



The Confederation of Parents' Advisory Councils of Saanich

Meeting Minutes

Microsoft Teams

September 17, 2020, 7 – 8:30 pm

Attendees

COPACS Executive

- *Monique Hiltz, President*
- *James Taylor, 2nd Vice President*
- *Craig Morton, Treasurer*
- *Phil Molloy, Recording Secretary; and voting member for Keating Elementary School*

Education Partners

- *Dave Eberwein, School District 63 Superintendent*
- *Jason Reid, Secretary Treasurer*
- *Nola Silzer, Trustee*

School PAC Representatives

- *Liz Keating, Kelset Elementary School*
- *Wendy Bird, Prospect Lake Elementary School*
- *Heather Hopčock, Deep Cove Elementary School*
- *Bonnie Doyle, Brentwood Elementary School*
- *Kelly Hoffman, Stelly's Secondary School*
- *Keely Kastrukoff, Bayside Middle School and Stelly's Secondary School*
- *Andrew Pape-Salmon, Cordova Bay*
- *Reet Dangerfield, Lochside Elementary School*
- *Leanne Turple, Lochside Elementary School*
- *Shu Franey, Bayside Middle School*
- *Kim Woodcock, Keating Elementary School*

Regrets

- *Ceilidh Fear, COPACS 1st Vice President*

1 Introduction and Territorial Acknowledgement

Monique Hiltz welcomed attendees and recognized that all Zoom participants were calling in from the unceded land of the Coast Salish Peoples and the traditional territory of the WSÁNEĆ peoples, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. Monique thanked everyone for taking the time to meet and noted the unusual nature of this year and this meeting due to COVID-19 and smokey airs caused by the wildfires in the United States.

2 Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve proposed by: Monique Hiltz; seconded by: Craig Morton. Agenda approved.

3 Approval of Last Meeting's Minutes

Motion to approve proposed by: James Taylor; Seconded by: Craig Morton. February 2020 meeting notes are approved.

4 Reports from our Education Partners

4.1 Superintendent

Dave Eberwein ceded the floor to Jason Reid to present a summary of the catchment boundary review, budget and funding.

4.1.1 Catchment Boundary Review

Jason explained that the previous night (September 16th) the Board of Trustees had approved a consultation plan for the boundary review. This plan outlines consultation events that will begin in the fall and will include school PACs. Jason noted that the focus of the review is on the south zone elementary schools and that the study is now available on the District's website (<https://www.sd63.bc.ca/leadership-governance/school-catchment-boundary-review>). Particular interest is being paid to Lochside, Cordova Bay, and Prospect Lake Elementary Schools. Jason explained any review to the catchment boundary will impact *future*, not current, families.

4.1.2 Enrollment

Jason noted that this year is an obviously unusual year due to the impact of COVID-19 on parents' decisions regarding student enrollment. The District had to plan for a decline (of approximately one-third) in international enrolment. Jason noted extreme fluctuations in domestic enrolment, even on an hourly basis. Generally, neighbourhood schools have seen a decline in enrollment of ~4% (but this is changing constantly). The distance education program (SIDES) is seeing significant growth in enrollment: from 350 students up to 900. Clearly, this has huge financial impacts. Every district is in a similar situation. Our district is lucky to have the SIDES program, since this option can be presented and means many good resources already exist.

4.1.3 Federal funding

Jason explained there are two sources of funding for schools, specific to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 1) In mid-august the safe return to school grant resulted in \$45 million for the sector. The District received \$ 562,000 targeted to specific areas including masks, cleaning supplies, increased cleaning frequencies, and technology.
- 2) More recently, \$2 billion was announced for School Districts nationwide. BC has received its first install of \$121 million. A second installment is expected of up to \$121 million but could be less. In early September, the Minister of Education announced how this fund will be distributed and what for. The Minister gave significant flexibility in how to use the fund, relating to pandemic and an option to use funds for remote learning.

Jason noted that the previous night (September 16th) The Board of Trustees had approved the School Districts spending plan for the funding, which will include teacher staffing for remote learning and increased spending in other areas, previously funded by provincial money (e.g. custodial services; Personal protective equipment). Some funding was also allocated to elementary and middle schools to

increase supervision time. The funding also allows staggered break schedules and to enable the supervision of cohorts in different areas of a school field. Some funds were also allocated to provide mid-day bussing at secondary schools to allow students to reach/leave schools at midday if they did not have classes in the morning/afternoon. The goal of this strategy is to reduce numbers of students at school who are not in class. Some funds were also provided to secondary schools to help with clerical/administration to help reorganize a new timetable accommodating 2 courses/day instead of 4.

4.1.4 Additional Comments

Dave Eberwein proceeded to further discuss funding, remote learning, and differences between the new school year and the experience of June 2020. The Provincial government tasked Districts with devising a plan to maximize in-class learning in cohorts during Stage 2 of the COVID19 response. At the end of July, the District drafted their plan. The biggest changes were proposed at secondary school to reduce cohort size (by supporting from 2 courses/day not 4). This plan was approved on 26 August.

The following week, the Federal government announced its funding. This funding enabled the District to create a remote learning stream. This information was emailed to parents with 4 options: home school; in-school; remote learning or distributed learning. Approximately 90% of students have returned to in-class education; 8-9% opted for remote learning; 1-2% opted for home schooling. Dave echoed Jason's observation that the numbers have been fluctuating rapidly and constantly, making it challenging to finalize plans.

The focus of remote learning is on core literacy and numeracy for elementary and middle schools and on academics for secondary schools.

The District will continue to monitor the landscape as it is changing constantly and rapidly. From Friday (September 18th) onwards, Dave expected the situation will become more stable, therefore making it easier to plan. At this point, the District will Communicate with remote-learning parents regarding teacher schedules. Students requiring instructional support team (IST) will have the same person for remote learning as for in-class learning to promote continuity.

Dave noted that a major difference in the remote-learning situation now from that experienced in the spring (when all students were home-bound) is that there were no students in school back then. Then, none of the schools' mobile devices were being used by in-class students; in contrast, now, most mobile devices being used in schools making it harder to loan out technology. As such, the District is seeking to *not* loan out mobile technology if possible, though they are working through requests now and offering devices where they are unavoidably needed.

Regarding the current low air quality and smokey conditions, Dave noted that the air health risk is and has been consistently at 10+ (high risk). Schools have reduced strenuous activities and kept students indoors when possible (but not to the complete neglect of outside activities, except for students with respiratory/medical conditions, who stay inside with supervision). Dave noted that schools have been endeavouring to keep doors and windows closed, and that the heating/ventilation system is quite modern in our School District (since it was upgraded over summer, with further upgrades coming in the fall). Overall, Dave explained the air inside the schools is healthier than outside and that it is likely safer inside school than many homes.

4.1.5 Questions for the Superintendent

- What is the expectation of parents when on school property regarding COVID19 procedures?
 - o School dependent but generally, wear masks when in close-contact with other people (students, staff, other parents), maintain social distances.
- Should we expect our kids to wear a mask at school?
 - o Harder because tend to touch their faces more
 - o Young children are poor vectors, so present less of a concern relative to older teen and adult.
 - o Elementary students not expected to wear a mask unless they are very adept at wearing one without touching their faces
- Lochside PAC learned about “Probiotic fogging” to clean classrooms, which was presented as a way to reduce COVID exposure. Is this correct?
 - o There are two kinds of foggers in the district: bleach-based and probiotic. The bleach-based is used in high-traffic areas. Relative to this bleach-based fogger, the Chrisal probiotic fogger is low odour, causes fewer allergic reactions, and reduces the presence of ‘biofilms’ on surfaces, which can attract unicellular organisms. It is also free of volatile organic compounds and safe for food surfaces, being 100% natural. It is used to eliminate viruses, and bacteria from surfaces. It is most useful in areas with sofas, draperies, bulletin board and other ‘soft furnishings’.
- What is the procedure and expectation regarding student-student contact at schools?
 - o The District is adopting an education process, not a disciplinarian approach
 - o The District is expecting all people, including students, to *learn* to physically distance. They are asking students not to touch while understanding that it is harder for younger children (in particular) to avoid contact. Dave noted again that younger children are poorer vectors than older children.
 - o Dave encouraged parents and students to talk to teachers if students are not comfortable with the contact they (the students) experience at school.
- Tips for parents?
 - o Acknowledge your own anxiety and recognize that that anxiety gets transmitted to children. Project hope, not concern.
 - o Model good emotional calmness and actions.
 - o Show appreciation to staff and teachers.
- What can PACs do to help?
 - o Build community
 - o Provide an opportunity to encourage parents to engage outside more
 - o Encourage parents to follow recommendations
- Will the remote learning model be similar to what was offered in June, different, or better?
 - o Different. In June it was hybrid model, which is fundamentally different now with 90% of students back in class.
 - District-based teachers will handle remote learning with focus on core academics, not elective areas (because those elective teachers are engaged with in-class students and/or facilities are not available to promote COVID-safe practices).

- SD63 is fortunate to have SIDES, which has academics developed for K-12, already in electronic format. The District is working with teachers to train them on those resources and using them as key academic resources.
 - What about French Immersion – is that part of remote learning?
 - Yes, the District is offering two teachers who can provide support for K-12.
 - Is there more detail on remote learning available on the Q&A pages?
 - Yes, biggest section in Q&A is on remote learning <https://www.sd63.bc.ca/Stage-2-QA> including the dates when students can transition in/out of the remote-learning option
- Zoom licenses – are they being used by the District?
 - The Province provided free Zoom license to School Districts in early May; however, several districts did *not* adopt them because of an inability to provide adequate support. Further, SD63 has already adopted MS Teams.
 - BCCPAC have arranged Zoom licenses for DPACs and PACs but this needs considerable logistical organization
 - Dave recommended that PACs connect with their school’s Administration to request the that Admin host PAC meetings on the school’s MS Teams accounts. Several schools (e.g. Clairmont) have already done this. Dave recommended this approach instead of Zoom.

4.2 Saanich District Board of Trustees

Nola Silzer expressed her gratitude for leadership shown by the District and staff over summer to allow schools to open safely. She also noted that the Trustees are keen to hear from parents.

5 New Business

- James Taylor noted that those affiliated with an elementary or middle school in the south zone should keep an eye on the catchment boundary review.
- Central Saanich and the CRD are beginning consultation on the Keating junction/overpass. One concern is with heavy traffic around Keating Elementary School.
- The municipality is looking to reduce speed in residential areas without a median line.
- School calendars for next year have been approved and are available online: https://www.sd63.bc.ca/sites/default/files/2021-22%20School%20Calendar_0.pdf
- There was a discussion about flexibility in the calendar to accommodate future shutdowns. James postulated that if we experience another COVID wave, we would slip back into another Phase 3; however, this things will be more efficient because we have the experience from the Spring, which will make for a quicker, more fulfilling transition to remote-learning.
- James reiterated the role of PACs to connect with parents, and encourage concerned parents to contact their PAC, COPACS, BCCPAC or the District directly.

6 Next Meeting

October 8th, 2020.

7 Adjournment

Motion to adjourn proposed by: Monique Hiltz; seconded by: James Taylor. Meeting adjourned to the annual general meeting at 8:30 pm.