

Good Day All:

I am sharing my thoughts with you. Below you will find an article that has been published today in the Penticton Herald Newspaper, and will go into 8 more local weekly newspapers in District 53 and 67.

Hope you enjoy!

Brenda

Dear Editor:

On Sat. March 25, 2006 I was pleased to be invited to "A Conversation with the Minister", a meeting of fellow DPAC Chairs from across the province with Education Minister Shirley Bond. So once again, off I go to Vancouver. Prior to the Ministry Meeting DPAC Chairs had a chance to meet twice and discuss viewpoints of crucial issues; including the virtual school idea, parent congress, parents education network, school planning councils, school centered leadership, DPAC funding, teacher accountability for student success, the learning roundtable and emergency preparedness.

It was evident that I was amongst a group of volunteer parent leaders that cared for students in BC. We, as parents, need to be involved in our children's education!!! I urge each and every parent to attend a future PAC, or DPAC meeting to have input in schools.

Your voice can make a difference. Remember~~ parent involvement = student success!

I have compiled a report, included below, that I wish to share with your readers.

Thank You

Brenda Dorosz, DPAC Chair, Okanagan Similkameen School District 53

## REPORT OF : "A CONVERSATION WITH THE MINISTER"

### "THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT"

SATURDAY MARCH 25, 2006

A PARENTS PERSPECTIVE

By: Brenda Dorosz ( District Parent Advisory Council Chair- SD # 53)

On Saturday March 25, 2006 the Minister of Education Shirley Bond hosted myself amongst many DPAC Chairs from across our province for a meeting of effective dialogue about education in BC.

"Conversation with the Minister" commenced with remarks from BCCPAC President, Kim Howland. BCCPAC had suggested bringing all DPAC Chairs together for a meeting.

During opening remarks from Minister Bond, the minister spoke of the importance of collaborative efforts to create “made in BC” solutions for student achievement and education excellence. Minister Bond expressed the day would be about our valued input and open dialogue throughout the meeting.

The duration of the day parents met in table discussion groups to provide opinions and ideas to ministry officials. Each group comprised of five DPAC Chairs, one BCCPAC Rep and one Ministry of Education official.

Minister Shirley Bond and Deputy Education Minister Emery Dosdall circled the room engaging in dialogue at various tables.

While sitting beside Minister Bond it was evident to me that this Government **does care** about putting students needs first.

This year the per pupil funding is the highest ever in BC.

During question and answer period with Minister Bond parents voiced concerns in the effectiveness of the Learning Roundtable, the need for a Teacher Registry, and increased funding for Special Needs students.

I also asked about the need for PAC designated space in each school and DPAC space designated in each district, Minister Bond had assumed this was happening already. It seemed from the reaction that about 50% of PACs have designated areas in each school and DPACs in urban areas seem to have space at the school board offices.

Agenda items were presented with power point presentations by various Ministry officials. Issues discussed included Graduation Portfolios, School Planning Councils and Student/School Centered Leadership.

We parents were also given the opportunity to exchange ideas for the Parents’ Education Network and the Parent Congress that were announced in the recent Throne Speech. Minister Bond is committed to hosting DPAC Chairs to a Parent Congress with Premier Campbell sometime this year.

( The Government is hosting a Teachers Congress also this year.)

Ministry of Education provided BCCPAC with \$100,000 to develop and host a DPAC Leadership School. Another \$36,000 in funding was announced to ensure one parent from every district attend the upcoming ***Interactive Innovations Conference ~Showcase of Learners and Learning*** in May. This will be a web based conference at five locations across BC.

I concluded from the table group discussions and the presentations from Ministry officials is that our Education system is in a phase of “re-shaping” to celebrate student excellence and support achievement.

In the recent Throne Speech it was said that “parents will be critical drivers” of Education in BC. I truly sensed that all Education Ministry officials present valued and listened to our input.

We don’t need a license to be a parent but a few lessons along the way can’t hurt. At the end of the day this Ministry illustrated that they to are able to learn from lessons and ideas put forth by us, the “critical drivers” for Education in BC.

My deepest Thanks to Education Minister Shirley Bond and her staff for being gracious hosts to a day of collaborative dialogue I will never forget!

Brenda Dorosz, DPAC Chair , Okanagan Similkameen # 53