



The Confederation of Parents' Advisory Councils of Saanich

Meeting Minutes

Microsoft Teams

January 14, 2021, 7 – 9:00 pm

Attendees

COPACS Executive

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

Education Partners

- **Dave Eberwein**, Superintendent, Saanich Schools (School District 63)
- **Jason Reid**, Secretary-Treasurer, Saanich Schools
- **Carly Hunter**, Director of Instruction, Saanich Schools
- **Monica Braniff**, Director of Instruction – Diversity and Inclusion, Saanich Schools
- **Nola Silzer**, Trustee (Sidney)
- **Teri Van Well**, Trustee (Saanich South)
- **Don Peterson**, Saanich Teachers' Association

School PAC Representatives

- **Wendy Bird**, Prospect Lake Elementary School
- **Bonnie Doyle**, Stelly's Secondary School
- **Andrew Pape-Salmon**, Cordova Bay Elementary School
- **Leanne Turple**, Lochside Elementary School
- **Eva Castelsky (helping Leanne)**
- **Shu Franey**, Bayside Middle School
- **Julia Roemer**, Royal Oak Middle School
- **Jacqui Hipwell**, Brentwood Elementary School
- **Tara Keeping**, Deep Cove Elementary School

Guest attendees

- **Lizanne Chicanot**, Principal, Parkland Secondary School

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: Craig Morton; seconded by: Kim Woodcock. Agenda approved.

3 Approval of Last Meeting's Minutes

Edit required in draft notes: update year of next meeting from "2020" to "2021". Motion to approve revised minutes by: Phil Molloy. Seconded by: Craig Morton. December 2020 meeting minutes are approved pending the noted edit.

4 Presentation by Lizanne Chicanot on International Baccalaureate Program at Parkland

Lizanne Chicanot gave a presentation on the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Parkland Secondary School (<http://www.parklandib.ca>). The presentation is available to view on the [COPACS website](#). Key points of the presentation and ensuing discussion are summarized below.

What is the International Baccalaureate program?

Founded in 1968, the International Baccalaureate® (IB) is a [non-profit educational foundation](#) offering four highly respected programs of international education that develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills needed to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world. Schools must be authorized, by the IB organization, to offer any of the four programs.

Taken from: <http://www.parklandib.ca/ib-foundation.html>

- The program, which has now been running at Parkland for 4 years, receives students from across the District and occasionally from outside the District, including international students.
- The program's mission is to create a more peaceful world through intercultural understanding.
- The program provides 2 years of accreditation.
- Students qualify for Graduation in British Columbia and therefore graduate with both a Dogwood (the standard BC Certificate of Graduation) and an IB Diploma.
- The program covers Grades 11 and 12, and preparation for the IB program begins in Grades 9 and 10.
- All students learn French, either at 'standard' or 'higher' levels; those who come to the program from a French Immersion background usually take 'higher' French.
- There is an application process (details available on the website), the goal of which is to ensure there is a good match between the student, the student's expectations, and the IB program.
- The school takes in one cohort of IB students per year. One cohort equals approximately 23-30 students.
- Some students take some IB courses and some other courses from Parkland.

5 Reports from our Education Partners

5.1 School District

5.1.1 Hot Lunches in SD63

Dave Eberwein addressed the issue of Hot Lunches not being reinstated in SD63 schools. Dave explained that the District is focusing on maintaining COVID vigilance and safety in schools, especially with the rigorous restrictions in place in BC as directed by Dr. Bonnie Henry. Monica Braniff is the liaison for elementary schools in the District.

The District understands the value of Hot Lunches – to build community spirit, offer PACs a fundraising opportunity, and to provide nourishing lunches; however, the District believes now doesn't 'seem' the right time to introduce more people into schools and goes against the spirit of enhanced safety measures imposed by Dr. Henry.

Dave stated that this was “not a forever decision”, but is a “right now decision” and that PACs should expect to hear soon from their school’s Admin on other ways schools can work with PACs on fundraising.

Generally, the District is trying to juggle anxieties over not being strict enough with COVID restrictions at school vs. relaxation of those restrictions. Currently the District receives roughly 10 times more comments from parents raising concerns about COVID complacency than those advocating activities that introduce more COVID risk.

The question was asked, why then are teachers providing in-class pancake day while parents are restricted from providing healthy food for lunches through Hot Lunches in a COVID-friendly manner? Dave agreed this is not in keeping with their consistent messaging and the incident will be investigated.

There was a discussion about activities over Valentines Day and Dave concluded paper products (cards etc.) will be OK since they are deemed low-risk.

5.1.2 Moving Forwards

Dave discussed reflecting on the last year to review what has worked and what could be retained moving forwards into a ‘post-COVID’ era. Dave gave a few examples of items that could be retained, such as the quarter system, and offering more SIDES-type programs.

5.1.3 International Student Arrival

Dave addressed COVID-related concerns regarding the arrival of international students. He reassured attendees that incoming students will comply with all COVID-limitations required for international arrivals. The students have been prepped for all Provincial and Federal requirements. The District is comfortable with the protocols in place.

5.1.4 Questions for Dave Eberwein

Q: Why don’t schools close during power outages – the air circulation goes off; doesn’t this present increased COVID risk?

A: This depends on the specific safety consideration and location. Prospect Lake Elementary School lost power during last week’s storm. The expectation was that power would return; in reality it took longer than this expectation. Nevertheless, generators were used to power (and hence light) corridors; and, with regards to air circulation, windows were opened capitalizing on the fair, mild weather that occurred on the day of the power outage. Dave toured the school in the morning and chatted with the Principal and teachers. Overall, there was deemed no increased risk due to COVID. Dave also reminded attendees that there are many schools in the Province that don’t have any air ventilation at all.

5.1.5 Upcoming Budget Process

Jason Reid discussed the forthcoming budget planning process. The first budget advisory committee meeting is taking place on January 28th. Planning will consider that this year look different to typical years for three reasons:

- Financial sustainability
 - o Over the past year, the District has appropriated reserve funding (on a one-time basis) to pay for additional costs and offset decreased revenue, over and above funding from government, all due to COVID impacts.
 - o Financially the District is faring better than initially thought due to remote learning students returning to brick-and-mortar schooling, which is boosting revenue.
- Enrolment uncertainty
 - o The budget planning process is heavily based on enrolment predictions
 - o In previous years, it has been possible to forecast enrolment fairly accurately then check/confirm through spring via registration rates. This situation is not the same this year,

due to COVID-driven fluctuations in enrolment. This uncertainty will have a knock-on effect on budget planning: if it's hard to forecast enrolment, it becomes hard to budget for next year.

- Provincial funding
 - o The Provincial Government has deferred the tabling of the provincial budget until April
 - o This delay affects the District's budgeting process, since the Province's budget feeds into the District budget.
 - o The Ministry legally has to provide numbers by March 15th but they may have uncertainty too, which could manifest as a conservative budget estimate

The District will adjust and adapt as new information materializes.

Q: Are there options if funding is reduced dramatically?

A: Jason commented that the District will have to adjust budget planning as things unfold. The preliminary budget is done based on enrolment, then, once enrolment rates are known, adjustments are made (to staffing). The process is less about when the preliminary budget is submitted and more about the ability to staff schools (the risk being overstaffing). Fundraising is not an option; reserves are the main form of contingency.

5.1.6 Remote Learning Update

Carly Hunter provided a brief update on remote learning (RL). One third of the 600 students that were originally enrolled in RL are still on it; the others either on the SIDES program or have returned to their home brick-and-mortar school. There are no plans to conclude the RL program; it'll keep going for as long as COVID stays rampant. There are, however, currently no plans to have a RL program in the 2021/2022 school year. Students are able to enter/exit the RL program every 6 weeks (even if they have never been in it before). February 16th is the next transition date.

5.1.7 Kindergarten Registration

Carly noted that the French immersion (FI) kindergarten registration process concluded today at 5 pm and there is a week between the French and English registrations. The District will go through the FI applications for the lottery and let parents know if they have a place; if so, they would give up their place in the English stream, thereby making more space for English registrants.

Carly discussed why the District had not employed an online registration process, like several neighbouring Districts. Carly said that we are all learning and adjusting during these COVID times and trying to accommodate the quick pace of life. The District needs time to solidify and confirm FI registration numbers ahead of English registration and there is insufficient time to implement an online process. Carly stated that COVID procedures were followed during in-person registration.

5.2 Saanich District Board of Trustees

Nola Silzer provided an update on behalf of the trustees

- The Board of Education is excited to be starting its strategic planning. The current 5-year plan was due to expire in June 2021; however, it has been extended until June 2022. Meanwhile, the Board will go through the process of developing the next strategic plan and will call on COPACS / parents through extensive consultation. The Board has hired a consultant (Mike McKay) to help with the process. More info to come before the next meeting.

Q: How does the strategic plan inform business/District planning?

A: The strategic plan identifies 4-6 priorities. These priorities get reflected in budget planning and risk management planning.

5.3 Saanich Teachers' Association (President)

Don Peterson provided an update on behalf of the Saanich Teachers' Association (STA). Don noted that teachers are quite anxious about COVID protocols and what happens when exposures do come. Any increased contact will increase anxiety among staff.

Parents of Grades 4 and 7 students will be affected by the Foundation Skills Assessment. The BC Teachers' Federation is opposed to the FSA because the data can be used to rank schools, but data collected this year will be anomalous, thereby compromising comparisons across years. The FSAs have been postponed to February. Letters from the STA will be posted to parents soon. The letter informs parents that they can, if they wish, withdraw from the FSA. The BCTF will be advocating to cancel the FSA.

6 COPACS Executive Reports

6.1 President

Monique provided a written report, provided below, and the following key points were discussed.

- The Tri-district Parent Education evening on digital literacy is coming up on the 19th and 20th February.
- Ryan Lacasse, who is in charge of Safety and Operations at Saanich Schools, has arranged a bulk-ordering deal with Total Prepare. Information on the details will come from COPACS when the deal is finalized and will be posted on the COPACS website. Presumably, this deal will be ongoing, not a one-off.
- The Parent Involvement Meeting will take place on March 11th 7pm. The focus will be on mental health. Since this date coincides with the March COPACS meeting, and there are a lot of other PAC-related activities around that time, it was decided that we would forego the March COPACS meeting.
- There was a discussion about enrolment, especially with respect to French Immersion registration, and shared experiences across the District.
- There was a brief discussion about FSAs – and what the parent opinion was. There was mixed concern but it was noted that the debate is more relevant at 'higher Provincial' levels. The main debate is whether the Province should be doing them this year. The Board of trustees plans to express their opinion that the FSAs should be scrapped this year.

6.2 Vice Presidents

No update

6.3 Treasurer

Craig Morton provided a financial update. Only minor administrative fees.

Gaming fund balance: \$3,849; Operating fund balance: \$5,891

6.4 Board Committee Representative

- The Secretary Treasurer provided an update on the Federal Safe Return to Class Fund (FSRF) which is money the federal government gave to provinces and territories to help local school boards deal with the COVID 19 pandemic. The district received 1.4 million in the fall and is set to receive a second installment this January. Staff members are recommending an increase in the amount allocated for computer equipment to provide remote learning (from \$40,000 to \$100,000) with residual to be used to offset teaching costs in excess of funded enrolment in "brick and mortar" schools. Another need recently identified is increased outreach to improve student engagement. It is being proposed to use \$50,000 out of the 2nd installment once received to do this outreach work.
- White Road property Update: A grant application has gone to the Minister to develop this

childcare space. The District plans to push ahead with a zoning application with the municipality.

- Policy Review: James encouraged attendees to review the Policy changes and provide feedback to the Board.

- Finally, there was a discussion about what parents could/should do if we see major cuts in funding next year. Key points were:
 - o Do not feel bad about advocating for kids – it is not about politics; it is about getting the best for kids; and
 - o Advocating for kids can/should be done in collaboration with our education partners.

7 Old Business

None discussed.

8 New Business

There was a discussion about children wearing masks in schools, and the general shift towards all children wearing masks to prevent COVID spread. While there has been no strict directive from the Province, some children choose to or have been asked to by their teachers, parents or both. The Teachers' Union has requested parents to ask their children to opt to wear masks. Some teachers have class-specific etiquette.

9 Adjournment

Motion to adjourn proposed by: James Taylor; seconded by: Wendy Bird. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Next Meeting Scheduled for: February 11th, 2021

January President's Report

First and foremost, I would like to welcome everyone back! As we forge through month ten of the pandemic with no clear end in sight, I sincerely hope everyone had the opportunity to rest and recharge over the holiday break.

The work that we all do is often a thankless job, so I'd like to start the year off by telling you all how valuable the work is that you are doing and how much I appreciate your support. Lets hope 2021 brings peace of mind and more human contact!

Highlights and Mentionables

- Reminder that the January 19th date for the tri-district Parent Education Evening on the topic of Social Media Awareness, Digital Footprints and Cyber Bullying is FULL. Registration for January 20th is open. Parents can access the registration form on the COPACS website.

- Ryan Lacasse, Manager of Operations/ Health and safety, has secured a bulk ordering deal with Total Prepare, for items related to emergency preparedness and is currently working on a list of items for PACS to order at a discounted rate.

- The 'Mental Health Snapshot' topic of the month is Mental Health Literacy and can be found here: [Snapshot](#)

- B.C welcomed a new Minister of Education, Honourable Jennifer Whiteside.

- French Immersion Kindergarten lottery registrations are taking place this week, with English registrations to follow January 26th-28th.

As always, thanks for all your hard work,
Monique