BCCPAC Representation Report

Submitted by: ***Cathy Jewett, Director***
Name of Event: FNESC
Date of Event: November 9, 2011.
Location of Event: BCTF, Vancouver

Purpose: The agenda included a presentation of the BC Education Plan and an update on Personalized Learning and a review of the sub-committees' work on the Four Goals.

Issues discussed: BC Education Plan. Review of Sub-committees work on the four goals. Goal Three has been expanded, but otherwise, no change since last meeting on these.
Marjorie Dumont welcomed us with a song and introduced us to a group of objects that were at the meeting to remind her and us about who we were there for and why. We passed the feather to introduce ourselves and acknowledge our family, our past and our purpose. Powerful start.

DeDe Derose (BCCT): Kit Kreiger has stepped down, Laura Bickerton is Acting Registrar of BCCT. DeDe explained that this could be her last FNESC meeting as BCCT will soon be defunct.

Ken Armour – regarding the presentation by Mike Harcourt at the last meeting. Will there be a follow up workshop on Dogwood 21 as mentioned in the minutes. *No, they need to make more progress before they are ready.*

Rod Allen, MOE- Distributed hard copies of the BC Education Plan.
http://www.bcedplan.ca/theplan.php

Context: Personalized Learning - best possible outcome for children to prepare them to enter the world. Provide flexibility – students feel disengaged, a lack of meaning. How can we improve the conversations between students – teachers- parents? Aboriginal outcomes – horrible, an embarrassment. How can we include Aboriginal students and parents and make them feel welcome?

Deb Jefferies; 20% of Dogwoods are illiterate. How successful are we? The quality of living index is high for Canada globally – but different for Aboriginal populations. BC has the highest rate of Child poverty in the country.

Rod: We have the resources as a country to deal with these issues.

Building on our strengths

More Real World Skills - better connection w/learning. Students apply their knowledge in a community embedded manner;

Improved student assessment and reporting – less of an event, more on-going and conversational

Importance of teachers/ Effective teaching – capitalize on the skills of great teachers. Better pre-service training and improved Pro D once they are on the job.

Greater flexibility – students learn beyond 9 – 3 and outside the school.

5 Key Elements

Personalizing Learning – We have good curriculum, but too many learning outcomes. Teachers struggle to cover the material. Focusing on core competencies (i.e. creativity, teamwork, etc.) that will prepare them for their future.

Quality Teaching and Learning – Work with universities to ensure teachers are properly prepared for their new profession. Mentor new teachers. 20% of graduates from Teachers Colleges never teach and another 20% leave the profession within the first five years. We need to improve support. Performance evaluation will help focus Pro D activities.

Flexibility and Choice - Allow school boards to set calendars according to the needs of their community. Make school choices easier. Improve parent engagement. Recognize education outside the classroom (i.e. Queen's Scout, carpentry project, etc.) and help train teachers to assess this work.

High Standards – move from content based to competency based. How do we assess this? Develop intervention strategies and supports for teachers. Can we speed this up?

Technology - B.C. is the most digitally connected province in Canada, still some areas do not have high speed service. How can we take advantage of technology – for the benefit rather than the detriment?

Q & A

DeDe Derose (BCCT) – What is the timeline to communicate with parents,t eachers, etc.?

Rod (MOE): The conversation needs to go to a district level. Districts need to get out and speak.

Cathy (BCCPAC): The public engagement process at the district level needs to improve. Inviting one parent to join a committee that meets during business hours, Monday to Friday, 50 kilometers away ignores the reality of parent volunteers. Communication and engagement needs to be on parents' terms. This is especially true for Aboriginal parents.

Rod: We rocognise the challenges

Glen (BCTF): A school has a state of art technology facility room, but it is closed due to a lack of funding for staff. This is a disconnect between what the MOE is saying and what is happening on the ground.

- Teaching is an indicator of student success, but socio-economic is as well. B.C. has the worst child poverty rate in the country.
- Where are the plans for Ab.Ed. success?
- Over ten years ago we had the "Plan 2000", basically a ten year plan. This "new" plan has many of the same concepts.

Rod: Teaching is a huge factor in students success. Our funding mechanisms need to change to create flexibility. Funding drives instead of following. How can we change this? Is there more money? We need to think about delivering funding more effectively.
Deb Jefferies (FNESC): Messaging surrounding diversity needs to be included in this plan. FNESC supports the "How We Are Doing" report to help us continue to advocate for our students.

- FNESC supports high standards.
- Support for Aboriginal parents is required. You can't just show up once.

Sherry (BCSTA): There is a disparity of opportunities due to a difference in resources.
Valerie (BCSTA): Define parental involvement potential.

- Ab. students are struggling w/ direct supervision, DL does not address their needs.
- Accessing the technology – Telus wanted $750,000 to hook up a school. They are getting the fibre optics to the community, but then it has to get to the user.
- Need to improve the partnership between teachers, students and parents.

Rod: This plan is not about increasing the number of DL students. It is about what makes sense for the individual – creating options.
Cathy: Aboriginal parents support should be community based, patience is required. Gwendolyn Point spoke at BCCPAC conference about how it takes months and years to build the trust.

- Schools are too fund-raising dependent to meet their technology needs. Creates inequities and pressure on parents.
- On-line courses - the assessment is not timely and can wreak havoc with university application deadlines. It is not inclusive with the bricks and mortar school. There should be integration with recognition to keep the student connected.

Rod: Yes.
DeDe: How do we acknowledge the out-of-school learning that takes place outside of organisations like the Royal Conservatory and Boy Scouts for example? DeDe gave an example of a student that lived on a farm and helped raise goats. Conversely, how can an urban student achieve along the same lines?
Rod: We need to continue to have these discussions to ensure inclusion.
Brian: What are the strategies to handle achievement discrepancies between boys and girls?
Rod: No silver bullet. We recognize tht all students learn differently. We are moving from a model that is one size fits all to a personalized model.
Marjorie (BCTF): We acknowledge Aboriginal inclusion, but we have been oppressed. Aboriginal people still have a mistrust of these systems. Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements are not the answer. We hear "I feel as a parent that I am being listened to, but not heard." We need to go beyond just saying the words "Spiritual" and "Emotional" , and truly address them.
?(arrived late missed intro): In Ft St. John they have a type of alternative program for Grade 10,11 and 12s. How are the students assessed? How can we learn from these programs?
Glen: Real life issues such as racism need to be addressed.
Recognition of real life skills from outside school
Dharini: Alternative schools have existed for decades.

Rod: This education change is a global phenomena. The OECD has identified 150 successfullearning environments. B.C. had 6 of these. OECD has chosen 30 of these to do an in-depth study, two are from B.C. (Gold Trail and Saturna Island).
Valerie: Streamlining meetings regarding oversight for children in care. We can have two different meetings which focus on the same child and the same information.
Rod: We may not be addressing specific issues, but through collaboration we can put the right structures in place.
Cathy: At our last meeting you presented an aggressive timeline for changes, including new Grad requirements by the end of December.
Rod: We are reviewing the attributes that a Grad needs. The MOE is striking a panel to discuss this issue. The members will be from a broad spectrum. What we are really looking for is feed back. Please go to the website, the result will go to the panels.

Conclusion:
As Rod stated this is a view from 50,000 feet, to continue the metaphor, they are not ready to land. In his responses you can see that he asks as many questions as he answers. If you check out the website www.bcedplan.ca there is a real time feedback opportunity.

Recommendation:
B.C. Education Plan - We should be promoting this feedback potential to our members. We should be brain-storming ideas as a board. We should ensure that we have some representation on these panels. FNESC needs to work on how their goals can be met by this plan.
FNESC Goals – Time to get some concrete action plans.