

The Structure of School Districts in British Columbia

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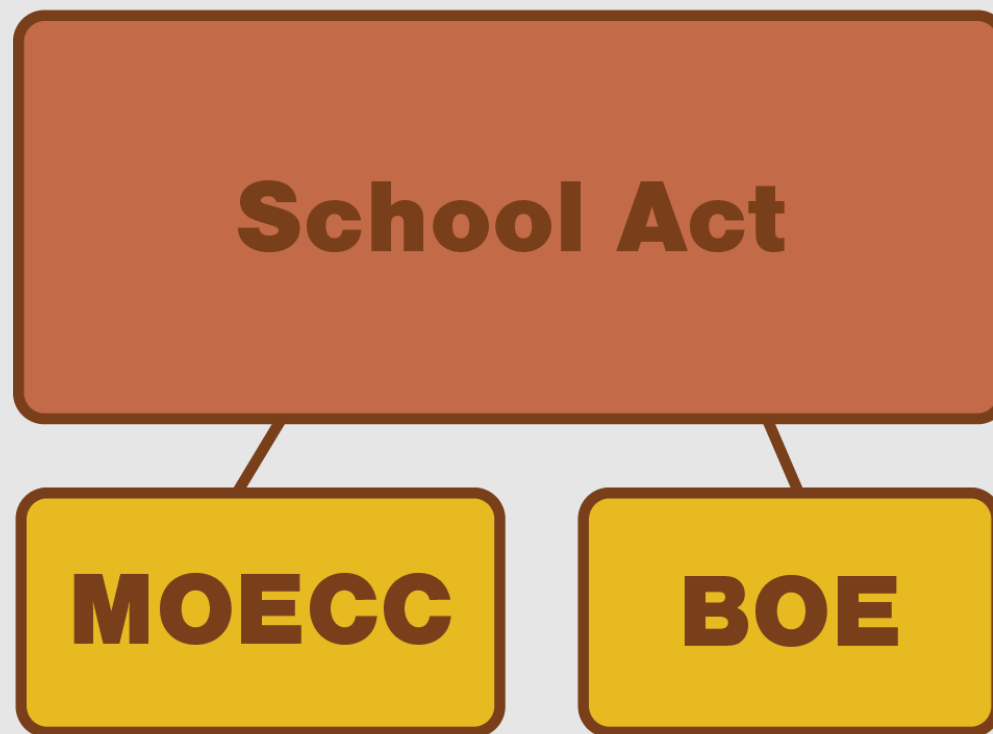


Overview

- To understand the co-governance model between the Ministry of Education and Child Care and school districts in BC
- To review the structure of School Districts generally
- To understand the role of the Board of Education in school districts
- To examine specific roles in school districts



General Structure





Mandate of the School System – Why we are here?

The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic_128089.pdf



Co-governance

– How do we meet our mandate

The Ministry of Education and Child Care sets the general direction for K-12 education, including the curriculum, funding amounts and the legal framework within which boards operate. Boards are responsible for governing school districts based on the educational aspirations of their local communities and in accordance with the policy direction established by government.

<https://bcsta.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/THE-ROLE-OF-BOARDS-AND-TRUSTEES-IN-BC-Digital.pdf>



Ministry Mandates and Authority

Ministry has significant authority and sets requirements for:

- Standardized Testing
- Curriculum
- Human Rights inclusions in Codes of Conduct
- Financial Reporting
- Many other issues

The Ministry also:

- Can remove a Board of Education
- Must approve land disposition



Co-governance in Action

Ministry sets general expectations with respect to the following issues but allows local Boards to determine specifics:

- Codes of Conduct (Cell-phone)
- Structure of the school system (e.g. middle schools)
- Boundaries and enrollment
- Funding decisions (some exceptions)



Co-Governance in Action - Funding

2024-25 Preliminary base funding per student \$8,915

- Funding flows to Boards from MOECC with limited strings
- Board determines collective agreement and *School Act* requirements and then ensures spending is aligned with Board goals (different districts have different needs)
- Boards report to the MOECC on outcomes via an “Enhancing Student Learning Report”
- MOECC provides feedback



Structure of School Districts

The *School Act* creates the Board of Education as a corporation. It states:

For the purposes of carrying out its powers, functions and duties under this Act, a board has the power and capacity of a natural person of full capacity.

https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412_06#section85

The Board of Education is elected by the public and can only act by motion in a formal meeting

Individual trustees have no authority

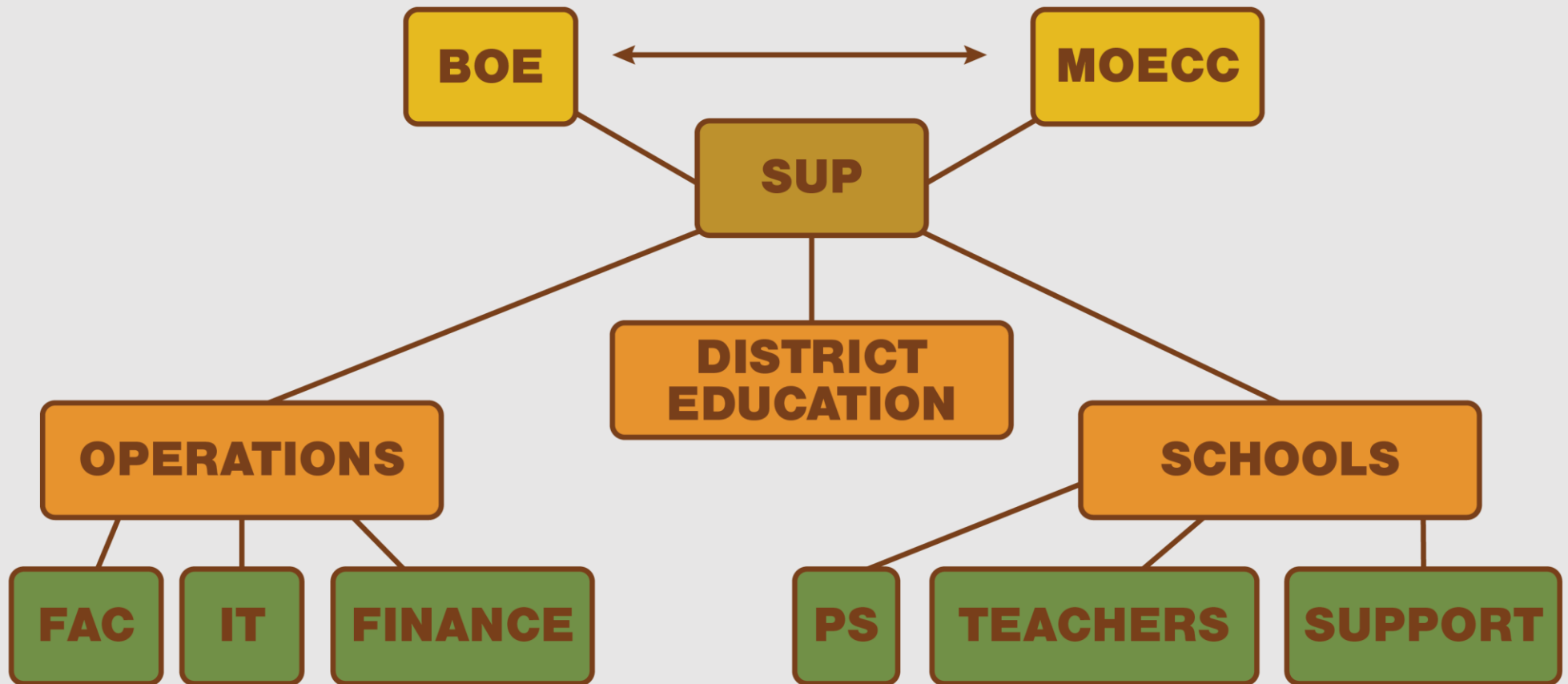


Role of the Board in Broad Strokes

- Setting local policy for the effective and efficient operations of schools
- Employing the staff necessary for school district operations
- Establishing condition of employment for employees
- Preparing and approving the school district's operating budgets and capital plans
- Hearing appeal from parents and students
- Advocating for and promoting public education



Structure of School Districts





Role of the Board – Strategic Direction

- Strategic Planning
- Sets goals that drive resources and focus including:
 - Funding
 - Staff time and focus
 - School goals



Role of the Board - Policy

- A policy, defined by NLPS is as follows:

Board Policies are statements that guide the desired operation of Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools. They create a framework for the Superintendent of Schools and staff to carry out their responsibilities and may contain statements of belief, expectations, and specific requirements.

<https://www.sd68.bc.ca/board/policies-procedures/>

Create a transparent and consistent framework for the public to be aware of when interacting with the District



Role of the Board – As Employer

- Technically the Board is the employer of all employees. In reality there is only one employee – the Superintendent.
- The Board's oversight of the Superintendent is one of its most important functions.



Role of the Board – Financial Health

- Setting direction for resource allocation, approving the annual and amended budgets and providing oversight on financial health
- As stated by the BCSTA:

Boards have important responsibilities for oversight of school district financial decisions. One of the most important aspects of governance for trustees is to connect district goals, strategic planning and finances, through the establishment of the school district's annual budget.

<https://bcsta.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/THE-ROLE-OF-BOARDS-AND-TRUSTEES-IN-BC-Digital.pdf>



Role of the Board – Parents

- The Board provides an avenue for the District's Parent Advisory Council to provide feedback to the Board.
- The *School Act* also provides a specific appeal mechanism to come before the Board in limited circumstances associated with decisions that have significant impacts on students.



Role of the Board – As Landowner

- Outside of parks typically the largest landowner in a community
- Holder of major community assets including recreation and green space opportunities
- Focus on the needs of students and capacity



Role of the Board – Advocates for Public Education

- Funding and Student Supports provincially and locally
- Social justice Issues and Curriculum
- The infrastructure needs of their specific communities



The Board in relation to teachers

- Technically the employer and approves a collective agreement including bargaining mandates
- May adjudicate a teacher discipline matter
- Ensuring the union has a voice in the District



Other roles in the School Act

Superintendent

Secretary-Treasurer

Directors of Instruction

Principals

Teachers

Parents

Students



Superintendent

CEO of the School District

Only employee of the District

Also has obligations to the MOECC in certain areas

The School Regulation provides that a Superintendent shall:

- assist in making the Act and regulations effective and in carrying out a system of education in conformity with the orders of the minister
- advise and assist the board in exercising its powers and duties under the Act
- investigate matters as required by the minister and after due investigation submit a report to the minister
- perform those duties assigned by the board
- shall render the assistance to the minister that the minister requires

https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/265_89#section6



Secretary-Treasurer

CFO/COO

Reports to Superintendent

School Regulation provides:

- a) become familiar with and comply with the accounting and administrative procedures specified by the minister and shall keep a record of the proceedings of the board and perform the other duties the board may assign in relation to its corporate affairs
- b) perform the duties specified for a secretary-treasurer by the Act and the regulations, rules or orders made under it
- c) perform those duties assigned by the board



District level Educational Staff

Assistant Superintendents, District Principals etc.

- Provide assistance to the Superintendent and individual schools or groups of schools as necessary
- Often assisting with reporting and/or implementing of special programs

The School Regulation provides:

The primary function of a director of instruction is to improve instruction within the grades or ungraded years for which the director of instruction is responsible and, in performing this function, the director of instruction shall have free access to any school, classroom or school record.



Principals

School Leader and direct supervisor of teacher and support staff at the school

The principal of a school is responsible for administering and supervising the school including:

- a) the implementation of educational programs
- b) the placing and programming of students in the school
- c) the timetables of teachers
- d) the program of teaching and learning activities
- e) the program of student evaluation and assessment and reporting to parents
- f) the maintenance of school records
- g) the general conduct of students, both on school premises and during activities that are off school premises and that are organized or sponsored by the school



Teachers

School Act (section 17):

Teachers' responsibilities

- 1) A teacher's responsibilities include designing, supervising and assessing educational programs and instructing, assessing and evaluating individual students and groups of students.
- 2) Teachers must perform the duties set out in the regulations.



Parents and the *School Act*

Right to:

- To Examine Records (**s. 9**)
- Be informed of attendance, behaviour and progress (**s. 7**)
- Volunteer (**s. 7.1**)
- To belong to a PAC (**s. 8**)



Parents and the *School Act*

Right to:

- Appeal a decision that significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student **(s. 11)**
- To consult with teacher or administrative officer with respect to their student's educational program **(s. 7)**



Student

Right to enroll (with some exceptions)

Limits on fees



Other roles not laid out in the *School Act*

- Educational Assistant
- Secretary
- Caretaker
- Trades
- Bus Drivers
- Accountants and finance professional
- Buyers
- Communications specialists
- Human Resource Specialists