



VICTORIA
CONFEDERATION
OF
PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS
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Report on Question Period and Other Board of Education Processes September 2012

Chronology on the Issue of Board of Education Processes

- Nov / 05 VCPAC passes a motion to discuss various suggestions regarding public School Board meetings with the District.
- Apr / 06 Letter sent from VCPAC to the School District formally asking for an opportunity to discuss our suggestions.
- Jan / 07 VCPAC surveys the larger school districts regarding question period.
- Jan / 07 VCPAC sends resolution to BCCPAC requesting that the Minister make question periods mandatory for School Boards. This resolution passed at BCCPAC 2007 AGM.
- Sep / 12 Chair Orcherton's motion to review Board practices and policies passes at the September 17, 2012 Regular Public Board of Education meeting.



Victoria Confederation of
Parent Advisory Councils

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April 7, 2006

Greater Victoria School District
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC
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Attention: Trustees

Re: Suggestions regarding public School Board meetings

In November 2004, the VCPAC Executive had a discussion relating to procedures at public School Board meetings. We covered various issues and concepts including the opportunity for interaction and stronger communication processes. After several discussions and some research of other districts, VCPAC unanimously passed the following motion at our November 22, 2005 general meeting.

RESOLVED: that the VCPAC Executive be directed to discuss the following suggestions regarding public School Board meetings:

- 1. Develop a process to allow questions or dialogue after a presentation to the Board.*
- 2. Post information on SD61 website to advise on public meeting processes.*
- 3. Provide time at each meeting for questions from the public, i.e. question period.*
- 4. Develop a process to provide presenters with follow-up information or feedback, e.g. written response provide by a designated individual.*
- 5. Develop a process allowing for Trustees to respond to presentations.*
- 6. Provide a process to inform presenters on the options available for discussion through the Education Policy Development Committee and Operations, Policy and Planning Committee.*

RATIONALE: This topic has been discussed at various executive meetings over the past couple of years. The recommendations above reflect a desire to have a more open and interactive process. Researching other district policies shows that many of these practices are in place elsewhere in the province.

The following are some of the thoughts and concepts that went into the above suggestions.

1. An opportunity for questions from trustees after public presentations would allow for some dialogue to ensure that the message of the presenter is understood. We note that such questions already often occur during District presentations.



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2. Many parents don't know how Board meetings work and what their opportunities are for direct input. A prominent, welcoming invitation to access this process may assist in generating much needed participation in our education system.
3. This is a key element in democratic process. It allows for transparent interaction in a public forum.
4. Many presenters look for information that is not available at the time of the public meeting. This process would ensure that such requests are followed up in a timely manner.
5. Although we are not sure what this process might look like, it appears to us that currently trustees are unable to take immediate action on items brought up by presenters. Perhaps, a process where presenters looking for action would be required to pre-circulate their presentation in written form to trustees.
6. These committees have been represented in the past as the key places to dialogue on issues. This opportunity should be well publicized and anyone contacting the District to speak to the Board could be automatically informed of these preliminary opportunities. This should not in any way deter their access to the Board but may allow them to develop their concept further before presenting to the Board.

In our research, we found that some school districts already have processes similar to those suggested above. We don't necessarily agree with all the details of each of their processes, but there is certainly material to generate the discussion of appropriate processes for our district. The following policies had the most detail to consider. They are attached for your perusal.

- a. School District #23 – Central Okanagan, Policy No. 1320
- b. School District #36 – Surrey, Policy No. 2400
- c. School District #39 – Vancouver, Policy No. KD
- d. School District #40 – New Westminster, Policy No. 204.1

We look forward to discussing these suggestions with you in whatever forum you deem appropriate.

Sincerely,

The Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

School Districts larger than 10,000 students at Sept 30, 2006
Do they have Question Period at Regular Public Board Meetings?

SD	District Name	Y/N	1st Period	2nd Period	Duration	Comments
23	Central Okanagan	Y	Before action items	After action items	15 min each	sometimes extended
33	Chilliwack	Y	included with delegation period		30 min.	
34	Abbotsford	Y	at the end		no set time	must relate to the agenda
35	Langley	Y	at the end		no set time yet	
36	Surrey	Y	at recess or end of meeting		max 30 min	
37	Delta	Y	at the end		15 min	concerning business from the meeting
38	Richmond	Y	when called for		10 min ea	2 periods during the meeting
39	Vancouver	Y	at 9:00 pm		max 1 hour	or end of meeting if earlier
40	New Westminster	Y	during delegation period		2 min each person	
41	Burnaby	Y	when called for		no set time given	
42	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	Y	fixed place on agenda		no set time given	one question with two follow ups
43	Coquitlam	Y	Half way thru	At the end	10 min each	sometimes varies
44	North Vancouver	Y	at the end		15 min	must relate to approved minutes or agenda
57	Prince George	N				do not have a question period
68	Nanaimo-Ladysmith	Y	when called for		15 min	
73	Kamloops/Thompson	N				do not have a question period
79	Cowichan Valley	Y	end of meeting		no specified time allotted	

***TITLE:* Question Period for Public School Board Meetings**

***SUBMITTED BY:* Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, SD#61**

***BE IT RESOLVED that* BCCPAC lobby the Minister of Education to propose an amendment to the School Act making it mandatory for School Boards to have a question period during regularly scheduled public board meetings.**

RATIONALE: Many school districts have question periods but some do not. This leaves the public with no opportunity to ask a question “on the record”. We consider this process as one of the fundamental tools to ensure the accountability of school boards.

***DESTINATION:* The Ministry of Education
The Premier of British Columbia**

Board of Education Motion – September 17, 2012

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) directs senior management to review all Board practices, policies and bylaws with respect to the Board's interaction with the Public with the view to clarify, educate and, if necessary, recommend any improvements to these practices and policies.

Motion Passed