

BACK P.A.C.



Overview

The parent advisory councils of schools have direct impact on the school, and the most important constituents of the school, the students. Most provinces have provisions in the School or Education Act for an advisory role of parent representatives via a representative council, normally termed a Parent Advisory Council (PAC).

The Parent Advisory Council usually works directly with the principal, the school board and staff of the school. Strong PAC have been associated with greater accomplishment in assessments on math and English, greater student and parent satisfaction, and decreased drop outs. Quality education and a healthy environment are two pillars that form the foundation of PAC involvement.

Getting Physical Activity and Physical Literacy on the Agenda

Physical activity is a means to achieve many health goals, as well as a means to achieve educational objectives within the HE/PE curricula.

Physical literacy is a foundation for allowing children to be physically active within school (curricular time), during recess, and in extracurricular activities. ALL HE/PE curricula in Canada are designed to provide a level of physical literacy as an educational objective – no different than educational objectives for numeracy and literacy.

Traditionally, PACs have not prioritized the HE/PE curriculum, or the importance of daily physical activity within the school setting (class, recess, lunch hour and before and after school programs).

The first step is to engage the PAC to have physical activity and physical literacy on the agenda. This is the BACK PAC concept. Most schools have a PAC already, and it is

generally an easy matter to introduce an new idea to a PAC during a regular meeting. The BACK PAC notion simply states that the current **P**arent **A**dvisory **C**ouncil will become the **P**hysical **A**ctivity **C**ouncil. In other words a PAC within the PAC – hence a BACK PAC.

Moving your BACK PAC forward

In the initial stages of a BACK PAC program, it is important to

1. Get physical activity as a standing item on the agenda of PAC.
2. Get the principal on side!
3. Invite the PE teacher, PE specialist or classroom teacher responsible for PE to the PAC meetings
 - a. Increase the parental understanding of the HE/PE curricular objectives
 - b. Ask who is not being engaged in the ongoing physical activity opportunities in the school – existing programs (like school sports) work for many children but not for all – often the one’s at greatest risk of unhealthy behaviors (sedentary and over-consumption of food)
4. Engage recess as a time for physical activity for all (elementary schools). Changes in equipment and volunteer training can make dramatic improvements in making recess fun, safe and **active**.
5. Discuss the role of PE in the development of physical literacy for children and how the school and the surrounding community (recreation, sport, etc) can be engaged to achieve educational objectives.
6. Getting good fuel for an active lifestyle. Often schools focus on healthy eating, which is an important element of a healthy lifestyle but it misses the joint importance of adequate PA each day for a child.
7. Explore other provinces and schools healthy schools approaches – and select one item that you think you can bring to your school.

The list is endless, and there are many provincial resources that can support these activities. Sometimes it is not within your province. There are many Healthy School Initiatives – and many of these programs have great physical activity resources.

Parent or School Advisory Councils Across Canada

British Columbia

<http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/>

Alberta

<http://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/>

<http://education.alberta.ca/parents/role/schoolcouncils.aspx>

Saskatchewan

http://www.literacyhub.ca/School_Councils.php

www.education.gov.sk.ca/scc/principalhandbook/

Manitoba

<http://www.mapc.mb.ca/>

Ontario

<http://www.schoolcouncils.net/>

<http://www.ontarioparentcouncil.org/>

Quebec

<http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/rens/banque/pages/parent-a.htm>

New Brunswick

<http://www.decnb.ca/>

Nova Scotia

<http://www.nsfhsa.org/>

www.ednet.ns.ca/...advisory-councils/

Newfoundland and Labrador

<http://www.nlta.nl.ca/files/nlfsc/default.html>

Prince Edward Island

<http://peihsf.ca/>

Nunavut

<http://www.cndea.ca/i18n/english/helping.html>

Yukon

http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/psb/school_councils.html

<http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/psb/ayscbc.html>