

**CHILDREN IN NEED OF PROTECTION:
REPORTING POLICIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL BOARDS**

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High profile sexual assault cases by British Columbia elementary school teachers in 2010 revealed BC school boards had “disturbingly inconsistent” child protection policies. As a result of the intense media scrutiny, the BC Ministry of Education required all school boards to reassess and update their policies on reporting suspected child abuse. This article presents an analysis of (N = 50) current school board child protection policies and procedures in British Columbia and an exploration of what training, resources, and support school boards state they provide to help teachers recognize and report cases where a child needs protection. The review revealed that most boards had documentation. However, the amount of information provided by each board varied greatly. An analysis of the documents revealed some school board procedures need to be updated to reflect current legislation and expectations regarding child welfare. Policy recommendations are proposed based on the results of the study.

Introduction

Parents and the public must have confidence that the education system is doing everything possible to protect the children with whom we are entrusted.
—Margaret MacDiarmid, former Minister of Education (School District 42, 2010)

Child abuse is a sensitive and complex problem that is linked to difficult, value-laden issues such as social and economic status, family relationships, violence, and sex (Ahrens, Katon, McCarty, Richardson, & Courtney, 2012; Beach, Brody, Todorov, Gunter, & Philibert, 2010; Currie & Widom, 2010; Sousa et al., 2011). For these reasons, full involvement of the community in the development and implementation of child abuse policies and programs is essential. Schools have been long acknowledged as playing a unique and important role in

identifying child abuse. Canadian children generally spend 190 days in school each year; therefore, teachers and other school employees are able to notice small changes in behaviour which may indicate abuse is occurring. As such, schools are the largest reporters (24% of all cases) of suspected child abuse in Canada (Trocmé et al., 2010). Due to the large number of reports made by schools, it is in the best interest of school boards to implement explicit, reader-friendly policies that hold the protection of children as paramount and abide with applicable child welfare legislation. Policies help support school employees by providing valuable information on the role and responsibilities of those involved in the reporting process, how and when teachers will receive training on child abuse issues, recognizing signs of abuse, and responding to abuse disclosures (Shewchuk, 2014). Most importantly, policies need to provide detailed procedures in case the alleged abuser is one of the very employees the school board has hired to care for its students. In these instances, school boards must balance the rights of the child, the individuals accused of abuse, and the need for schools to work in a climate free of fear and suspicion. Therefore, the purpose of this present study is to examine the content of British Columbian school board policies on child abuse.

Research Questions

The following two research questions guided the study:

- 1) What BC school boards have publicly available web-based documents in place in relation to reporting suspected child abuse?
- 2) What is the content of these policies?

This paper is organized into six sections. First, I provide a legislative review of major child abuse policies and policy initiatives from 1990 to 2014. Second, I include a narrative of recent child

abuse accusations against two teachers in British Columbia and the ensuing response from the Ministry of Education. Third, I discuss the method for completing the policy analysis. Fourth, findings are presented from the empirical analysis of 50 British Columbia school board policy documents on child abuse. Finally, recommendations are made to inform future policy development.

Legislative Review:

Major Policies and Policy Initiatives in British Columbia from 1990–2014

Changes in legislation and political culture drive local policies and decisions made by school boards. Therefore, in this section I offer an overview of major child welfare policy proposals and initiatives in British Columbia between 1990 and 2010. My aim is to provide a brief timeline of some major landmarks in a complex field. What follows is inevitably selective. No topic is comprehensively reviewed, but I have indicated some major sources of political controversy which influenced school board policies during the turn of the millennium. The items referred to in Table 1 are statements of government policy positions, policy directives, regulations, or pieces of legislation (bills, acts), and reports with recommendations commissioned by the government or other authoritative sources.

Table 1
Major Policies and Policy Initiatives from 1990–2014

Date	Name
1990–1991	United Nations: Rights of the Child
1991	Public Response to Request for Suggestions for Legislative Change to Family and Child Service Act
1991–2000	New Democratic Party elected (left of center political party)
1991–1992	Community Review Panels established
1993	Making changes: Next steps
1994	Gove Commission created
1994	Child, Family, and Community Service Act passed
1994	Child, Youth, and Family Advocacy Act
1995	Report of the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection in British Columbia
1995–1996	Child, Family and Community Services Act implemented
1997	Children’s Commission Act
2001–Present	Liberal Party elected (right of center political party)
2001–2002	Core Service Review and corresponding funding cuts
2002	Changes to who Children’s Aid Societies (CAS) can investigate
2006	Coroner’s inquest into Sherry Charlie's death
2006	BC Children and Youth Review
2006–2007	Liberal government budget proposal & cuts
2008–2014	The Representative for Children and Youth investigative reports
2010	Final report on the implementation of the recommendations of the BC Children and Youth Review

The decision to mark 1990 as the starting point is one of convenience, since this was the year Canada became a signatory (ratified in 1991) of the groundbreaking international United Nations (UN) agreement on children’s rights. This human rights treaty set out the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children. Governments who ratified the treaty are bound by international law to protect children’s rights as outlined in the document. After ratifying the treaty, existing Canadian child welfare legislation needed to be reviewed to ensure consistency with, inter alia, the Charter and the UN Convention (Owen & Parfitt, 1990).

In 1991 the British Columbia Ombudsman released the report *Public Response to Request for Suggestions for Legislative Change to Family and Child Service Act* (PRRSLC). Using the newly ratified UN agreement as a guide, the report recommended that the Family and Child Services Act (1981) definition of a “child in need of protection” be updated to include

emotional abuse. In addition, the report suggested the new legislation should contain the “best interest” test. The best interest test states that, when decisions are made concerning custody and guardianship of children, the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) has a greater onus to “establish that apprehension would be better for the child than care provided by his or her parents or any other alternative means of family support” (PRRSLC, 1991, p.2). Apprehension was to be considered a “last resort” after family supports and less intrusive measures had been tried, and failed. In addition, the PRRSLC advocated for child welfare services to be delegated to the local level while maintaining the “provincial government's role as funder, policy developer, standard setter, and monitor of services to children, youth and their families” (PRRSLC, 1991, p. 8).

During this same time frame, the newly elected New Democratic Party (NDP) appointed additional community panels to review child welfare issues throughout the province. Reports of the panels were released publically in 1992. Two-hundred and sixty-four recommendations were made in total. The panels agreed with the PRRSLC Ombudsman report that the MCFD should take the “least intrusive” measures when working with families (i.e., removal from home is the last resort). In addition, the panels suggested child welfare concerns should be addressed at the local level and that an Independent Advocate for Children and Families be created.

In 1992 a five-and-a-half-year-old child, Matthew Vaudreuil, was murdered by his mother. While he was known to the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD), he was not under the ministry’s supervision. Matthew’s death sparked outrage with many constituents who felt the “system” failed the vulnerable children within its care. In 1994, an independent inquiry was ordered, chaired by Justice Gove, to look into the child’s death (Gove, 1995). The

inquiry produced a total of 119 recommendations. There were four overriding themes in his report. First, Gove argued for “child centered” practice because he thought social workers placed too much importance on supporting families instead of protecting children. Second, Gove believed all services to children should be placed under a single umbrella rather than scattered through various government departments and ministries. Third, while Gove felt it was the provincial government’s responsibility to create policy and standards, he suggested decentralizing the delivery of services to “Children’s Centers” which would operate at the community level. Finally, Gove recommended an independent Children’s Commission be established who would be responsible for investigating all children’s deaths and serious injuries (Gove, 1995).

The Gove Inquiry, Community Review Panels, and PRRSLC Ombudsman report agreed on the need for more localized service delivery. However, they had differing opinions on all other matters. For example, while Gove wanted a child protection system concentrated on the safety of children, the review panels and Ombudsman report wanted a supportive system that focused on providing least intrusive practices. In addition, where Gove wanted a Children’s Commissioner to police the child welfare system, the review panels sought an Independent Advocate for Children and Families. The new Child, Family, and Community Services Act was passed in 1994, but implementation of the act was delayed while the Gove Commission was underway. The act was amended to include Gove’s suggestions that the safety and wellbeing of children be listed as the paramount considerations. Amendments were made to expand the definition of child in need of protection to include emotional abuse. Moreover, the new act mandated that “anyone who has reason to believe that a child may be abused, neglected, or is for

any other reason in need of protection, must report it to the Director or a delegated social worker” (CITE). The new act was finally implemented in 1996 (Foster & Wharf, 2011).

As a result of the intense scrutiny garnered from the Gove Inquiry, the NDP government implemented many of the Gove and community panel recommendations without critical forethought and understanding of where they fit within the long-term strategy for British Columbia child welfare policy. For example, the role of Independent Advocate (community panel) and Children’s Commissioner (Gove) were both filled in 1995 and 1997 respectively, something which resulted in two separate public bodies fulfilling similar services (Foster, 2011).

Table 2 compares the roles of the Independent Advocate versus the Children’s Commission.

Table 2
Independent Advocate vs. Children’s Commission Roles

Independent Advocate (1995)	Children’s Commission (1997)	Similar role? (Yes/No)
Provide information to the government and communities about the availability, effectiveness, responsiveness, and relevance of designated services to children, youths, and their families.	Monitor the development and implementation of internal review processes across ministries and agencies of government to ensure they are respectful, timely, effective, and child-centred.	Yes
Ensure that children, youths, and their families have access to fair, responsive, and appropriate complaint and review processes at all stages in the provision of designated services.	Provide a comprehensive avenue for external complaints for children if a young person’s complaint was not resolved through the ministry’s internal process.	Yes
Ensure the rights of and interests of children, youths, and their families relating to designated services are protected and advanced and that their views are heard and considered.	Ensure all children in care have a plan that meets their needs.	Yes
Promote and coordinate in communities the establishment of advocacy services for children, youths, and their families.	To investigate critical injuries that occur when children are receiving designated services.	No
Perform any other functions assigned to the advocate by an enactment.	To review all child fatalities and investigate any that are suspicious and unusual, through an investigation and multidisciplinary process.	No

Due to the intense media scrutiny surrounding the Gove Inquiry, intake teams increased their focus on risk assessment instead of helping families in the least intrusive manner, as suggested by the community panels and Ombudsman. Moreover, due to the lack of funding provided for preventative measures intake teams did not have the tools to manage families without apprehension – causing the number of children in care to rise dramatically (Cradock, 2004; Parton, 2006).

In 2001, the newly elected Liberal government undertook a Core Service Review which asked every government department to review its spending (D’Avignon, 2013; Foster & Wharf, 2011). The government found that there were many overlaps and significant duplication of services in the child welfare system, something which stemmed from the Community Review Panels and Gove Inquiry. Accordingly, the Children’s Commission (Gove) and Child and Family Advocate (community review) were abolished. A new Child and Youth Officer replaced the previous two roles. This new position was required to report to the Attorney-General rather than the public at large. In addition, the new Child and Youth Officer would no longer be allowed to question MCFD policies and practices—rather it would be the officer’s duty to ensure all policies are being followed. Responsibility for reviewing children’s deaths was transferred to the Coroner’s office while advocacy on behalf of children and families was transferred to the Ombudsman (Cradock, 2007).

The newly formed Liberal government reported expenditures for children and family services were to be cut by 20 % (later reduced to 12%). This directive resulted in many preventative community initiatives proposed by the Gove Inquiry and NDP government being canceled. The ministry met new budget reduction targets by cutting 12% of funds to services for children and families, and a 55% reduction in executive and support services, including quality

assurance (Hughes, 2006). Furthermore, budget cuts to the Coroner's office resulted in a failure to properly review the deaths of 713 children (Meissner, 2006). In an attempt to lessen the strain without increasing funding, in 2002, without consultation, Gordon Hogg, then Minister of Children and Family Development, introduced amendments to the Child, Family, and Community Service Act that reduced protection afforded to children. The previous legislation required anyone with reason to believe a child is at risk of abuse to promptly report it. The amendment required anyone with concerns about a caregiver other than the child's parent (e.g., the alleged abuser is a teacher) to report only "if the child's parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child" (British Columbia Teacher's Federation, para 6). In addition, the MCFD was removed of its authority to act on issues that did not involve parents or guardians, because too much time was spent "investigating thousands of reports that would be better addressed through community agencies, schools, or the police" ("When child abuse is suspected," 2010). This change of internal ministry policy gave schools the "green light" to conduct their own internal investigations when employees were suspected to have abused students. However, it should be noted that the Child, Family, and Community Service Act (1996) still required anyone who suspected child abuse had occurred to report their concerns to a child welfare worker.

Since 2001, there have been 24 more reports (e.g., Coroner's inquest into Sherry Charlie's death, BC Children and Youth Review, and Representative for Children and Youth investigative reports) which have suggested 229 recommendations to improve child welfare services in British Columbia (Hughes, 2006; Meissner, 2006; Turpel-Lafond, 2010). British Columbia's Finance Minister described the 2006/2007 provincial budget proposal as "a budget designed to improve services for children." It included an increase for the MCFD of \$278 million in new funding over three years (2007–2010) (Foster & Wharf, 2011), however from 2008 to

2014, funding has actually decreased \$44 million (British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union, 2014).

In summary, the past quarter-century has been a time of great turmoil for British Columbia's child welfare services. Government mismanagement by both the NDP and Liberal governments has resulted in a fragmented and underfunded child protection system. Since the Core Service Review, the Liberal government has consistently reduced funding and ignored policy recommendations suggested by both independent and government commissions which placed a great strain on the system. In an attempt to lessen the strain without increasing funding, the Liberal government removed the MCFD's authority to act on issues that did not involve parents or guardians. Yet, the Child, Family, and Community Service Act (1996) still required anyone who suspected child abuse to report their concerns to a child welfare worker. As a result, school boards created inconsistent child abuse policies. In the next subsection, I provide the current definition of child abuse, as outlined in the Child, Family, and Community Service Act (1996) and the teacher's role in preventing abuse from occurring.

Defining Abuse and the Teacher's Role

The Child, Family, and Community Service Act (1996) states that if a caregiver inflicts or allows others to inflict physical injury, or if a deliberate use of force results in injury or the threat of injury, then physical abuse has occurred; any sexual behaviour toward a child or the use of a child for sexual means, is considered sexual abuse; when a child's sense of self is harmed or when a child is threatened, terrorized, rejected, diminished, or disparaged by their caregiver, emotional abuse has taken place. Neglect is considered to have occurred when a child's physical, psychological, or emotional development is impacted as a result of their needs not being met. In

British Columbia, for an act to be considered child abuse it must be committed by a caregiver—a parent or another person (e.g., teacher, coach, babysitter) who has direct responsibility over a child.

In British Columbia, all persons (including school personnel) who have reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected has a legal duty under the Child, Family, and Community Service Act (1996) to report their concern to a child welfare worker.

A Narrative of Abuse in British Columbia Schools

In a large scale Canadian study investigating reports of abuse to child welfare agencies across the country, researchers found that 96% of investigations of abuse involved at least one relative while only 1% of substantiated cases were against a classroom teacher (Trocme et al., 2005). Although the rate of teachers committing child abuse is small, unfortunately, investigations into teacher behaviour do occur. The following section contains a narrative of recent child abuse accusations against two teachers in British Columbia.

Two Allegations in Two Weeks

Ella¹ came home from school one afternoon in October 2009, she informed her mother, Alice,² that her supply-teacher, Mr. Plehanov, was “gross because he touched my bum and deede³” (Payne, 2012b, p.1) and he “wanted to have sex with all the girls” (Payne, 2012b, p.1). Worried her daughter was sexually assaulted, Alice called Ella’s school principal and wrote a

¹ Pseudonym used due to publication ban.

² Pseudonym used due to publication ban.

³ Slang term for vagina.

formal letter of complaint to the Coquitlam School Board. The board assured Alice it “would take appropriate action given the gravity of the allegations” (Stefenhagen, 2010, p.1). When Alice asked if the police would be called, the board informed her “they would be if the investigation found evidence of a crime” and to “be patient and to not talk about it [the case] because we [the school board] needed to protect the integrity of the investigation” (Stefenhagen, 2010, p. 2). Without the consent of the students’ parents, the school principal began an internal investigation which involved interviewing eight children, including the alleged victim, about their experiences in Mr. Plehanov’s class (Payne, 2012a, p.1). When Alice discovered her daughter was interviewed without her consent, she called the school to inquire why she was not contacted in advance. “Brushed off” by the principal and school board, Alice was told she “had no right to know anything at all. [She] had to believe and . . . trust in the process” (Stefenhagen, 2010, p. 2). While Aleksandr Plehanov was internally reprimanded by the school board, Alice was never informed “what kind of discipline was taken” or “what kind of process [was] followed” (Stefenhagen, 2010, p.2). In March of 2010, Alice heard from a friend that more children were sexually assaulted by Plehanov. At this point Alice decided to call the police and told her friend to “tell those people to call the police because *the board has failed us* [italics added] and this is not going to happen again” (Stefenhagen, 2010, p. 2). Police charged Plehanov with five counts of sexual interference and sexual assault involving five girls, all between the ages of seven or eight.

Two weeks after the arrest of Plehanov, another BC teacher, Jason Epp, was charged with two counts each of sexual assault and sexual interference against two elementary school students. On May 3, 2010, the Chilliwack School Board contacted the RCMP to inform the police of an allegation of sexual assault made against Jason Epp (Sigaty & Drews, 2010)

immediately after a parent had come forward with the allegation. Charges were laid against him on May 12, 2010, after the RCMP interviewed two students who were under the care of Epp (“Chilliwack teacher,” 2010; “Sex charges,” 2011).⁴

Disturbingly Inconsistent Policies

The media attention received by these two incidents prompted many to question the child abuse policies of BC school boards. An exposé by the *Vancouver Sun* reported that child protection policies were “disturbingly inconsistent” (Steffenhagen, 2010). The Chilliwack School Board, among others called the police or child welfare services immediately after an allegation was made (Steffenhagen, 2010). Other boards, like Coquitlam, conducted internal investigations without contacting police or child welfare services and kept the results secret. Abbotsford and Langley School Boards were also discovered to have “failed children and parents a few years ago” (Woodrow, 2010) in similar cases involving substitute teachers. Coquitlam’s policies came under further scrutiny when the BC Provincial Court considered some witness testimony “particularly unreliable” (R. v. Plehanov, 2012) because the alleged victims were not separated and were allowed to talk to each other during the internal investigation by the school board. The judge believed this influenced the victims’ testimonies and consequently, there was insufficient evidence to prove Aleksandr Plehanov was guilty of sexual interference and assault. He was acquitted of all charges in 2012 (R. v. Plehanov, 2012). Aleksandr Plehanov was arrested once again in March of 2013, for one count of touching for a sexual purpose a person under the age of 16 and another count of sexual assault. His trial date is set for October, 2015 (Payne, 2014, p. 1).

⁴ Further investigation revealed that there was insufficient evidence to prove Epp was guilty. As such, charges were stayed against Epp in 2012.

In August of 2010, Margaret MacDiarmid, the BC Education Minister during 2010, sent a letter to all school boards ordering an immediate review of their child protection policies to ensure they were comprehensive and up-to-date. More specifically, she wanted board policies to include:

- a) a statement of purpose and guiding principles;
- b) legal definitions and references to legislation;
- c) protocols for contact, communication, and information-sharing among school boards, the Ministry of Children and Family Development or delegated aboriginal child and family services agencies, and the police should be clearly set out, accessible, and understood by all school board employees;
- d) delegated role and responsibilities to school board administrators and other employees regarding child protection;
- e) procedures regarding annual training to make certain that all employees, contractors, and volunteers are aware of and understand how to carry out their legal duty to respond when concerns about child abuse or neglect arise; and
- f) detailed information on how employees of the board are to respond when concerns about child abuse or neglect arise (School District 42, 2010).

Boards were required to complete a survey that inquired about the content of their child protection policies by September, 2010. If a board's policy did not meet one or more of the criteria discussed in the ministry letter, the board was required to outline a plan of action and timeline for making certain their policies were updated. Results of the survey were not made public. However, five years should be more than enough time for all boards to update their policies to reflect the requirements outlined by Margaret MacDiarmid. Since there has not been a formally conducted examination of school board policies in the ensuing years, it is unknown if the boards have made these changes.

Method

Data Collection

There are 60 school boards in British Columbia. I completed a web-based search to discover each (N = 60) board's documents on reporting suspected child abuse during February 2015 (see Appendix for list of school boards and accompanying links). All boards had websites and corresponding webpages devoted to policies and procedures. If I discovered a school board did not have a publicly available policy or procedure on its website (N = 10), I noted the information in an Excel spreadsheet. These boards were excluded from the future content and thematic analyses.

The policy analysis framework used in this study was revised from my previous work that analyzed Ontario school board documents on reporting suspected abuse. For more information about the creation of the tool please see Shewchuk (2014). The renewed framework contains 14 questions which are divided into seven sections. The section titles include: school board documents, document properties, legal system, document dissemination, reporting procedures, community partners, and training opportunities (Table 3).

Table 3
Policy Analysis Framework

Section	Question
School Board Documents	How many school boards have documents in place? What types of documents currently exist?
Document Properties	How long are the documents? Does the document have a statement of purpose and guiding principles? How often are the documents reviewed or updated by the board?
Legal System	What legislation does the document reference? Are key terms defined?
Reporting Procedures	What type of procedures are included? What information does the reporter need to know in order to report? What staff have delegated roles and responsibilities? What supports are provided to help employees throughout the reporting process?
Community Partners	Who is involved in the collaborative process?
Training Opportunities	What commitment is provided to deliver training?
Dissemination	How and when will the information in the documents be disseminated to key actors (i.e., parents and teachers)?

Data Analysis

Microsoft Excel and NVivo were employed to collect data in relation to the questions within the policy framework. Microsoft Excel was used to track relevant website links, calculate frequencies, and find descriptive statistics while NVivo was utilized to aid in recording codes, themes, and overarching patterns.

Limitations of Study

Because all boards had webpages devoted to policies and procedures, when I could not find a child protection policy, I inferred that either (a) a child abuse policy or procedure didn't exist or (b) the board considered this information to be private. Therefore, individual school boards without child abuse documents located on their website were not called to ascertain whether their documents exist. However, it is possible that these boards have publicly available documents but forgot to upload them to their respective websites. In addition, having a school board policy that deals with child abuse does not ensure adherence to the policy. Therefore, this research cannot claim how policies are understood and implemented within the school boards.

Findings

The following subsections are organized according to the sections from the policy analysis framework in Table 1: school board documents, legal system, document properties, document dissemination, reporting procedures, support systems, training opportunities, and community relationships.

School Board Documents

Of the 60 school boards, 17% (N = 10) did not have publically available documents. Therefore, 50 school boards were examined using the policy analysis framework. Surprisingly, Coquitlam School Board (the school board that internally investigated Aleksandr Plehanov) was one of the boards that did not have a publically available document on its website. I found four types of documents in British Columbia school boards (Figure 1).

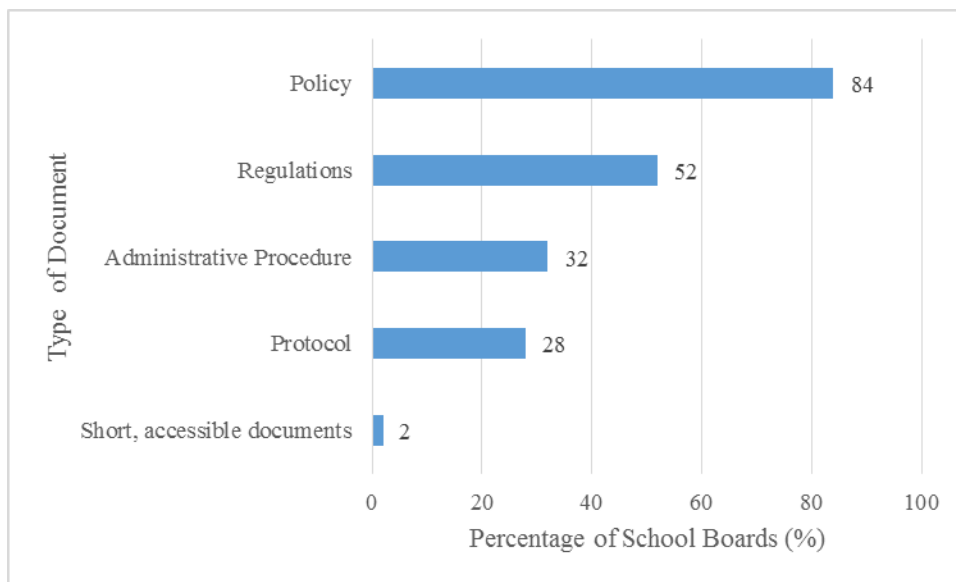


Figure 1. Types of documents found in BC school boards.

A board could have any combination of policy, regulations, administrative procedures, and joint protocols. For definitions on the various types of documents, please see Shewchuk (2014). In addition, one board chose to upload a short, accessible document on child abuse meant for parents and guardians.

Document Properties

Length of documents. Table 4 shows the measures of central tendency of document page length.

Table 4
Measures of Central Tendency of Document Page Length

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Policy	1.00	6.00	1.71	1.00	1.00	1.12
Admin. Pro.	1.00	12.00	4.06	3.00	2.00	2.98
Regulations	1.00	22.00	4.68	3.00	2.00	4.44
Joint Protocol	2.00	28.00	11.71	9.00	5.00	8.44

Table 4 shows joint protocols were much larger than the other types of documents.

Statement of purpose and guiding principles. Forty-three school board documents (86%) had a statement of purpose; a statement of purpose was defined as a declarative sentence which summarizes the specific topic and goals of a document. It is typically included in the introduction to give the reader an accurate, concrete understanding what the document will cover and what they can gain from reading it. Only 14% (N = 7) of school boards included guiding principles in their policies; guiding principles were defined as references to the principles that—in a collaborative setting—inform all parties serving children and families. School boards were referred to the principles in the *BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect* for further guidance. The foremost guiding principle in the *BC Handbook* is “the safety and well-being of children are the paramount considerations” (Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2003, p. 14).

Document review and updates. Information on the dates of policy creation and review were all found within school board policies. Sixty-four percent (N = 32) of the analyzed boards have either created or revised their policies within the last five years. Figure 2 shows the number of school boards that have issued and revised their policies since the 1970s.

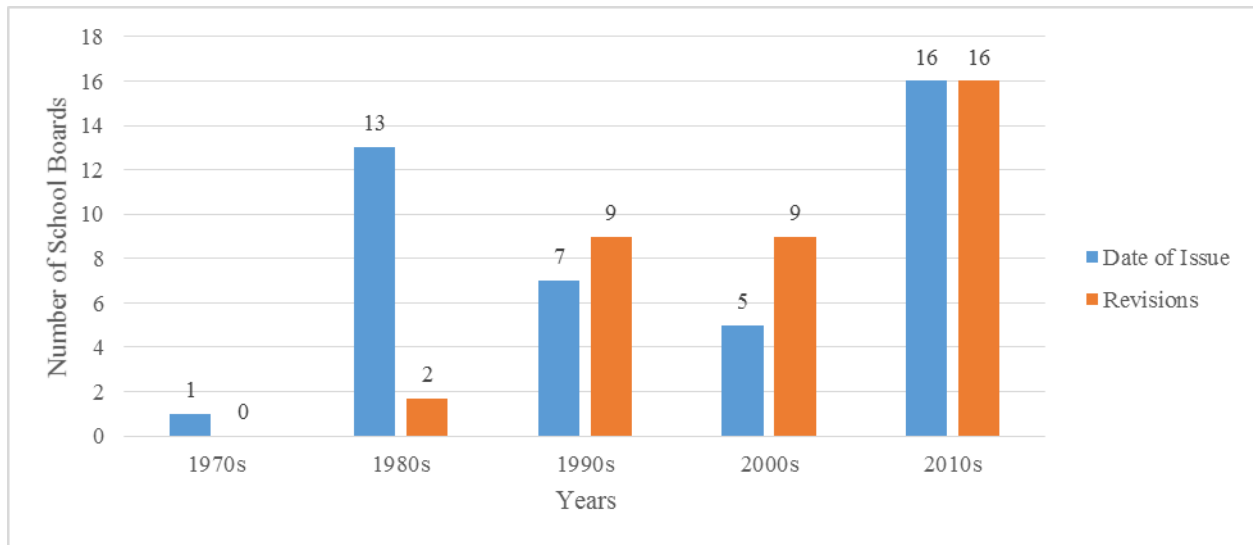


Figure 2. Issued and revised school board policies over the past four decades.

As can be seen in Figure 2, prior to the 1980s very little attention was given to child protection policies in BC school boards. However, updates to child welfare legislation in 1981 may have prompted 13 school boards to implement policies during this decade. When child welfare legislation once again updated in 1996, school boards were encouraged to create (N = 7) or review (N = 9) their existing policies. However, the most reaction came from school boards during the 2010s. This large response may have been due to the Aleksandr Plehanov trial and accompanying media circus in 2012.

Legal System

Ninety-two percent of analyzed boards cited legislation within their documents (Figure 3).

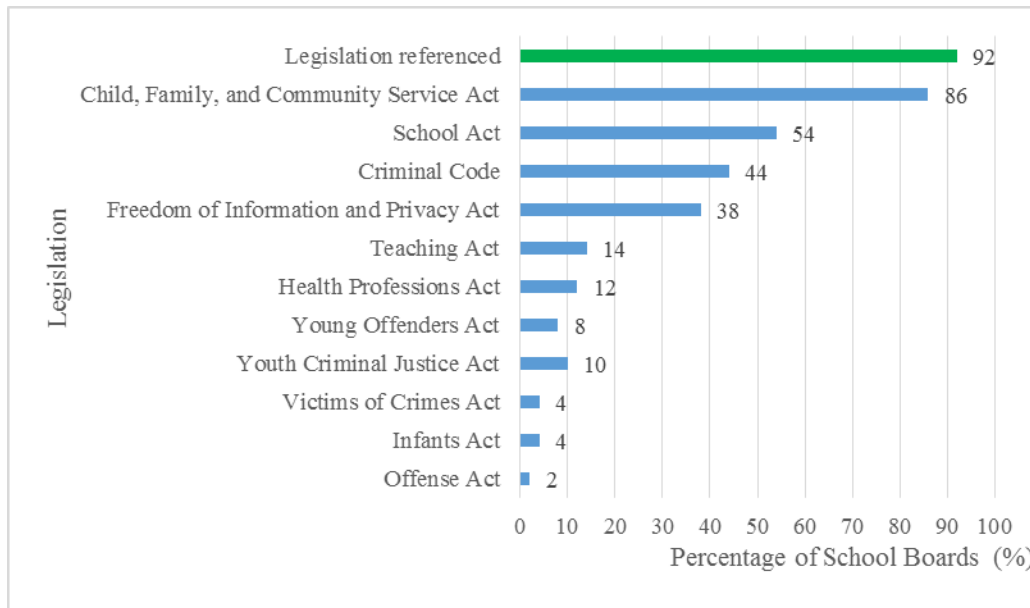


Figure 3. Legislation referenced by school board policies.

The Child, Family and Community Services Act was the most cited piece of legislation.

Approximately one-quarter of school boards with publicly available documents (N = 13) stated employees must report matters where they suspect a child needs protection as required by the Child, Family, and Community Service Act (1996). Table 5 outlines additional requirements in the act and the percentage of school boards that included this information in their policies.

Table 5

Requirements Under the Child, Family, and Community Service Act (1996)

Requirements	% of Boards
In need of Protection includes circumstances of physical harm, sexual abuse and exploitation or emotional harm towards a child by a child's parent, or by another person if the parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child. It also includes circumstances of parental neglect and abandonment—s. 13(1)	26
A person who has reason to believe that a child needs protection . . . must promptly report the matter—s. 14(1)	24
No person is personally liable for anything done or omitted in good faith in the exercise or performance or intended exercise or performance of a power, duty or function conferred under the Child, Family and Community Service Act—s. 101.	16
An employee who breaches the duty to report a child that may be in need of protection commits an offence and is liable to a fine of up to \$10,000.00 or to imprisonment for up to six months, or both—s. 14(1 and 6).	14
An employee who knowingly reports false information commits an offence under the act punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000 or, imprisonment for up to six months, or both—s. 14 (4 and 6).	10

A lower percentage of boards included detailed information on other requirements discussed in The Child, Family, and Community Service Act. Just over one third (38%) of analyzed school boards provided definitions for legal terms used within the documents. In total, 31 terms were defined. The 10 most commonly defined words were: child welfare (28%), sexual abuse (18%), physical abuse (18%), emotional abuse (18%), the police (16%), interagency protocol (14%), child (14%), superintendent (14%), sexual exploitation (12%), and neglect (12%).

Reporting Procedures

The following subsection includes findings on the types of procedures school boards had on child abuse, and the persons involved in making a report. Figure 4 shows the percentage of analyzed school boards with each type of reporting procedure.

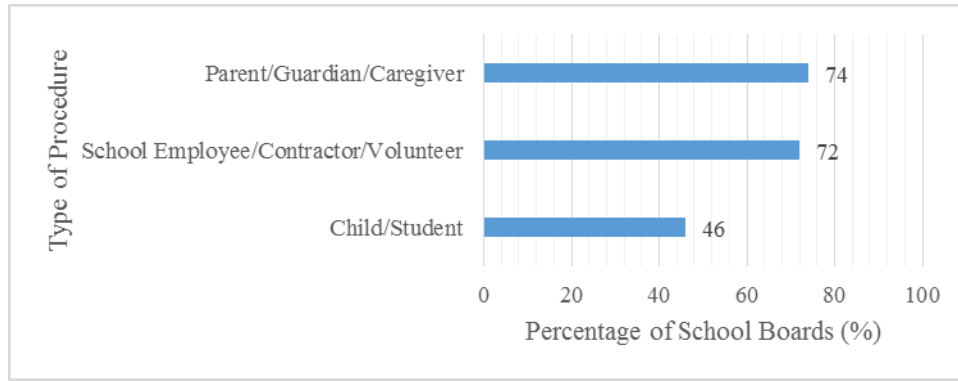


Figure 4. Types of procedures in school boards.

Approximately three-quarters of analyzed school boards included procedures to follow if school personnel suspect a child is in need of protection from a caregiver or school employee, while significantly fewer boards included procedures if the abuser was another student within the school.

Parent/guardian/caregiver. Seventy-four percent of school boards included procedures if the abuser was a parent, guardian, or caregiver. Table 6 shows the most common roles and responsibilities of those involved in the reporting process.

Table 6
Designated Roles and Responsibilities of School Personnel

Person	Responsibilities
Employee who suspects abuse has occurred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact MCYFS immediately • Inform Principal or designate
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start a file and maintain a record of the report to the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Include staff member's name, date, and time of report, name of the social worker (if known). • Provide assistance and support to the school staff member who made the report to MCFD • The principal will assist the investigation by providing access to the child and use of the school for interview purposes as requested. • Inform the Superintendent of Schools. • A copy of any reports or forms are to be sent to the Superintendent's office.
RCMP and MCFD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview all victims and investigate claims • Contact parents/guardians

When the abuser was a parent/guardian/caregiver every school board procedure reported employees were required to contact an intake worker with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). In addition, 74% of school boards stated the reporter must inform the school's principal after the report was made. Some boards suggested consulting with the school's principal prior to making the report. However, boards stressed if the principal was not available to consult, this should not hinder the employee's reporting. Just under one third of procedures (28%) included the information that should be provided via a telephone conversation with the children's aid society. Such information should include the following: demographic information about the child and family, details of child's disclosure, a brief description of the reason for suspicion, and name of the alleged offender. Moreover, 8% of procedures asked employees to take note of the intake worker's name and contact information and to ask whether the situation would be investigated. If an investigation was deemed likely, the reporting employee was instructed to ask for the time and location of the interview with the student. Twenty-two percent (N = 11) required employees to fill-out forms during the reporting process.

School employee/contractor/volunteer. Seventy-two percent of school boards included procedures if the abuser was an employee, contractor, or volunteer. Table 7 shows the designated roles and responsibilities of those involved in the reporting process.

Table 7
Designated Roles and Responsibilities of School Personnel

Person	Responsibility
Reporting employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact MCYFS immediately • Inform principal or designate (unless principal is the offending employee)
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the superintendent of schools. • A copy of any reports or forms are to be sent to the superintendent's office • Any duties assigned by the superintendent of schools to facilitate the investigation of the complaint • Responsible for the safety of children while they are attending school or participating in school activities
Superintendent of Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborates with the RCMP and/or child protections and/or child protection social worker. Coordinated investigations are conducted. • Informs the board of the allegations. • Investigates on behalf of the board of education, as part of his/her legal responsibilities under section 15 of the School Act. Before interviewing a student or other witnesses, the superintendent of schools or designate will consult with RCMP and/or child protection social worker to ensure that other investigations are not prejudiced • Document the results of any investigation performed at the direction of the superintendent. • Updates the parents/guardians on the outcome of the board investigation. • May dismiss, suspend, or otherwise discipline the accused employee for just and reasonable cause.
Secretary Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the circumstances indicate that a civil claim is likely to be made against the school board or its staff or volunteers as a result of the incident, the secretary treasurer is responsible for ensuring that a report is made to the School Protection Program
RCMP and MCFD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview all victims and investigate claims • Contact parents/guardians • Advise superintendent of schools on the status of the investigation and share relevant information regarding the investigation

Most school board procedures require the employee who suspects that another employee has abused a student to follow the same procedures as if the child had been abused by a parent or guardian. After reporting to the MCFD, the employee must inform the principal (or designate) of the report, who will then contact the superintendent. The reporting employee would contact the superintendent if the principal is the accused, or the principal is otherwise

unavailable. The superintendent becomes responsible for cooperating with MCFD and RCMP for the remainder of the investigation. For example, the superintendent of schools for Alberni School Board is responsible for working with MCFD and the RCMP to develop a plan which includes: the extent of immediate school board action; the method of investigation, including mutually acceptable timelines; the method of sharing information; the involvement of the school board in the investigation; and attempts to ensure the alleged abuser and the abused do not meet during the investigation (Alberni, 1998, p. 3). After the investigation of the MCFD and RCMP has been completed, the superintendent of schools for Alberni School Board has the authority to investigate any abuse allegations independent of whether the MCFD or RCMP are involved in formal criminal charges.

Three school boards—Greater Victoria, Peace River North, and West Vancouver—had slightly more convoluted procedures which had “employees who . . . suspect physical or sexual abuse of a child by a school board employee . . . must report their suspicions to the Principal,” then the “Principal shall immediately report to the Superintendent,” and, finally, the “Superintendent must report the matter to the Police” who will then “work with the police in investigating the matter” (Greater Victoria, 2013, p.1). These procedures are in accordance with the MCFD handbook, the *BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect*, which states “If the abuse occurs in a setting such as a school, youth custody or child care center, the head of the organization is responsible for responding” (p. 32). However, the school board documents did not include the MCFD caveat that “if the school employees believe a child is in imminent danger there is a legal duty to immediately report the concern to the local child welfare worker” (p. 32). This caveat is important because the potential time wasted relaying an abuse disclosure (student

to teacher, teacher to principal, and principal to superintendent) could result in the child experiencing further abuse.

Twenty percent of school boards (N = 10) of school boards (Campbell River, Cariboo-Chilcotin, Central Okanagan, New Westminster, Nisaga, Peace River South, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Saanich, Sea to Sky) do not follow BC child welfare legislation or MCFD procedures as outlined in the *BC Handbook*. Instead, the aforementioned boards' policies claim "School officials have the primary responsibility for dealing with these [reports of employee abuse] allegations; reports to Child Welfare Workers from school officials are not usually required"; and "the Superintendent may investigate allegations that a child has been abused by a volunteer or contractor or report the allegations to the Police" (Sea to Sky, 2012, p. 1). These procedures are not in accordance with s. 14 of the Child, Family, and Community Service Act, which stipulates "a person who has reason to believe that a child needs protection . . . must promptly report the matter" (i.e., child welfare intake worker) (Child, Family, and Community Service Act, 1996). In addition, the MCFD handbook reports that all individuals who suspect child abuse has occurred must report, regardless of whether or not the superintendent reports. The superintendent does not have the legal discretion to determine which cases are to be reported to child welfare or police services and which cases are internally investigated.

Child/student. Forty-six percent of school boards included procedures if the alleged abuser was another student within the school. Nechako Lakes School Board states "abusive behavior between children . . . generally involves an imbalance of power, where one child is significantly older than the other, or one of the children may be more vulnerable" (Nechako Lakes, 1998, p. 5) and the "decision . . . to report to a child protection worker is made on a case-by-case basis" based on the seriousness of the incident (e.g., minor altercations and aggression

between children does not constitute abuse). If an employee has reason to believe the child is in need of protection, the employee must follow the same procedures as if the child had been abused by a parent or guardian. Designated roles and responsibilities of school personnel are the same as if the abuser were a caregiver (Table 6).

Supports. Telephone numbers to local children's aid societies were included in 40% (N = 20) of board policies. Forty-two percent (N = 21) of boards included information on how to respond to children who have disclosed abuse. Thirty percent (N = 15) provided information on how to keep personal records on children suspected to be in need of protection. Ten percent (N = 5) of school boards included signs and indicators of abuse. Finally, some school boards informed their employees to take time to process personal feelings after the report was made and to speak with a counsellor or other trusted individual if need be. Some school boards, such as Burnaby, have delegated their Safe Schools department to debrief specific incidents with school board staff as needed and requested (Burnaby, 2012, p. 6).

Community Partners

Eighty-six percent (N = 43) of school board policies discussed inter-agency collaboration with child welfare or police services. Upon examination of the documents, it was revealed 62% (N = 31) of school boards mentioned creating an inter-agency protocol. Yet, as previously mentioned, only 28% of board protocols were found as a result of the web-search. Thirty-four percent of boards reported they will support victims of abuse and others who were affected by the report by referring them to counselling services in the community.

Training Opportunities

Sixty-two percent (N = 31) of school board documents stated ongoing professional development opportunities for staff would be provided. Most school boards reported it was the principal's or superintendent's responsibility to ensure training was provided. However, no information was included on who would provide the training (e.g., child welfare worker or school counsellor). In addition, 46% of school boards (N = 23) reported students would receive preventative training on child abuse.

Delegated roles and responsibilities. Depending on the school board, different employees were responsible for ensuring training was provided. Boards such as Haida Gwaii and Greater Victoria simply affirmed it was the board's responsibility to "provide Ministry of Education approved personal safety programs to educate students, staff and parents/guardians on protecting children from abuse" (Greater Victoria, 2013, p. 3). Others, such as Central Okanagan, Campbell River, and Cariboo-Chilcotin stated that the superintendent was responsible for these duties. Finally, Gold Trail and Delta put this responsibility in the hands of principals.

Dissemination

Forty-four percent of documents (N = 22) mentioned information would be disseminated to school employees. Figure 5 shows the types of dissemination most commonly discussed in school board policies.

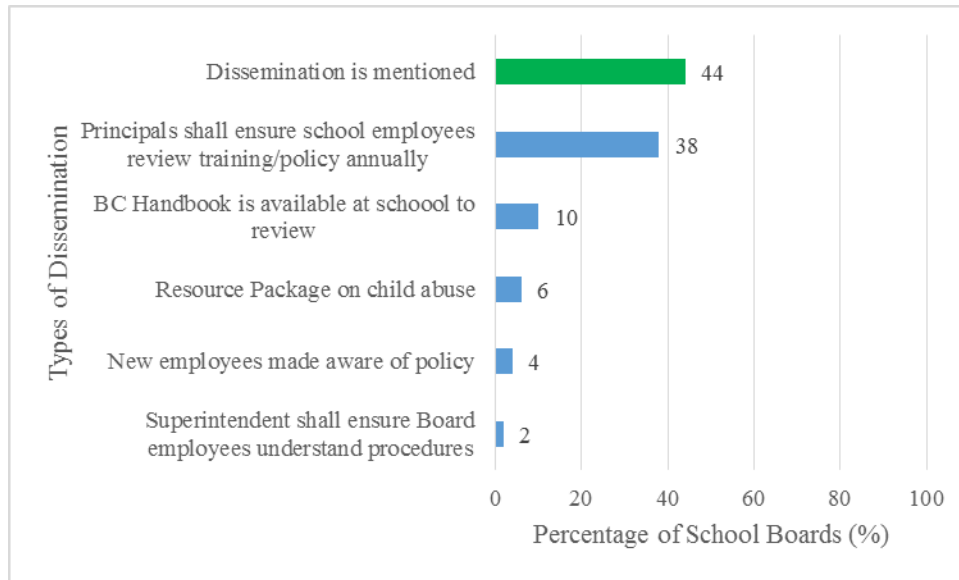


Figure 5. Types of employee dissemination

The most common form of dissemination required the principal to review training and board policy annually with school employees, with substantially fewer boards indicating other types of dissemination.

Thirty-four percent (N = 17) of boards included information about how certain information would be disseminated to parents. In regards to abuse prevention training, some school boards reported “parents will have the opportunity to view the materials prior to their presentation in class” (Richmond School District, 2012, p.1) and must sign a consent form indicating their child can participate. If the parent chooses to remove the child from the abuse prevention training, schools will inform parents of the options to deliver the material in a home-study environment (Peace River South, 2013, p. 9). School boards also included information on when parents will be updated concerning investigations regarding allegations of employee abuse. For example, some school boards reported that “in the course of an investigation, solely conducted by the school district employee, contract service provider or volunteer, parents shall be informed/consulted prior to an interview of the student” (Comox Valley, 2009, p. 1). In

addition, a few boards also reported parents “must be informed by school district officials of the allegation and the outcome of the school district investigation, unless there are special circumstances, e.g., relating to a child protection or police investigation, or endangerment of the child” (Cariboo-Chilcotin, 2011, p.5).

Discussion

Many Boards Failed to Implement Requirements Outlined by the Ministry of Education

As previously mentioned (see above, p. 14), the BC Ministry of Education sent a letter ordering all school boards to review their child protection policies to ensure they were comprehensive and up to date in 2010. Table 8 includes the elements of a comprehensive child protection policy, as outlined by the Ministry of Education, and the number of school boards (N = 50) that complied with each of the requirements.

Table 8
Elements of a comprehensive child protection policies

Elements	# of Boards
Statement of Purpose	43
Guiding Principles	74
Glossary/Definitions	19
Reference to Legislation	43
Protocols for contact, communication, and information-sharing among school boards, the Ministry of Children and Family Development or delegated aboriginal child and family services agencies, and the police should be clearly set out, accessible, and understood by all school board employees.	Found: 23 Indicated: 52
Delegated role and responsibilities to school board administrators and other employees regarding child protection	50
Procedures regarding annual training to make certain that all employees, contractors, and volunteers are aware of and understand how to carry out their legal duty to respond when concerns about child abuse or neglect arise.	31
Detailed information on how employees of the board are to respond when concerns about child abuse or neglect arise	21

The findings from the current study reveal many BC school boards did not follow the instructions provided by the ministry. This points to an oversight on behalf of the BC Ministry of Education. While the ministry did ask the boards to complete a follow-up survey (above, p. 14) one month after the letter was sent, it appears that no future updates were required.

Attention is needed to 13 school board documents. Greater Victoria, Peace River North, and West Vancouver School Boards need to address their documents regarding employee abuse. At minimum, these boards should update their procedures to include the MFCD caveat “if the school employees believe a child is in imminent danger there is a legal duty to immediately report the concern to the local child welfare worker” (Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2003, p. 47) so students are not placed in further risk of abuse while the abuse disclosure is making its way up the organizational hierarchy. However, a better solution is to revise these procedures so that the employee who first hears the disclosure is responsible for contacting child welfare or police services. Upon making the report, the employee can then either contact the principal (who would then contact the superintendent) or superintendent directly. From this point forward, the superintendent would be responsible for jointly investigating with police and child welfare services. This change in procedure would help to ensure the child is not put at risk of further abuse because of breaks in communication between administrative staff.

Campbell River, Cariboo-Chilcotin, Central Okanagan, New Westminster, Nisaga, Peace River South, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Saanich, and Sea to Sky school boards need to make more substantial changes to their procedures on child abuse by employees. These procedures indicate that the boards are capable of determining which reports are internally investigated and which reports are forwarded to police. School board administrators are not

trained in criminal or child welfare matters, and, as a result, boards *can* and *have* made mistakes when left to make their own judgements on these very sensitive issues. The above-mentioned school boards need to update their procedures to reflect that all reports of abuse need to be forwarded to child welfare or police authorities so they can determine whether or not abuse has occurred.

School Boards Need to Be Transparent and Accountable for Their Actions

It was surprising Coquitlam, along with nine other school boards (Abbotsford, Boundary, Central Coast, Coast Mountains, Conseil Scolaire Francophone, Cowichan Valley, Gulf Islands, Langley, and Rocky Mountain) did not have board documents on reporting suspected abuse uploaded to their websites. Compared with Ontario, BC had 3% more school boards without publically available policies or procedures. Moreover, over half of BC school boards reported having inter-agency protocols, but only 23% of board protocols were found as a result of the web-search. It is unclear why Coquitlam and other boards have chosen to leave the public in the dark in regards to their policies on child protection. Boards may not have a policy because there is already legislation and other documents on reporting, such as the *BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect*. Alternatively, Coquitlam and others may have procedures but consider these documents to be internal and private, and therefore do not share them publicly. For example, Rocky Mountain School Board reported “we have completed the review . . . and implemented the new requirement for annual training for all staff, volunteers and contractors” (Carrier, 2010). Yet, upon examining the school board website, there is no child protection policy. Neither of these options is acceptable; the status-quo, behind-closed-doors solution, which leaves the public in the dark, was shown not to work during the Plehanov trial in

2010. Openness and transparency is something that must start at the board level, and Coquitlam has chosen to waste this opportunity to lead by example.

Conclusion

Children have a right to basic physical and emotional support and an environment which nurtures their growth and development free from abuse and neglect. Moreover, the health and welfare of a child has been proven to be an important element which affects the student's experience and achievement at school. To this end, school boards must be committed to providing a safe and caring environment which is conducive to learning and the development of positive interpersonal interactions among students, staff, parents, and the community. It is a widely held belief that teaching is a "culture of care" (Nias, 1999, p. 66). This caring culture and the child-centered values of school employees place the school in an ideal position for ensuring child protection and promoting child welfare.

With proper training and supports, and with clear and explicit reporting procedures, teachers can do even more to help improve children's lives. However, child protection policies are also needed due to a more sinister reason. When incidents of teacher abuse occur or are suspected, school boards must jointly conduct investigations with multiple agencies, all the while respecting the rights of the accused, the victim, and the victim's family. As shown, these issues can cause great contention and potential harm to children if board policies do not reflect the standard of care required by legislation. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and school boards have a responsibility to ensure comprehensive policies are in place to address all of these issues.

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Appendix:

List of Analyzed School Boards and Links to Documents

School Board	Type of Documents	Link
Abbotsford	None	http://www.sd34.bc.ca/board/policies
Alberni	Administrative Procedure	http://www.sd70.bc.ca/Board/Policies/Documents/SD70%20Policies%20and%20Admin%20Procedures%20-%20last%20update%20Feb%205%2015.pdf
Arrow Lakes	Policy	http://sd10.bc.ca/board-of-education/sd-10-board-of-education-policy/
Boundary	None	http://www.sd51.bc.ca/index.htm
Bulkley Valley	Policy	http://www.sd54.bc.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20&Itemid=47
Burnaby	Policy	http://sd41.bc.ca/budgets_policies/manual/index.htm
Campbell River	Policy; Regulations	http://www.sd72.bc.ca/Board/Policies/Pages/default.aspx
Cariboo-Chilcotin	Policy; Regulations	http://www.sd27.bc.ca/policies-bylaws/
Central Coast	None	http://www.sd49.bc.ca/index.php?page=goalsbylawsandpolicies
Central Okanagan	Policy; Regulations	http://www.sd49.bc.ca/index.php?page=goalsbylawsandpolicies
Chilliwack	Policy; Regulations; Protocol	http://www.sd33.bc.ca/district/profile/policy-manual/students
Coast Mountains	None	http://www.sd33.bc.ca/district/profile/policy-manual/students
Comox Valley	Policy	https://sd71.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentList.aspx?ID=12578
Conseil Scolaire Francophone	None	http://www.csf.bc.ca/csf/a-propos-du-csf/politiques-du-csf/
Coquitlam	None	http://www.sd43.bc.ca/Board/Policies/Pages/default.aspx
Cowichan Valley	None	http://www.sd79.bc.ca/board-of-education/
Delta	Administrative Procedure	http://web.deltasd.bc.ca/content/about/boardofeducation/policy-procedure
Fort Nelson	Protocol	http://www.sd81.bc.ca/
Fraser-Cascade	Protocol	http://www.sd78.bc.ca/policymanual/main.htm
Gold Trail	Policy; Regulations	https://sd74.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentList.aspx?ID=22409
Greater Victoria	Policy; Regulations	https://www.sd61.bc.ca/board-of-education/policiesregulations/
Gulf Islands	None	http://sd64.bc.ca/district/policies-and-procedures/
Haida Gwaii	Policy; Administrative Procedure	http://sd50.bc.ca/board/policy-manual/
Kamloops/Thompson	Policy; Administrative Procedure; Protocol	https://bcscsd73.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentList.aspx?Id=1729&Search=1&Result=2
Kootenay Lake	Policy; Regulations	http://www.sd8.bc.ca/?page_id=83

Kootenay - Columbia Langley	Policy; Regulations; Protocol None	http://www.sd20.bc.ca/policies-procedures.html http://www.sd35.bc.ca/board/Lists/About_Us/PolicyDispForm.aspx?ID=1
Maple Ridge- Pitt Meadow Mission	Policy Administrative Procedure	http://www1.sd42.ca/board-of-education/policies-under-review http://www.mpsd.ca/districtinformation/procedure_manual.aspx
Nanaimo- Ladysmith Nechako Lakes	Policy; Administrative Procedure; Protocol Policy; Regulations	http://www.sd68.bc.ca/?page_id=534 http://www.sd91.bc.ca/sites/default/files/files/POLICY%20DOCUMENT%20June%20-%202014.pdf
New Westminster Nicola- Similkameen	Policy; Administrative Procedure; Regulations Policy; Regulations	http://district.sd40.bc.ca/primary-links/policy-manual-alphabetical http://www.sd58.bc.ca/html/Policies/policy-index.htm
Nisga'a North Okanagan- Shuswap	Policy; Regulations Policy; Regulations	http://www.nisgaa.bc.ca/board-of-education-policy/ http://www.sd83.bc.ca/About%20Us/Policy%20Manual
North Vancouver Okanagan Similkameen	Policy; Administrative Procedure; Protocol Policy; Regulations	http://www.sd44.ca/Board/PoliciesProcedures/Series300/Pages/default.aspx http://www.sd53.bc.ca/district/policies
Okanagan Skaha Peace River North	Policy; Administrative Procedure Policy; Administrative Procedure; Regulations	http://www.sd67.bc.ca/policies.asp?o_id=2555&PageSize=20&Page=1&order_by=&desc=0&q=child http://www.prn.bc.ca/policy/
Peace River South Powell River	Policy; Regulations Policy; Regulations Policy; Protocol	https://www.sd59.bc.ca/district/manuals-and-guides http://www.sd47.bc.ca/Board/Policies/Pages/default.aspx
Prince George	Policy; Regulations	http://www.sd57.bc.ca/Policies/Policies/Pages/default.aspx
Prince Rupert	Policy; Regulations; Protocol	http://www.sd52.bc.ca/sd52root/content/policy-and-regulations
Qualicum	Policy; Regulations; Protocol	http://www.sd69.bc.ca/Board/Policies%20and%20Bylaws/Pages/default.aspx
Quesnel	Policy; Administrative Procedure; Protocol	https://bcsd28.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingInformation.aspx?Id=127
Revelstoke	Policy; Protocol	http://www.sd19.bc.ca/PolicyManual
Richmond	Policy; Regulations; Protocol	http://www.sd38.bc.ca/District/About/sd%2038%20policy/FOV4-00011D9F/
Rocky Mountain Saanich	None Policy; Administrative Procedure	http://www.sd6.bc.ca/documents.php http://www.sd63.bc.ca/ourboard/board-policies
Sea to Sky	Policy; Administrative	http://sd48seatosky.org/board/bylaws-policies-

	Procedure; Regulations	regulations/
Sooke	Policy; Administrative Procedure; Regulations; Protocol	https://sharepoint.sd62.bc.ca/sites/public/policies/Policies/STUDENTS.aspx
Southeast Kootenay Stikine	Policy; Protocol	http://www.sd5.bc.ca/Board/Policy/manual/Pages/default.aspx
Sunshine Coast	Protocol	https://sd87.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentList.aspx?ID=119
Surrey	Regulations	http://www.sd46.bc.ca/index.php/policies-and-procedures
Vancouver	Policy; Regulations	https://www.surreyschools.ca/departments/SECT/PoliciesRegulations/Pages/default.aspx
Vancouver North Island	Policy	http://www.vsb.bc.ca/policy-manual
Vancouver Island West	Policy; Regulations	http://www.sd85.bc.ca/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=47
Vernon	Policy; Administrative Procedure	http://www.sd84.bc.ca/policy-manual-school-district-84
West Vancouver	Administrative Procedure	https://sd22bc.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentList.aspx?ID=3597
		http://www.sd45.bc.ca/about/admin-procedures/ap-300.html