BCCPAC MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

June 7, 2011.

SCHOOL ACT - Ann started the conversation off by commenting on the School Act and how it could be amended to support the parents' voice, specifically 8.3 section 6.

SPCs – some principals are not truly collaborating with parents. Most are acting as intermediaries between teachers and the SPC. There are some who may be putting those thoughts through their own lens of opinion. Decisions that must receive SPC approval are increasing. i.e. Video surveillance at schools and coming up - Wi-Fi., which is ramping up to be a big public health issue.

It is important for parents to feel valued, as they are the only true volunteers at the table. Other models exist and should be investigated. Caveat – parents may feel more comfortable with another parent at the table.

BCCPAC feels we need a venue for parents to collaborate with administration and teachers. We want SPCs to work.

BCCT – BCCPAC has issues with the process to select Directors. We didn`t recommend anyone for the Board as due to our unwillingness to participate in this process.

The Parent Complaint process – problems are not being addressed at a school level. There needs to be a process that is less biased towards educators and easy to comprehend. Break down the barriers. Education Ombudsman? An arm's length person to help parents navigate the system and to ensure that action is taken. In the past BCCPAC had the Advocacy Project, which we lost when our budget dropped.

MOE – Parents complaints going to an organisation is not the most effective. They should be handled at a local level. For example when I was MOH we set up a Patient Care Complaint Office for each Health Authority. This was set up to address the issue of the alternative which was using the media as a way to address complaints.

Sherry Moharuk – Parents should feel welcome to go to the district. The process to solve issues at a District level already exists.

We need a neutral advocate. The present "Pyramid" – Principal, District, MOE is not timely or consistent. Some districts might be too small to support an advocate, but the concept of zones, such as is used with other education partners would be a better fit. There are positive benefits such as identifying families in crisis for early intervention that might have taken longer to come to the attention of Social Services.

Assessment for *all* staff – i.e. Principals, Education Assistants, playground duty workers, as well as teachers. It is a standard practice in Private enterprise. Assessment can identify schools or areas in need of skills upgrading, for example Special Needs. This brought the conversation to the BCCPAC Resolution on having all teachers trained in Special Needs.

MOE – met with BCTF this morning. They posited that, "Teachers don't need assessment. They are all competent". His observation to them was, "There might be room for improvement." Some assessment is occurring but it is inconsistent from district to district. BCTF has indicated that they are interested in teacher mentoring. Agreed we are not equipping Principals and VPs.

Ann - Why not CUPE?

Currency – Status quo, a teacher may be out of the classroom for up to 20 years and may return without any skills update. Cathy gave a summary from BCCT meeting and reported no visible opposition to proposed Currency changes.

MOE – at morning meeting w/ BCTF, there are "entrenched views in the assumption of Currency." In other words, everything is just fine.

SD 23 – SB requires 50% of PACs represented at DPAC meetings, in person, before they will consult with DPAC on SB decisions. Ann has met with the DPAC, parents and the local PVPA President. Parents want to opt out of using District services, i.e. e-mail. They want privacy. They want the autonomy to decide what is quorum. They want to be able to allow parents the flexibility to attend meetings via teleconference.

This sets a precedent. Why set up barriers instead open up to the community and a diversity of opinion.

MOE – What precipitated this?

Ann – Trustees feel there is not enough parent involvement and they are trying to increase it with this policy. The issue is the School Act needs to back up the work of the DPACs.

Funding for DPACs – It is existing. In the past there was funding to the district to support DPAC (B-44?), based on FTEs. While it no longer exists, some districts still supply this support. In most cases the DPACs that receive this support are more successful than those that don't. Gaming Funds give a standard amount - $2500.00, but it is the same no matter what FTEs in the District. i.e. Sea to Sky SD gets the same Grant as Surrey, yet they have 4,000 FTE students vs. 60,000 in Surrey.

Gaming Grant issues for PACs – presently PACs receive $20/FTE, but can't spend it on Parent Education. This does not require a change in funding, just a change in policy. PACs need to

focus on being a voice in education – not fundraisers. PAC events should be for building community not making money.

Funding for BCCPAC – We are thankful for the $150K grant this year that will cover new initiatives: i.e. Website improvements, Regional Conferences. But.... our Annual Operating Grant of $100K the past two years is down from a high of $659K three years ago. We are very interested to learn about the PEI parent organisation's relationship with Superintendents. They also have a generous budget about $1500/school versus our $65/school.

Ann will be stepping down next year and we need to leave a strong organisation. We have operated on a shoestring, but need to hire another staff member. Our office lease is expiring and we don't want to renew it as the space is too large and we would like to downsize. Would there be any Government offices that would have space to accommodate our organisation. This would free up almost 50% of our budget.