

6. There may also be financial considerations. Is there adequate demand to offer the program economically? Are the program activities expensive to run? Does the choice option require specialized facilities or resources? Would new staff with specific skills need to be hired?

School boards are now required to consult with SPCs respecting the allocation of staff and resources in the school. This should help in developing school choice options within available resources.

### Committed to More Choice

BC has one of the best education systems in the world. The Government of British Columbia is committed to making it even better by:

- supporting more education choices
- providing parents with more opportunities for involvement

School boards are working closely with parents to offer more choices and ensure that the education system meets the needs of all students and their parents.



[www.bcsta.org](http://www.bcsta.org)



BC Confederation of  
Parent Advisory Councils

[www.bccpac.bc.ca](http://www.bccpac.bc.ca)



[www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca)



## Developing More Choices

**Within the K-12  
Public Education System**



Do you want a particular  
type of school or program  
in your district?

## More Choice in BC

In British Columbia, we want to provide more choices for parents and students.

For the first time, students in British Columbia can now attend any public school in the province where there is space.

That means students can choose to attend a school in their “home” district, in a neighbouring district or in any other district.

Many parents choose a local neighbourhood school for their child: it is convenient and school friends are close by.

Your family may consider other choices, such as: French immersion, fine arts, traditional, distance electronic learning at home, less formal “storefront” schools and apprentice programs — to name only a few.

For more choice information please see your local district web site or contact your local school district office. Local school boards are the best sources of the kinds of programs already available in BC.

Contact information for all BC school districts can be found on the AchieveBC web site at: [www.AchieveBC.ca](http://www.AchieveBC.ca)

## Steps to Increase Choice

For some parents and students, however, the existing choices may not be the best fit.

A parent, or a group of parents, may want to develop a type of school in their home district that is not currently offered.

Below are some steps for parents who want to increase the number and/or type of choices within their district.

These steps do not have to be followed sequentially — some parents may start by talking with their school district; other parents may start by doing some background research and checking the level of interest. Where you begin will depend on you and your local district.

1. Often a great place to start is by checking out other districts or public schools that are already offering the choice you are interested in. What did it take to get this option? The Parent Advisory Council (PAC), District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC), School Planning Council (SPC), school trustees, teachers, support staff or the principal of that school of choice are often happy to talk with interested parents. Researching at the library or online can also be very helpful.
2. How many parents and students want this option? How many students would attend the school or the “school-within-a-school” program? Is there enough demand? Are there any concerns? Talk with other parents, the SPC, PAC, DPAC, and the principal.

3. Parents will need to begin exploring the idea with their local school board. The school board is legally responsible for providing education programming. What do trustees or staff think of the idea? School board staff will be interested and have good educational expertise to share. Maybe the district is already planning to offer this choice?
4. Can the choice option you are exploring be offered within the BC public school system? For example:
  - Public schools must follow provincial curriculum standards.
  - Under provincial legislation, any faith-based education programs may only be provided through an independent school.

Is the proposal consistent with the BC *Human Rights Code* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*? Also, under the *BC School Act*, public schools must accept all students of school age.

5. If school board staff or the school board do not initially support the choice option, try to find out the reasons why. Would additional information help? What about successful examples of similar schools? Would a “school-within-a-school” model work? If the school board is not willing to offer the choice, the board can be asked to review the decision.