



The Confederation of Parents' Advisory Councils of Saanich

## Meeting Minutes

Microsoft Teams

October 8, 2020, 7 – 8:30 pm

### Attendees

#### COPACS Executive

- *Monique Hiltz, President*
- *Kim Woodcock, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*
- *Craig Morton, Treasurer*
- *Phil Molloy, Recording Secretary*
- *James Taylor, Board Committee Representative*

#### Education Partners

- *Dave Eberwein, School District 63 Superintendent*
- *Jason Reid, School District 63 Secretary Treasurer*
- *Don Peterson, Saanich Teachers' Association*
- *Denise Jones, Saanich Teachers' Association*
- *Terri VanWell, Saanich South Trustee*
- *Elsie McMurphy, Saanich Board of Education*

#### School PAC Representatives

- *Wendy Bird, Prospect Lake Elementary School*
- *Heather Hopčock, Deep Cove Elementary School and Bayside Middle School*
- *Bonnie Doyle, Brentwood Elementary School*
- *Kelly Hoffman, Stelly's Secondary School*
- *Andrew Pape-Salmon, Cordova Bay*
- *Leanne Turple, Lochside Elementary School*
- *Ceilidh Fear, Keating Elementary School*
- *Julia Roemer, Royal Oak Middle School*
- *Jacqui Hipwell, Brentwood Elementary*

#### Regrets

- *Liz Keating, COPACS 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

## 2 Reports from our Education Partners

### 2.1 Superintendent

Dave Eberwein, supported by Jason Reid, gave the following report.

#### 2.1.1 Enrolment

The fluctuating enrolment numbers continued into October. There has been an across-the-board decrease in enrolment of 90 elementary, 75 middle, and 100 or more secondary students and an overall reduction in >200 full-time equivalent students. There has also been growth in distance education, most coming in from outside the district. Overall, there has been an *increase* in district enrolment.

The district expects financial pressure because of having to add staffing and other costs involved in distance education. The district will not reduce staffing in neighbourhood schools; as a result they need to access financial reserves, which may have implications down the road.

In response to parent questions, Jason noted:

- There is less funding per student in distance learning than in neighbourhood schools
- SIDES distance learning is different from Remote Learning. In remote learning, there is less focus on subjects beyond core academics (see September notes for reasons).  
Further, there is an intention to transition remote-learners back to in-school learning.

#### 2.1.2 Boundary Review

The primary objective of the boundary review is to better balance capacity and catchment populations in the South Zone and to thereby rectify an historical imbalance in registration in South-Zone elementary schools.

The main is Prospect Lake Elementary School, which is over-capacity. Previous intake rates for this school were 25-30 students per year; there are now ~50 new students per year.

The review will also consider other anomalies:

- The boundary between Cordova Bay Elementary and Lochside Elementary, which currently has strange and unnecessary dogleg. The District is proposing to change boundaries without changing sizes to a simpler, more logical shape.
- The boundary between Brentwood Bay Elementary and Prospect Lake Elementary, which is quite far north, meaning Brentwood Bay families sometimes have to go south.

Proposed changes would shift some enrolment from Prospect Lake to Brentwood Bay and provide a more logical boundary.

In response to parent questions, Jason noted:

- The boundary changes will be grand-parented through. The enrolment policy is that if you're in the school, you're in – and the same with siblings. Families will be kept together. The review only affects families coming into a new school. The changes will be implemented in the 2021-2022 year.
- The district does not anticipate having to do another boundary review to accommodate ongoing expansion in Brentwood Bay, primarily because Brentwood Bay Elementary has space to absorb additional enrolment and can be expanded if necessary.

### 2.1.3 Remote Learning

Dave presented slides on current numbers in total enrolment and those in remote learning:

- Elementary: 2801 total enrolment with 185 (6.6%) in remote learning
- Middle: 1525 total enrolment with 132 Remote (8.7%) in remote learning
- Secondary: 2215 total enrolment with 164 (7.4%) in remote learning

Staffing for remote learning is complete, including for French Immersion (but not at secondary level). Remote-learning teachers are doing well and have regular Friday staff meetings.

Transitions times for Kindergarten to Grade 8 will occur on October 13, November 16, January 4, and March 29. The concept behind remote learning is that it's meant to be a transitional program, allowing families to shift back to in-school learning when they feel ready. The District has tried to make it as predictable as possible; students will *not* lose their place at their school.

The transition dates are different for Grades 9-12: November 16 and February 1. Those still in remote learning after February 1 will be transitioned into the distance learning program at SIDES since the District cannot offer the full spectrum of Secondary courses via remote learning but can through SIDES. This approach is meant to promote graduation. The District anticipates many families will opt to return to school but noted that it is easier to find secondary SIDES classes than elementary SIDES classes.

Dave confirmed that *students will not be forced back into schools in January*. He encouraged any parents with questions to email [remote@saanichschools.ca](mailto:remote@saanichschools.ca)

### 2.1.1 Upcoming Election

New banner on website and election link ([election.bc.ca](http://election.bc.ca)). Some schools will be used as polling stations, but the COVID19 situation is being recognized:

- Elections BC's budget pays for additional sanitation costs

- Schools only used on weekends as polling stations and not during school week (students not present).
- There is a modification of process to reduce staff, allow physical distancing, supply sanitation stations and PPE, masks
- Increased mail-in ballots.

### 2.1.2 COVID19 Testing

Dave has been trying to answer the question: how fast does COVID testing happen for children? However, he has been unable to obtain information from Island Health (IH) (but will keep trying to). He noted that the gargling test is widely used except for very young children.

There was a discussion of recent experiences, which pointed towards an approximate wait time of 24-48 hours. It was also noted that:

- IH is inundated
- One cannot currently talk to someone at IH; instead one must leave a message then they call you back and set up an appointment *if the patient is symptomatic*.
- IH is testing 7 days a week
- One can now get a result texted to you, which is meant to provide faster results

An update is soon coming from the district to include:

- Key symptoms
- Who to call, when to call, what to do if your child is sick

Dave noted that the District's protocols have not changed regarding what would happen if/when a student receives a positive COVID test result. Each case would be evaluated individually to consider the context of exposure; potential for transmission etc.. If there is a suspected case (student or staff), they are sent home; get tested; and stay away while symptomatic. Student would be isolated in school until a parent collects them. Once they've been tested, Public Health dictates next steps, not the District. Communication templates are set up and the District promises transparency.

There followed a discussion of school cohorts, additional cohorts, and parents limiting the number of 'cohort groups' they are comfortable with across all activities (school, sports etc.).

There was another discussion of the air filtration system used in schools in the District. See September COPACS meeting notes for more details.

## 2.2 Saanich Teachers' Association

Don Peterson, supported by Denise Jones, provided a report for the Saanich Teachers' Association (STA).

There has only been one case of close-contact COVID transmission on the island, which occurred further north. Don noted that we must not get complacent and that eventually we will see a transmission. At that point we will need to know what we are doing and to follow protocols to be as safe as possible. Parents are encouraged to talk to their PAC, teachers, and administrators about protocols, including asking why we are doing things the way we are.

In response to parent questions, Don noted:

- The main point of concern for parents is ensuring that custodial staff is replaced when sick to ensure classes are cleaned. If parents are concerned they should speak to Admin at their school.
- If people, including teachers, are interacting with people not in cohort, they should be physical distanced then, if that distancing is not possible, wear masks.

Denise noted that media releases are coming on Facebook page relating to the election and that the STA is looking forward to collaborating with COPACS on election events.

### *2.3 Saanich District Board of Trustees*

Teri VanWell and Elsie McMurphy provided a report for the Saanich District Board of Trustees. Terri summarized a recent Zoom meeting to learn and share with other boards of education. The meeting included a speaker, Anthony McLane, who was an actor and is now an inspirational speaker and freestyle rapper. His talk was on antiracism and included things that could be done in our school boards. Take-homes included: treating each person as an individual; working to dismantle racism; advocating engagement and not sitting on sidelines; trying to facilitate even in small ways; speaking up when someone says something offensive; discussing racism in your families; and taking time to education yourself with racial issues.

At end of the month the Board is attending Provincial council, where motions to have BCSTA advocate with government. One motion is about antiracism and bringing it to forefront in our schools.

Elsie recognized we are in a "new and interesting education environment". She also thanked COPACS and members who help the school board for providing insight to their deliberations, including the ongoing policy review. She offered COPACS the opportunity to ask questions, and to offer advice to Elsie or Terri, who could relay that information back to the Board.

There was a discussion about outdoor spaces and celebration of indigenous culture, which Elsie recognized would be useful in ongoing revisions to the Board's strategic plan.

## **3 Approval of Agenda**

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

## 4 Approval of Last Meeting's Minutes

Motion to approve proposed by: Monique Hiltz; Seconded by: Kim Woodcock. September 2020 meeting notes are approved.

## 5 COPACS Executive Reports

### 5.1 *President*

Monique noted that many of her updates were covered by Dave's report. She also noted that she has been having very transparent conversations with Board and getting very quick responses from them. She also flagged the Districts ongoing mental health initiative, 'Mental Health Snapshots', which are being posted weekly.

### 5.2 *Vice Presidents*

No additional update.

### 5.3 *Treasurer*

No transactions this month other than a \$2 admin fee.

### 5.4 *Board Committee Representative*

James Taylor covered the following key points from the latest Committee Day and Finance, Facilities and Technology meeting:

- The School District has a business company, which was set up several years ago. It provides training for incoming international students. The Board is split ethically and ideologically regarding whether a public school system should be providing this service. There is an ongoing debate regarding whether the company should be dissolved. This decision was postponed for a year. If we do more distant learning, the District may need this company.
- There was a discussion about a White Road property, which was gifted to the District 150 years ago but with which they have done nothing. The property has become a liability. At community meetings, people spoke strongly about using it for early learning so the District is proposing to develop it into an early learning centre, with focus on outdoor learning. The district would not run the development but would need to partner with a business.
- The policy review is an ongoing effort by the Board. COPACS is encouraged to follow reviews of policies relevant to parents and communicate issues to the review committee. There was a discussion about parents taking ownership of specific policies including:
  - Earthquake and Emergency Preparedness
  - Administrative Procedures (140) – Technology and Information use.

There was a varied discussion of:

- Indigenous training for teachers at a Professional Development day by Sheralyn Macrae, which covered cultural competency and the curriculum. Training has also been provided for district staff, and could be provided for parents.
- School plans have been updated, and are largely a simple extension of last year's plans. PACs are encouraged to talk to their administrators about their school's plan.
- COVID is causing delays to the Foundation Skills Assessment for Grades 4-7.

## 6 Old Business

### 6.1 Zoom and MS Teams

COPACS has opted out of the BCCPAC Zoom license in favour of MS Teams licensing through school administrations.

## 7 New Business

### 7.1 COVID Experiences and Possible Need for COPACS Forum

There was a discussion about COPACS providing a safe place for parents to express experiences associated with COVID testing, such as a private forum for parents. The goal would be to help COPACS stay in touch with parents' experiences and to guide any next steps such as reaching out to Minister of Health. COPACS does not want a forum that has to be actively monitored; rather, we wish to gather and share sharing experiences to help us to be more responsive, and advocate for parents. There was a suggestion of periodic surveys of parents. The counterpoint to this was that, as volunteers, it could be too much work to organize and manage. The discussion remained open but folks were encouraged to connect with PACs and reach out to COPACS via email with their experiences.

### 7.2 Policy 1100

The Policy 1100 meeting is held annually to bring together PAC executive, trustees, administrators, and district staff. The group was asked to consider any topics for this year. The only suggestions were 'the safe use of technology by students, technology addiction, and related health effects', and mental health.

### 7.3 BCCPAC summit

This year's BCCPAC summit is taking place online on November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

### 7.4 Provincial election

See above.

### 7.5 Parent Education Night Invitation

Parents are invited to an education night on 'Kids in a virtual world – Parents as Education Career coaches' by Colleen Mcnamee. More details available online:

<https://copacs.sd63.bc.ca/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=224#p230>

## **8 Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn proposed by: Ceilidh Fear; seconded by: Monique Hiltz. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Next Meeting Scheduled for: November 12th, 2020