

COPACS



The Confederation of Parents' Advisory Councils of Saanich

Meeting Minutes

Microsoft Teams

November 12, 2020, 7 – 8:30 pm

Attendees

COPACS Executive

- **Monique Hiltz**, President
- **Liz Keating**, COPACS 1st Vice President
- **Kim Woodcock**, 2nd Vice President
- **Craig Morton**, Treasurer
- **Phil Molloy**, Recording Secretary
- **James Taylor**, Board Committee Representative

Education Partners

- **Dave Eberwein**, School District 63 Superintendent
- **Tim Dunford**, School Board Trustee
- **Alicia Holman**, School Board Trustee
- **Don Peterson**, Saanich Teachers' Association
- **Dean Coates**, Canadian Union of Public Employees

School PAC Representatives

- **Wendy Bird**, Prospect Lake Elementary School
- **Heather Hopčock**, Deep Cove Elementary School and Bayside Middle School
- **Bonnie Doyle**, Stelly's Secondary School
- **Andrew Pape-Salmon**, Cordova Bay Elementary School
- **Leanne Turple**, Lochside Elementary School
- **Ceilidh Fear**, Keating Elementary School
- **Julia Roemer**, Royal Oak Middle School
- **Jacqui Hipwell**, Brentwood Elementary School
- **Jeremy Lawrence**, affiliation not provided

Guest attendees

- **Ryan Lacasse** Health and Safety Manager for SD63

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 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: Monique Hiltz; Seconded by: Craig Morton. October 2020 meeting minutes are approved.

4 Presentation by Ryan Lacasse

Ryan Lacasse provided a summary of emergency preparedness in the district, including with whom various responsibilities lie. He kindly provided the following notes.

Emergency preparedness is a collaborative effort between municipalities, managers, staff, students, and parent groups.

The majority of implementation and guidance comes from the BC government document "Emergency Management Planning Guide for School Districts and Authorities". This lays out general responsibilities regarding:

- Mitigation and Prevention
- Planning and Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery

Specifically, regarding equipment and supplies the plan says the following:

"Part of the planning process includes identifying documentation, equipment and resources to provide first aid, shelter, comfort, basic rescue and care for students and staff for a period that could range from a few hours to a few days. Work with your parent committee and community partners in gathering and safely storing equipment and resources, which could include items listed in the Templates section."

As part of this long-standing planning process the school PACS have supplied the food and water supplies, emergency supplies, and comfort items (i.e. generators, pop-up tents etc.). The school district has supplied the ground preparation for storing the items, as well as the storage container itself. The school district is also responsible for any training of staff members that are part of an emergency response team.

I have attached an emergency supplies list that is sent to all principals as part of their emergency response package in September. The list contains "recommendations" for emergency preparedness kits, but a discussion between principals and PAC representatives should occur to provide the necessary supplies for their individual school.

Table 1. Emergency preparedness responsibilities

Person/group	Responsibility
Superintendent	Report emergencies, disasters, and critical incidents to the Ministry
Principals	Safety of students. School based Plan. Conducting Drills.
Teachers/support staff	Understand the ERP and perform designated tasks.
Parents	Participate in the development of the plan, aware of how plans work, up to date student information, participate in drills when invited to do so, encourage students to take it seriously, help acquire and organize emergency supplies
Volunteers	Knowledgeable of plan, report any incidents if offsite
Local Authorities	EOC and first responders

Questions to Ryan

- In the case of an emergency during school time and parents are separate from and unable to access the school, what happens? Is that covered in the emergency drills?

Many considerations are incorporated into the plan and will continue to evolve during ongoing reviews. There will be particular focus on maintenance of communications. The District is also doing well at keeping up on planning for supplies and buildings, and meeting current requirements.

- How long is staff expected to stay at the school in the case of an emergency? This seems especially relevant to staff who have their own family. And at what point do social services get involved?

Within the Province at large, the emergency operation centre has several layers. In SD63, the EOC will be run out of the district's school building – where communications will be run through radio transmission, and the focus will be to coordinate staffing. At a certain point the EOC becomes municipality run, and then ultimately Province run.

- Who is responsible for the procurement of supplies?

The plan is for the school district to work with schools and PACs to buy emergency supplies. The district will have to work with PACs on a case-by-case basis, and review each school's situation. The district expects to be able to help with suppliers' discounts.

Alicia Holman added that Central Saanich is responsible for emergency response on the Peninsula; further, Emergency BC is based in Keating. The main risk issue is water supply since the municipal water pipes are shallowly buried and liable to rupture in a large earthquake. In an emergency, water would be trucked in, but water remains a key vulnerability.

5 Reports from our Education Partners

5.1 Superintendent

5.1.1 Schools Update

Dave has been able to visit half the schools in the district so far. Has particularly enjoyed joyful trips to Elementary schools. Also had many interesting and in-depth discussion with students at Secondary schools.

Dave noted that while necessary accommodations have been made in recent months, the question remains of where and how do we go back to 'normal'? What does the education of the future look like? Over the last few months we've learned a lot.

Dave also discussed the Children's Development Centre, a small school on the south side of the district, which has been used for students who have challenges learning in schools. This site is being rebuilt, with developments taking place around the existing school. The upgrades will be built to LED Gold standard. The Beacon Community Services will be part of the community area being built there. The new structure is scheduled to open next September.

5.1.2 Enrolment

Dave provided another updated on enrolment rates. It has taken much longer than usual to project enrolment rates. Overall, enrolment is down at brick-and-mortar schools. Normally the district would reorganize buildings and staffing to reflect these enrolment changes (on average, the district usually budgets \$100,000 per 25 students), but not during a pandemic. Many more students have enrolled at SIDES – triple the usual rates. This has helped the district's bottom line; however, these enrolment rates cannot be sustained in the long run. Currently, the financial shortfall is being covered by unrestricted surplus from previous years and federal money; this funding structure is unsustainable. Next September is very hard to forecast due to COVID uncertainty. The district will continue to monitor the various dynamics to try to budget for next school year.

5.1.3 Boundary Review

Dave credited Jason Reid for having done a tremendous job fine-tuning the catchment boundaries. Adjustments will have small impact on families, especially since they are being grand-parented in. There will be minor adjustments on the east side of the district by Cordova Bay, Lochside, Royal Oak, the Highway, and up towards Brentwood Bay. The changes are going to the Board for review and implementation for next fall.

5.1.4 Remote Learning

Dave provided an update and forecast to the district's remote learning program. This program is funded by a federal grant, which ends this year and there is no word yet about it being extended. There will be an interim/transitional program throughout the province in which remote learners transition back to in-class learning.

The vast majority of remote learners who are moving back are doing so Monday November 16th. They will do so with an interim report card from their remote-learning teacher, which will be very similar to a normal report card. This will provide a status update on what each student has learned, where, and how. Dialogue will continue between the in-class teachers, the remote learning teachers and students.

The district expected to be notified by parents if they did or did not want to transition back to in-class instruction last week (w/c November 1st) – ahead of the transition date. This deadline allowed dialogue and discussion among students and teachers and should provide a smooth transition for those returning to elementary and middle schools.

All Secondary-school remote-learners will be transitioning to SIDES (not back into the school). This will allow the students access to a more rounded program.

5.1.5 Questions for Dave Eberwein

There was a question about air filters used in the school portable buildings. Portables have forced air and have replacement filters. If the portables do not yet have MERV 13 filters, they will.

There was a question about whether remote learning will continue through to the end of the school year. Readers are referred to previous months' COPACS minutes for a more fulsome discussion of this topic. Briefly, at Secondary schools – all students will transition to SIDES until the end of the school year unless they have already gone back to in-class instruction. For elementary and middle-school students the expectation is that remote learners will transition back into in-class instruction; however, it is recognized that this could take until the end of year. Beyond that, we do not know.

There was a question about whether students can transition *into* remote learning. Not at the moment, but that could change. Special-case families, e.g. those that have immunocompromised members should speak to the district if they have concerns and wish to pursue remote learning.

It was noted that Rob Fleming (former Minister of Education) has not ruled out school closures and the question was posed if there is a plan for that situation. In short, yes. Dave summarized the phases of BC's Restart Plan, which includes Phase 1 (normal); Phase 2 (the phase we're currently in) and Phase 3 (what we experienced with at-home learning in late spring). There may be area, regional, or provincial shut downs, which would be similar to Stage 3. The district is well prepared for shutdowns using various learning platforms, informed by the spring experience, leveraging the SIDES curricula, and using resources added to the Saanich Learns website. Dave noted that last week the district had to prepare for the shutdown with two weeks' notice – during vacations when many employees were vacationing. This time much more preparation would be possible, and starting from a more refined base.

5.2 Saanich District Board of Trustees

Tim Dunford and Alicia Holman gave a short report on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Tim expressed his appreciation for all that COPACS does, especially in current COVID times. He noted that many other districts' Boards do not enjoy the same level of support and interest from their parent community.

Tim commented on:

- The catchment boundary review and noted that it has been very well received.
- District finances, noting that the district is in difficulties largely due to the decline in international students, and increased staffing at SIDES. He noted that revenue from SIDES is not equivalent to bricks-and-mortar schools, and that budget projections will be challenging for next year. He suggested the district may again look at the use of unrestricted surplus – but also noted that this tactic is not sustainable and that Provinces and Districts will need to consider alternative options in future years.
- The policy review, which he noted is almost reaching the end of its formal process. The review was instituted over a year ago, led by the Policy Review committee. Tim noted that parents have had a say throughout the process via COPACS' participation. The review was a very large task but coming is before the Board for incorporation into the new policy manual next week when the old policies will be rescinded.
- The Board's AGM, which was last week (November 2nd), in which new officers were elected.
- The Board's Strategic plan for the next 5 years. This plan will require lots of work in the near future and COPACS will be heavily involved in the process. A request was made that the Board consider preparation for "chronic stresses and acute shocks" that could affect our district and be open to all possibilities of disruptions to learning and associated infrastructure, including via online work. More generally, the request was made that the strategic plan considers "resiliency" writ large.
- COVID cases. Tim noted that recent COVID cases were discussed at the recent Board Chairs' Call with Vancouver Island Trustees Association. They discussed the recent exposures in two Nanaimo high schools. The Chair said that the Board and the District are dealing with the exposures in a very calm, deliberate and planned way. It was also noted that appropriate language is very important, e.g. "outbreak" vs "exposure". Tim also reference Dr. Henry and her team who have said that based on the school experience province-wide, schools are not a major transmission agency with the existing protocols in place. Tim concluded by noting that while we (SD63) are currently have no outbreaks or exposures, we need to be prepared for when they do occur.

Tim was asked how parents find out about the policy review and implications for them (e.g. Policy 1100). Tim suggested a presentation would be made for COPACS and noted that one

aspect of the review was to improve the online searchability of the new policies and administrative procedures.

Dave noted that the Board needs to approve the policies first (due to occur on Wednesday 18th November); however, a communication strategy would be developed to unveil the new policies. The new policies and procedures would available be on the district's website. Once they get posted, Dave would talk to Monique to arrange a presentation for COPACS. Dave noted that most relevant components for parents would now be in administrative procedures.

Alicia Holman added that the Board supported the superintendent in the appointment of a new Principal at Brentwood Bay Elementary School – Rae Dennett – and noted that the Bayside Vice Principal will also moving to Brentwood Bay Elementary School. Finally, Alicia commented that the Keating Flyover plan is developing and that the community is waiting to see the plans and to participate in any review

5.3 Saanich Teachers' Association

Don Peterson noted that the BC Teachers' Foundation and labour board might be in the news in the next few weeks because, in several school districts (but not ours), there is disagreement over COVID protocols. Don did confirm that there are currently no problems in Saanich.

Don expressed his appreciation for the evening's conversation. He explained that there is little that can be done to fully *avoid* exposure in schools because it is simply not possible to completely remove *all* risk of COVID getting into schools (e.g. asymptomatic sufferers who only discover they have COVID after having attended class). What we *can* do is avoid turning exposures to outbreaks. Don strongly encouraged parents to make sure they and their children are following protocols and not to be complacent. He advised that that if parents are aware of their school protocols, follow them; if not, ask PACs or Admin.

6 COPACS Executive Reports

6.1 President

Monique provided a written report, which accompanies these minutes. She also commented on communications received from the BCCPAC regarding the parents' complaints procedure. All schools are supposed to have reviewed these procedures with parents. BCCPAC have provided a document to help parents navigate this process:

https://bccpac.bc.ca/upload/2016/05/bccpac_universal_concerns_procedure_0-1.pdf Further, all PACs should know this process. Monique also noted that she will be attending the BCCPAC conference this year and requested that if anyone else wishes to attend to let her know.

6.2 Vice Presidents

Kim noted that she attended the Board AGM last week, in which were appointed a new board chair, vice chair and chairs of other committees.

6.3 Treasurer

Craig presented a financial update, noting only a few expenses: \$150 for the BCCPAC membership and two months of bank fees. Current balances are:

- Operating A/c: \$5890.76
- Gaming A/c: \$4229.17

There was a suggestion to send gifts to the district on behalf of COPACS but, noting that it was unlikely the district could accept gifts, it was deemed more appropriate for COPACS to express gratitude to constituent PACs. Andrew Pape-Salmon agreed to lead this initiative.

6.4 Board Committee Representative

James provided a summary of the following points:

- Saanich is soon to undertake a traffic-pattern review that may affect KÉLSET Elementary school, so stay tuned.
- Regarding the Keating Overpass development, James recommended that parents reach out to Jason Reid at the district, who has been trying to determine how and why the planners chose their designs. More information is also available at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/transportation-infrastructure/projects/highway-17-keating-cross-overpass>
- There was also a discussion of engaging with key politicians such as Adam Olsen.
- Budget season is coming up in which next guiding budget principles are approved.
- James drew people's attention to Education Directions, where there is lots of good information for early-career planning <https://careered.sd63.bc.ca/>

7 Old Business

7.1 Policy 1100

There was a lengthy discussion about the implications of the policy review on Policy 1100. The discussion revolved around how the content of Policy 1100 is to be allocated across policy and administrative procedure (AP) documents. The key concerns raised were:

- To seek clarification on where the key components of Policy 1100 will be featured in the new policy manual
- That the core sentiment of Policy 1100 should not be lost or diminished as a result of the review
- That the implications of content reflected in AP documents could have different 'weight' or validity (e.g., voting implications) in the future.

It was agreed that these concerns would be brought to, and discussed with, the School District at the next COPACS meeting. Further, it was noted that we (COPACS) will be able to review

the changes after the Board approves the policy review. Any concerns can be raised with the District and we can work with them and the policy committee chair to address those concerns.

8 New Business

8.1 Parent Education Night Invitation

Keating PAC requested financial support for a speaker to present on Parenting by Dr Allison Rees. Ceilidh Fear motioned for \$375 to cover the speaker's costs under the stipulation that the meeting be accessible to parents throughout the district. Monique Hiltz and Craig Morton both seconded the motion. Voting yielded unanimous support and the funding request was approved. Information on this event will be posted on COPACS' website.

8.2 Hot Lunches

There was a discussion about whether any PACs had been able to reintroduce hot lunches. It was suggested that Hot Lunch coordinators contact Keating Elementary PAC's Hot Lunch leaders (see <https://keating.sd63.bc.ca/mod/resource/view.php?id=4810> for contact details), who have developed a good reintroduction plan. It was noted, however, that this plan has not yet been implemented and awaits authorization from the district.

8.3 Deep Cove PAC Donation

Deep Cove's PAC donates to a "PAC in need" each Christmas and they are seeking suggestions for beneficiary PACs. Please reach out to them if you wish to suggest a PAC.

9 Adjournment

Motion to adjourn proposed by: Monique Hiltz; seconded by: James Taylor. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Next Meeting Scheduled for: December 10th, 2020

President's Report

Highlights from the past month...

-COPACS joined a communication platform called "Slack", where many other districts engage in private conversations about their struggles or concerns with their district. This will allow us to idea share and gain a better understanding and perspective of what other districts are encountering/ facing. This on-going dialogue will allow us to better communicate our concerns directly to BCCPAC, if needed.

-The Saanich Teachers Association released a call to action statement to local candidates requesting a commitment to better health and safety regulations in schools. As a result of that statement, I collaborated with Denise Jones, the political action rep for the STA to create a series of questions addressing our aligned concerns. Questions were distributed to each potential candidate prior to Election Day, with request to respond via video. COPACS received one response From Adam Olsen.

-Superintendent Dave Eberwein and I had a meeting about Policy 1100 (new name pending) and mutually decided on the topic of the importance of mental health and well-being. The meeting will take place virtually this year and the invitation to attend will be extended to all parents that express interest. The date the meeting will take place March 11 2021. I will be working closely with Monica Braniff to plan an informative evening.

-Our executives met and discussed the importance of parents being aware of the "appeal process" and how to access information. I would like to encourage all PACS to reference the link provided in the chat for more information and make it available to parents when needed.

-I attended a SIDES PAC meeting and learned that they are currently preparing a proposal to the provincial government to become an official "provincial service provider". This would allow for more funding and allow SIDES to provide more robust programming. Anyone in the province would be entitled to enroll. SIDES is in the process of hiring 12 new teachers to facilitate their growing program needs.

-The district received a grant from Victoria Rapid relief funding and finalized details on providing a food program to families in need. The following is information on the program- The total grant is for \$12,000. Monica Braniff worked with Sheilia Austin (Interim Principal for Indigenous Education) and Henrietta Langran-Desbrisay (ELL lead--refugee families) around next steps for food provision support. Monica suggested the following plan & Sheilia Austin and Henrietta Langran are both in agreement that this would best serve the families most in need. Here is a summary of the plan-

- \$3000: Support for 10 schools that had the majority of students/families in need of food provision in June-- \$300 each to support food programs within their buildings.
- \$9000: Support for individual families. We had 80 families accessing supports at the end of June...that is down from where we were initially in March. We will review the list for changes/additions. This will allow for two \$50 cards per family.
- Additional support: CUPE would like to contribute gift cards to support families in need allowing for a third \$50 card.
- Food gift cards to 80 families 3 times throughout the year...November/December, March, and June, timed to be shortly before school breaks

-Bayside school has completed their hiring process. **Rae Dennett** was appointed to the position of Principal at Bayside effective January 1, 2021. Rae is currently the VP at Bayside, and has been an outstanding leader in our district for many years. Her assignments have included being District Vice-Principal at CDC, Integration Support Teacher at KELSET, NSMS and SIDES, Program Coordinator and Lead Teacher at CDC, Indigenous Education team member, District Diversity Team member as well as many other leadership initiatives. This experience along with her outstanding passion for building student inclusion and success will be a wonderful fit for the Bayside community. The district will begin the vice principal hiring process in late November.

In closing, thank you to everyone for their continued efforts and advocacy on behalf of the children in SD63.

Kindly,
Monique Hiltz