

DPAC REPORT - October Lavington Elementary PAC Meeting

September 25, 2021 4:16 PM

DPAC Meeting took place on September 23, 2021 on Zoom

Stakeholder Presentations

New superintendent Christine Perkins attended and presented. Highlights from her presentation:

- All the school buildings and facilities in the District were ready for classes to start on September 7th.
- Issues around transportation have been mostly resolved. A few issues came up, but nothing major.
- The District website is being updated and the Superintendent will have a report/newsletter up every month called the "Superintendent's Report". The report is collaborative and will have input from all principals in the district. Principals will submit three pictures and three pieces of good news from their school. The report will also include events and conferences coming up and how parents can communicate with the board.
- DPAC asked the Superintendent to ensure the board continues working on greater access to board meetings. The streaming zoom meetings means parents can't attend and ask questions.
- Superintendent noted a few upcoming events: October is LGBTQ month and Parent/Teacher Conferences will happen on October 28 and 29th.
- As of the date of the DPAC meeting Teacher/Parent Conferences are in person unless the family requests a Zoom meeting. Teachers do not have the choice. There was some discussion around this. Teachers are also not permitted to ask parents if they are vaccinated.
- Superintendent Perkins noted that the expectation is that everyone entering the school has received both doses of the vaccination. There was a fair bit of push-back on this statement - primarily that the message has not been communicated to parents and "strong encouragement" doesn't equate to required.
- PACS are encouraged to communicate to parents that if they don't want to wear a mask in the school or if they are uncomfortable being in person, they should request a virtual conference.
- All schools are closed on September 30, 2021 for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- Superintendent Perkins has encouraged District staff to use their pronouns in emails and other communications. She included her pronouns on her Zoom title.

Luke Friesen from the Board Office presented on "Communicating Student Learning". Highlights from his presentation were:

- The pilot has been extended another 4 years. The Ministry of Education wants more time to consider how well it's working. Luke expected that it's been extended due to the Provincial election and COVID slowing the collection of data.
- A committee will be formed to provide feedback to the Government on the pilot project. Believe the date is September 2022. Will be encouraging parent participation.

Cori Huizer - President of the Vernon Teacher's Association presented. Highlights from her presentation:

- The VTA has been focusing recently on land acknowledgments. The BCTF recently published an article in their magazine called "The Art of Acknowledgments".
- Cori noted that acknowledgments are moving away from the scripted, boilerplate language to a more personal acknowledgment.
- The VTA has struck a standing committee on truth and reconciliation. The VTA has communicated to teachers to remember that September 30th is not a holiday it is intended to be a day of reflection.
- On the issue of COVID - Cori stressed that kids need to stay home when they are sick. She underlined that there is a very high level of anxiety among teachers. On the Friday before the DPAC meeting there were 85 kids absent at Harwood and on the same day there were 40 teachers away and the District could not meet the demand for TOCs.
- There is a level of exhaustion for teachers already due to the stress around COVID.
- Cori stressed that PACS need to ensure parents have reviewed the Communicable Disease Plan for the District, and particularly pages 7-8 which summarizes the most important information for parents. PACS are encouraged to put those pages up on websites and social media.

Debbie Callum - Representative for Principals and Vice-Principals presented. Highlights from her presentation:

- Noted that start-up went well in all schools.
- Noted that there is hesitance on the part of some parents to wear masks in the school. They have been able to deal with those issues without too much trouble.
- She asked parents to please be kind when communicating issues with administrators, staff and teachers - particularly around masking and covid. Please remember that they are just following the health orders and directives from the District.

That ended the Stakeholder presentations and we moved into the regular DPAC meeting. Highlights from the meeting were:

- In past years, gaming money was available to DPAC to pay for PAC memberships to BCCPAC. That has now changed and PACS can now use gaming money to pay for the BCCPAC membership. Despite that, DPAC will still pay for PAC memberships this year. We can expect an email soon to provide the information to renew our membership.
- BCCPAC now has a seat at the BC School Sports table. President of our DPAC, Gladys Fraser, has volunteered to sit at that table on behalf of BCCPAC.
- Gladys noted that she has had fairly extensive communication with Christine Perkins about various issues and that she is very responsive - she will communicate by text. She did note that as PAC representatives we need to be careful when communicating with her that we make clear when we are speaking on behalf of the PAC and when we are speaking personally. Those boundaries can be lost in the informality of some forms of communication.
- Superintendent Perkins has asked Gladys to provide her with a heads-up about any important topics that will be discussed at a DPAC meeting because she wants an opportunity to consider and prepare a response. Important that DPAC representatives bring the issues to DPAC well in advance of meetings.

- The issues around parent communication with the Board and ensuring the board follows their own bylaws about dealing with parent issues has reached and end with the Board for now. At the September board meeting the Board indicated that they had considered the recommendations put forward by DPAC for changes to Bylaw 13 and they have decided not to make any changes. DPAC has decided to keep the Bylaw 13 task force in place to continue to monitor the Board's compliance with their current bylaws and whether any further issues arise.
- DPAC talked about pushing a District policy requiring PACs to consult with District staff (Student Support Services) regarding the accessibility of school equipment prior to making purchases. An example that was discussed is the Gaga Pits without doors. BX's gaga pit is being retro-fitted to create a door and is being funded. BX's DPAC rep did not know who funded it.
- DPAC has struck a committee to provide information to parents about the role of Trustees, prior to the next election.
- DPAC is planning to host a leadership dinner with PAC representatives and a keynote speaker. The leadership dinner will be virtual. Talked about the possibility of PACs being in person with one another but attending the dinner virtually. Looking for a keynote speaker and working out how to have a virtual dinner.

Next Meeting October 28, 2021.