

PROVINCIAL SYMPOSIUM ON SCHOOL PLANNING COUNCILS

SUMMARY OF FACILITATED TABLE DISCUSSIONS – ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Issues:

- Will SPC's help or hinder public education?
- Difficulty in seeing within a year what difference an intervention has made.
- Student achievement is more than tests!
- Legislation doesn't include CUPE
- Political agendas, support staff
- Overload (grad review, etc.)
- Defining student achievement (success)
- The ability of the SPC to get input from parent community
- Preparing groundwork. A successful start will be key in setting the stage for long-term.
- What does consensus look like? How do we make this inclusive and representative of all?
- Resourcing the creation and implementation of the school plans.
- All partner groups and consultant groups be fully involved (Inclusivity)
- Structure excludes non-teachers, school employees, students, bands, etc. as well as limiting representation from different community of interests within teachers and parents.
- Definition of achievement!! "What data?" - holistically
- Logistics and support
- Establishing common agreement on processes for determining a realistic plan and for measuring its success.
- To respect the mandate of the SPC, while also hearing the voices of the constituent groups in an atmosphere of trust.
- Why was "BCTF" not funded as were other partner groups?
- Why are "support staff unions" not seen as "partners"?
- Source of funding for districts to implement SPC's/focus on improving student achievement which does not come at the expense of other students?
- Potential interference with existing structures
- Legal relationship of SPC recommendations to local education agreements, aboriginal education councils, aboriginal district improvement plans.
- Need for district criteria for data gathering consistency
- Board criteria for acceptance/rejection of school plans
- Funding
 - Release time or time in lieu for teachers/parents/administrative officers
 - Collation/secretarial
- To maintain an appropriate balance between long and short term

- How can SPC's support student achievement – need in-service and tools to collect/analyze data, set goals and implement goals \$???
- How can SPC's support effective continuity from year to year as the membership changes?
- Lack of involvement from all (CUPE, Students)
- Power, politics, professionalism, parents, purpose – if not all addressed then no trust
- Timeline – composition – which data – funding
- Practical aspects
- Trust between groups, common language, keep politics out
- Time, Learning, Commitment
- Time/resources
- Composition to ensure effective SPC
- Proportional representation
- How do we address the issue of teachers and time respectful of all members
- Will SPC's be representative?
- Time & partners and resources and broad participation = SPC success
- Time
- Resources
- Section 8.2
 - How can a board logistically consult with SPC's re allocation of staff and resource, accountability, education, services and programs?
 - Difficulty of finding secondary parent volunteers for SPC's in small districts
 - Define and clarify "consultation"
 - What is value of one-year plan? Timeline – working on next plan when don't know how first plan worked?
 - Too much time spent on data gathering, not on teaching, concern focus moved from individual student needs to make sure long range goals show improvement, identifying what we want to measure understanding that this is a long-term process (3-5 years), monies to support process, difficulty in assessing soc/emotional needs, that plans and results not be used to compare schools, try to find simple solutions to complex problems, confuse strategies with goals
 - Resources-time monetary for in-service, data collection, discussion.
 - United we stand
 - Clarification of roles and responsibilities e.g. allocation of resources
 - The structure and processes of building an effective SPC

Opportunity:

- Participation – communication – understanding
- Finding ways of involving parents in all aspects of student learning
- To plan in a non-adversarial environment, on a regular and continuing basis, in a way that will generate good will and energy to support student learning and make schools a place of success for all students.
- Collectively ensuring a focus on student achievement
- To broaden conversation from parent/teacher to whole schools
- Having the partner groups work together for a common purpose, responding to the needs of the schools and modeling collaborative behaviour for the students
- To build a common understanding of what we mean by student achievement and how to describe it
- For meaningful involvement of parents in educational decisions. The most important change to education ever!
- Build on what is currently in place
- Enhance relationships and commitment
- To work toward understanding of success for all students
- SAC will create opportunities for the kinds of relevant discussion that will allow for recognition and marketing of the strengths of the public school system in general and specific schools with the districts
- Improved student achievement through greater parent involvement
- A collaborative process to better determine what data we can use to improve student learning.
- Meaningful partnership for children's achievement
- Greater parental involvement!
- Create a viable opportunity for the members of the whole school community to participate/re involved in improving student achievement.
- Effective/positive partnership
- Bring everyone in to discuss improving SA
- Clarify and bring focus to what achievement is. Benefits beyond school – new sense of “what is a learning community” long-term benefits
- Accountability cuts both ways
- SPC's will provide meaningful, informed dialogue and action to support and improve student success and support public education.
- ...through informed participation foster support for students in the public education
- Working together for kids
- Meaningful dialogue around student success!
- Building relationships with ALL
- To understand learning better
- Opportunity to work on growth annually with a broader perspective and knowledge base
- Common focus from diverse perspectives

- Focus on pedagogy, best practices, work on meaningful goals, formalizing and greater uniformity of opportunity, continuity of school growth plans, more meaningful opportunity for parents to be involved in student's education and in understanding of school system; more input from parents at board level; more balanced attitude; raise credibility of public education to parents and community; increase public confidence; reach out to broader community; narrowing focus; building partnerships; focus on what is important; to work together.
- Equity in governance
- Collaborative focus on students
- To get everyone in the school community working together – on the same page {include support staff, students (as appropriate) etc}
- Working collaboratively, to build understanding & awareness for a common purpose of student success.
- Networking All voices
- Collaboration/consensus
- All together: one student at a time
- Partnerships for student success
- This is an opportunity for greater transparency and genuine collaboration around the school and our students.
- Shared ownership of school improvement goals created through an open transparent process.

Challenges:

- Building trust
- Equity & access how can SPC's maximize these?
- Ensuring that we hear all the voices and that school plans reflect the needs of all students
- Understanding what is the data and what it means
- District plan – school plan – whose plan? Ownership of the plan
- Students' needs elevated
Ministry educators parents trustees – draw a line from each to students needs elevated
- That SPC's not be politicized (come to collaborate on behalf of the whole)
- That SPC's improve not just plan
- Time, effective representation, agenda's
- "Building capacity of members of SPC in talking about data"
- To build trusting relationships within school communities
- To find 5 committed people to serve
- ...communication and more....
- Achieving a common understanding of what we mean by "student achievement" – social/emotional/intellectual/career/etc.
- To focus on the purpose rather than the planning process in light of
 - Structural issues (exclusionary)
 - Potential for politicization
 - Need for parents to be educated
 - Heavy reliance and burden on principal
- Keep it simple
- Define student achievement (with student involvement). It must be broader than standardized test scores. It should be based on the values of a democratic society and reflect the whole curriculum.
- Meaningful involvement from all stakeholders
- How do we ensure meaningful dialogue and real, dynamic involvement of all partner groups?
- Determining the plan (measures, broad, meaningful)
- Plan built on meaningful evidence that addresses multiple faces of education
- To determine what meaningful data will assist the trusting school community to address student performance
- Effectiveness: reaching all students, data we use, how we use time
- Staying focused on the mandate of the SPC
- Inclusion of groups not included now, understanding data
- Trust of participants – funding – timeline – gathering data – what, how – training of parents, teacher...
- Training – especially on decision making so informed discussion and decision making can occur.
- Funding for change
- Skilled members of SPC who can listen be approachable, bring forward all issues, perspectives for discussion and consensus building (i.e. openness)

- Defining and using good data/information LOCAL
- Include support staff; time – finding it and making it productive; alternatives in place for continuity (teacher alternate e.g.); time frame; educating people on data-training; assessment literacy; social dev. Goals may be dropped due to difficulty of data crunching; how do we integrate new identified needs due to difficulty of data crunching; how do we integrate new identified needs in long range goals; getting PAC involvement in SPC when no PAC in place.
- Assessment training – which data, how do we use it, how do we keep it focused on student achievement.
- Commonality without uniformity
- Build on ongoing successes
- How do we successfully involve our partner groups at the school level so that this process makes a difference? - -for all
- All partners focused on student achievement
- Define strategies for consultation with PAC, all parents, all students, all teachers, all support staff and the broad school community prior to developing/finalizing school improvement plans.
- Create a district policy/guidelines/criteria for SPC's and finding parent volunteers.
- Assemble the partnership for a common purpose.