

# **BC CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS**

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## **School Planning Council Policy in British Columbia**

### **A Comparative Analysis of District Policy**

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# School Planning Council Policy in British Columbia

## A Comparative Analysis of District Policy

### Contents

Executive Summary	Page 3
Four Types of School Planning Council Policy	Page 4
School Planning Council Meetings	Page 9
Who Can Attend a School Planning Council Meeting?	Page 11
The Chair of the School Planning Council	Page 12
Quorum	Page 13
Decision Making (on matters other than the School Plan)	Page 14
Consensus	Page 15
Sub-Committees	Page 15
Alternates	Page 16
Conduct of SPC Members	Page 17
SPC Misconduct and Discharge	Page 19
Resignation and Vote of Non-Confidence	Page 21
Finances	Page 22
Funds Provided for School Planning Councils	Page 23
School Planning Councils that Include Non-Voting Members	Page 23
Role of the PAC	Page 25
Role of the School Planning Council	Page 26
Consultation Expectations of a School Planning Council and Development of the School Plan	Page 27
Exceptions in SPC Policy	Page 30
Conclusion	Page 32
Recommendations	Page 33

## **Tables**

Table 1	School Planning Council Required Meetings Per Year	Page 9
Table 2	Calling Additional SPC Meetings	Page 9
Table 3	When a Meeting Must Be Called	Page 10
Table 4	Who Can Attend a School Planning Council Meeting?	Page 11
Table 5	Selection of Chair	Page 12
Table 6	Quorum	Page 13
Table 7	Decision Making: Consensus or Vote?	Page 14
Table 8	Sub-Committees	Page 15
Table 9	Alternates: For Parents and Teachers	Page 16
Table 10	Conduct Clause	Page 17
Table 11	No Liaison Officer	Page 18
Table 12	District Policy with Discharge Clause	Page 20
Table 13	Resignation and Vote of Non-Confidence	Page 21
Table 14	Financial Remuneration	Page 22
Table 15	Councils that Include Non-Voting Members (Students)	Page 23
Table 16	Councils that Include Non-Voting Members (Non-Teaching Staff)	Page 24
Table 17a	Consultation Expectations of SPC	Page 29
Table 17b	Consultation Expectations of SPC	Page 30

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1	List of Districts (#5-#51)	Page 35
Appendix 2	List of Districts (#52-#91)	Page 36
Appendix 3	Unique or Interesting SPC Clauses	Page 37
Appendix 4	Building School Improvement Capacity: School Self-Assessment (District #78, Fraser-Cascade)	Page 38
Appendix 5	School Plan Requirements for Approval by School Board (District #48, Howe Sound)	Page 43

## **Executive Summary**

This report provides an analysis and comparison of School Planning Council District Policy in the province of British Columbia as of August 2003. With the passing of Bill 34, School Planning Councils came into effect July 1, 2002. The 2002/2003 school year was an interim year for School Planning Councils. This is reflected in the fact that there are almost an equal number of districts with a permanent policy as there are districts which have a policy in either draft, interim, or implementation form. Many have expiry dates or review dates.

This report compares 58 out of the 60 districts in British Columbia.<sup>1</sup> The exceptions are District #92, Nisga'a, and District #93, Conseil Scolaire Francophone. District #92 does not yet have a policy and the District #93 policy will be translated into English in the future.

Overall, there are four styles or approaches that are used to create School Planning District Policy:

1. Prescriptive, mainly clauses defining procedures and administration
2. School Plan Orientated
3. A combination of Prescriptive and School Plan Orientated
4. Non-Prescriptive.

The School Plan Orientated style is the most comprehensive in defining the role and purpose of School Planning Councils, and for providing procedures for consultation, suggestions of data to be collected and reviewed, planning cycles,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendices 1 and 2 for a complete list of districts in this report.

timelines, and checklists that appraise the school plan. School Plan Orientated policy tend to result in original or distinct School Planning Council policy in comparison to the typical district policy. They do not prescribe administrative procedures, but rather focus entirely on the development, implementation, and assessment of the School Plan.

The Prescriptive style is the most widely used and also the most generic as the clauses in most district policy have the same wording (or a similar rendition) and are frequently sequenced in the same order. They become distinguishable from each other by the direction in their procedures governing operational matters such as defining who is chair, how often the School Planning Council will meet, the information provided on school plan development, and through other operational procedures.

The combination of Prescriptive and School Plan Orientated styles sets some parameters around administrative procedures and is largely focused on the development and implementation of the school plan.

The Non-Prescriptive style does not define procedures and administration or the development of a school plan for a School Planning Council. The policy is typically between 1 and 2 pages long and may contain a few clauses.

District policy in 56 out of the 58 districts covered in this report acknowledges that the function of the School Planning Council is to represent the school community in the development of the School Plan. Overall, School Planning Council District Policy has honoured the intention of the legislation to represent the school community and to give parents a meaningful role in education to

improve student achievement. However, much of district SPC policy is long on administrative and procedural detail but short on comprehensive consultative processes, well-defined roles and responsibilities, and School Plan development strategies. The intention to involve the school community to improve student achievement is there, but not always the road map of how to get there.

## **Four Types of School Planning Council Policy**

### **Prescriptive Style**

The Prescriptive style creates policy through defining administrative and procedural clauses or regulations that govern a School Planning Council. The policy is divided into sections or sub-headings. The typical policy has between 8 and 16 sections or sub-headings, with the majority having 12 or more. The same clauses, or a similar rendition of that clause, can be found in the School Planning Council policy of most districts, often in exactly the same order.

This type of School Planning Council policy is mainly focused on the regulations governing the business and functioning of the Council; it frequently has standard clauses regarding consultation and the school plan.

Development of the school plan varies from district to district. For example, Fort Nelson (#81) has a comprehensive section on the development of its School Plan, but its overall style could be described as Prescriptive.

In general, a Prescriptive style policy will contain some of the following sections under the sub-headings:

- Purpose and Role of SPC
- Support (District Liaison)
- Establishment
- Membership
- Elections and Duties of Officers
- Inaugural Meeting
- Chair
- Meetings
- Quorum
- Decision-Making
- Non-Retaliation / Non-Discipline
- Financial
- Annual School Plan
- Confidentiality and Conduct
- School Board Consultation with the School Planning Council
- Acceptance, Rejection, Modification of School Plan

Found less frequently:

- Amendments
- Timelines
- Annual Review
- School Planning Councils in School Annexes
- Responsibilities of Members
- School Planning Council—Consultant
- Alternate Schools

### **School Plan Orientated Style**

The School Plan Orientated style creates policy by focusing entirely on the development, implementation, and assessment of the School Plan. It does not include administrative or operational procedures. Only Fraser-Cascade uses this approach.

The School Planning Council Policy of Fraser-Cascade (#78) is entirely focused on district and school improvement planning. In fact, their policy is named *Interim Guidelines for District and School Improvement Planning*. It begins with guiding principles and opens with its intent to improve student achievement. It connects the District Growth Plan to the School Plan. It defines a process for monitoring and reviewing the achieved results of the school plan and provides a process for the SPC to jointly determine First Nations student goals with the Aboriginal communities the school serves.

The Fraser-Cascade SPC policy clearly defines the role of the school board, principal, teachers, and the PAC and its consultative role. It clearly defines data sources to consider in the development of school plans. It states that school plans *will* address the performance of subgroups. It has a planning cycle:

- Phase One: collection and interpretation
- Phase Two: analyze and report
- Phase Three: developing the plan
- Phase Four: implementation and monitoring.

It also provides funding for the purpose of school growth planning and implementation. It has suggested timelines.

Fraser-Cascade has developed an excellent school self-assessment instrument to measure school improvement.<sup>2</sup> An example taken from it is:

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 4, *Building School Improvement Capacity: School Self-Assessment Instrument*, District #78, Fraser-Cascade.

### *IX Partnerships*

Improving schools work in teams with parents, students, and identifiable groups to improve student learning.

### *Questions*

How are you involving parents in developing improvement plans?

How involved is your school planning council in analyzing data, establishing baselines, identifying goals, and setting performance targets?

### *Rubric*

#### *Not Yet Meeting Expectations:*

Little evidence of parent, student, or group involvement. If they are involved, it is more on a reporting or rubber-stamping basis.

#### *Meeting Expectations:*

The SPC has a role in developing the school improvement plans.

#### *Exceeds Expectations:*

Parents, students, PACs, SPCs, and specific subgroups are fully involved in shaping the school's goals. The school is working with these groups to support improvements. The school keeps the groups well informed as to progress being made.

Although Fraser-Cascade does not prescribe or define any administrative or procedural operations, its unique approach creates a very comprehensive method for creating a school plan, keeping the goal of student achievement at the forefront.

### Combination of School Plan Orientated and Prescriptive Styles

The combination of School Plan Orientated and Prescriptive styles creates policy by primarily focusing on the School Plan or School Growth Plan and combines this with administrative and procedural clauses or regulations.

The roles and responsibilities of School Planning Council members are defined and some of the district policies are accompanied by an SPC handbook.

The following districts fall under this category:

**District #5, Southeast Kootenay**, has a handbook that defines what an SPC is, defines its mandate, operations, data collection, and review processes. It also defines the responsibilities of the school board, PAC, principal, teacher, and SPC representatives for the PAC. The policy also provides administrative and procedural clauses.

**District #72, Campbell River**, also has a School Planning Council Handbook very similar to the one defined for Southeast Kootenay. In addition, it provides information on communication and consensus-building and how to enhance parent participation. Campbell River's policy contains 13 sections governing regulations.

**District #48, Howe Sound**, has 13 categories of regulations in its policy and also has a good criteria list to be completed by the superintendent entitled *School Plan Requirements for Approval by School*

*Board*.<sup>3</sup> One of the criteria noted under School Planning Council Mandates is the principal, one teacher, three parents, or their alternates have been actively involved. Another criterion is in relation to school growth plans—the principal, staff, parents, and secondary students have been actively involved in the process of determining school growth plans. It provides a good checklist that ensures the School Planning Council fulfills the role of consulting with the school community.

**District #46, Sunshine Coast**, has a School Planning Council Handbook that has a good section on data collection and review. It lists the responsibilities of the school board and allows for School Planning Councils to choose from several models for conducting business. SPCs may establish bylaws for operation and determine how other members of the school community may be involved.

**District #75, Mission**, defines its policy through School Plans, defines the focus of the plan, defines student achievement, consultation, and outlines the planning process. It mentions that the community has to be updated on progress. It defines consultation, school community, and school plans. School Planning Councils must develop a constitution and bylaws to govern their operations and provide a copy to the Board of Trustees and Parent Advisory Council. The policy provides a constitution and bylaws template that contains some rules and regulations, but also allows for some school autonomy.

**Greater Victoria, District #61**, policy is developed by defining the roles and responsibilities of the school board, School Planning Council, principal, teachers, and

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 5.

PAC. It lists sources of data that could be used. Part of the criteria to accept a plan includes these factors:

- i) The plan was collaboratively and jointly developed with parents, all staff (teachers and support staff), and itinerants and students (where applicable);
- ii) School goals include performance indicators, have been developed using a wide variety of data, and are focused on improving student achievement.

It also has regulations governing membership, meetings, and decision-making. SPC members have a code of ethics.

**Abbotsford, District #34**, defines, the responsibilities of the school board, PAC, PAC representative, student representative, principal, and teachers. It provides advice on collection of data, consultation of the whole community, reviewing and reporting on areas for improvement. It also provides advice on developing the school plan. Annual training will be planned by its District Steering Committee.

Abbotsford has regulations governing meetings, decision-making, finances, and timelines. It is the only policy that defines student representative responsibilities.

### **Non-Prescriptive Policy**

The Non-Prescriptive style creates policy that for the most part does not define administrative procedures and does not address the development of a School Plan. Only three districts fall under this category. They are District #6, Rocky Mountain,

District #35, Langley, and District #51, Boundary.

All three districts state the school board shall consult with the School Planning Council as required by the School Act.

Both Boundary and Rocky Mountain state in their Policy Statement that they recognize their responsibility to ensure that School Planning Councils function effectively and in accordance with ethical standards and the School Act to represent the school community in the process of school planning. Langley states that the school board expects that School Planning Councils represent the whole community, function effectively, and act in accordance with ethical standards and the School Act.

All three have a clause that pertains to the School Planning Council providing advice to the school board with respect to:

- allocation of staff and resources in the school
- matters contained in the board's accountability contract relating to the school
- educational services and educational programs in the school.

Rocky Mountain defines the structure or membership of the School Planning Council and their mandate or purpose:

*The School Planning Council formally acknowledges the importance of parental involvement in the improvement of student achievement.*

The SPC is an advisory body whose major role is to:

- a) consult with the community in developing, monitoring and reviewing school plans
- b) advise and support the principal regarding the
  - i) data included or data which may be required in the School Success Planning process
  - ii) reporting of the School Success Plan and the outcomes of the Plan
  - iii) student achievement targets and levels established.

Boundary defines the purpose of School Planning Councils as:

(provides) parents, teachers, and the principal with an advisory process as they

- 1) review the draft School Growth Plan prepared by the principal
- 2) prepare the annual School Plan
- 3) advise the principal regarding the
  - School Growth Binder
  - data included or the need for data
  - the School Plan (Ministry Form)
  - the process used to identify goals
  - the information reported
  - the targets and levels established.

Boundary has the additional clause that states the School Planning Council must consult with the PAC during the preparation of the School Plan.

These three districts are described as non-prescriptive because they do not contain additional clauses that govern how the School Planning Council operates, nor do they define how data is to be collected or how the community is to be consulted.

The next section of this report will explore some of the clauses from sections or sub-headings found in the majority of School Planning Council district policy. All of the districts in British Columbia are compared, with the exception of Nisga'a (#92) and Conseil Scolaire Francophone (#93).

## School Planning Council Meetings

Most district policy sets a minimum number of times a School Planning Council must meet in a school year. In the majority of districts (62%), this is at least three times per year, and in 15% of districts it is four times or more per year. Some districts have the SPC set their future meetings at their inaugural meeting, and twelve percent (12%), or 7 districts, do not stipulate how many meetings are to be held each year. Overall, eighty-eight percent (88%) of districts mention meetings in their policy.

Table 1: School Planning Council Required Meetings Per Year					
SPC Meetings per year	not in policy	at least 2x	at least 3x	at least 4x	SPC decides
% of Districts	12%	1%	62%	15%	10%

Based on 58 districts

Districts that do not stipulate number of meetings: #6 #28 #35 #51 #57 #78 #91

### Additional Meetings

In seventy-two percent (72%) of district policy, there is a clause defining additional meetings. The standard clause states that additional meetings may be convened at the call of the chair, upon at least one week's notice, unless waived unanimously. In Saanich (#63), additional meetings can be called at the request of the principal *or* chair. The districts listed in Table 2 have a clause in their policy regarding calling additional meetings.

Table 2: Calling Additional SPC Meetings													
ADDITIONAL MEETINGS	District #												
<b>Call of the Chair</b>	5	8	10	20	22	23	27	33	34	36	37	40	
<b>(One week notice)</b>	41	42	43	44	45	48	49	50	52	53	58	59	
	60	61	62	63	64	67	70	71	72	73	74	81	
	82	83	84	85	87								
<b>Call of the Chair or Principal</b>				63									

No clause for meetings in policy: 6/35/51/57/78/91.

Revelstoke (#19) and Fraser-Cascade (#78) do not mention additional meetings.

Richmond (#38) and Vancouver (#39) say additional meetings may be convened if necessary, but do not define a procedure.

Sunshine Coast (#46) allows SPC to choose from different models to conduct meetings.

Mission (#75) allows SPC to set up procedures for meetings in their individual constitutions and by-laws.

Qualicum (#69), additional meetings are at the discretion of the SPC.

Powell River (#47), Bulkley Valley (#54), and Nanaimo-Ladysmith (#68) set their meetings at their inaugural meeting and do not define additional meetings or procedures.

### When a Meeting Must Be Called

Thirty-four districts have a clause that states an additional meeting *must* be convened if requested by 3 members of the School Planning Council, one district at the request of two partner groups on the SPC, and 2 districts stipulate at the request of all the members of the SPC.

**Table 3: When a Meeting Must Be Called**

<b>MUST BE CALLED</b>	<b>District #</b>											
<b>Request of 3 members</b>	5	8	10	20	22	23		33	34	36	37	40
	41	42		44		48	49		52	53	58	59
	60		62		64	67	70	71	72	73	74	
	82	83	84	85	87							
<b>Request of Two Partner Groups</b>			43									
<b>Request of all Members</b>								50				81

### Adding Items to the SPC Agenda

In the districts that do have a clause in their policy regarding meeting procedures, there is a specification that any member may place an item on the proposed agenda of the next meeting by request to the chair. Agendas shall normally be provided at least one week in advance, but this shall not prevent members from adding matters to the agenda for discussion without prior notice. The exceptions to this are:

- Chilliwack #(33), which requires unanimous consent
- Greater Victoria (#61) and Gold Trail (#74) which require majority consent for any matters arising without the standard one week notice.

Chilliwack has the unique clause:

*any member or non-voting advisor may place an item on the proposed agenda of the next meeting by request to the chair.*

## Who Can Attend a School Planning Council Meeting?

Attendance at School Planning Council meetings is open to the school community in thirty-one percent (31%) of districts, and by permission or invitation in fifty-seven (57%) of districts. Seven districts, or twelve percent (12%), do not define SPC meetings in their policy. In districts where attendance is by permission or invitation, the standard clauses are:

*Meetings shall be open to members of the School Planning Council, invited guests, and others who have permission from the Council. Or*

*School Planning Councils may invite others to attend and/or participate in their meetings, but no such guest shall have a vote.*

In districts where SPC meetings are open to the school community, some of the standard clauses are:

*Meetings shall be open to members of the School Planning Council, alternates, invited guests, and members of the school community. Or*

*Except when dealing with confidential matters, meetings shall be open to members of the school staff, members of the PAC, alternates, invited guests, and others who have permission from the Council. (District #64)*

*School Planning Councils meetings shall be open to members of the school community and other invited guests, and shall be advertised through the school's normal channels of communication. (District #63)*

**Table 4: Who Can Attend an SPC Meeting?**

<b>SPC MEETINGS</b>	<b>District #</b>																					
<b>Permission or Invitation</b>	5	10	19	20	22	23	27	33	34	36	37											
	39	41	43	44	47	48	49	50	52	53	58											
<b>57%</b>	59	62	67	70	72	73	81	82	83	84	87											
<b>Open to School Community</b>	8	38	40	42	45	54	57	60	61	63	64											
<b>31%</b>	68	69	71	74	79	85	91															
<b>Not in Policy</b>	6	28	35	46	51	75	78															
<b>12%</b>																						

Chilliwack (#33) states School Planning Councils, *as a body*, may invite others to attend.

Richmond (#38) states additional members of the community are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate in meetings of the SPC.

## The Chair of the School Planning Council

In forty-eight percent (48%) of districts, the principal is the chair, and in forty percent (40%) the School Planning Council elects the chair. Twelve percent (12%) of districts do not define who the chair is. In 72% of districts, additional meetings can be convened at the call of the chair, with one week's notice. In those districts that have a clause defining the chair, the chair is responsible for keeping records, except in Cariboo-Chilcotin (#27) and Buckley Valley (#54) where it is the principal's responsibility. Many districts state that the chair may require anyone to leave, other than a member, if he or she is disrupting the functioning of the council.

**Table 5: Selection of Chair**

CHAIR	District #											
<b>Principal is Chair</b>	8	10	19	22	23	36	37	39	40	41	44	45
<b>48%</b>	48	49	54	59	60	62	70	72	73	81	82	83
	84	85	87									
<b>SPC Elects Chair</b>	5	20	27	28	33	34	38	42	43	47	50	53
<b>40%</b>	57	58	61	63	67	68	69	71	74	79		
<b>Not in Policy</b>	6	35	46	51	75	78	91					
<b>12%</b>												

## Quorum

Quorum is the number of members of a group that must be present if the business done is to be legal or binding. In forty-seven percent (47%) of districts, quorum is the principal plus 2 members (and in districts where they have alternates) or their alternates. Two districts (3.5%) require all their members for a quorum, and two districts (3.5%) require *any* three members. Nine districts (15%) require a member from *each* partner group. Fourteen districts (24%) do not mention quorum in their policy. District #39, Vancouver, and District #58, Nicola-Similkameen, require one member from each partner group for a quorum, and have an additional clause that states if there is no representation from a group (teachers or parents) on the School Planning Council, quorum shall be the principal (or vice-principal alternate) plus two members. Overall, twenty-four percent (24%) of districts do not have a clause for quorum in their policy, and seventy-six percent (76%) of districts define quorum in their policy.

**Table 6: Quorum**

Quorum	District #								
<b>Principal + 2 Members</b>	5	8	36	63					
7%									
<b>Principal + 2 Members or their Alternates</b>	10	19	20	23	27	28	37	41	42
47%	44	47	48	49	50	53	54	60	68
	70	71	72	73	74	79	84	85	87
<b>All the Members</b>	34	69							
3.50%									
<b>One Member from each Partner Group</b>	22	39	43	45	58	62	64	67	82
15%									
<b>Any 3 Members</b>	33	75							
3.50%									
<b>Not in Policy</b>	6	35	38	40	46	51	52	57	59
24%	61	78	81	82	91				

### Decision-Making (on matters other than the School Plan)

On matters other than the School Plan that require the School Planning Council to make decisions, sixty-four percent (64%) of districts require consensus. Southeast Kootenay's (#5) definition of consensus is *reaching an agreement that all members can accept and support*. It sometimes means that all members are not in substantial agreement, but recognize the decision is in the best interests of student success. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the districts who must reach decisions through consensus have a clause stating that if members cannot agree on a response, the council will report it in the meeting records. Many districts add that members may submit individual reports when consensus cannot be reached. Most district policy states that School Planning Councils shall operate on consensus. Votes are not taken except on the approval of the proposed School Plan. Surrey (#36) adds the clause, *A School Planning Council is an advisory body. Votes are not taken except on the approval of a proposed School Plan*.

Votes are taken in eleven districts (19%) only when consensus cannot be achieved.

**Table 7: Decision Making: Consensus or Vote?**

Decision Making ON MATTERS OTHER THAN THE SCHOOL PLAN	District #							
<b>Consensus</b>	5	20	27	34	36	38	49	59
<b>16%</b>	63							
<b>If no consensus, recorded</b>	10	19	22	23	37	39	40	41
<b>48%</b>	43	44	48	50	54	58	60	62
	64	67	68	70	72	73	81	82
	83	84	85	87				
<b>Vote, If no Consensus</b>	8	33	42	45	47	52	53	69
<b>19%</b>	71	74	81					
<b>Not in Policy</b>	6	28	46	51	57	61	75	78
<b>17%</b>	79	81						

## Consensus

When consensus cannot be reached in District #62, Sooke, on matters referred to the council (other than the School Plan), the council will report to their members as well as the board. In Coquitlam (#43), when consensus cannot be reached, it is to be reflected in the meeting record as well as in the School Improvement Plan.

The School Act states that the School Planning Council will vote on the School Plan before it is submitted to the board. Saanich (#63) has a unique clause in regard to consensus and the School Plan. In Saanich, the approval of the proposed School Plan shall be by consensus of the members of the School Planning Council. Failing consensus, a team of representatives from the STA (Saanich Teachers' Association), COPACS (name of the DPAC), and the district administration would meet with the School Planning Council in support of arriving at consensus. Failing that, a vote would occur. In District #27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin), the SPC may request the services of the District Liaison Officer to assist with mediation of issues if consensus cannot be reached.

## Sub-Committees

Sub-Committees can be created in seventy-one percent (71%) of districts. Mention of sub-committees is usually found under the Decision-Making section in most district policy. The standard clause in most district policy reads:

*A School Planning Council may create sub-committees to investigate matters within the Council's jurisdiction and may invite additional participants to join the sub-committees.*

**Table 8: Sub-Committees**

<b>Sub-Committees in Policy</b>	<b>District #</b>												
<b>Not in Policy</b>	5	6	19	28	35	43	46	51	54	57	61	62	63
<b>29%</b>	75	78	81	91									
<b>In Policy</b>	8	10	20	22	23	27	33	34	36	37	38	39	40
<b>71%</b>	41	42	44	45	47	48	49	50	52	53	58	59	60
	64	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	79	82	83	84
	85	87											

## Alternates Parents and Teachers

Although alternates are not mentioned in the School Act, 80% of districts have a clause in their policy enabling alternates to fill in for a member. There are a few variations in district policy regarding alternates. School District #69, Qualicum, states 3 parents and *an* alternate. Quesnel (#28) has a clause regarding electing alternate parent representatives, but does not have a clause for an alternate teacher representative. Some clauses read, *Teachers and parents may elect alternate representatives* (#10), and others read, *Teachers and parents may elect one alternate representative* (#19), or *Teachers and Parent Advisory Councils may each elect one alternate representative*. Gulf Islands District (#64) is the only district that states teachers and PACs *must* elect alternate representatives. Alternates often have an observer status if they are not replacing a member at a meeting.

**Table 9: Alternates: For Parents and Teachers**

<b>Alternates</b>	<b>District #</b>								
<b>Parents and Teachers</b>									
<b>Alternates</b>	10	19	20	22	23	27	28	33	37
<b>80%</b>	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46
	47	48	49	50	52	53	54	58	59
	60	61	62	64	67	68	69	70	71
	72	73	74	79	81	82	83	84	85
	87								
<b>Not Mentioned</b>	5	6	8	34	35	36	51	57	63
<b>20%</b>	75	78	91						

### Alternates—Principal

The majority of district policy states that: the principal may designate the vice-principal to act as his/her alternate for one or more meetings. Variations of this alternate designation are:

*The principal may designate another principal or vice-principal to act as his alternate for one or more meetings. (#10)*

*The principal may designate a vice-principal, the District Liaison Officer, or District Officer responsible for the school to act as her/his alternate for one or more meetings.*

Unique clauses:

*The principal may, in extenuating circumstances, designate the vice-principal as an attendee. (#61)*

*The principal may designate a vice-principal or teacher-in-charge. (#64)*

## Conduct of SPC Members

The conduct of School Planning Council members is mentioned in eighty-three percent (83%) of district policy and not mentioned in seventeen percent (17%) of policy.

The districts of Saanich (#63), Revelstoke (#19), and Greater Victoria (#61) have a separate code of conduct for SPC members, and Prince George (#57) has 9 rules of conduct within their policy.

**Table 10: Conduct Clause**

District Policy	District #							
<b>Conduct Clause</b>	5	10	19	20	22	23	27	33
<b>83%</b>	34	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
	43	44	45	47	48	49	50	52
	53	54	57	58	59	60	61	62
	63	64	67	68	70	71	72	73
	74	79	81	82	83	84	85	87
<b>No Clause</b>	6	8	28	35	46	51	69	75
<b>17%</b>	78	91						

## Conduct

Matters pertaining to conduct are typically found under *Confidentiality and Conduct*. The standard clause usually contains all, some, or similar renditions of the following:

### CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONDUCT

1. From time to time, the School Planning Council may be provided with information by or on behalf of the School Board that has been designated as confidential. The members of the Council are expected not to disclose such information without permission given by or on behalf of the School Board and to abide by any restrictions or conditions placed on disclosure of the information.

2. It is expected that parent representatives will function as representatives of all school families and represent their community of interest, not the interests of any subgroup.
3. It is expected that the teacher representative will function as a representative of all teachers in the school and represent their broad community of interest, not the interests of any one person or sub-group.
4. Members are expected to be collaborative and respectful in the conduct of Council business and to abide by the rulings of the chair.
5. Any member of a School Planning Council may request the district liaison officer appointed under s. 2.1 to assist the School Planning Council in resolving internal disputes or problem-solving or improving its processes.
6. Any complaint about the functioning of the School Planning Council should be made to the Council through its chair. If the complaint is not resolved, then the complainant may address the complaint to the district liaison officer.
7. If it appears to the School Board, following investigation, that a member of a School Planning Council has been guilty of misconduct, including but not limited to breach of confidentiality, the School Board may discharge the member and request that a new member be elected, or may appoint a new member if elections are not feasible. Before making such a decision, the School Board shall ensure that the member has had the opportunity to respond to the allegations. The School Board will not be required to provide an oral hearing, but shall take into account any written representations

### **District Liaison Officer**

**Table 11: No Liaison Officer**

No District Liaison Officer	District #	6	28	35	51	75	78
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A District Liaison Officer is designated in ninety percent (90%) of districts. This designation is typically found under the section heading *Support*:

*The superintendent may designate a contact to act as district liaison for School Planning Councils. This district liaison officer will have the right to attend any meeting of a School Planning Council. Or*

*The superintendent shall designate a board officer to act as district liaison for School Planning Councils. This district liaison officer will have the right to attend any meeting*

*of a School Planning Council or a School Planning sub-committee, and may designate another board officer or employee to attend in his or her place.*

### **SPC Dispute Resolution and Problem Solving**

In 77% of the districts that have a District Liaison Officer, any SPC member can request the District Liaison Officer to assist the SPC in resolving internal disputes, problem-solving, or improving its processes. In Chilliwack (#33), North Vancouver (#44), and Okanagan Skaha (#67), the School Planning Council *must* request this assistance. Greater Victoria (#61) will resolve any disputes through the Victoria School District Appeal Procedure. In Coquitlam (#43), the assistant superintendent is free to enlist the support of any or all of the partner groups in resolving internal disputes or problem-solving. Vernon (#22) intends to develop a conflict resolution process in consultation with the District Parent Advisory Council, the Vernon Principals and Vice-Principals Association, the Vernon Teachers' Association, and representatives of the board.

### **Complaints About the SPC**

In 88% of the districts that have a District Liaison Officer, any complaints about the functioning of the SPC are to be made to the council through its chair. If the complaint is not resolved, then the complainant may address the complaint to the District Liaison Officer. Chilliwack (#33) stipulates that if the complaint is with the chair, the complainant can go to the District Liaison Officer.

### **SPC Misconduct and Discharge**

#### **Discharge by the Board**

There is a discharge clause in SPC policy in 76% of districts. The standard clause used for discharge is:

*If it appears to the School Board, following investigation, that a member of a School Planning Council has been guilty of misconduct, including but not limited to breach of confidentiality, the School Board may discharge the member and request that a new member be elected, or may appoint a new member if elections are not feasible. Before making such a decision, the School Board shall ensure that the member has had the opportunity to respond to the allegations. The School Board will not be required to provide an oral hearing, but shall take into account any written representations.*

Variations of this clause are found in Kootenay Lake (#8) which states that before making a decision to discharge a member:

*the board shall ensure that the member has had the opportunity to respond to the allegations with an advocate present, if so desired by the member.*

In Peace River South (#59), the member is entitled to meet with a committee of the board consisting of the school’s liaison trustee and at least one other trustee. This committee then makes a recommendation to the board.

**Table 12: District Policy with Discharge Clause**

<b>Discharge Clause</b>	<b>District #</b>									
	5	8	10	20	22	23	27	33	34	36
	37	38	39	40	41	42	44	45	47	48
<b>Discharge Clause</b>	49	50	52	53	54	57	58	59	60	62
<b>76%</b>	63	67	68	70	71	72	73	74	81	82
	83	84	85	87						
<b>No Discharge Clause</b>	6	19	28	35	43	46	51	61	64	69
<b>24%</b>	75	78	79	91						

### **Discharge by Council**

In Surrey (#36), if it appears, following investigation, that a member of a School Planning Council has been in breach of the School Planning Council Policy and Regulations, the council may discharge the member and request that a new member be elected, or may appoint a new member if elections are not feasible. Before making a decision, the School Planning Council shall ensure that the member has had the opportunity to respond to the allegations. The member may appeal the School Planning Council’s decision to the board. The board will not be required to provide an oral hearing, but shall take into account any written representations.

The ability of the SPC in the Surrey model to appoint a new member (if elections are not feasible) raises questions about parent members being elected by the PAC and their clause (4.6) regarding the principal’s role in recommending parent appointments to the board if there is an insufficient number of parents.

### **Discharge by the Superintendent**

The Liaison Officer in West Vancouver (#45) determines if the efficacy of the SPC has been jeopardized and reports to the superintendent who has the authority to discharge a member.

## Resignation and Vote of Non-Confidence Clause

Nineteen percent (19%) of districts, or eleven districts, have a clause in their policy that pertains to procedures to follow if an SPC member resigns or does not continue to be a teacher or PAC member of the school. Fourteen percent (14%), or eight districts, have a clause for loss of confidence in SPC members and procedures for removal.

Table 13: Resignation and Vote of Non-Confidence											
	District #										
<b>Resignation Clause</b>	10	27	33	37	49	53	58	59	71	74	83
<b>Non-Confidence Clause</b>	10	27			49	53	58	59	71	74	

Gold Trail #74: Votes must be by secret ballot

### Resignation or Cease to be a School Member

The clause used for resignation or cessation of membership is the same in all the districts in Table 13, with the exception of Central Coast (#49) which does not include the *fails to attend two meetings* section:

*During their term of office, if a teacher rep or PAC rep resigns, or does not continue to be a teacher or PAC member of the school, or if during their term of office, the representative fails to attend two duly called meetings in a row, unless the SPC agrees otherwise, the membership of that representative will cease, and the alternate will take the representative's place. If there is no alternate, the constituent group will elect another rep within one month of that rep's loss of membership, or the board will appoint a representative.*

### Non-Confidence Vote

The clause used for a vote of non-confidence of a member is the same in all the districts in Table 13, with the exception of Central Coast (#49) which does not include the written notification of at least one week section:

*The teacher and PAC representatives must maintain the confidence of those who elected them. If the teaching staff or PAC holds a vote of non-confidence in their rep and that vote of non-confidence is supported by a two-thirds majority of those members present at a meeting called for that purpose, with each member being provided with written notification at least one week in advance of the meeting, then the SPC membership of that rep ends immediately. The alternate will then take the rep's place on the SPC. If there is*

*no alternate, one is to be elected within one month. Failing this, the board will appoint a representative.*

## **Finances**

The majority of districts, sixty-four percent (64%), state they do not provide financial remuneration for members of the SPC. The majority of districts have the following clause or a similar rendition regarding finance:

*Membership is voluntary.*

*SPC members will receive no honorarium, payment, or reimbursement of expenses for participation in SPC meetings.*

*A School Planning Council has no power to raise or expend money. Or*

*Meeting expenses are the responsibility of the school.*

*A School Planning Council has no power to raise or expend money.*

Finances are not mentioned in seventeen (17%) of district policy, and nineteen percent (19%) of districts, or 11 districts, have a clause stating that members may claim reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses. The standard clause relating to reimbursement is:

*Members may claim reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses in accordance with the school board policy governing employee expenses. Expense forms (other than the principal's) must be approved by the principal.*

**Table 14: Financial Remuneration**

Expense Reimbursement	District #									
<b>No reimbursement</b>		10	20	23	27	33	34	36	37	38
<b>64%</b>	39	40	41	42	43	44	47	48	49	50
	53	53	54	57	61	62	63	67	68	69
	70	71	72	74	75	81	83	85	91	
<b>Reimbursement Clause</b>	8	10	22	45	58	59	60	64	73	82
<b>19%</b>	84									
<b>No mention in Policy</b>	5	6	19	28	35	46	51	78	79	81
<b>17%</b>										

District #82, Coast Mountain: Teachers may take time in lieu of a child care expense claim.

## Funds Provided for School Planning Councils

Only 4 districts, or seven percent of districts, mention the provision of funds in their policy:

District #45 (West Vancouver): *Each school will be provided with \$250.00 annually to assist with the work of the Council.*

District #64 (Gulf Islands): *The School District will provide financial assistance to schools; and shall determine the level of funding on an annual basis.*

District #78 (Fraser-Cascade): *The Board of School Trustees has budgeted funds for the purpose of school growth planning and implementation. Schools will be funded for this purpose. The amount of funding ranges from \$500.00 to \$2500.00 per school, and \$5500.00 is allotted for District Growth Planning.*

District #81 (Fort Nelson): *The Board will allocate the amount of \$0.75 per student per school or a minimum of \$200.00 for coffee supplies and to offset child care expenses.*

## School Planning Councils that Include Non-Voting Members Students

Twenty-four percent (24%) of districts, or 14 districts, have clauses relating to students and their inclusion on SPCs. Of those 14 districts, forty-three percent (43%, 6 districts) say *may include a student*, and fifty-seven (57%, 8 districts) say *to include a student*. In sixty-four percent (64%) of the 14 districts that have a clause pertaining to students, the reference is to *a secondary student*, and in thirty-six percent (36%) the reference is to *students*. Coquitlam (#43) includes both secondary and middle school students.

**Table 15: Councils that Include Non-Voting Members (Students)**

SPC	District #											
<b>Non-voting members</b>												
<b>Students</b>	20	33	34	39	40	41	43	44	45	46	64	
24% of all Districts	67	69	84									
<b>May Include a Student</b>		33	34	39								
	67	69	84									
<b>To Include a Student</b>	20				40	41	43	44	45	46	64	

Students: -elected by students: 20, 33, 41, 43, 45  
 -appointed by the principal: 34, 44, 46  
 -invited by SPC: 39

Do not indicate election or appointment: 40, 64, 67, 69, 84

### School Planning Councils that Include Non-Voting Members—Non-Teaching Staff

Fourteen (14%) of districts, or eight districts, have clauses relating to non-teaching staff and their inclusion on SPCs. Of the eight districts that have an inclusion clause, fifty percent (50%) say *may* or *are encouraged to have*, and fifty percent (50%) say *shall* or *are to include*. Only Chilliwack (#33) states that the member *shall be elected by its members*. Vancouver (#39) states SPCs may invite a member, and the remaining districts in Table 14 do not clarify if membership is by election or appointment. Clarification is made that the positions are non-voting.

**Table 16: Councils that Include Non-Voting Members (Non-Teaching Staff)**

SPC	District #							
<b>Non-voting members</b>								
<b>Non-teaching staff</b>	28	33	39	40	45	64	67	69
14% of all Districts								
<b>May Include</b>	28		39				67	69
<b>To Include</b>		33		40	45	64		

## Role of the PAC

Only a few policies have a separate clause defining the role of the Parent Advisory Council. Reference to PACs is mainly through clauses that deal with consultation, either with the principal or School Planning Council, or in reference to bylaws for the selection of parent representatives to the School Planning Council. Many policies say the process for the selection of parent representatives shall be in accordance with the bylaws of the PAC for the school. Many policies also say the principal shall consult with the PAC on its bylaws for the election of parents to ensure that bylaws safeguard the rights of parents to participate.

Abbotsford (#34) and Greater Victoria (#61) have a clause in their policy regarding PAC responsibilities, and Abbotsford is the only district that includes a definition of a PAC (Officer) Representative's responsibilities in its policy. Both Campbell River (#72) and Southeast Kootenay (#5) have a clause regarding PAC and PAC representative's responsibilities in their SPC handbook:

*The Parent Advisory Councils responsibilities are to:*

- *elect, by secret ballot, three representatives to the School Planning Council (one of whom is to be a member of the executive of the PAC)*
- *establish or modify its bylaws to govern the election of members to the School Planning Council*
- *establish a process (in collaboration with the principal) for the School Planning Council representatives to:*
  - i. *receive input and direction from the school's parents (PAC)*

- ii. *inform the school's parents (PAC) about the School Planning Council's work*
- iii. *assist the School Planning Council as requested (from Greater Victoria, #61).*

(Modifications from other districts are in parentheses.)

Many policies do not have definitive processes for consultation and communication with the PAC, and therefore it is important to have some type of process stipulated in the PAC bylaws. The following definition is from Abbotsford (#34):

*Parent Advisory Council Representative (PAC) Responsibilities:*

- *represent the PAC at meetings of the SPC*
- *regularly attend all SPC meetings*
- *speak on behalf of the PAC at SPC meetings*
- *be a strong advocate for meaningful involvement in the school and in the development of a school plan*
- *be a conduit for the collective parent voice between the PAC and SPC*
- *provide a report to the PAC membership at every PAC general meeting*
- *request direction from the general PAC membership*
- *attend general PAC meetings*

In the School Act, section 8.3(7), a board must make a school plan approved under section 8.3(4) available to the parents of that school. This is not distinctly stated in many policies, which is another important reason for PAC bylaws to clearly define the role and responsibilities of the PAC Officer Representative member.

## Role of the School Planning Council

The purpose or role of the School Planning Council is defined in every district policy, and in a majority of districts it is defined in either the preamble or the policy statement.

The majority of districts have the following clause, or a similar rendition of it, in their policy or policy statement:

*The Board recognizes its responsibilities to ensure that School Planning Councils function effectively and in accordance with ethical standards and the School Act to represent the school community in the process of school planning (or development of the school plan).*

Frequently, *with the goal to improve student achievement* is an addition to the above clause.

Another common clause is:

*The Board of School Trustees supports the establishment of School Planning Councils for the purposes set out in the School Act.*

All district policy defines the role and purpose of School Planning Councils within their regulations and policy, with the exception of Langley (#35). All refer to the School Act and the intent of the legislation to involve and consult with the school community in the development of a school plan and other matters contained in the board's accountability contract. All policy refers to the mandate set out in Bill 34. The SPC is most often defined as an advisory body whose goal is to consult with the school community in developing, monitoring, and reviewing school growth plans with the aim of improving student achievement. An example of a standard

clause pertaining to the purpose and role of SPCs is:

*Preparation and/or review of a proposed school plan, connected to the school district accountability contract, to improve student achievement.*

*Consultation on matters referred to it by the school board, superintendent or the superintendent's designate.*

Districts often define which groups can refer matters to the School Planning Council in their policy. This consultation referral is found in the *Consultative Expectations of a School Planning Council* section of this report.

The districts of Sooke and Mission define the purpose of the School Planning Councils as to:

*formally acknowledge the importance of parental involvement in improving student achievement.*

## Consultation Expectations of a School Planning Council and Development of the School Plan

All district policy reviewed has a clause in it that requires consultation between the board and the School Planning Council in regards to:

- (a) the allocation of staff and resources in the school
- (b) matters contained in the board's accountability contract relating to the school
- (c) educational services and educational programs in the school.

In most district policy, consultation expectations can be found under the *Roles and Responsibilities* and *Annual School Plan* sections. Most policy defines who refers matters to the SPC and with whom the SPC consults. There are usually two distinct types of clauses used in defining the roles and responsibilities of the SPC, particularly in a Prescriptive style policy. Both usually mention preparation of the School Plan, but one defines it as consulting on matters referred to it by defined members of the school community, and the other defines it as providing an advisory process to prepare the School Plan. Some of the more typical clauses are:

1. The role of a School Planning Council is:

- (a) preparation of the Annual Plan
- (b) consultation on matters referred to it by the School Board, the superintendent, or the superintendent's designate
- (c) consultation on matters referred to it by the Parent Advisory Council
- (d) functions assigned in these procedures
- (e) functions that are ancillary to the above.

or

- (a) consultations on matters referred to it by the school community

and

2. Acts in an advisory capacity to review relevant data pertaining to student achievement.

or

2. The SPC is intended to provide parents, teachers, and the principal with an advisory planning process as they:

- (a) prepare the School Growth Plan through examination of data and district goals, and,
- (b) advise the principal regarding the
  - School Growth Planning binder and the data included or the need for data
  - School Growth Plan
  - the process used to identify the goals

- the information reported
- the targets and levels established.

### **Consultation with PAC**

The School Act requires a School Planning Council to consult with the Parent Advisory Council. This is directly stated in 56 of the 58 districts in this report. A common clause pertaining to consultation between the SPC and PAC is:

*A School Planning Council must consult with the school's Parent Advisory Council during preparation of the School Plan. Consultation shall be at a minimum a presentation at a Parent Advisory Council meeting, of which notice has been given to parents in accordance with Parent Advisory Council bylaws. The School Planning Council shall provide the Parent Advisory Council with a reasonable opportunity for input into the school plan and consider such input when deciding the school plan.*

More than fifty percent of districts use this clause.

Unique clauses:

*A School Planning Council must consult with the school's Parent Advisory Council during preparation of the School Plan. Consultation shall be continuous, with notice given to parents in accordance with PAC protocols. This consultation will provide the PAC members a reasonable opportunity for input into the School Plan and must include a presentation of the final draft. The SPC will consider such input when deciding on the School Plan. (Fort Nelson #81)*

### **Consultation with the Community**

Consultation with the school community is cited in eighty-six percent (86%) of districts (50 out of 58 districts). A typical clause is

*A School Planning Council will also consult with other members of the school community regarding preparation of the School Plan. Such consultation shall at a minimum provide notice of the draft proposed School Plan to employees with a reasonable opportunity for input into the School Plan and consider such input when deciding on the School Plan. The School Planning Council will consider what other groups and individuals who are important to the life of the school should be included in the consultation and how to communicate with them. (Gold Trail (#74) adds: notice has been given to parents, Bands...)*

For the most part, the method of consulting with the community is left up to the School Planning Council. In a few districts, it is up to the principal to ensure that consultation has been with the

whole community, and in a few districts, school boards make this a criteria for the acceptance of the School Plan. In Kamloops/Thompson (#73), the School Plan must be ratified by the PAC and the school staff before recommendation to the board.

### Consultation Expectations of the SPC

Table 17a and Table 17b look at *how* and *with whom* the SPC consults as defined in district policy. The heading *Represent the Community* is included as almost all policy states that the SPC represents the community in its policy statement or within the policy. Some districts define consultation through the collection of data and the goals or targets set. The style of the policy is represented by the following letters:

- (C)—a combination of Prescriptive and School Plan Orientated
- (N)—Non-Prescriptive
- (P)—Prescriptive
- (S)—School Plan Orientated

*Report Out to Community* is included to represent those districts who directly define how they will report to the community. Clauses that say the SPC should consider how to communicate with the community are not included, but are included under *Must Consult Community*.

Table 17a: Consultation Expectations of SPC												
District #	5	6	8	10	19	20	22	23	27	28	33	
Style	C	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Must Consult PAC	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Data Collection, Goals, Targets	x	x	x	x		x			x	x		
Report Out to Community	x	x	x	x			x					
Must Consult Community	x			x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Represent the Community	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
District #	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
Style	C	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Must Consult PAC	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Data Collection, Goals, Targets	x								x			
Report Out to Community	x				x							
Must Consult Community	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Represent the Community	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
District #	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	57	58	59
Style	C	P	C	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	P	P
Must Consult PAC	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Data Collection, Goals, Targets	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x
Report Out to Community										x		
Must Consult Community	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Represent the Community	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x

**Table 17b: Consultation Expectations of SPC**

District #	60	61	62	63	64	67	68	69	70	71	72	73
Style	P	C	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	C	P
Must Consult PAC	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Data Collection, Goals, Targets		x	x								x	
Report Out to Community		x				x		x		x	x	x
Must Consult Community	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Represent the Community	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
District #	74	75	78	79	81	82	83	84	85	87	91	
Style	P	C	S	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Must Consult PAC	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Data Collection, Goals, Targets	x	x	x		x							
Report Out to Community		x	x		x				x		x	
Must Consult Community	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Represent the Community	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	

## Exceptions in SPC Policy

The Comox Valley policy states that their school and district planning process is built on the research-based belief that student learning in a school is most likely to improve when the staff in that school

- (a) jointly determine school needs based on valid data from many sources
  - (b) establish plans to meet those needs (goals)
  - (c) implement those plans, and
  - (d) assess whether those needs were met.
- PACs should, as representatives of parents, provide the school with advice regarding their view of school needs and support the staff in their efforts to implement the school growth plan.
  - The SPC should serve as a final review of the school growth plan before it is submitted to the board for final approval.
  - At each PAC meeting and SPC meeting, and in regular newsletters sent to parents, principals will inform parents regarding the school growth plan, the progress made toward achieving the goals, and actions the staff are taking to meet these goals.
  - No later than the end of each school year, the principal will review progress made toward accomplishing the school growth plan with the school staff, and a preliminary school growth plan for the next school year will be drafted.

- The principal will share the review and draft plan with the PAC and SPC. This may be done in writing through a school newsletter. The review and draft plan will be sent to the superintendent.
- During the month of September of each school year, the school staff will finalize a proposed school growth plan using data available at the time. The principal will consult with the superintendent or assistant superintendent during this process. The principal will also prepare a report on the previous year's school growth plan for the SPC, the PAC, and the superintendent.
- No later than October 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year, the staff will forward the proposed school growth plan to the School Planning Council for review and recommendations. The SPC will inform the school staff of any changes they will recommend to the board.
- The staff and/or the principal alone may send comments regarding changes made by the SPC to the board through the superintendent.

The premise in the district policy of Comox Valley is that student learning in a school is most likely to improve when the staff do certain things, and as a result, in looking at the consultative role defined in their district policy, the SPC appears to be an adjunct to the principal and staff in a school.

## **Conclusion**

Districts that create SPC policy by using the combination Prescriptive-School Plan style have the most effective policy for they give a clear indication of the roles and responsibilities of SPC members, provide details on how to create a School Plan, and define a consultative process. There is a greater focus on the development, implementation, and assessment of the School Plan involving the school community than in the other styles of policy.

The School Plan Orientated style used by Fraser-Cascade provides an excellent SPC road map to improve student achievement. It clearly states that the intent of the SPC is to improve student achievement, defines what student achievement is, provides a list of data sources to be considered, provides a planning cycle, and, most importantly, a School Self-Assessment tool to measure school improvement. Although it does not at all define administrative procedures for the business of the SPC, such as how many meetings per year, quorum, and other details, it provides a very comprehensive method for the community to develop a School Plan for the purpose of improving student achievement.

The majority of districts use the Prescriptive style in developing School Planning Council policy. This style is predominantly lengthy on administrative and procedural detail, but short on the development of the actual School Plan. The Prescriptive style is often more about governing the conduct of the members than about the development of a school plan, school growth, and therefore student achievement.

Districts whose policy combines the development of the School Plan with administrative procedures create the most effective policy. A good policy answers the question: *How do we get there from here?* If the intent is to improve student achievement, then the policy should provide the map to get to this goal. A good policy includes a checklist to monitor its success. While there is a need for some administrative and procedural direction in School Planning Council policy, it should not dominate the policy. The best policy combines some administrative and procedural direction with a clear road map to achieve the goal of improving student achievement by involving the community.

Overall, School Planning Council district policy recognizes the intention to involve the community to improve student achievement, but not always the road map to get there.

## Recommendations

### 1. District Associate Call Out

#### Questions directed to both PAC presidents and SPC/PAC officers

- Has your school changed the PAC constitution and bylaws to incorporate the School Planning Council?
- Ask for a copy of the changes to the PAC constitution and bylaws.
- Is your school community aware of the work of the SPC?
- How does your SPC communicate with your school community, and how do you solicit input from your school community?
- Does your PAC see the final draft of the proposed School Plan before it is submitted to the Board of Trustees?

### 2. Contact the DPAC in Comox Valley SD #71

- The policy makes the SPC sound like an adjunct to the principal and staff of the school. Rather than the SPC developing the School Plan, they appear to be the final review before it is submitted to the board, and even then only school staff or the principal may send comments regarding changes made by the SPC to the board through the superintendent. In their original draft, it was suggested that the SPC and PAC *meet in conjunction*. This was later changed to *may meet in conjunction*.

### 3. What makes an effective school planning council?

- Clear definitions of the role of the SPC: teacher, parents, principal, board.
- Definition of the community.
- Well developed School Plan. Explains what needs to be looked at to develop a plan.
- Well defined avenues of communication between PAC and the whole school community (not simply *must communicate with the PAC or community*).
- Checklist or assessment tool to measure the effectiveness of the SPC.
- Criteria for acceptance by the board that include ensuring that the community has been involved in the development of the plan.
- A statement about how the final School Plan will be shared with the school community.

# School Planning Council Policy in British Columbia

## A Comparative Analysis of District Policy

### Appendices

Appendix 1	List of Districts (#5-#51)	Page 35
Appendix 2	List of Districts (#52-#91)	Page 36
Appendix 3	Unique or Interesting SPC Clauses	Page 37
Appendix 4	Building School Improvement Capacity: School Self-Assessment (District #78, Fraser-Cascade)	Page 38
Appendix 5	School Plan Requirements for Approval by School Board (District #46, Howe Sound)	Page 43

**Appendix 1**  
**List of Districts (#5-#51)**

<b>District</b>	<b>Type of Policy</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b># of sections in policy</b>	<b>Date of Policy</b>
#5 Southeast Kootenay	Permanent	C	SPC Handbook and 8 sections	2002
#6 Rocky Mountain	Permanent	N	Policy Statement and 2 sections	2003/02/11
#8 Kootenay Lakes	Interim	P	Policy Statement and 16 sections	2003/02/11
#10 Arrow Lakes	Interim	P	Policy Statement and 14 sections	expires no later 08/30/04
#19 Revelstoke	Permanent	P	8 sections, code of conduct	2003/02/04
#20 Kootenay-Columbia	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 16 sections	2003/03/05
#22 Vernon	Interim	P	Policy Statement and 14 sections	2003/01/14
#23 Central Okanagan	Draft	P	Policy Statement and 14 sections	2003/02/25
#27 Cariboo-Chilcotin	Implementation	P	Policy Statement and 13 sections	2003/03/13
#28 Quesnel	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 3 sections	2003/01
#33 Chilliwack	Draft	P	Policy Statement and 13 sections	2003/02/18
#34 Abbotsford	Draft	C	SPC Roles/Resp and 5 sections	2003/06
#35 Langley	Permanent	N	Policy Statement only	2003/01/21
#36 Surrey	Draft	P	Policy Statement and 14 sections	2003/04/10
#37 Delta	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 16 sections	2002/11/26
#38 Richmond	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 3 sections	2003/06
#39 Vancouver	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 13 sections	2002/11/04
#40 New Westminister	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 12 sections	2003/01/28
#41 Burnaby	Draft	P	Policy Statement and 12 sections	2002/11/12
#42 Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 16 sections	2003/01/28
#43 Coquitlam	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 12 sections	2003/02/03
#44 North Vancouver	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 14 sections	2003/06/10
#45 West Vancouver	Interim	P	Policy Statement and 14 sections	2002/11/26
#46 Sunshine Coast	Draft	C	SPC Handbook and 4 sections	2003/03
#47 Powell River	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 17 sections	2002/09/24
#48 Howe Sound	Permanent	C	Policy St. 13 sections, Checklist	2003/01/08
#49 Central Coast	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 17 sections	2003/02/11

**Appendix 2**  
**List of Districts (#52-#91)**

#52 Prince Rupert	Draft	P	Policy Statement and 15 sections	2003/03
#53 Okanagan Similkameen	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 16 sections	2002/11/20
#54 Buckey Valley	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 9 sections	2003/02/18
#57 Prince George	Permanent	P	Policy St.13 regulations, 12 adm. procedures	2003/01/28
#58 Nicola-Similkameen	Permanent	P	Policy St., 18 sections, improve plan template	2003/01/22
#59 Peace River South	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 15 sections	2003/01/15
#60 Peace River North	Interim	P	Policy Statement and 14 sections	2003/03/12
#61 Greater Victoria	Permanent	C	SPC Roles/Resp., 4 sections, code of conduct	2003/01/27
#62 Sooke	Interim	P	Policy Statement and 16 sections	2002/10/22
#63 Saanich	Permanent	P	Policy St, 31 adm.procedures/ code of conduct	2003/01/15
#64 Gulf Islands	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 15 sections	2003/02/12
#67 Okanagan Skaha	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 12 sections	2003/03/10
#68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith	Interim	P	Policy Statement and 15 sections	notice motion 03/06
#69 Qualicum	Draft	P	Policy Statement and 8 sections	2002/12/17
#70 Alberni	Interim	P	Policy Statement and 13 sections	2003/06/10
#71 Comox Valley	Draft	P	Policy Statement and 17 sections	2003/05/06
#72 Campbell River	Permanent	C	SPC Handbook and 13 sections	2003/01/28
#73 Kamloops	Interim	P	Policy St.,14 sections, expires no later 04/08	2003/02/03
#74 Gold Trail	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 15 sections	2003/05/13
#75 Mission	Permanent	C	School Plan Development, template constitution	2002/11/12
#78 Fraser-Cascade	Interim	S	School Plan, Plan Assessment Tool	
#79 Cowichan Valley	Interim	P	Policy Statement and 11 sections	2003/02/19
#81 Fort Nelson	Draft	P	Policy Statement and 12 sections	2003
#82 Coast Mountains	Permanent	P	Policy Statement and 14 sections	2002/12
#83 North Okanagan-Shuswap	Draft	P	Policy Statement and 12 sections	2002/11/12
#84 Vancouver Island West	Interim	P	Policy Statement and 14 sections	3/5/14
#85 Vancouver Island North	Interim	P	Policy S., 13 sections, expires no later 04/08	2/10/07
#87 Stikine	Interim	P	Policy St.,14 sections, expires no later 03/09/30	2002/12/17
#91 Nechako Lakes	Permanent	P	Policy S. 21 regulations	2003/03/31

### Appendix 3 Unique or Interesting SPC Clauses

#### #34 Abbotsford

Considers training crucial to success of School Planning Councils. Annual training will be planned by the District Steering Committee.

#### #36 Surrey

Meetings are to be arranged for dates and times that are mutually convenient and agreed upon by School Planning Council representatives.

#### #38 Richmond

Additional members of the school community are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate in meetings of the School Planning Council.

#### #39 Vancouver

The Parent Advisory Council should endeavour to ensure that the ethnic diversity of parents is represented on the School Planning Council. In order to accommodate this endeavour, the principal will arrange for interpretation services if necessary.

#### #48 Howe Sound

Checklist for superintendent prior to meeting with the school board.

#### #50 Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands

Except for recording attendance or formal motion, or by request of the member, names shall not be recorded in the record of the meeting.

#### #52 Prince Rupert

**\*\*Note:** Given that over 50% of the district's student population is First Nations, PACs are strongly encouraged to ensure First Nations representation on SPCs as research demonstrates this would correlate positively with greater academic success for our First Nations students. For the purpose of encouraging and supporting First Nations representation, the definition of "parent" is deemed to include any extended family member (for example, grandparent, aunt, and uncle) who plays a significant role in the student's or child's upbringing.

#### #62 Sooke

Criteria for its acceptance of a School Plan.

#### #69 Qualicum

District Liaison Officer to initiate a meeting in October of each year with the DPAC Chair, MATA President, QDP & VPA President to schedule and develop an agenda for a School Planning Council in-service session. School Planning Council in-service session to be scheduled for early November of each year.

#### #78 Fraser-Cascade

School Self-Assessment Instrument modeled on FSA-style reporting School Self-Assessment: *Building School Improvement Capacity*

#### #84 Vancouver Island West

It is expected that the student representative will consult by suitable means with students in the school on all matters pertinent to the affairs of the School Planning Council; such consultation will respect the interests of the students in the school. (Only policy with student guidelines.)

Appendix 4

**Fraser-Cascade School District 78**  
**Building School Improvement Capacity: School Self-Assessment Instrument**

**I. Goals:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not Yet Meeting Expectations      Meets Expectations      Exceeds Expectations

Improving schools have a strong instructional focus. This focus is made visible in clear goals for improving student learning.

Question:      What specific goals have you chosen for improving student learning?

Rubric:      Not Yet Meeting Expectations:      Goals have little focus on student learning: They are more focused on teaching processes. Goals are more related to adult behaviour than to student learning outcomes.

Meeting Expectations:      Thoughtful evidence-based goals are clearly linked to student learning.

Exceeds Expectations:      Goals are specific, measurable, relevant, and timely and go beyond meeting basic learning needs because these are already in place.

**II. Rationale:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not Yet Meeting Expectations      Meets Expectations      Exceeds Expectations

Improving schools have a thorough and connected set of reasons based on evidence for the selection of their student-achievement goals.

Questions:      What data-based rationale did you use to support the selection of your goals?  
Are your goals informed by subgroup achievement results?  
Do your goals address any achievement gaps or poor performance results indicated by your data?

Rubric:      Not Yet Meeting Expectations:      Few data-based reasons are evident.

Meeting Expectations:      Goals are supported by well thought out reasons based upon a general understanding of data and community expectations.

Exceeds Expectations:      Goals are well supported by various data points that are disaggregated for subgroup achievement, and are contextualized to pinpoint instructional significance.

**III: Data:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not Yet Meeting Expectations      Meets Expectations      Exceeds Expectations

Improving schools are actively considering at least three sources of evidence including classroom, school, district and provincial data. The analysis of this evidence has informed the selection of the school's goals.

Questions:      What data or evidence are you using to determine how well students are achieving?  
Are you using a variety of data points to measure student progress relative to learning outcomes?

Rubric:      Not Yet Meeting Expectations:      Not clear what data will be used to develop improvement plans. The evidence being used, if any, to establish goals is limited to one source.

Meeting Expectations:      Classroom, school and district/provincial data sources are used to inform goal setting and planning.

Exceeds Expectations:      Various data sources are carefully selected and well analyzed to provide significant direction to school improvement planning and goal setting. Data sources provide evidence of progress.

**IV: Strategies:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not Yet Meeting Expectations      Meets Expectations      Exceeds Expectations

Improving schools have a well-organized, focused improvement plan in place. The strategies selected to achieve the goals represent a blend of current research in the field and best practices.

Questions:      What strategies are you using in your improvement efforts?  
Do your strategies address student learning activities relative to the outcomes identified for improvement?  
Are professional development and curriculum planning needs addressed in your strategies?

Rubric:      Not Yet Meeting Expectations:      Strategies, if any, are few and not well connected to desired learning outcomes.

Meeting Expectations:      Practical strategies are in place and are linked to professional development opportunities.

Exceeds Expectations:      Research-based strategies linked to current best practices are in place. Strategies are linked to desired student learning outcomes and to well-planned professional development activities and curriculum implementation needs.

**V: Structures:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not Yet Meeting Expectations      Meets Expectations      Exceeds Expectations

Improving schools have aligned structures—resources, time, and organizations—to achieve the results they seek. This includes effectively allocating resources to the areas of highest need for improvement.

Questions:      What changes have you made to your staffing allocations to realize greatest learning benefits?  
 What changes have you made in allocating resources to address greatest needs?  
 What changes have you made to using time and organizations effectively to support your improvement goals?

Rubric:      Not Yet Meeting Expectations:      Structures have not been aligned to support enhanced student learning.

Meeting Expectations:      Some structural changes have been made to support student achievement improvements.

Exceeding Expectations:      All necessary resources, time and organizations have been adjusted to support school goals.

**VI: Results:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not Yet Meeting Expectations      Meets Expectations      Exceeds Expectations

Improving schools get improved student learning results at both the classroom and at the school level.

Questions:      What baseline data are you using to identify and track your performance targets?  
 What are your performance targets?  
 Do your performance targets represent a realistic stretch?  
 How are you tracking your results to avoid year-end surprises?

Rubric:      Not Yet Meeting Expectations:      Baseline data and targets are not evident.

Meeting expectations:      Performance targets and trend data are being established and used to support data-based planning.

Exceeds Expectations:      Trend data is in place and is analyzed to establish performance targets. There is evidence of progress being made towards achieving improvement goals.

**VII: Communications:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not Yet Meeting Expectations      Meets Expectations      Exceeds Expectations

Improving schools communicate and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made.

Questions:      How are you informing your trustees, parents, staff, students and community about your improvement efforts?  
 What processes do you have in place to gather input from, and provide results to your various groups?

Rubric:      Not Yet Meeting Expectations:      Insufficient communication processes exist.

Meeting Expectations: The school makes a basic attempt to communicate goals and results to most groups.

Exceeds Expectations: Staff, parents, students and trustees are knowledgeable about the goals and the progress being made towards those goals. They have provided informed input in the formation of the goals, outcomes, and strategies.

**VIII: Partnerships:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not Yet Meeting Expectations      Meets Expectations      Exceeds Expectations

Improving schools support district and provincial improvement initiatives as part of a greater learning community.

Questions: How are your school’s plans influenced by and connected to the district’s goals, beliefs and priorities?  
How are the district’s plans influenced by and connected to your school’s goals, beliefs and priorities?

Rubric: Not Yet Meeting Expectations: There is little connection to the district’s improvement plan.

Meeting Expectations: The school’s plan is relevantly connected to the district’s improvement plan.

Exceeding Expectations: The school has influenced the development of the district plan, and school and district goals and strategies are mutually supportive and complementary.

**IX: Partnerships:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not Yet Meeting Expectations      Meets Expectations      Exceeds Expectations

Improving schools work in teams with parents, students and identifiable groups to improve student learning.

Questions: How are you involving parents in developing improvement plans?  
How involved is your school planning council in analyzing data, establishing baselines, identifying goals, and setting performance targets?  
How are you involving specific groups of parents in developing improvement plans for their children? (Aboriginals, special needs, ESL, etc.)

Rubric: Not Yet Meeting Expectations: Little evidence of parent, student or group involvement. If they are involved, it is more on a reporting or rubber stamping basis.

Meeting Expectations: The SPC has a role in developing the school improvement plans.

Exceeding Expectations: Parents, students, PACs, SPCs and specific subgroups are fully involved in shaping the school’s goals. The school is working with these groups to support improvements. The school keeps the groups well informed as to progress being made.

**X: Leadership:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not Yet Meeting Expectations      Meets Expectations      Exceeds Expectations

Improving schools are led by school leaders with a clear vision for and commitment to school improvement and improved student learning. Principal, vice-principal, teacher, support staff, parent and student leadership is encouraged and systematically developed and shared.

Questions:      How are you working as an aligned school team to improve student results?  
                          How is the school providing for the leadership development of all its membership to build leadership capacity around student achievement?  
                          Are students, parents and staff being empowered to recognize quality learning and instruction, and to expect, nurture and support these two features of quality schools?  
                          How does the school take a leadership role in supporting and informing district leadership so that district supports for improved student achievement are in place?

Rubric:      Not Yet Meeting Expectations:      Little shared leadership is evident.

                 Meeting Expectations:      There is sufficient evidence of shared leadership in the school.

                 Exceeds Expectations:      Shared leadership involves the entire school community, and it results in improved learning for all students. Leadership development for school planning councils is in place. District resources are being utilized, and school involvement in district planning is evident.

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**Appendix 5**  
**School District #48, Howe Sound**

**School Plan Requirements for Approval by School Board**  
**To be completed by the Superintendent prior to Board Meetings**  
**[Excerpt, pages 9-11]**

**Key Educational Growth**

The school has met, or is making acceptable progress in meeting the goals of education.

The school has met, or is making acceptable progress in student attainment of the prescribed curriculum.

The school has met, or is making acceptable progress in meeting the education needs of all students.

The school is using, or is making acceptable use of the principles of learning to guide educational practice in the school.

The school has met, or is making acceptable progress in meeting expectations that the school is a welcoming and caring place where communications are effective, and where members of the school community feel safe and have opportunities for involvement and leadership.

The school has implemented, or is making acceptable progress toward district initiatives.

**School Planning Council Mandates**

Principal, one teacher, three parents or their alternatives have been actively involved.

Where Aboriginal students are enrolled in the school, representatives of the Aboriginal community have been consulted and actively involved in the review of evidence related to Aboriginal learners and the plans for intervention.

Data has been examined from Foundation Skills Assessment, Grade 12 provincial examinations, Satisfaction Surveys and pertinent school information to make informed decisions.

Data showing trends over time have been examined wherever possible

Where 5 or more Aboriginal students are enrolled in a grade, performance of these students has been examined and presented separately for specific academic success rate.

**Allocation of staff and resources in the school**

The enrolling staffing allocation is adequate.

The non-enrolling staffing allocation is adequate.

The support staffing allocation is adequate.

The operating budget for the school is adequate.

### **Accountability**

The School Planning Council has presented the school plan to staff.

The School Planning Council has presented the school plan to the Parent Advisory Council.

The School Planning Council has considered the input from staff and the Parent Advisory Council.

### **Educational Services and Programs**

There are adequate library services provided in the school.

There are adequate special education services provided in the school.

There are adequate counselling services provided in the school.

There is adequate computer technician support provided in the school.

There is adequate supervision provided in the school.

There is minimal administrator time allotted to special education services.

Targeted funds for Aboriginal Education have been spent in consultation with the Aboriginal community.

Administrator time is adequate.

### **School Growth Plans**

Principal, staff, parents, and secondary students have been actively involved in the process of determining school growth plans.

The selection of the goals for the upcoming year is part of a five-year plan for improvement.

A comprehensive action plan is in place for the achievement of the growth plan.

A rationale has been provided that clearly links the growth plans with an analysis of the data examined to determine success.

Where there is a population of Aboriginal students of 5 or more in any grade, the school has included a growth plan goal specific both to the needs of these students and to involvement of the Aboriginal community.

The school growth plan includes a manageable number of goals with priorities established for a 2 to 3-year period.

The school growth plan clearly outlines how goals are to be achieved.

The majority of the school plans focus directly on student achievement.

Performance standards specify measurable student achievement targets for meeting objectives.

A plan has been presented for annual monitoring of progress towards meeting the goals and making adjustments where appropriate.

The school demonstrates a satisfactory level of commitment and capacity for implementing the strategies of the school growth plan.

**Balanced Budget**

The school has submitted a balanced budget.