

PROVINCIAL SYMPOSIUM ON SCHOOL PLANNING COUNCILS

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION TOPICS

Facilitator: Anne Cooper/Pat Dooley

Topic #1: How will we ensure that the school community is truly represented, and that all voices are heard?

All of us.....

- Agree that strategies to engage as many people as possible in the conversation about SGP are in place
- Agree that we need to find ways to draw in the aboriginal community (e.g. LEA process)
- Link SPC with other processes – (e.g. CUPE liaison)
- Agree on the need to define all aspects/?? Of school community (who are the constituent groups?)

Some of us...

- Are concerned about lack of CUPE on council
 - Are concerned about lack of student involvement
 - See a need to link SPCs and LEAs
 - Recommend having a monthly meeting (or regular) around the importance of school climate
 - Think that SPCs could be a mechanism for expanding involvement of parents
 - Worry about distance
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Facilitator: Trish Rosborough

Topic #1: How will we ensure that the school community is truly represented, and that all voices are heard?

Some of us...

- Throughout the province, there should be some consistency in SPCs but not conformity
 - Some training needs to happen in districts before building SPCs so that people know how to be responsive to their constituent groups.
 - People need information before deciding to sit on SPCs
 - Use report cards to communicate about SPCs
 - All SPC meetings are public meetings
 - Help parents to become educated by attending school/district Pro-D
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Facilitator: Trish Rosborough

Topic #1: How will we ensure that the school community is truly represented, and that all voices are heard?

Some of us...

- Need inclusion of all—CUPE staff, students, parents, teachers, admin—particularly at High School age student leadership needs to have a place—these members need to have a voice and a vote in SPCs
 - Need to get moving with this with what we have right now
 - Relationships and communication are important
 - Admin teachers and parents may need to acquire more skills for supporting zone representation
 - Do you have to ensure that everyone is represented?
 - Boards can ask principals what did they do to ensure everyone is represented
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Facilitator: Nancy Hinds
Topic #2: How are we going to work together?

All of us...

- Goal: Best for every student
- Strong relationships to start can build on them
- Trust is key—protocols. How to treat each other
- Build “common understandings” initially ie) Data
- Common Language
- Clarity on History—impact on us
- Varied perspectives
- Communication
- Simplify
- Role of policy guidelines

Some of us...

- Possible Roadblocks:
 - Accountability measures SMART test scores only
 - Time for SPCs to meet (practical side) re: work
 - Over structured—bureaucratic
 - Youth involvement
 - Support (as per accreditation) per district leader e.g. District meeting overviews per reps. Training
 - What about small rural schools – 20 students, 1 teacher—opportunities. How will it work?
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Facilitator: Joyce Gram
Topic #2: How are we going to work together?

All of us...

- Confirm mandate and responsibilities
- Confirm process, especially consultation
- Attitude, open mind, respect—why are we here?
- Acknowledge fears and anxieties, get all concerns out
- Curiosity
- Building bridges, what are we trying to achieve?
- Get all groups together, educate all together
- Unequal representation a major concern
- Whatever you bring to the table is worthy of considerations, essential to get dialogue going

Some of us...

- Teachers professionalism threatened
 - Expertise shunned
 - Vancouver teachers to creatively interpret wording in the school act
 - Pessimism, skepticism
 - Parents are volunteers everyone else is paid
 - How will meetings accommodate everyone?
 - Teachers spread too thin already
 - Parents have no real position in education
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Facilitator: Terri Watson
Topic #3: How are we going to make decisions as a group?

All of us...

- Agree on the importance of conversation
- Time-consuming
- Consensus is preferred
- Consensus is important
- Representatives are important
- Difficult process, lot of work

Some of us...

- Votes may sometimes be necessary
 - Worry about what kind of issues there will be to vote on
 - Consensus at all costs (supported guided, trained)
 - Worried that when trying for consensus, silence (especially on part of parents) is seen as agreements
 - If we insist on consensus at all costs then we will defeat SPCs
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Facilitator: Alex Holm

Topic #3: How are we going to make decisions as a group?

All of us...

- Are cautiously optimistic
- Believe that future actions should be set on best practice from the past
- Want district policy to be enabling rather than restricting
- Want training in group work facilitated by dist/school staff
- Believe that a review of all available data is good, constructive starting place
- Feel that consensus should be the goal but that consensus does not mean total agreement or largest common denominator decision making
- Recognize that good decision making takes time and time is a precious resource

Some of us...

- Mourn the loss of accreditation
 - Are concerned that data will be too narrow
 - Are worried that this is a ploy to undermine locally elected boards and public education
 - Want the planning cycles to be aligned between schools and dist.
 - Want resource allocation (MOE to dist. To school) to reflect the plans developed
 - Wonder why some "exclusive" groups are good (e.g. Staff committee) while others are very, very bad (e.g. 5-person SPC)
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Facilitator: Jacqueline Odehnal

Topic #4: How are we going to ensure that behavior is ethical?

All of us...

- Role of the chair to keep behavior ethical (or the leader)
- Sticking to the guidelines or code of ethics
- Adhere to the guidelines
- Keep the student as "the focus". What is best for the student?

Some of us...

- Who is writing the guidelines? The board? The PAC?
 - Who deals with the unethical party? Board or PAC? E.g. Approval to dismiss person of the SPC.
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Facilitator: Nancy Lagana

Topic #4: How are we going to ensure that behavior is ethical?

Issues...

- Scope of confidentiality. Need criteria for what can/cannot be repeated. What can/cannot come to the table? Privacy of individuals to be respected
- Inclusiveness. Already starting out with some not at the table. Some SDs working on consensus, having non-voting members - expect through consensus model not to have to exclude any.
- Unbiased. Take a wide view - not individualism. Special interest. Use effort and attention to ensure students raising the questions get attention
- Allow other voices to be heard and listen to them, value all input. Avoid control situations. No bullying.
- Transparency. Other side of confidentiality- right of community affected to know what is going on.
- Talking to people with whom you have consensus - not about them. Not avenue for complaining about.

- Moral stand point. Integrity. Honesty.

Belief...

- There needs to be ethical standard or guidelines—at a provincial level as a framework or suggestion out really each SPC should address the need for a code of ethics. Provincially could list issues that must be addressed.
 - Be very clear about the mandating the SPC, so focus on this, not other stuff
 - Develop some consequences for unethical behavior. Have a process in place. Work on dispute resolution process.
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Facilitator: Steve Cardwell and Monica Pamer

Topic #5: How are we going to understand and interpret the data?

All of us...

- Want to learn how to look at data in a thoughtful purposeful way
- Want to understand what data really means
- Build understanding at a school in an equilateral way which promotes understandings
- Hope that data includes narrative and other more nuanced information
- The value, the difference between assessment of learning and assessment for learning
- Realize that education and parents have very different ideas about assessment and achievement

Some of us...

- Have found “getting excited about data” useful
 - Think data is presented in too limited a way at present
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Facilitator: Anita Chapman

Topic #5: How are we going to understand and interpret the data?

All of us...

- Think it would be a good thing if Ministry brought and trained everyone on same data platform/software
- Need for training of all in interpreting data minister __ can have very negative effects
- Comparison of how school does over time useful but ranking is not. How much people like ranking is a problem. Need classroom school measures, qualitative as well as quantitative
- Easy to get data may not be the most useful.

Some of us...

- Okay to take data at face value
 - Need intermediate indicators
 - No will so that data can inform teaching practice
 - Need secondary analyses
 - Will be hard to determine appropriate baselines
 - Where is the time for all the discussion of data we envision
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Facilitator: Ann Naymie

Topic #6: How will we know what our broader community cares about?

All of us...

- Ask them

Some of us...

- Broaden community definitions
- Inner-city school—includes business, social agencies
- Parents and staff who are not on the SPC
- Families of schools, elementary schools that feed into middle school
- MoE’s mandating accountability and curriculum
- Personal welcoming of groups
- SPCs should meet with interest groups of the community

Facilitator: Merle Williams, Ann Naymie, H el ene Cameron
Topic #6: How will we know what our broader community cares about?

Most of us...

- WHO is the broader community? – school- principals, teachers, parents etc. – business, -- taxpayers
- Concern: first nations, diverse group, parents of successful kids don't show up
- HOW: Bosh – Power of Public Engagement
- Need to engage so people buy-in
- Improve our way of making requests
- Clarify conditions of satisfaction and agree on them
- It usually takes a crisis for people to show they care
- Most people want to be helpful and will say yes if asked but no good just talking : need goal, need direction
- ASK!

Some of us...

- We already know what people care about: complaints, radio talk show, newspapers, talking to people
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Facilitator: Tina Moncado
Topic #7: How will we resolve conflict?

All of us...

- Keep focus on student achievement
 - Same information, common terminology
 - Common understanding
 - When conflict cannot be resolved having mediator (conflict resolution committee)
 - Last resource
 - Need mechanisms internal to the SPC
 - How do we schedule meetings to address all participants' needs?
 - Revisiting the mandate
 - Daycare available during meeting times
 - Being honest
 - Equal knowledge
 - What does the data mean?
 - Being included—shared information
 - Representative role vs. Personal Interests
 - The interests of all students
 - Role definitions
 - Keep it simple
 - Focus on student achievement
 - Clarification of the processes
 - Mechanism for gathering representation/ information
 - Criteria for board approval has there been consultation
 - Extra effort at clarifying and understanding
 - All points of view heard
 - Will of the group
 - Trust
 - Differing values—common interests for all students
 - Process for deciding chair person
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Facilitator: Judith Clark
Topic #7: How will we resolve conflict?

All of us...

- Use of district personnel (e.g. District principal) for consistency of advice, support of process (e.g. Who is an “employee”)
 - District consultation and district team to model process (BCCPAC may provide support)
 - School board policy establishes a framework e.g. For decisions—making voting and consensus
 - Provision for minority reports appended to school plan
 - Consensus decision making
 - Clear framework for plan and process to be provided through district principals to PACs and SPC’s e.g. Communicate criteria for acceptance of school plan district goals
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Facilitator: Daphne Churchill
Topic #8: How will we ensure that time frames and organization issues do not exclude anyone?

All of us...

- Good communication plan-based on good data/ common dialogue
- Get FSA earlier if current data is needed/ or fit with old timelines—need timely data to have meaningful dialogue
- Need for real data to drive decisions
- Qualitative and quantitative data needed
- Night time meetings will exclude teachers
- Teacher morale is low
- Set times that work for the group
- Keep # of meetings low/small/short
- Sub committee work can help with distribution of work hard
- Need the five members to be strong leaders in their own groups to ensure that all other members are heard/understand/communicated with
- Publicize the meeting info so everyone has equal access – newsletters/email/websites/binders
- Agree on procedures, process for how the group will function so each person will know role
- Needs to be a plan that reaches the whole community

Some of us...

- Eliminate the need for timelines
 - School level work can be done during the day so the teacher reps are the ones that need to do the extra curric.meetings
 - Compensate teachers with time off
 - Some parents do not feel qualified – so need true collaboration
 - Be careful not to turn this into an accredited process
 - Ensure school data is looked at generically and not by teacher/ makes them feel vulnerable
 - Also look at who is in the school and bring that data who the context of dialogue
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Facilitator: Stanley French
Topic #9: How and to whom will SPCs be accountable?

All of us...

- Through 2-way communication among all parties
- Must develop regular consultation processes through measuring success of the plan
- To whom: to school board, to students, to school community, to mandate of public education system, to constituent groups.

Some of us...

- Conflict resolution processes will be necessary to avoid derailment of process
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Facilitator: Sandra Bruneau
Topic #9: How and to whom will SPCs be accountable?

All of us...

- Accountable to parents, the school community, to the board, to the government through the board to bands (through contractual agreements).
 - What: (accountability for what?). school plans, total involvement of folks, student success, student achievement, acknowledging diversity, any other things in accountability contracts
 - How? (School Plan) Board to approve /modify/reject, Questions of funding, time, committee work, support staff. Representation of partner groups.
 - Dissemination of information (out and back) expenses will be incurred including TOC costs. Who will pay? Also costs of reporting out.
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Facilitator: Heather Walker
Topic #10: How will we establish goals that ensure success for all students?

All of us...

- “all” is important
- “all” is difficult
- data can support planning
- long term nature of education/ planning process
- common understanding of success needed
- need to have trust that all are working towards the same goal

Some of us...

- - data changes/needs change
 - looking at groups rather than individual students
 - allocation of resources will have an effect and be affected by data
 - collaboration can work
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Facilitator: Cynthia Lewis and Sherri Mohoruk
Topic #10: How will we establish goals that ensure success for all students?

Notes...

- Do we know what success for all students looks like?
- Concern for students who fall through the cracks
- How do we accurately measure success—growth of individual learner, -- what are the indicators? E.g. Students meeting the next step after high school
- Changing grad requirements—pathways to success
- Elevate the merit of the various pathways
- Maintain the focus
- This needs to be well defined, all have to be on the same page
- Much more to student achievement than narrow measures outlined for SPC—e.g. Grad requirement implementation
- Pyramid of interventions need to be part of plan
- Parent involvement / SPC, PACs—how do these two relate to each other? There are several types of involvement? How do these come together?
- Can't we learn from what is working in other jurisdictions?
- Indicators of success have to embrace the needs of the community.
- Achievement= for all
- Has to start at the classroom level
- Educate needs—what about parent needs re: twin child's growth?
- Use satisfied survey data
- Become assessment literate—all partners
- Figure out how do you include really unique kids in more generalized goals? Can IEP's help?
- Performance standards “thinking” – spread the word provincially
- Find out what the child's / parents definition of success is.

Facilitator: Judy Arnold
Topic #11: How will we discover and decided what our own training needs are?

All of us...

- Clean process for district
 - District take the lead
 - Before elections
 - Phase 1—clarify qualities of people and roles
 - Phase 2—elect learn
 - Phase 3—context/ethics problems
 - Framework for principals
 - Training to take districts from where they are to goal happily on the same page
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Facilitator: Linda Kaser
Topic #11: How will we discover and decided what our own training needs are?

All of us...

- Data literacy
 - The role and the recruiting process and then retention
 - Keeping people informed year to year
 - Learn a good goal
 - Meaningful participation
 - Key areas identified
 - Aboriginal education involvement / new models/ best practices/ outreach
 - Annual meeting
 - Tiny school models
 - Training in effective meetings
 - Organizing the “front end” effectively (esp. for principals)
 - Using electronic info effectively
 - Broadening the flow of information with all groups
 - Models for connecting smaller and larger communities—contracts and plans
 - What data to use, how to organize
 - Roles and responsibilities—what it is / what it isn’t
 - Staying on the focus
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Facilitator: Karen Horner
Topic #13: How will we consult and inform others?

All of us...

- Parent information day/meeting for those interested in SPCs
 - Each partner group places SPC on their meeting agenda—updates, etc.
 - Form executive of “the 5 SPC members” and include other members i.e. CUPE, students who are relevant, to participate in discussions
 - Principal needs to consult with appropriate people even though they aren’t the “chosen core”
 - Representation on SPC for parent spots by population i.e. First Nations
 - Using the following methods as means to communicate with parents depending on what would work best: meetings (even with daycares), websites (district, PAC), email (mailing list), newsletters, community school network, education coordinator at Band office
 - Need to make communications reader friendly—literacy levels that are appropriate
 - Survey with specific questions to parents
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Facilitator: Gail Sumanik
Topic #14: How can we ensure that discussions of achievement and success include all the aspects of student growth, including social development?

All of us...

- High School development important part

- surveys are an indication of success
- need to define achievement
- agree that SPC cant just talk about PSA, graduation rates but look at the whole child

Some of us...

- are worried that things most quantifiable are least significant
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Facilitator: Kim Young

Topic #14: How can we ensure that discussions of achievement and success include all the aspects of student growth, including social development?

All of us...

- need to know what data we should use
 - social responsibility is one of the key areas—easily understood across the community
 - build time to reflect on the questions
 - we go from existing states to present school plans
 - Parents involved as soon as possible in the assessment dialogue.
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Facilitator: ?

Topic #14: How can we ensure that discussions of achievement and success include all the aspects of student growth, including social development?

All of us...

- Need to observe over time. Work in progress
- Comments about narrowness of Fraser Institute type of reporting
- Continue to have group/ provincial meetings (share information)
- Ensure public has a good knowledge base when reviewing statistical data

Some of us...

- Are concerned that this move may move BC away from its liberal catholic school system
 - Concerned: very few types of goals, numerous of literacy
 - Benefit: sharing of information/expertise
 - Collect goals, sort, share
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Facilitator: Jean Borsa

Topic #14: How can we ensure that discussions of achievement and success include all the aspects of student growth, including social development?

All of us...

- District criteria for SPCs improvement goals must include all students and all required areas of student growth and development
- BC curriculum includes academic and social and career goals and these should be considered along with performance standards, in developing school improvement plans
- Success should include judging whether each individual child is reaching his/her potential
- Data and analysis should be presented to all groups in the school community for input and reaction
- All diverse data (grades, report cards, etc) should be considered—not only one source of data
- Open transparent and full communication with all groups.