

## What you wanted to know about PEN, but didn't know who to ask!!

PEN is a large database with over 3 million records. PEN is a data source for Public, Independent, Offshore, Federally Funded Band Schools, StrongStart Centres and Public Post-Secondary Institutions. PEN is connected to school administration systems such as BCeSIS and this is where the student's record originates from the initial registration whether in a StrongStart Centre, Elementary School or the student is coming from out of the province.

## Why is data quality important?

Students transferring between schools can inadvertently be assigned two PENs and exam results can be attached to the wrong PEN causing delayed graduation and confusion for the student. Students can be denied access to Post-Secondary Institutions until their names are corrected on their transcripts, as well as, the extra printing costs to correct Dogwoods and transcripts that are produced with incorrect names. It also makes the 1701 Data Collection more efficient when records don't need to be reviewed for differences.

## Where does the official ministry record come from?

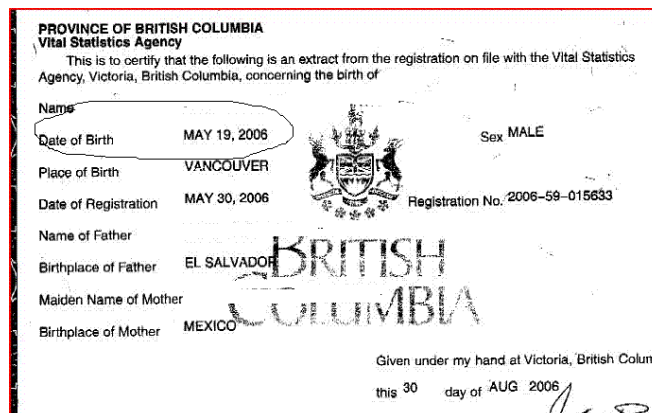
The original record is created by the school upon first registration of the student.

## If I make a mistake does it automatically get corrected in the ministry system?

The only way a student record can be corrected is by forwarding legal documentation to the ministry, correcting it in the school system does not automatically update the ministry record.

## What does the ministry see?

Often a birth date is entered from the date of registration on the birth certificate, not the actual birth date of the student. See illustration below.



PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Vital Statistics Agency

This is to certify that the following is an extract from the registration on file with the Vital Statistics Agency, Victoria, British Columbia, concerning the birth of

Name

Date of Birth MAY 19, 2006 Sex MALE

Place of Birth VANCOUVER

Date of Registration MAY 30, 2006 Registration No. 2006-59-015633

Name of Father

Birthplace of Father EL SALVADOR

Maiden Name of Mother

Birthplace of Mother MEXICO

Given under my hand at Victoria, British Columbia  
this 30 day of AUG 2006

To expedite the process often administrators will register a student in the system from the registration form filled out by the parent. The parent does not always enter the child's name as it legally appears on the birth certificate, which causes errors that need to be corrected down the road. 75% of the errors the ministry is correcting right now are Kindergarten students.

### **What can I do to get it right the first time?**

Only register the student into your school administration system using legal documentation. If you are on BCeSIS do a restricted query to ensure the student is not already in BCeSIS. Students may be in BCeSIS from previous years and the record maybe inactive. Do not assume the student has never been entered into BCeSIS. Kindergarten students may have attended a StrongStart Centre. Pages 15, 16 and 17 of the Standards Manual will be of further assistance.

### **Can I do data quality checks throughout the school year on my data?**

Yes, you can run your 1701 extract through PEN Web any time during the year to see if there are any differences between school and ministry data.

PEN Web: <https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/tsw/pen/>

Instructions for using PEN Web: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pen/schools/penweb.htm>

Don't know your password? You can request it:

<https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/tsw/tsw/submitReset.do?actionMapping=load&app=pen>

### **What if I have other questions?**

The PEN team is always willing to assist with any questions you may have, please email [pens.coordinator@gov.bc.ca](mailto:pens.coordinator@gov.bc.ca), call Ryan McLeod at 250-387-2351 or Tanya McLellan at 250-356-8020