

# ADVOCACY 101



Presented by Susan Wilson

Thursday March 16, 2017

Kootenay Lake School Board Office, Nelson



# TODAY'S AGENDA

- Welcome and introductions
- Disclaimer
- What Advocacy is – and isn't
- Supporting your child
- When you need support
- Questions?
- Closing comments and remarks





**Hello**  
my name is



# SUSAN'S DISCLAIMER

This information is meant as a guide when acting as an advocate for yourself or another parent and is by no means a replacement for legal advice or direction. Every situation is different and everyone will have their own way of approaching a conversation.

Susan is a parent advocate with over ten years experience helping families and school districts across the province. Susan trained under the BCCPAC Advocacy Project which ended in 2009 due to a change in Ministry of Education funding priorities.



# WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

**Advocacy is described as speaking up in support of yourself or others.**

Parents are their child's natural advocate, making sure their child's rights, needs and opinions are respected.

Parents can also help make sure decisions affecting their child are made fairly.

People who learn to advocate for themselves approach problem solving in an appropriate way



# WHAT ADVOCACY IS NOT

- Advocacy is **NOT** about winning, punishing or firing someone – it's about coming to a resolution
- Advocacy is **NOT** about "me" – it's about the child



# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

- Your child may come home from school complaining about being treated badly or not wanting to go to school. They may also complain of stomach or head aches or their behaviour changes.
- You may be concerned about your child's progress in school, placement in an educational program or the administration of exams

**Now what???**



# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

Identify the problem

- Bullying?
- School progress?
- Staff behaviour?
- Whose issue is it, anyway?

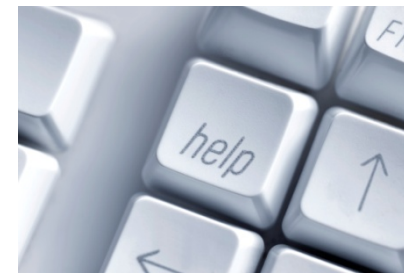




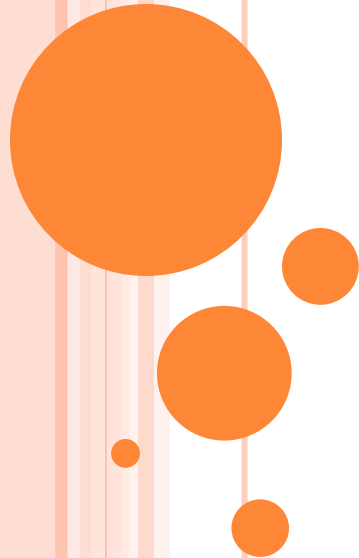
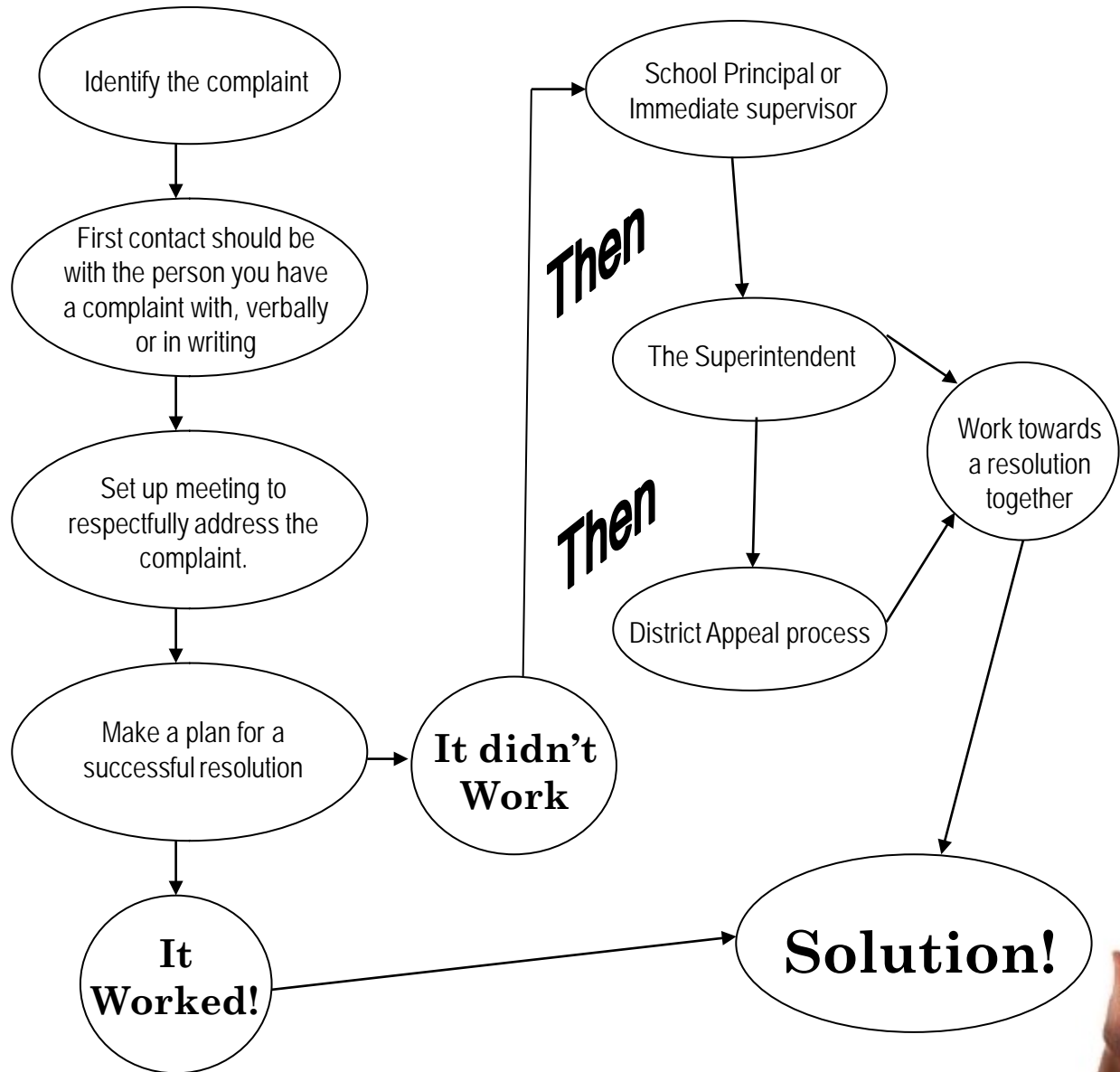
# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

Learn how the school and/or school district deals with concerns and complaints

- School Code of Conduct
- School handbook
- School District policies and processes
- Communication Protocol



# GENERAL RULE OF THUMB



# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

## SD 8 Policies

206 – Communications, Concerns, Complaints

300 – Student Conduct and Discipline

300.1 – Use of Illegal Drugs and Alcohol

## Pupil Transportation Manual

- Expectations of students on the bus
- Expectations of bus drivers

# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

When a meeting is called

- Be prepared
- Do I need someone with me?
- Follow up regarding actions promised during the meeting
- Be open-minded about a solution



# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

Will my child be targeted or otherwise singled-out if I raise a concern?

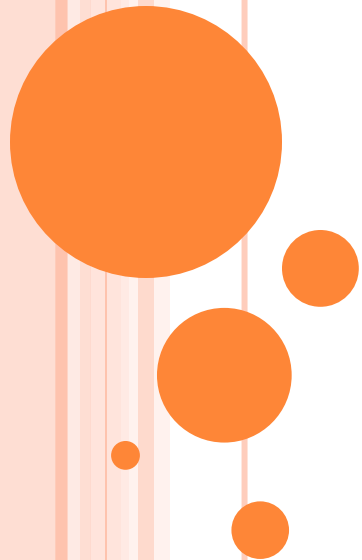
- Reach a resolution on the issue first, then express your concern about retribution
- Staff may feel powerless to deal with your child's unacceptable behaviour in fear it will be considered as "retribution"



# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

## Individual Education Plans (IEP)

- Does my child need one?



# WHEN YOU NEED SUPPORT

- I don't understand
- I didn't know this was going to happen
- I feel I'm in over my head

[sd8advocate@gmail.com](mailto:sd8advocate@gmail.com)



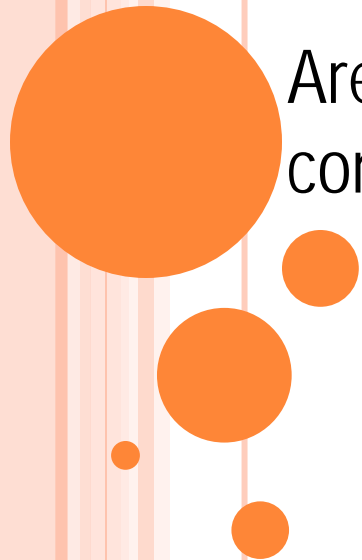
# WHEN YOU NEED SUPPORT

- Can my PAC help me?

Is the concern systemic or specific to a child?

- Can my trustee help me?

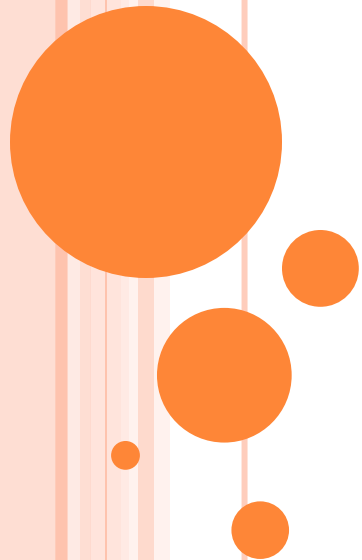
Are you looking for information or to launch a complaint?





# WHEN YOU NEED SUPPORT

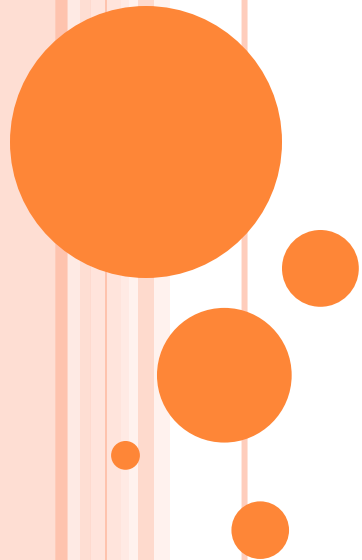
- I'm still unhappy with the decision
- When the issue is bigger than the school district





# CLOSING COMMENTS

- Name one thing you learned today
- What else would you liked to have learned?



# THANKS FOR ATTENDING

*Don't forget to fill out the evaluation forms!*

Susan Wilson

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