

Annual Presidents Report

The 2021-2022 school year began in a familiar way with masks and restrictions and continued as such until Term 3, where we finally saw reprieve from Covid-19. As Parents and Guardians of our children, not only do we want the best for them- we want to see them thrive in their educational experiences. As we continue to witness protocols and restrictions be lifted, we are reminded that we can do hard things, and so can our children.

This year, more than ever, we learned to listen. We learned to hold and make space and that truth and reconciliation meant that we might need to unlearn what we were taught as children. We had difficult conversations in our homes and in our communities and on September 30th we celebrated the first Truth and Reconciliation Day. This day honours the children stolen from their homes, the survivors of residential schools, the loss of language and culture as well as the families and communities impacted by residential schools. We acknowledge their ongoing suffering and the multigenerational trauma these families and communities are still facing today.

A special committee was formed and a lengthy and very thorough consultation process began. The process included community engagement and input as well as a comprehensive survey that was circulated to parents and guardians often. Throughout the planning and information gathering process, the committee met, reviewed and revised until we saw the 5 year Strategic Plan be adopted and implemented. The four main themes that we will begin to see a lot of in the coming years are:

- Early Literacy
 - Indigenous Learner Success
 - Mental Health and Wellness
- and lastly,
- Citizenship

A more elaborate explanation of each theme can be found here on the district website: <https://saanichschools.ca/board-education/strategic-plan>

After the release of the provincial funding formula we saw our School Board strongly advocate on our behalf. It was stated by Chair Timothy Dunford, in his letter directly to the Minister of Education, Jennifer Whiteside that we lacked stable funding reflecting the financial impact of enrolment change and inflationary changes over time. Chair Dunford expressed that adequate funding is foundational to the development of programs to enhance student learning that will be sustainable.

Secretary Jason Reid, identified in his 2022 Risk Report that our most significant risk, consistent with previous years, relates to the sustainability of our budget. It is his recommendation that we reduce our spending by \$1.0 million dollars for the 2022-2023 school year in order to reestablish budget sustainability and to reduce the risk of program cuts in future years.

The roll out of the new district website was a success, all though admittedly, still a work in progress.

The COPACS executive team organized an opportunity for parents to vote in favour of or against writing a letter to the School Board, requesting a mandatory vaccine mandate for all district staff and teachers. The data gathered was ultimately shared with The Administration and the Board of Trustees and was very well received. This collaborative achievement was made possible completely by volunteer efforts. COPACS has been, and will continue to be the catalyst for change in our school communities. COPACS is an organization that acts as a sounding board for all Parents, amplifying voices that would otherwise not be heard. The work we do is incredibly important. Together we form a team of passionate people, who in my opinion, play a large roll in the continuity of accountability in our schools. Our shared and separate experiences, combined with our access to resources and our proximity to both the Board of

Trustees and the Administration mean that we can offer Parents a safe space to be heard and provide them with knowledge and information. Collectively, we are an irreplaceable asset to the district, contributing a wealth of diverse opinions, unique perspectives and insight that, only we as Parents and Guardians, can provide. Currently, we are at risk of folding. Utilizing our "seat at the table" is imperative to student success and to maintaining the trust and transparency we've earned through years of hard work and networking with our community partners. If you or anyone you know has time to dedicate to COPACS, please reach out!

It has been a privilege representing and advocating on behalf of the Parents, Guardians and children of SD63. And all though I am thankful for you all allowing me the opportunity to grow as a parent, and to be apart of something bigger than myself- it is my time to go!

Warmly,

Monique Hiltz
President- COPACS SD63