



BCCPAC Advocacy Project

About the BCCPAC Advocacy Project

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project is about parents helping parents.

Advocacy is a tool that helps people communicate. Whatever the concern, whatever the problem, advocacy can help communication, remove barriers and solve problems.

Advocacy is about speaking up or acting on behalf of oneself or in support of another person or group.

What do we do?

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project:

- Builds understanding of child and youth advocacy among parents and within the BC public school system at large.
- Helps everyone focus on the best interests of students.
- Helps school and district parent advisory councils (PACs/DPACs) and individual parents and students solve problems in our public schools.
- Promotes fair, impartial, consistent and effective problem-solving.

“Students and parents who learn to advocate for themselves gain an understanding of their rights and responsibilities. They develop the courage to stand up for themselves and know how to approach problem-solving in an appropriate way.”

Speaking Up! A parent guide to advocating for students in public schools.

Parents as Natural Advocates

Parents are their child’s first teachers. They have the primary responsibility for their care and well-being. They can make sure their child’s rights, needs and opinions are respected. They can provide information about their children that helps decision-makers make fair decisions about their child.

Why do we need to speak up for students in public schools?

Many parents don’t know where to begin when they want to solve problems in their child’s best interest. Many are unsure about where they “fit” in the public school system when it



BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

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comes to speaking up for their children. Some of the problems children face at school can be very complicated. Some parents worry about when to speak up, how to speak up and what will happen if they do.

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project supports parent leaders and individual parents to speak up for children. It helps parents understand parents' and children's rights and responsibilities in the public school system, as well as the rights and responsibilities of others. Sometimes it is hard to find out how a school district deals with parent/student concerns. The project helps students and parents find and use the school, district and provincial policies and processes that are available to help them solve their problems. Where possible, the project encourages local parent leaders to act as mentors to parents—helping develop advocacy skills among parents throughout their school districts!

PACs/DPACs have a legislated role in the School Act to represent parents in the BC public school system. DPACs that are members of the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) and want to focus on building advocacy in their districts can join the project. More than two-thirds of the DPACs in the province have joined. When DPACs focus on advocacy activities, they learn more about the challenges students and parents face in our public schools. With this information, DPACs can influence school boards to make decisions that support students and parents.

How did the BCCPAC Advocacy Project begin?

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project is an initiative of BCCPAC, the provincial voice for member PACs/DPACs. In 1994, BCCPAC received funding to run a pilot project. Since then, thousands of parents in BC have been helped to speak up for their children. Their experiences have helped the project identify systemic problems in the public school system and enabled BCCPAC to pursue positive change at the provincial level.

Find out more about the BCCPAC Advocacy Project

Call the toll free message line 1-888-351-9834



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