

President's Message

As I listen to the neighbourhood sounds of summer: kids laughing, bicycle bells ringing, street hockey slap shots and friends visiting friends; I find it hard to accept that September is quickly approaching and with it a return to school and packing lunches. While we rush to get the last few excursions into our summer plans I find myself also looking forward to the excitement of a new school year.

September and back to school presents a new beginning for our students and parents; a chance to start again, achieve new goals, and try new activities. If last year was a good year then this year may be even better. If last year was a tough year then this new school year provides opportunity for a new start and optimism for a better year.

Research studies show that students do better in school when parents have opportunities to be genuinely involved in advising educators on programs, services and operations. In 1989 Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) were legislated into the School Act giving parents the authority to advise the school board, the principal and staff on matters relating to the school.

Over the past 20 years parents around the province have exercised this right and come together through PACs, District PACs and through BCCPAC to discuss issues facing schools and public education, building positive relationships and outcomes with educational partners. Schools, school districts and the Ministry of Education are increasingly supportive of parent involvement in education and accepting that parents are not only partners in education, but they are primary partners. There are more opportunities than ever to get involved in your child's school and education.

Parents play a key role in student safety and health through nutritional food programs, earthquake preparation and transportation studies. Parents are actively involved in school planning councils, analyzing data and input from many sources to create goals and plans to improve student success. Parents are engaged in supporting teachers in the classroom through reading programs, field trips and craft projects.

District Parent Advisory Councils (DPACs) play a critical role improving programs and services for students and advising the local school boards on district issues. PACs and DPACs have a strong voice through the British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory

(BCCPAC) with provincial educational partners and the Ministry of Education.

As we head into a new school year and a new budget, that will reflect the economic downturn, BCCPAC will continue to represent the collective voices of its membership to the Ministry of Education and other partner groups. We will be closely monitoring to ensure that the best interests of students – all students – will be the paramount focus of all funding decisions.



BCCPAC President
Ann Whiteaker

BCCPAC will continue to support our members around the province through parent resources, learning opportunities and conferences, including updates on emerging issues and opportunities through our online newsletter, *NewsBytes*, and through our Advocacy Project.

I invite you to participate in BCCPAC's upcoming Fall Conference: "Common Vision and Collaborative Action" which offers workshops for both novice and seasoned parent leaders. Our line-up of keynote speakers, includes the BCCPAC Advocacy Project's Coordinators, speaking on the Power of Parents.

Gary Anaka, an entertaining expert on the topic of brain wellness will show you how to prepare your child's brain for improved learning and how to prevent your own loss of brain power as you age. Dr. Susan Phillips, who has worked on several collaborative education projects in different provinces, will talk about building collaborative action.

It's been 20 years since PACs were first legislated into the School Act. Join us in the celebration. Learn from our workshops and speakers and, most importantly, by networking with other delegates. I look forward to meeting you there.

Supporting student success through parent involvement.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Whiteaker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A".

Ann Whiteaker
President