



Our Voice

BC CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS



INSIDE:

How Education Could Save Canada Billions

Number One Killer of Teens

Parents Talk About Individual Education Planning

SPRING 2009

WHO WE ARE

The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BC-CPAC) is recognized as the collective voice for parents about public school education in BC. Every public school Parent Advisory Council and District Parent Advisory Council in the province is eligible for membership. BCCPAC is a charitable non-profit organization registered under the BC Society Act. BCCPAC purposes are:

- To advance the public school education and well-being of children in the province of BC
- To carry on activities to promote and enhance meaningful parent participation in an advisory role at the school, school district, and provincial level.

OUR VOICE

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OUR COVER

Our cover was drawn by grade three student Jacey Cunningham. Jacey attends Neilson Grove Elementary in Ladner, B.C. where her mother is PAC Chairperson. The school's motto is "The little school with a big heart;" a concept Jacey has captured in her art.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

APRIL

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 18 | 10:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. Governance Audit Member Input Session, Prestige Inn, Cranbrook |
| 30 | 10:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. Governance Audit Member Input Session, Radisson President Hotel & Suites, Richmond, BC |
| 30 - May 1 | BCCPAC Spring Conference, Radisson President Hotel & Suites, Richmond, BC |

MAY

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2 -3 | BCCPAC Annual General Meeting, Radisson President Hotel & Suites, Richmond, BC |
|------|--|

JUNE

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 26 | Schools close for summer break |
|----|--------------------------------|

AUGUST

- | | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 31 | 2008-2009 BCCPAC membership ends |
|----|----------------------------------|

SEPTEMBER

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 8 | Schools reopen |
|---|----------------|

President's Message



Ron Broda

providing one of the highest quality public educations available anywhere.

This year I had the great privilege of serving on the selection committee for the Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence. On Monday, March 2nd this year's 20 award winners attended a special luncheon at the legislature, were introduced to the Legislative Assembly, during question period, and received their awards from Lt. Governor Point at a special ceremony at Government House. It was great to see the broad smiles of satisfaction and pride on the faces of both the recipients and their families. Congratulations to all!

I have attended numerous meetings with various education partner groups. The Board of Directors has also worked hard representing BCCPAC with groups such as DASH, CHSF, BC School Sports and the Education Partners Group. The reports of these meetings can be found on the members' only section of the web site.

This has been a very busy year for BCCPAC. The long-anticipated rewriting of BCCPAC's *Leadership Manual* is well under way. A lot has changed in education since the manual was first published. These changes have created the need for major revisions and much research to assure accuracy of those revisions. A preliminary draft of the new document is currently under review.

BCCPAC is well known and widely recognized for producing reliable and accurate information that is valued by not only our members, but education partners as well.

The Advocacy Project is now working on an IEP self-help guide. An article, written by the Advocates, describing parents' experiences with IEPs is in this issue of *Our Voice*.

BCCPAC received a request to provide copies of the *Speaking Up! Guide* as well as the *Supporting Student Success* booklet for a recent BCTF new teacher training session. In the words of Geoff Peters, BCTF's Assistant Director, Communications and Campaigns Division

"Your materials were snapped up by new teachers at our conference on Friday and Saturday. I told young teachers they needed this material to truly understand what parents were expecting from teacher/parent collaboration as well as to get tips on how to have the most successful and productive discussions with parents in a problem-solving climate."

This is just one example of the many effective working relationships that BCCPAC enjoys with all of our education partners. Please visit the members' only page of BCCPAC's website to see what other partnerships are doing on behalf of our children.

BCCPAC is now well underway and on schedule in implementing the recommendations of the Governance Audit, completed in June of last year. So far two member consultation sessions, regarding BCCPAC's constitutional purposes have been held. These have been very informative. They have also identified additional questions to be considered as BCCPAC updates and rewrites its Constitution and Bylaws. The completion of this process will insure that BCCPAC is properly structured and positioned to be even more effective in promoting the best possible public education for all children in BC.

Our Spring Conference and Annual General Meeting on April 30th to May 2nd is fast approaching. Our staff and Conference Committee has done a magnificent job of assembling a program filled with informative and exciting sessions. At our AGM a number of very important decisions, that may significantly affect BCCPAC's future, will be made. We will also be holding elections to the Board of Directors for the 1st Vice-President, Treasurer and two Directors, whose terms of office expire this year. I look forward to seeing you all there!

For the future, for ALL our children,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Broda'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ron Broda
President & CEO

The Number One Killer of Teens

At the age of sixteen, teenagers start asking about getting their license and access to the family car. In our society this is a normal part of growing up, but statistics also indicate this is potentially the most dangerous decision a parent can make.

On average 54 teenagers (aged 16 to 20) die in BC every year in car crashes.¹ Over 70% of those killed are male. While 16 to 20 year-olds represent 6.6% of all licensed drivers in BC, they account for 14% of all drivers involved in a crash.²

Canadian drivers 16 to 19 years of age have a fatality rate more than four times as high as that of drivers aged 25 to 34 and nine times as high as that of drivers aged 45 to 54.³

RCMP detachments across the province have school liaison officers that explain the risks of driving to students, but Sgt. Pierre Lemaitre, who has been doing this work for many years, says the key to reducing teen risk is parent communication. Studies show he is right.

According to research, when parents set boundaries and take an active role in their teenagers driving education, the teenager's chances of being in a crash are reduced by up to a third.

“The most frustrating thing for police officers is that young people feel invincible. We're the ones who have to notify the parents and tell them that their children won't be coming home,” says Lemaitre.

“If we were able to harness the grief of parents who have lost children in crashes then we might be able to reach the kids.”

...when parents set boundaries and take an active role in their teenagers driving education, the teenager's chances of being in a crash are reduced by up to a third.

He acknowledges that teens have a desire to go fast; that is part of the North American culture. He also says that some in law enforcement think that teens are desensitized by what they see on TV and in video games. They think teens need more graphic examples to move them.

“We have to be clear in our communications. I encourage parents to keep those lines of communication open. There is so little time for parents to have discussions with their teens, but parents need to make this a priority.”

He suggests taking your child to a cemetery and telling them you don't want them to end up there. This will help make an impact, so they can grasp the reality of the risk and how their parents and friends would feel losing them.

“Wherever you are living, take your kids to the local wrecking yard. Show them the reality of what happens in accidents. Engage them in conversation about the risks and responsibilities of driving. Tell them how you would feel if they were killed in a crash.”

ICBC provides various demonstrations to help students understand the responsibility of driving, including one that simulates a teen crash. See their web site for details (www.icbc.com/youth/activities.asp).

FOOTNOTES

¹BC Traffic Collision Statistics: 2001 to 2005, www.icbc.com

²ICBC web site www.icbc.com

³Op. cit.

SEASON 09 - 10

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How Education Could Save the Economy Billions

A recent study, *Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada*, by Olena Hankivsky of Simon Fraser University, indicates the high cost of ignorance and the potential savings to the economy if the high school drop out rate could be reduced.

According to Statistics Canada, 20% of Canadians have not completed high school. According to the study, high-school dropouts cost Canada's social assistance programs \$969 million annually, not to mention the costs of crime and to health care.

“Research shows that education leads to better health,” says Hankivsky. “A lack of a high school education is associated with health problems such as diabetes, cardio vascular disease and various types of cancers. It actually reduces life expectancy.”

More education has also been shown to reduce crime.

“Those who graduate are less risk averse and have less propensity to commit crime,” she said, citing a U.S. study that showed that high school education reduced incarceration for murder, assault, motor vehicle theft and arson.

The 20% contingent of high school drop-outs earned \$10.3 billion less annually than those who had completed high school but have not gone on to further post-secondary education. Over their working life drop-outs will earn \$307 billion less than those with high school certificates. This means the government will lose \$11.5 billion in tax revenue, according to the study.

“One thing we could not do in this study is come up with a global cost for not finishing high school. There's too much missing data to do this, so we just reported in each sector,” Hankivsky said. “It's important to keep in mind that more

Estimated Savings Achieved if the Canadian Population has One Percentage Point More High School Graduates (2008 dollars)*

	Estimated cost per dropout		Estimated savings achieved if the Canadian population had one percentage point more high school graduates (2008 dollars)	
	Annual	Lifetime	Annual	Lifetime
Tangible Costs				
Health (private)*	\$8,098	\$211,471	\$2.3 billion	\$70 billion
Social Assistance (public)	\$4,230		\$1.4 billion	
Crime (public)	\$224		\$74 million	
Labour & Employment				
Earning loss (private)	\$3,491	\$104,222	\$1.2 billion	\$34 billion
Tax revenue loss (public)	\$226	\$6,882	\$75 million	\$2.3 billion
Revenue lost in employment insurance premium (public)	\$68	\$2,063	\$22 million	\$686 million
Employment insurance cost (public)	\$2,767		\$921 million	

*Source: Hankivsky, O. *Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada*

and more we're starting to see the relationship between level of education and those sort of negative and positive outcomes.”

(continued page 10)

When preparing baked goods for sale to students...

Recipes meet the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools

Download at www.healthyeatingatschool.ca

For Guidelines questions, call **Dial-A-Dietitian**
604.732.9191 1.800.667.3438

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- PHARM
- THE LUNG ASSOCIATION* British Columbia
- BRITISH COLUMBIA
- Canadian Cancer Society

Parents Talk About Individual Education Planning

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project invited parents of students with special needs to share their experiences in individual education planning for their children. Their comments and information, gathered through casework, are shaping the development of an Independent Education Planning (IEP) self-help guide that will be available in May on the BCCPAC website. It will help parents participate effectively in the development of their child's IEP.

We know that the BC public school system recognizes that all students, including those with special needs, should have "equitable access to learning, opportunities for achievement, and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs."¹ What does this mean when planning for the education of children with special needs?

Students with special needs have a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioral nature, a learning disability or they may have exceptional gifts or talents. Parents of students with special needs must be given the opportunity to be consulted in the preparation of their child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).² The IEP documents have "individualized goals, adaptations, modifications, the services to be provided, and includes measures for tracking achievement."³

What works

The BC Council of Administrators of Special Education (BC CASE) notes that meaningful consultation is "the



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willingness on the part of the school and the family to openly discuss decisions and options available, and a willingness to listen to each other and work collaboratively toward best/balanced decisions."⁴

Meaningful consultation is vital in education planning; however, parents identify a larger, more troubling issue. Parents often feel they have to take on the system's responsibility to ensure their child receives the best possible learning opportunities and care. They say problems arise unless parents take on this accountability role and monitor to ensure first that the IEP is child-focused, clear, appropriate and workable, and later that the IEP is followed and evaluated. Some expressed concern for the many parents who do not have the time or skills required to fulfill this expanded and often daunting role.

Parents said that the process works when the education professionals:

- Support the whole IEP process and have the skills and resources to follow through on plans
- Provide everyone involved with all relevant information before meetings so everyone comes prepared for discussion
- Respect the opinions/assessments of professionals from outside the public education system
- Recognize that parents know a lot about their child
- Encourage parents to share student views and needs and involve them where appropriate

Some parents said involving their child in IEP planning empowers the student and improves self-esteem. Many parents said it was important to have everybody, involved with their child, meeting together to gain an understanding of their child's disability and needs. This promotes working together to set realistic, specific and measurable goals for the child. They also talked about the value of consulting as a group several times a year to review strategies and progress and make needed changes.

What doesn't work

Parents report delays in recognizing and identifying their child's special need as well as delays in meeting to

prepare their child's IEP until well after the school year has started.

They expressed serious concerns about:

- Lack of time and resources committed to planning and implementation
- "Boiler plate" IEPs
- Failure to implement the IEP
- Too many goals and objectives with no effective way of measuring progress
- Inadequately trained staff and staff turnover
- Insensitive comments and/or lack of cooperation from staff
- Poor grade-to-grade and level-to-level transitions



You can't spot the children with special needs by looking at them. Parents know their children best and can advocate for an IEP that suits their child's needs and abilities.

"Once the IEP is established, it's important to review it during the year by having a team meeting, including parents, teachers, EAs and all stakeholders. By having a mid-term or quarterly review, it allows everyone a voice in order to determine if the goals are being met and/or what changes may need to be implemented before the end of the year."

Parent comment

What would help

Information, information, information! Over and over, parents said that knowing what to expect from the public education system, the people and the planning process, knowing how to prepare, who else is involved and why, and receiving information in advance would have helped them participate more effectively. Some suggested that schools could provide information packages. Another

suggested a parent support network in the school so parents with experience in the process could help.

FOOTNOTES

¹Policy Document: Special Education, BC Ministry of Education, 2006, www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/special_ed.htm#

²Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, BC Ministry of Education, Appendices p. 26. September 2008. www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/special_ed_policy_manual.pdf

³ Ibid p. 4.

⁴Supporting Meaningful Consultation with Parents, British Columbia Council of Administrators of Special Education, 2008, www.scsbc.ca/resources/Meaningful%20Consultation.pdf

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project focuses on helping parents and students around the province who want to solve the problems they are having in their public schools. You can reach the BCCPAC Advocacy Project on the toll-free message line at 1-888-351-9834.

Promoting the Great Talent of Young Students

What do singer Michael Buble, magician Murray Sawchuck and dancer Luc Benoit have in common? If you answered they have all performed in Vegas, you're only half right. Buble and Sawchuck have, but Benoit, at age 15, is a little young for that. The actual answer is that they all performed at the Stars of Tomorrow (formerly Cavalcade of Stars) when they were just starting their careers.

"This is a showcase for emerging performing artists," said Harriet Tuey, of the Burnaby Arts Council, which puts on the show annually. She said the majority of performers are school age with only the occasional performer aged over 19.

Stars of Tomorrow has been going for sixteen years. It began, according to Tuey, because the Arts Council recognized that while visual artists were getting public attention, Burnaby needed something to spotlight the performing arts.

Initially, the Arts council hired a producer to organize the event, but, as money got tighter, they realized they would have to take on the work themselves. Tuey chairs the Show Committee. Some people form the Planning Committee, which reviews the entire process.

Another committee solicits the performers by producing and placing advertisements in community newspapers. Other committee members contact Lower Mainland schools and, more recently school boards, seeking potential performers.

"We get performers from the entire Lower Mainland and they could come from beyond the Lower Mainland, but we have not had any." This is likely because the Arts Council lacks the means to advertise and promote beyond the Lower Mainland.

The Committee auditions every performer. If the performer cannot make the audition, the volunteers go to see the performer or have she or he submit a DVD for review.

The Stars of Tomorrow is a wonderful example of what can be accomplished by a small group of dedicated volunteers. According to Tuey, although the performance is in February, the first meeting for it is in September. At that meeting the group gets started on soliciting performers and arranging auditions. The second meeting is held after the auditions and is to review and select the performers and divide up the job of contacting each one. The next meeting is to determine the schedule of the performance.

Does your child need an education plan?

BCCAT is here to help

Does your child need a plan for their post-secondary education? BCCAT is here to help. The BC post-secondary world is full of opportunities, but where can your child start searching for the one that is right for her or him? With free online tools and resources from BCCAT, students can plan their way to post-secondary success.

EducationPlanner.ca provides access to information on more than 1600 undergraduate programs at post-secondary institutions throughout BC. At EducationPlanner.ca, students can search programs according to their preferences and goals, compare program, admissions and tuition information, store and

personalize their findings, review other students' opinions on programs, and link to career information.

What is transfer? It's what happens when one institution gives credit for courses or programs completed at another institution. About a third of all new university students from BC are transfer students. At **BCTransferGuide.ca**, students can find out about the many opportunities for transfer in BC, learn the basics and benefits of transfer credit, discover the path that works for them, and build and save a learning plan for future use.

EducationPlanner.ca and BCTransferGuide.ca are provided by the BC Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT), which operates under the Ministry of Advanced Education & Labour Market Development.

BCCAT Your guide through post-secondary education.

“We meet more often as we get closer to the event,” says Tuey. She also said they have been doing it so long they know what is needed and just do it. “We all put up posters.”

The Show Committee is made up of different sub-committees that handle everything from coordinating the performance to selling advance and on-site tickets, to publicity, to refreshments and coordinating volunteers like the Girl Guides and students seeking work experience.

The variety of performers at the Stars of Tomorrow February performance was amazing. In the dance area there was everything from Luc Benoit’s Irish dancing (he’s been doing it since age 3) to Maddy McCallum’ Metis jigging, to jazz, ballet, lyrical, tap and hip hop.

There were performers like Tatiana Banden who, though virtually unknown in Burnaby, recorded a song that won top prize at the International Music Festival in Europe. Not to mention Shivanji Bhayana, who has been performing since the age of four and has done hundreds of stage shows across Canada and the USA.



Among the performers at Stars of Tomorrow was Perry Ehrlich's Showstoppers, a troupe of 20 talented teenagers from around the Lower Mainland.

Among classical performers there was Raymond Zeng who began playing piano when he was 6 and has recently performed with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

Parents from outside the Lower Mainland, with children talented in the performing arts, should contact the Burnaby Arts Council regarding next year's Stars of Tomorrow. Alternatively, you might want to produce a show in your part of the province.

In the Driver's Seat Workshop for parents of teen drivers



Are you aware of the actual risks facing teen drivers?

Novice Stage drivers are almost 45% more likely to be involved in a crash than experienced drivers. Among 16 to 20 year olds, 54 are killed each year and thousands more are injured. Over 70% of those killed are male.

A parent's active involvement in a teen's learning to drive process can help reduce the risk of a crash by one third.

In The Driver's Seat, developed and presented by the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation, gives parents the tools they need to help their teen be a responsible and safe driver. We discuss the influence of parents, peers, media and adolescence; share insight about crash statistics and the role of BC's Graduated Licensing Program; and provide tools and family contracts that can be tailored to fit any family's needs.

Book a workshop for parents in your community.

Fill out a Workshop Request Form at www.TeenDrivers.ca or email sandra.jones@bcaa.com



Your donations help support the Young Drivers Program. To donate visit www.bcaatsf.ca Registered Charitable Organization #86742 1372 RR001

How education could save economy billions (continued from page 5)

What Hankivsky did provide is an estimate of the overall cost savings if Canada had one per cent more high school graduates (see table page 5). She estimates the overall cost savings in 2008 resulting from a one percentage point increase in the Canadian graduation rate would have been over \$7.7 billion for that year.

“Overall the findings of this study suggest that the up-

front investment in education should remain an important policy priority. Those types of investment reduce costs later on. It may also be the case that the one-size-fits-all approach needs to be examined.”

Hankivsky pointed out that the report did not explore why students drop out and that there needed to be a follow-up study to explore this. Such a study could give parents the insight needed to prevent their child from dropping out, not to mention the education system as a whole.

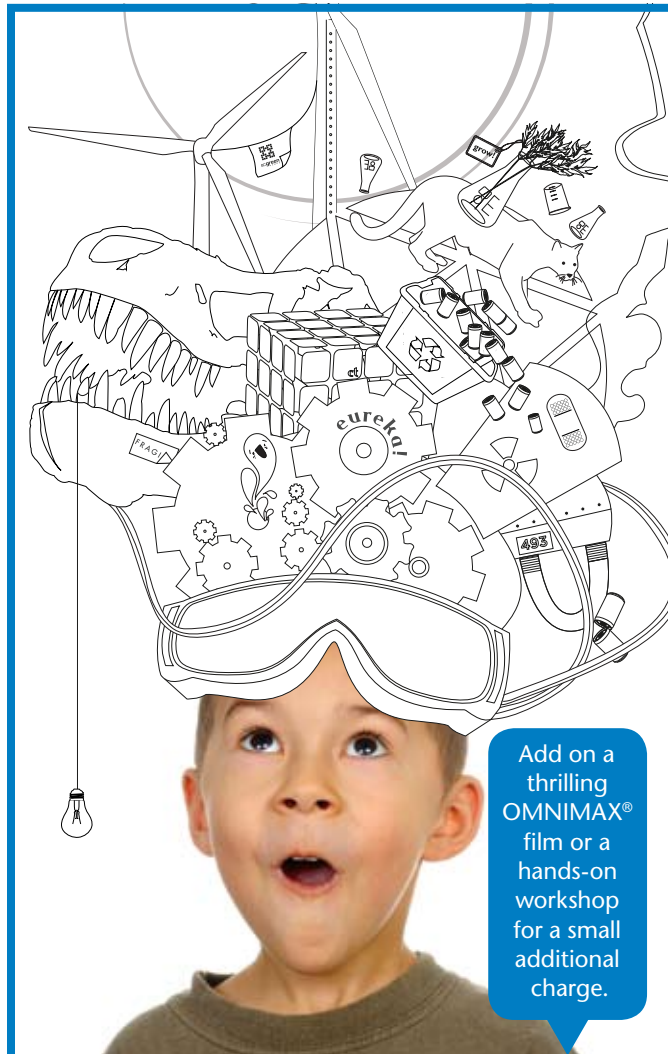
The study also did not assess the quality of education at the high school level. An issue that also requires more study if there is to be better understanding of why students drop out.

BCCPAC has as its mission the best possible public education of all children in BC, but there are no studies to tell us what the best would look like and how it could affect drop-out rates.

“This study is intended to get the attention of policy makers, politicians, parents and students. Given the high costs, we need to do more to ensure that all students graduate. We need to do more to help those who are most likely to drop out,” said Hankivsky.

REFERENCE

Olena Hankivsky, *Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada*, (Burnaby: Simon Fraser University, 2008)
<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/OtherReports/Costofdroppingout-HankivskyFinalReport.pdf>



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Governance Audit Member Input Sessions

April 18 (Cranbrook) or April 30
(Richmond) from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Your chance to add input into the review of BC-CPAC's constitutional purposes is coming up. Attend at the Prestige Inn, Cranbrook or at the Radisson President Hotel and Suites Vancouver Airport in Richmond. Members' input will determine the future of the organization. Admission is free and lunch will be provided. Please fill out the registration form on the BCCPAC web site//www.bccpac.bc.ca/index/governance_audit/purposeschedule.aspx

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Our Purpose is Student Success

Betty Boulton, Keynote Speaker: ***Getting the Most from Parent Involvement***

Dr. Betty Boulton has appeared on educational television and authored the best seller *176 Ways to Involve Parents*. Betty is passionate about parent and community involvement. She is currently an adjunct professor. She retired from the position of assistant superintendent of School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) and has served as director of instruction (curriculum), principal, assistant principal, and classroom teacher.

Max Wyman: ***Why the Arts Matter in Education***

Max Wyman is a passionate advocate for Canadian arts and culture. He has authored several books on the subject, taught critical writing and dance history. For six years he was a member of the Canada Council and for four years he was President of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. He was given Canada's highest civilian honour when he was made a member of the Order of Canada in 2001.



Judy Arnold: ***Measuring Success, Achievement Contracts***

Judy Arnold is the Director Systems Performance for the Ministry of Education.

John Hawkins: ***Words That Can Change The World***

John Hawkins is an international speaker and trainer, and author of *Public Speaking Mastery: The Complete Guide to Speaking with Passion, Power and Persuasion*. John will conduct two consecutive workshops that will be highly interactive. You can learn how to be an influential public speaker. John is committed to helping people experience the satisfaction, exhilaration and opportunities that come with improved communication.

For complete details on these and other speakers see www.bccpac.bc.ca

Other workshops:

- Minute Taking
- Making Meetings Work
- Building Resilience in Children
- Parent Information Resource Coordinators
- Developing Media Awareness for Your PAC/DPAC

Radisson President Hotel & Suites Vancouver Airport
Richmond, BC

A block of rooms has been booked for BCCPAC members at the rate of \$125 + tax (single/double occupancy/night/room). To take advantage of this rate book before March 31. For hotel reservations telephone: 604-276-8181 Toll-free: 1-888-201-1718

Annual General Meeting

Be a part of the real business of BCCPAC. Come to the Annual General Meeting and hear other members address the resolutions – then vote on behalf of your council. Attend the All Candidates' Meeting, ask questions of the candidates and vote for the people your council wants to represent parents and students in public schools in BC. This year members will elect for the positions of 1st Vice President, Treasurer and two Directors. For the resolutions booklet see <http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/resolutions.aspx>