

DPAC Summit Nov. 20-21, 2020 Report

Prepared by: Amie Thibodeau

Presenter Jo Chrona (First Nations Education Steering Committee),

Spoke of:

- It is important to remember that not everyone is in the same place when it comes to truth and reconciliation and that a lot more conversation is necessary.
- Land was still being taken away from indigenous people 50 – 70 years ago.
- Residential schools in BC didn't close until 1984, and in Canada 1996.
- Some residential schools were authorized by the government to experiment and study the effects of malnourishment in the children attending.
- Children were forcibly removed from their homes and families to attend residential school. It was illegal for parents to refuse.
- Children attending residential schools were often sent across the province to attend school, this way they could not run away from school and parents would have less influence.
- The purpose of residential schools was to convert students to Christians and to civilize them.
- Jo challenges everyone to be uncomfortable, because it's an uncomfortable part of our history.
 - Learn more about truth and reconciliation.
 - Look for ways to engage with indigenous members of our communities. There are often events open to the public (during non covid19 times).
 - Use the territorial greeting at the beginning of meetings.
 - Learn who your area's elected band members are and what language is spoken in your area.
 - Call out racism when you see it.
 - Avoid using colloquialisms that are racist and can cause offense.
 - Use caution shaking hands, not all indigenous peoples are comfortable or familiar with shaking hands.

Recommended resources:

FNESC/FNSA English First Peoples 10, 11, 12 teacher resource guide.

MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) UBC Reconciliation through Indigenous Education

Presenting, Policy for Enhance Student Learning, Shelaina Postings and Cynthia Drummond, Ministry of Education

- System-wide focus to continuously improve educational outcomes for all students in BC's public education system and improve equity for Indigenous students, children and youth in care, and students with disabilities or diverse abilities
- Continuous improvement in
 - o Educational outcomes
 - o Operations
 - o Governance
 - o Relations
 - o Workforce
- Outcomes and measures are aligned with the educated citizen and focused on:
 - o Intellectual development
 - o Human and social development
 - o Career development

Mental Health in Schools, Anti-Racism and the Inclusive Education Handbook with Jennifer McCrea & Patricia Kovacs, Ministry of Education

-Working on a parent/caregiver handbook that will be universal throughout BC. Some districts already have one so need to make sure all information is the same and applicable.

The purpose of the handbook is a set of resources to:

-create a common understanding of the K-12 education system including specific roles and responsibilities.

-assist parents/ caregivers in being confident partners in their child's educational experience.

-strengthen collaborative conversations between parents and school districts.

-Interestingly the Parent Handbook does not mention DPAC.

-Mental health strategy: MHiS Strategy Elements & Action Items

Compassionate Systems Leadership.

-Adult well-being through training. Stress contagion happens in the classroom which means we need to think of the teacher and the families.

-Districts hiring Mental Health Leads similar to the SOGI leads that are already in every district.

-Looking at emerging trends and understanding data.

-Support a Mental Health Leadership Network.

Mental Health in the Classroom:

- Improve social and emotional learning outcomes.
- Develop a common language and strategies to address substance use.
- Physical literacy leads to improved mental health outcomes.
 - encourage walking/biking to school.
- Kids need at least 2 connected adults, not necessarily teachers can be another parent saying hi while dropping off their own kids. Don't underestimate your role in the life of another child.
- Some ideas of what parents would like to see towards Mental Health Supports were:
 - Councillors that are located off school property. Some students may be uncomfortable seeking help in front of peers.
 - More councillors hired in school districts.

Racism:

- Racism is not a new issue.
 - Where there is racism there are higher levels of stress in the system.
 - Recent events show the importance of the commitment to ensuring that B.C. schools are safe and welcoming places.
 - The Ministry is looking closely at how and where racism shows up in the B.C. education system
- Anti-Racism Work in Action,
- Minister's Anti-Racism Community Roundtable hosted with key organizations in July 24 2020.
 - Equity in Action Project to respond to the 'racism of low expectations' for Indigenous learners.
 - Framework for Enhancing Student Learning focusses on equity and inclusivity of outcomes for all students.
 - Develop a systemic approach with provincial partners and Rights holders to address racism and hate-related incidents

Take Action Together:

- Address acts of racism - challenging the behaviour, not the person.
- Seek out online parent groups to join to support personal learning.
- Allow children to question, express and explore topics.

-Connect locally about anti-racism work and how PACs can support.

Recommended listening: Podcast – Nice White Parents

Indigenous Parent Engagement:

-Recommended taking a personal pledge of reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

-It is important to get PAC's and DPAC's to understand their roles and responsibilities in engaging with indigenous peoples.

-Need to find ways of getting your first nation parents/caregivers more involved and informed about PAC's and DPAC's.

Suggestions and Ideas:

-Invite Indigenous leaders to DPAC meetings.

-Create an Indigenous liaison position on DPAC executive with voting privileges.

-Start conversations around Indigenous students and what we can do to help make school more inclusive for them.

-Prioritize goal setting to engage with, and make positive relationships with Indigenous communities.

-Use online platforms to limit the distance or other barriers for attending meetings.

-Invite family/locals/elders to the school to share stories, resources and skills.

Issues BCCPAC is working on:

Pandemic Created Issues

-Remote flexible learning with a full educational program for families who are not returning to school must be addressed plus a plan to address the clear loss of learning and reduced educational hours currently being experienced by students.

-Inclusion & Special Needs Not all students with diverse abilities/disabilities are in school 5dys per week with supports; vulnerable students are still experiencing food insecurity; wait lists for assessment and designations are very long; IEPs are not completed in the first 60days of school etc.

-School Act Appeals Process in Districts Discussion with the Ministry & BCSTA regarding the review and changes needed for the inequitable and inconsistent Appeals process.

-Policy for Enhanced Student Learning and Ministerial Order This new accountability for boards and districts is critical.

-New Funding Model The current model fails students; parents and students demand something different.

Role of DPAC

-Comprised of elected parent representatives from PACs and serve as an umbrella organization for district PACs.

-Assist parents in forming a PAC in every school.

-Assist members in obtaining information and communicating with district personnel.

-Help parents navigate the school system locally.

-Advocate for parental involvement in the education system.

-Support & encourage PACs and parents in accessing the school system at all levels by providing regular forums for the exchange of ideas and information to ensure that public education serves the best interests of all students.

-DPAC is a district stakeholder. In addition to the power granted by the School Act, your DPAC has “stakeholder” status.

-Being a stakeholder entitles DPAC to: 1. Have representation (on behalf of parents) on all Standing Committees 2. Have representation on advisory and ad hoc committees plus any working groups.

-Succession planning is important for DPAC’s and PAC’s.

-Burnout is real and may be more of a factor during a pandemic, so more hands make light work.