

BCTF conference notes – May 9-10, 2025

Amy White, KES Parent/PAC representative

Overall, a well-organized conference with excellent, relevant content for SD46. I enjoyed meeting and chatting with teachers and parents from all over BC.

On the first evening, four speakers approached the topic of engaging communities from different perspectives: food in schools, political organizing, basketball, and local music.

Brent Mansfield's talk was particularly relevant for SD46. He teaches Edible Education as a specialist teacher at Lord Roberts Elem. in Vancouver, and spoke about co-founding LunchLAB, an educational lunch program that offers hands-on, cross-curricular food literacy learning. His blog/website are worth a visit for those interested in new possibilities for their school food programs (search: LunchLAB).

The second day featured multiple workshops. A few takeaways:

Crafting Compelling Messages that Resonate (Rich Overgaard)

- In social media, craft your responses for the silent observers, the ones “reading along” – not whoever is most shrill/argumentative. These after-the-fact readers are the ones you might be able to reach/influence
- Good messages use first person, emphasize values, are simple and concise, easy to repeat, offer a solution, and are believable
- An initial test: Is it interesting, not just to you? Does it matter to your audience?
- Start with your values, state the problem, offer statistics/facts to support your statements, talk about a solution, make it real with an illustrative story

Indigenous Language Learning (Nailah King-Hopkins, Karina Peters, Koosen Pielie)

- An inspiring teacher team passionate about teaching ʔayʔaʔuθəm (ayajuthem), which is a critically endangered language, through a pilot immersion program (qathet School District)
- They offer 2 days/week to kindergarten/gr. 1 students. Full immersion, so no English spoken. An expanded curriculum including math, the international phonetic alphabet, cultural teachings. Elders and
- They use “total physical response” (TPR) language learning techniques, which links the sounds/words to body movements

Teachers & Parents for Better Schools (Lizanne Foster, Tammy Murphy, Anne Whitmore)

- Showcased how the Surrey Teachers' Association President, Surrey CUPE President and Surrey DPAC President advocated together on issues such as overcrowding, resource shortages and inclusion barriers

- Offered this framework for building an effective advocacy team:
 - Build relationships (including clearing the air about past issues)
 - Identify priorities
 - Share resources and expertise
 - Advocate jointly – present a common front and be indivisible
 - Reflect on and celebrate progress

Understanding and Utilizing the Exclusion Tracker (Angela Clancy and Tracy Humphreys)

- Presentation on the Exclusion Tracker, which is an online tool for tracking and highlighting instances where students with a disability were denied access to education
- Can be used by parents and students themselves; fully anonymous. Enables one-time reporting, as well as reporting repeated instances of exclusion
- Exclusion can look like: shortened days; no EA = no attendance; denial of field trips; learning only offered in hallways, etc. etc.
- Tracker is managed by the Family Support Institute and BCEdAccess Society. Data from the tracker enhances advocacy efforts for properly supporting complex classrooms with diverse learners, and documents systemic issues
- BC Ombudsperson, Jay Chalke, has begun an investigation into the exclusion of students from schools in BC's K-12 public education system, so there is momentum on this topic
- A possible resource for parents/teachers: the Mobility Opportunities Services Society lends out adaptive equipment to help kids with disabilities access fieldtrips, e.g. a rugged trail-cart