



UNDERSTANDING PARENTS' ROLE IN K-12 AND THE A-Z OF A PAC

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I acknowledge I am speaking to you today from the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Coquitlam speaking peoples and are grateful to be on this territory.



TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ABOUT ME

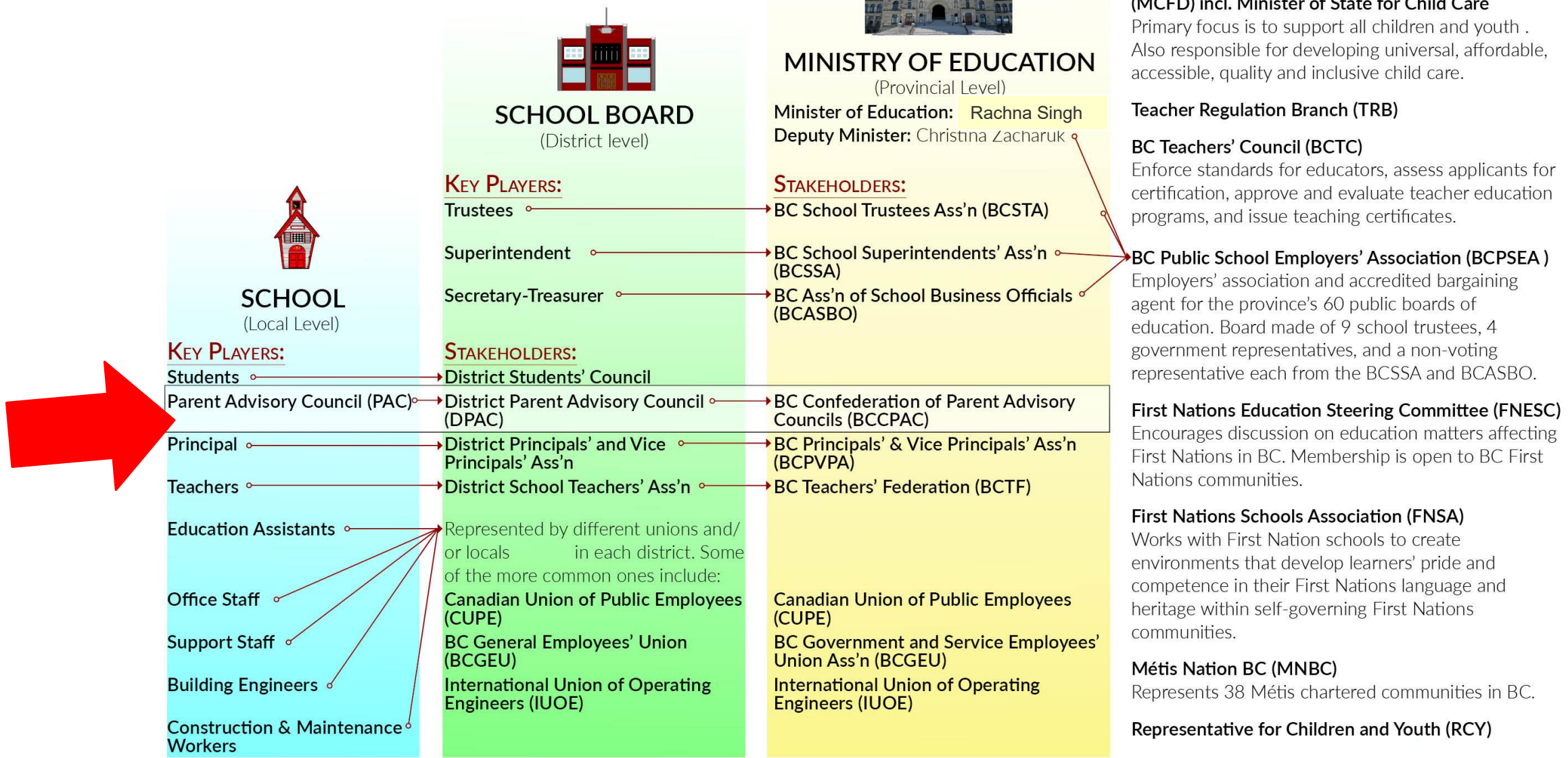
- Active advocate within public education since before my twins were born in 2004
- In addition to past President on BCCPAC Board, was Member at Large on my children's high school PAC, was Chair at my elementary PAC
- Have extensive experience serving in various roles on PACs and on non-profit boards
- 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

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC) STRUCTURE

It is through the PAC structure that ALL public school parents/guardians are represented -

- at the school level by their PAC,
- at the district level by their DPAC and
- at the provincial level by BCCPAC.

BC Public Education



BCCPAC AND WHY THEY MATTER

- The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) is a non-partisan, registered non-profit charity with a volunteer board and has been in existence since 1922
- They represent the parents/guardians of over 565,000 children attending provincial public schools (bricks & mortar and online)
- **They are recognized by government and education stakeholders as the provincial voice of parents on issues affecting the K-12 public system**
- They work hard to ensure alliances are strong and respectful.

No Other Group at the Provincial Table is Representing Parents

Membership fees help
support their provincial advocacy
And direct *support* to members

RESOURCES

- Their [website](#) including the online [Leadership Manual](#) and educating people about [Parents as Stakeholders](#)
- **PPT** [presentation](#) and [video recording](#) of my (D)PAC “A to Z” presentation from May 2019 Parent Education Conference
- **PPT** [presentation](#) of my “Parent Engagement & Succession Planning” presentation from May 2021 Parent Education Conference
- **Article** on [Benefit of Parents and Schools Working Together](#) in BCPVPA magazine
- Post to [Members Forum](#) or [Facebook page](#) to get insight and help from other members – they are a wealth of information
- Each of you for each other – Reach out to another DPAC and PAC

SCHOOL ACT

This document is important – covers EVERYTHING

Parents/guardians should read & understand relevant parts

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

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

DPAC AND PAC

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

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

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**

ROLE OF DPAC

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

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

REPRESENTATION WITHIN DPAC

1. DPAC Execs

- Public representatives of DPAC
- Responsible for DPAC governance
- May have voting power at executive meetings, general meetings

2. PAC Reps (referred to as DPAC Rep)

- Represent their PACs to DPAC
- Help form DPAC policy through motions
- May have voting power at executive meetings, general meetings

3. Any Parent/Guardian

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

FACT:

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

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS (PAC)

- Recognized in the School Act, Section 8
- Required to have Bylaws under which they operate (self-governing)
- Responsible for funds raised/received/distributed
- Official collective voice of the parents/guardians of the school community
 - ALL parents, all students, equitably by actions and funding
- **Composed of, run and managed by parents**
- Can advise school staff/board of education respecting any matter relating to the school or provincial education
- **To advise and participate in the activities of the DPAC**

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

FACT:

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

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)

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

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

ELECTIONS

- Bylaws state your executive positions with duties and the terms and process for elections
- Traditionally includes a Chair, Vice-Chair/Co-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, DPAC Rep and Members-At-Large
- DPACs may have additional positions such as District Liaison or BCCPAC Liaison.
- Bylaws also state elections are to be held during the AGM (Timing depends on the Bylaws – Spring, Fall)
- For Gaming Grants Application – you need 2 Executives to sign
- For Gaming Grants Summary Report – you need a Treasurer + 1

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)
- Role of Treasurer and Finance Committee
- Signing officers including measures to protect against fraud
- Budget must be presented and approved at the AGM

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

MEETING 'GUESTS'

- PAC and DPAC meetings are for parents of children at that school and/or district
- School administrators and staff representatives should be invited & 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

COMMUNICATIONS & 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

PACs and DPACs...CAN ONLY communicate with parents **once parents/guardians have provided their contact information or opted in to receive information.**

There is a need for the PAC & DPAC to communicate directly with its PAC/parent community and for that, parents need to provide contact details to their PAC.

This means, if individuals don't provide email or other contact information to their PACs, the PAC & DPAC is unable to communicate directly with you.

IMPORTANCE OF AN ENGAGED PAC

Through their elected executives from parents/guardians in the school, PACs communicate with their parent/guardian community gathering and discussing issues of importance regarding their school in order to adequately advise those that influence their school.

ENGAGEMENT IS...

...anything and everything

- it's big and small, it's simple and complex, it's nurturing and repetitive, it's warm and welcoming, it's clear and transparent, it's helpful and non-judgmental, it's connection and communication

And it takes time and effort BUT the payoff is 10x the effort.

ENGAGE AND CONNECT

- In addition to PAC meetings, communication should be done in-person (group & 1:1) PLUS newsletters, emails, blogs/websites, class reps, bulletin boards, and possibly surveys so that all parents have the opportunity for input
- Connecting and networking with your parent community is about engagement
- Help parents see themselves as part of something larger than themselves
- Dialogue should be in both directions

CONNECT AND COMMUNICATE

- Hold General meetings specifically for parents on issues which are topical for them
- Move Executive (business) meetings to a different evening
- Hold Welcome Table first week of school
- Speak at Welcome to Kindergarten in Spring
- Host Coffee Table during Sports Day
- Be available before/after school assemblies

COMMUNICATE WITH TRANSPARENCY

- This is critical – Your school community needs to know what you are doing and why, why it matters and how you need them
- Don't hide – Share and be 100% transparent
- There is a need for the PAC to communicate directly SO connecting with parents to get their email is a connection point you can leverage
- Leverage the school newsletter to reach more parents and ask them to sign up/provide their email to you

SUCCESSION PLANNING NETS ROI

- Have a plan and work on it at the beginning of the year, not the end
- Each executive member needs to consider “filling their seat” as they depart
- ≠ get your friends on the Executive but thinking of those engaged and interested parents who you can pull forward – tap them on the shoulder, ask
- An engaged parent community with a full Executive will help (see the link?!)

ENGAGED PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- More engaged parents mean more PAC Executive positions filled
- Which in turn helps with succession planning (!)
- A full PAC with an engaged parent community means you can secure volunteers
- Which then means you can reach into your parent community for other assistance
- Win-win-win for the school community

YOU

CAN

DO

THIS

BEST PRACTICES

- Make plans and electronically document everything (It's 2022!)
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Connect, involve, engage and nurture – then repeat
- Divide the work up among the Executive
- Learn to say no and let it fall if needed
- Step aside before your child is in their last year – be onsite to mentor
- Ask for help & say thank you to the helpers

Thank You!