



BCCPAC Advocacy Project

JANUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project is into its fifteenth year. Can you believe it? We have so many fond memories of 'parents past' and 'parents present' who have inspired us to always look forward. Congratulations, parent leaders, you have come a long way! A parent's right to advocacy support is accepted. More parents can and do successfully speak up for their children. The principles of administrative fairness are openly discussed. More parents are meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their children.

Of course, there is still more to do, and we know you're up for it!

What next?

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project is starting the year by getting on with a special project. We are designing a self-help guide to help parents with the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process. This guide will complement the guides *Problem-Solving* and *Meeting Survival* used extensively by individual parents, parent leaders and the project.

We hear a lot from parent leaders and individual parents about what is happening with IEPs in our public schools. We know that many parents of children with special needs continue to struggle to be involved effectively in all phases of Individual Education Planning. As we've gathered information and considered ways to be more effective in our efforts to help parents help themselves, we thought...Cue lights and music...“Eureka! We could design a self-help guide around IEPs.” (Okay, it didn't play out quite like that.)

Why another self-help guide?

Individual Education Planning is challenging even when people are working with the best of intentions. It's important that everybody involved work together with parents to ensure the process is user-friendly and child-focused.

We know there is lots of information available to parents. We also know that parents have important information that will help others understand how their children learn. As Mel Levine says, “I think we pay a heavy price for misunderstood kids.” A self-help guide can help parents find and consider the information relevant to their child's needs, track actions taken to support their child and help them follow-up with the right people. A guide will also support parents, and the child where appropriate, in transition planning or, if necessary, in an appeal. Their ability and confidence to participate effectively can result in better outcomes for their child and



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Our vision is to improve public education for all students by including and supporting parents.

build stronger relationships with the professionals responsible for responding to their child's learning needs.

We want you to help

In many ways, parent leaders are already helping! Motions carried at BCCPAC Annual General Meetings speak volumes about your care and advocacy for children with special needs. We also know that parents of children with special needs in your school district are talking to you. They have much to share about what works and what doesn't. We want to hear from them, and we want *you* to reach out and ask them what kind of information would be helpful in a self-help guide. Remember, your experience in helping parents with information and support in Individual Education Planning is also important. We want to hear from you too!

We can help you

We've included a piece that you can include in your newsletters and/or on your PAC/DPAC website, bulletin boards, or other places where parents gather:

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project Needs Your Help!

Does your child have an Individual Education Plan? Are you willing to share your experience to help shape a self-help guide for parents? The BCCPAC Advocacy Project is designing a self-help guide to help parents participate in the development of their child's IEP. The guide will complement the Problem-Solving and Meeting Survival self-help guides included in Speaking Up! A parent guide to advocating for students in public schools. Take a look on-line at www.bccpac.bc.ca/advocacyproject/resources.aspx

The BCCPAC Advocacy Project wants to know:

1. What parts of the Individual Education Planning process worked for you and your child and why?
2. What parts of the Individual Education Planning process didn't work for you and your child and why?
3. What kind of information do you think would have helped you participate better?

As part of the process of designing the guide, the BCCPAC Advocacy Project will be summarizing the information for BCCPAC and participating project district parent advisory councils.

You can provide your input in an anonymous on-line survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=YvHmZd6S6eAucOIC9wpRZw_3d_3d

until **Friday, Feb.27, 2009**. The BCCPAC Advocacy Project looks forward to hearing from you!



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Want to know more about Individual Education Plans?

You can find lots of information on the Ministry of Education website. Remember to check out your local Board of Education policies too!

“An IEP is a documented plan developed for a student with special needs that describes individualized goals, adaptations, modifications, the services to be provided, and includes measures for tracking achievement. It serves as a tool for collaborative planning among the school, the parents, the student (where appropriate) and, as necessary, school district personnel, other ministries and/or community agencies.”

Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Ministry of Education Legislation

School Act: Section 11 Appeals

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/revisedstatutescontents.pdf>

Individual Education Plan Order

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m638-95.pdf

Special Needs Students Order

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m150-89.pdf

Student Progress Report Order

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m191-94.pdf

Support Services for Schools Order

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m149-89.pdf

Ministry of Education Policy

Special Education

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/special_ed.htm

Distributed Learning- Requirements and Guidelines for Students with Special Needs

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/spneed_distance_ed.htm

K-12 Funding—Special Needs

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/funding_special_needs.htm

Ministry of Education Publications

Special Education Services: A manual of Policies, Procedures and Guideline

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg.htm

You can find a variety of resources related to specific special needs at

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/sped_res_docs.htm



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Other resources

Although dated, the Parent's Guide to Individual Education Planning (IEP) 2002 by the BC School Superintendents Association still offers valuable information for parents.

www.bcssa.org/topics/IEP.pdf

Speaking of helping us...

We want to know what you do with this newsletter. This school year, we have written about specific topics of interest in BCCPAC Advocacy Project Newsletters. We want to learn how, or if, you have used the information. Please help us by clicking on the SurveyMonkey link in the e-mail accompanying this newsletter. It will take you to an evaluation form. We look forward to hearing your views!

Janet, Cathy and Helen

BCCPAC Advocacy Project Toll Free Line

1-888-351-9834

BCCPAC Vision for Advocacy

- To have all parents and students in public education respected, with parent and student needs and opinions reflected in school, district and provincial decision-making
- To have PACs, DPACs and BCCPAC working together effectively, in the best interests of BC's students and parents, with recognition and support from the Ministry of Education
- To have school districts provide the information and support parents and students need to resolve their issues effectively within school district processes.



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