if a staff member is also a parent at a school



Robert's Rules of Order & Meetings

- Meetings need to be focused on business at hand including motions, with clear agenda and a strong meeting chair to facilitate the flow of conversation
- Always be respectful and ensure all voices can be heard
- Robert's Rules helps with this by providing a simple set of meeting guidelines to ensure your group have better meetings, not make them more difficult
- RR is a guide for conducting meetings and making decisions as a group
- You can modify them or find another suitable process that encourages fairness and participation, unless your bylaws state otherwise

FACT:

PACs and DPACs
are NOT required to
fundraise but most
choose (feel obligated)
to do so



Communications with Transparency

Constitution & Bylaws (incl Mission Statement)

Policy Manual

Agendas & Minutes

Financial Records

Treasurer's Reports

Committees List & Reports

Newsletters and email

Blogs and websites

Calendar of Events



What's in a Message

Your message is the core argument you are trying to communicate

Goal is to get your point across

Concisely describe what you do, why are doing it, and why your community should care



Social Media

- Designate spokesperson, usually the Chair (in Bylaws!)
- Safety, security and privacy of all is of paramount importance
- Stick to facts and be respectful
- Don't need to comment on everything
- Have an opinion but be mindful you represent ALL parents
- Common courtesy holds
- Use social media to inform and educate (NO ranting)
- C&B should indicate who does what, who is spokesperson
- Not everything is appropriate for social media
- If you wouldn't say it in polite company...don't say it



Hacks, Honest Haters, and Trolls

Spot them, don't become them!

People with a vested or partisan interest in opposing your cause or issue

Members of the public with a legitimate disagreement, expressed respectfully

Classic trolls



Media

- Designate spokesperson, usually the Chair (in Bylaws!)
- Safety, security and privacy of all is of paramount importance
- Don't feel obliged to respond to journalist or reporter
- Don't feel the need to "answer" the question
 - Make your statement
- Stick to facts and be respectful
- Don't need to comment on everything
- Have an opinion but be mindful you represent ALL parents
- Common courtesy holds
- Not all media is good media or good attention



Advocacy isn't Activism

ADVOCACY - a simple short word with oh so much meaning and a different meaning for each of us

- *Noun* - public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy

If the status quo isn't working or acceptable, within our democracy, it's our right to ask questions, push back, to demand change

It's not a question of your political leanings or how you vote

It's not which party you love or hate

And it's not about ranting and railing because you are way too mad



Constitution & Bylaws

The School Act requires that every PAC/DPAC has Bylaws that specify how meetings are run, how the business is conducted, how dissolution is to be handled, and how executive reps are elected

If you do not have Bylaws, you need to get started to resolve that!

If you have not reviewed/updated your Bylaws in a long time...its time!

We strongly recommend that you make your Bylaws available online in a searchable format (PDF is probably best)

DPAC may offer (check) to archive and host a copy of every PAC's bylaws

Some districts ask that DPACs/PACs file a copy of their C&B with the district office – check to confirm

A Constitution & Bylaws is a living document and should be well known to the members, executive, partners, and others interested parties

Copies should be available at all meetings, posted in a conspicuous place, and included at the front of any manuals or guides frequently used by the membership or executive

FACT:

Not having a Constitution & Bylaws
is much worse and more
challenging than the effort to create
and maintain them



Purposes of a Constitution & Bylaws

A Constitution states the reasons why an organization exists

It defines the reasons for being, mandate and purposes, used to focus its activities

A constitution should be brief (1-2 pages), and separate from the bylaws

Bylaws are an organization's operating rules

It defines the roles of the membership and executive, provides direction and authority to the membership and executive, provides a method for holding everyone in the organization accountable for their decisions and actions

FACT:

Once a Constitution & Bylaws are adopted, they take effect immediately and remain in effect until formally changed.

The document is never invalid just because it's old.



My Elementary School

Constitution - Table of Contents

- **Section I Name**
- **Section II Purposes**
- **Section III Mission Statement**
- **Section IV Interpretation of Terms**

Bylaws - Table of Contents

- **Section I Membership**
- **Section II Meetings of Members**
- **Section III Proceedings at Meetings**
- **Section IV Evote**
- **Section V Election of Executive Officers**
- **Section VI Terms of Office of Executive Officers**
- **Section VII Executive Officers and Duties**
- **Section VIII Code of Conduct – Statement of Understanding**
- **Section IX Committees**
- **Section X Finances & Finance Committee**
- **Section XI Constitution & Bylaw Amendments**
- **Section XII Dissolution**



Holding Elections

Bylaws will state what your executive positions are and the terms and process for elections

Traditionally that includes a Chair, Vice-Chair/Co-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Members-At-Large

DPACs may have additional positions such as District Liaison or BCCPAC Liaison.

Bylaws will also state elections are to be held during the AGM

- Timing of an AGM depends on the Bylaws – Spring, Fall both work



Holding Elections

PACs/DPACs should put a call-out for nominations before and during the AGM

- Eligibility will depend on what the Bylaws say but traditionally PACs/DPACs allow all parents/guardians from their school community to run for positions
- During the AGM the final call for nominations is made
- How parents vote should be in the Bylaws (i.e. single vote from each parent of child attending the school)



Elections...in your Bylaws

If only one person runs for a position, they are acclaimed to that position

If >1 person is running for a position, voting should occur

The AGM Minutes should record election results

- Traditionally Exec take their positions at end of AGM or end of school year (which could be your fiscal year)

Should a vacancy arise on the executive, the Bylaws should provide direction as to how to fill that vacancy including whether or not another election is needed or a simple motion at a regular meeting will do



Financial Accountability

The Bylaws need to indicate:

- What is the Fiscal Year
- Why the council raises funds (if they do), how \$ distributed (incl Gaming money)
- Role of Treasurer and Finance Committee
- Signing officers including measures to protect against fraud
- Budget must be presented and approved at the AGM



Creating C&B for First Time?

IF you are creating a Constitution & Bylaws for the first time, or are undergoing a major review, plan to spend several months on the project

These documents require close attention to detail and plenty of discussion

All parent members should have the opportunity to consider the issues and express their views



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Creating/Updating your C&B

It is important to involve your parent community members in creating and reviewing your council's Constitution & Bylaws

Both documents belong to the membership, not to the executive or constitution committee



Involving Parent Community

You can involve your members through various means:

- a letter or notice that the C&B will be reviewed, with a survey or questionnaire on key issues - survey or questionnaire can be dropped off at the school without coming to a meeting
- an informal get-together to discuss the parent role in the school
- special meeting, or dedicated time at a regular meeting, where parents are invited to discuss the council's mission, purposes, and operating rules
- a committee to review the constitution and bylaws, and make recommendations to the executive and parent membership

We recommend that councils review their Constitution and Bylaws annually. A regular review focuses members' attention on the council's purposes and objectives.



Personal Information

Personal Information and Privacy Act (PIPA)

Applies to personal information

Personal information is defined as “information about an identifiable individual”

Meaning information that can identify an individual, for example, name, home address, email, phone number, physical description, education, religion, employment, marital status etc

What organizations and types of information does PIPA regulate?

Organizations covered by PIPA

PIPA applies to all organizations and to all personal information held by organizations unless PIPA says that it does not apply (section 3(1)).

An organization includes:

- a corporation, including a strata corporation,
- a partnership,
- a doctor's office,
- an association that is not incorporated,
- a co-operative association, including a housing co-op,
- a society,
- a church or other religious organization,
- a charity,
- a sports club,
- a trade union,
- a partnership,
- a political party,
- an individual involved in a commercial activity (for example, an individual running a small renovation business that is not incorporated), and
- a trust.

PAC, DPAC
and BCCPAC
fall under
PIPA



Common Sense Rules

PIPA creates “common sense” rules for collecting, using, and sharing personal information

These rules will apply if PAC/DPAC decides to collect personal information for contact lists that use home phone numbers, addresses, or personal e-mail rather than business addresses volunteer or committee lists, awards or prizes

The personal information might include photographs and video tapes as well as electronic or paper records



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We Can Help

Sample **C&B** on our website

Leadership Manual covering **many topics** relevant for PACs and DPACs on our website

Post to our **Facebook page** to get insight and help from other members – they are a wealth of information

Call or email our office for assistance

Thank You!



@BCCPAC



@YOURBCCPAC



bccpac.bc.ca



info@bccpac.bc.ca