



2125 Keating X Road, Saanichton, B.C. V8M 2A5

CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS OF SAANICH

General Meeting Minutes

Oct 4, 2012 – 7:00 pm

District Resource Centre
6843 Central Saanich Road
Victoria BC V8Z 5V4

Attendees:

COPACS Executive: Nancy Borden, Cathy Fountas, Martine Lunke, Tom Niemann, James Taylor, Heather Carley, Sarah Ommundsen.

PAC Delegates and parents: Melissa Drolet, Jennifer Langard, Angie Walters, Amanda Hippolt.

Board Office: Nancy McDonald.

Board of Education: Wayne Hunter, Tim Dunford, Barb Menzies.

Saanich Teachers' Association: Sean Hayes

Guest: John Bird

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was amended as follows:

- 4) Reports from the Education Partner Groups
 - a) Board executive: Nancy McDonald
 - b) Saanich Teachers Association: Sean Hayes
 - c) CUPE: Nathan Stevens
 - d) Board of Education Chair: Wayne Hunter

Motion put forward by Cathy Fountas, seconded by Sarah Ommundsen. Agenda accepted as amended.

3) Approval of the minutes: 1) Tom Niemann, 2) Sarah Ommundsen. Motion carried.

4) Reports from Education Partner Groups

a) Board executive: Nancy McDonald.

It has been a good start-up to the year. The Board is addressing the allocation of the Learning Improvement Fund money from the government. The Learning Improvement Fund is a decision by the government to address the issue of class size and composition. SD63 has received approximately \$800,000, which will be used to provide staffing, educational assistants, etc. The preliminary allocation was made in June, and the board is now finalizing the process.

The new legislation changes the way classes are built as it removes class averaging. As a result, classes are on average slightly bigger at the elementary level, with an average of 21-22 students, but this has allowed extra staffing to make the intermediate classes smaller. There are also fewer classes with over 30 students at the secondary level.

The School District has also been busy with the implementation of the ERASE (Effect Respect And a Safe Education) program. ERASE is a government initiative to reduce bullying and manage any potential threats in schools. SD63 is now undergoing bullying and threat assessments. Nancy McDonald is the district's "Have a Safe School" coordinator. There will be a 5-year training

program for staff in order to establish a safe school culture. Online bullying reporting tools and stronger codes of conduct are also in the works. One of the non-instructional days will revolve around the anti-bullying program.

The next Policy 1100 meeting will take place soon, either on October 23 or 24. The first half will be led by COPACS, followed by discussions and work in smaller groups. The topic for the evening has yet to be determined.

There will be an Education Ministry-led forum on the new graduation requirements on November 8, from 4 to 7 pm. There will be about 45 people attending from the district and we would like to have 6 COPACS or parent representatives.

b. Saanich Teachers Association President: Sean Hayes

It has been a quieter start-up to the year, with the job action being over for now. Open bargaining will start again in the Spring.

The BCTF has issued a pamphlet called "Better Schools for BC". This is an attempt to inform all school partners on topics that affect education in BC. The BCTF hopes to make public education an election issue in BC.

The BCTF is also figuring out the details of the Learning Improvement Fund. On class composition, the new legislation includes what has been dubbed a "cash for kids" rule: Classes for grades 4 to 12 can not exceed 30 students unless the teacher is paid extra money. The STA is directing its members not to take extra pay for increased class sizes in SD63.

c. C.U.P.E.: Nathan Stevens: regrets

d. Board of Education Chair: Wayne Hunter.

Wayne Hunter thanked Sean Hayes for his work and praised the experience and expertise that he brings to the school district. The School Board is waiting to hear the teachers' perspective on how things are balancing out with the new legislation. He expressed the view that it would be preferable to have more flexibility in the negotiations at the district level, as opposed to having all negotiations centralized through the BCPSEA and the BCTF.

Due to some conservative budgeting, the School Board is now discussing how best to allocate approximately \$1,000,000 of extra funds. Some of it will be used to hire extra counsellors. Some other decisions of the Board may come to fruition and generate more revenue, which would allow a bigger re-investment. These issues will be discussed at School Board meeting next Wednesday.

James Taylor suggested that the Board re-visit the 5-day school closure in the Spring during these budget discussions, in light of the impact that this decision will have on lower income families. He further requested that there be a review at the end of the year to evaluate whether or not the projected savings were actually realized.

4) Report from Special Presentation: Vancouver Island Parent Conference rep: John Bird.

The conference started in 2003-2004, and broadened in 2006 to include all of Vancouver Island. The VIPC is very successful: there were 225 attendees last year, including some teachers, educational assistants and principals. This year's line-up includes Jane Elliot and Gabor Mate. COPACS used to be involved in the organization of the event but hasn't participated in the past few years. John Bird would like to officially invite COPACS back into the organizing committee. The question of child care at the conference was raised. John Bird has not had major requests for child care in the past, but has told parent to submit child care receipts for reimbursement if necessary. For mor information on the VIPC, visit www.vipc.ca.

A motion was put forward by Cathy Fountas, seconded by Melissa Drolet:

That COPACS allocate up to \$3,000 to reimburse parents' registration fees for the Vancouver Island Parent Conference of 2013, and request a follow-up/feedback/reporting back of experience via e-mail.

The motion was passed. Nancy Borden will get in touch with Dennis Powell to see if we can organize school bus transportation to the event.

6) Reports from COPACS executive:

a) President: Nancy Borden

i. Policy 1100 date and topic

The date of Wednesday October 24 was chosen, at 7pm. It was suggested that the meeting be held at North Saanich Middle School, to showcase the new school.

Several possible topics were suggested:

- Personalized learning
- Extra-curricular activities- where do we go, what do we get out of it?
- Student engagement/ parent engagement in public education
- Universal design: many educational strategies were initially developed for students with special needs, but were found to be better for all children. For example: enquiry-based classrooms.

It was decided to go with the personalized learning topic, as it is broad, relevant and topical, and many aspects of the other topics can be included in it.

ii. The BCCPAC will hold an Education Leadership Conference, on Thursday and Friday November 15 and 16. Interested parents are encouraged to attend. The COPACS executive considered whether or not to sponsor parents wishing to attend, but decided that the cost for sending a single attendee was too high (\$450/person registration fee, plus hotel, plus ferries), and that the money would be better spent providing educational opportunities for parents in the district.

b) Board Committee rep: James Taylor

The full reports were presented and filed with the minutes. At the Finance and Facilities meeting, there was a lot of discussion following a parent's complaint that school buses are unavailable for secondary school students on the two days a week when school finishes early. There was also discussion about the allocation of the extra contingency money.

c) Diverse Ability liaison: Heather Carley:

Heather had discussions with some parents about the school buses for children with special needs. Some students are missing up to an hour of school every day because of the pickup schedules of the special needs buses. Some families expressed concern over having their children with special needs riding on the regular school buses, because of lack of supervision. This raises several issues. If the school buses lack supervision, then the issue of safety on the buses for all children should be addressed. Also, the children who regularly miss school time because of the bus schedule might be discriminated against.

A motion was put forward by Heather Carley, seconded by Melissa Drolet,

That the issue of special needs bussing and specifically of children missing instructional time due to the bussing schedule, and of school bus safety in general, be brought to the attention of the Board, with a request that it direct the examination of the issue by the district administration and report back to the Board and COPACS.

The motion was passed.

d) Parent Education Director: Sarah Ommundsen.

Sarah distributed a sheet with possible ideas for Parent education Nights topics, with a request that the reps take it to their PAC executives for feedback.

e) Treasurer: Tom Niemann

We have about \$10,000 , about half in the general account and half in the gaming account. We have money to spend on good projects!

A Motion was put forward that \$400 be allocated to provide refreshments for the COPACS meetings of the year.

1) Cathy Fountas, 2) Tom Niemann. The motion was passed.

f) others

Melissa Drolet communicated that the Deep Cove PAC is planning to have a parent education evening on multi-age classes on October 17. The event is open to all parents in the district.

A Motion was passed that the funds that had been allocated for the Deep Cove PAC event of September on the job action, which was cancelled, be re-allocated to this event.

1) Cathy Fountas, 2) Sarah Ommundsen. The motion was passed.

John Bird invited interested parents from COPACS to come to the PAC Congress of SD61, on November 1 at 6 pm, at S.J. Willis school. A light supper will be served. Please RSVP to John Bird.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.