

PAC – PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Monthly Meeting

Date: Wednesday, January 27th – 6:30 pm

Location: General Wolfe Elementary school library

Meeting Minutes

PAC Members (in order of sign-in sheet):

Malcom Forsyth, Jenny Evans, Dawn Dunkerley, Harvey Chiang, Libby Taylor, Suzie Polzin, Ian Martin, Denise Macdonald, Gayle Tan, Katie Stevenson, May Ke, Robbin Simao, Tamara, Ricci Chang, Mary McCullum, Jen Kim, John Kim, Stasa Jones, Alan Rentz, Serena Verma, Bianca Fehr

PAC Executive:

- Michael Nedelec, Chair
- Jaimini Thakore, Vice Chair
- Harold Schellekens, Treasurer
- Monica Luu, Secretary

Administration:

- Susan Nichols, Principal
- Rose Thomas, Vice-Principal
- Curtis Mathewson

Special Guest: Janet Fraser VSB School Trustee

These minutes are reflected in the order of what was discussed.

1. **Welcome and Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm.

2. **Approval of November 12th, 2015 Minutes**

Motion to adopt the Minutes of the November 12th, 2015.

Moved (L. Taylor)	Seconded (H. Chiang)	Carried
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3. **Curtis Mathewson – demo of new instruments**

- Presented the new Orff instruments: Baritone marimbas, bass xylophone, glockenspiels.
- This is a ½ classroom set paid for by PAC. Should last 20-25 years. May need ongoing funding for repairs (usually for mallets).
- We are half way with purchase of these instruments. Goal to finish buying the set and acquire alto and soprano xylophones gradually over future years.
- A parent volunteered and got the opportunity to try out the xylophone and do a duet with Curtis Mathewson during the meeting.

4. **Janet Fraser, Trustee - special guest from Vancouver School Board**

- Discussion on seismic and long range facility plan. These plans were tied together a year ago.
- Time line was agreed to in December. Staff worked frantically over the holidays. 9 trustees on the Board with questions and info generated.
- The Committee has a wide range of reps: teachers, principals, trades, engineers etc. who gave input of what was in the plan.
- Need to achieve 95% capacity as part of the plan. There was discussion on what counts as space and not. How you count space is different in elementary schools vs high schools.
- On Monday, January 25 – vote concluded that we need kids in safe schools.
- There are several projects ready to come forward for funding. Wolfe is high priority under “Recommendation 4”. Wolfe at Project Definition phase.
- The plan goes to end of seismic program. There are 110 different schools, and need to manage them well.
- We have never moved a whole school population out of high school yet.
- Janet presented a map of plan. Plan is until 2030.

Parent Questions to Janet Fraser:

1. How can our voices be heard with the same passion as parents whose children’s schools are subject to closure?
 - Answer: Trustees will consider all that comes in.
2. What happens to the schools close and then population of kids go up?
 - Answer: report has projections. We’ve had increase in population in the past but declining enrollment. Plan is reviewed each year.
3. Do you feel there is a sense of urgency for seismic?
 - Yes, there is a sense of urgency. We have a project office setup which is joint between the Vancouver School Board (VSB) and Ministry. Now we are working together for a common goal.
 - In the past, projects come forward and Ministry would change rules.
 - All parents need to be there for voices to be heard even if it’s not only your school being closed. Recommendation to parents to read long range facility plan.
 - Ministry will access if we have spaces rather than purchase a portable

- Susan Nichols: Wolfe is at 106% space capacity according to Ministry. Capacity number relates to space only not to be confused with class composition. 30 kids would be in a smaller classroom but we would not lose classrooms. 95% capacity will not look the same in one school and another.
4. What is the VSB doing to ensure that the teachers will be teaching the 21st century learning? With so much teacher autonomy how will we know our kids will be getting more hands on self - directed learning? Will there be more funding for this? Will this include more time spent outdoors. More place based learning and community involvement?
 - Answer: Teacher must meet curriculum. Comes from the Ministry. The Board works with senior management. Changes in report card drives changes instruction. Think big, start small. It still has same big ideas, individual outcomes are less. New curriculum allows teacher to go deeply into subjects. No mandated increase in outdoor education. It focuses on strengths as a learner.
 5. The lack of band and music is a real concern. Students will be so far behind by the time they reach high school. I just don't understand the rationale or what (if anything) can be done if parents take initiative?"
 - Answer: Band is based on anyone who has no experience. Ministry doesn't give money for band and strings. It cost 0.5 million to run band and strings. If we continue to spend that money, we are not doing other things. As we get to budget season in March, the number will be more fixed. Difficult thing to work on as Trustees. But you can speak to Trustees for help.
 6. Can we fundraise to have band program? If curriculum is given by teachers, then funding has to come from district.
 - Answer: We may be down 2 band periods, but we instead have 2 extra music periods. Curtis Mathewson is here the same as last year and is now teaching music in the times he taught band. This year all student in grade 2-7 have at least 1 period of music with him, unlike last year, when one of the grade 7 classes had no music with him, and the rest only had 1 period where now they have 2. Students will not 'be behind' in music from Wolfe-there are many elementary school (almost half) that have never had a band or strings program, and may or may not have a music specialist. High schools always start with a Beginner Band program (if they offer band).
 - If you move band off the school timetable, then it won't be taught by VSB staff. It won't be a VSB program. Jazz band is run by Curtis as a volunteer like other teacher volunteer for sports.
 7. What plans does the Vancouver School board have in works to address the education of Syrian school children who will soon be arriving in Canada? Will there be additional support offered not only in ESL, but mental and trauma counselling?"
 - Answer: There are only 3 private refugee students. There are some government sponsored refugees but we don't expect it to be a huge number. Services available for students but may not have funding we need. If new students aren't here by February 2016, they don't get counted or funded for this year and will

need to be counted the following September. A small number of students will be special needs. There is still some uncertainty, staff working as hard as they can.

8. Is curriculum going to incorporate coding?
 - Answer: yes, but no announcement as to when.
 - Wolfe currently has a Coding Club but only open to kids who had participated in the past.
9. How do international students play a role in this?
 - Schools at 95% want to bump numbers up. 95% is district wide average. There are 1600 international students at the moment. International students count as students using up space. Schools with 10% population of international students, may have significant impact to the school (Secondary)

Other Comments:

- Janet Fraser is on 5 different committees.
- Parent: There is not another cent to be cut to our budget. We've cut enough.
- Parent: every parent should send an email a day to Ministry.
- MLA George Heyman is coming to our Feb. 23rd meeting.

5. Principal and Teacher Reports

Susan Nichols, Principal

December feels long ago, but I don't want to miss saying a BIG thank you for the parental support of all the initiatives that took place-very successful sock and toque drive, food bank drive, the winter concert and the sing along.

FSA exams for grade 4 and 7 students have started and will be ongoing until February 19th. The school has excused one ESL student and 2 special needs students. We have received letters from 43 out of 56 grade 7 parents requesting the student does not write the exam due to extenuation circumstances, and the same letters for 34 out of 58 grade 4 students. This will again affect our school's overall results as the percentage of test taking is part of the school's Fraser Institute rankings. As we all know, the Fraser Institute's rankings do not tell the story of a school and a community, but it is helpful for all of you to understand why we are ranked as we are.

Organization plans for next year are just starting. We have 48 in catchment k students registered, and students have until the end of the month to register. We will probably lose some of the students to French Immersion as the lottery for that program is in mid-February. I know of a few cross boundary siblings (but official cross boundary registration has not yet started). We are a designated 'full school and I have to work with the Director of Instruction, Rob Schindel, before accepting any cross boundary students.

As well, this year we will be working with the Board to ensure that all the students at Simon Fraser and Edith Cavell have a spot for kindergarten, there are almost 80 registered there with space for between 40 and 50.

The grade 6/7 teachers have met and considered the parent feedback amongst other factors and have decided to go ahead with camp in 2017 for the grade 6/7 students. Teachers have

traditionally raised \$20 000 toward this event and are looking for parents to take on this part of the camp with support of the administration.

The Vancouver School Board is undergoing an Update of its Strategic Plan. The goal is create a plan which meets the needs of our unique district and ensures student achievement and will being. They are looking for involvement from the community. There are 2 initial ways to get involved-an Ideas Fair at Prince of Wales Feb. 18 from 4-7 pm and a survey. I will give the links to Monica to include in the minutes, to Jaimini for inclusion on the website and will also embed them in the newsletter at the end of this week.

The Project Definition Report for General Wolfe has started. I met with members of the Joint VSB/Ministry of Education Facilities office before Christmas Break, and attended a meeting with the team that will be completing the report earlier this month. At this point we are not being asked for Community input as it is mainly the creation of a business case of replacement or renovation. The current Ministry guidelines will only fund whichever is less expensive. At this time I do not know which way the group is thinking, and depending on their findings, it could go either way. The PDR should be finished in early June, at which time the recommendations will be shared with staff, parents and students. The next stage is about a 6 month period where the plan gets approved by the Ministry of Education, where the project is approved and the funds are released. Next is a year of design, and then, if all goes to plan, construction/renovation could start. Using the VSB numbers for capacity, we are sitting at 106%.

One item which looks like it will not affect this is the long Range Facilities Plan, which was passed unanimously by the Board on Monday night. Wolfe is named in the report under recommendation 4 as a school for consideration for immediate priority. The link to the plan is the first item on the newly re-designed VSB web page, and the dates for public consultation will posted there when finalized. I encourage you all to partake in the public consultation process, as historically it has been the schools where closure has been considered who are the most active participants in the process, and it is important a range of voices are heard.

I am sure there is more-it has been a very busy 2 months, and as always, we appreciate all the ways the PAC supports the school.

Rose Thomas – Vice Principal

Each year the Board is required to submit the following year's calendar to the Ministry of Education by the end of March. This will be posted to the VSB website when approved by trustees for parent feedback. When I am told they are ready for input I will send out the link for parents.

I will also share the dates with parents as soon as they become official. As the VSB is projecting a deficit again next year, I am guessing the 2 week spring break will continue, but I recommend that people wait and see before booking extended holidays!

Basketball is getting underway-I am very grateful to all the teacher sponsors and parent coaches and drivers.

Skating is underway next week-each class will be going 3 times, and due to the great PAC support the only cost to individual students is their skate rental. Thank you for the lovely opportunity for Community fitness.

6. **Playground update:**

- Grant Brumpton is a Wolfe parent and leading the playground replacement for us. He did a great job of surveying students for feedback on playground options.
- Fundraising has slowed down. Need fresh help to fundraising.
- **Recommendation:** wait for PDR (Project Definition Report for seismic) in June, before making playground changes.

7. **Call for Volunteers**

- **Drama Club – need volunteers ASAP!**
- Drama Club is currently on hold and in order for it to still have a chance to run this school year, we need a volunteer to work with Sarah Collins (Wolfe teacher) ASAP in order to start up the club.
- **Halloween Dance for Fall 2016**
- Volunteers needed to organize Halloween Dance event for next school year (Fall 2016). Thanks to Lisa Scott and Dawn Dunkerley for doing such great work in past years. If you are interested in learning more about how you can help, please contact Lisa Scott at lisamscott@telus.net to get more information.
- **Volleyball and soccer coaches needed for Fall 2016!**
- There is a call for coaches for next school year (Fall 2016) for soccer and volleyball teams! Please considering volunteering to coach if you are interested.

8. **Upcoming events**

- Nancy Bradshaw – March 9th to discuss resiliency. Contact Libby Taylor if you has speakers to suggest for parents
- Next PAC meeting: Tuesday, February 23rd
- Van Horne parent workshop with Terry Small – Tuesday, February 23rd
- Casino Night – Friday, February 26th
- Silent Auction – Thursday, April 21st

9. **Other topics raised by parents:**

- **Google Groups** – check PAC website on how to subscribe. Send email to Colleen Von Dehn (vondehns@gmail.com)
- **Hot Lunch Program** - Parent had concern about quality of hot lunch program and nutritional value and whether it is possible to have a parent run hot lunch program. Also, hot lunch program seems to be catered towards non-vegetarians.
Susan Nichols: We used to be inner city school but somehow kept the VSB hot lunch program. Changing the hot lunch program to be parent run with a private company would have to go through food services at the Board. A private hot lunch program along with the VSB hot lunch program cannot co-exist. We have to think longevity. If there is parent burnout then we can no longer go back to having the VSB hot lunch program. Jennifer Cook is the contact for the VSB hot lunch program.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 PM.

Moved (May Ke)	Seconded (Stasha Jones)	Carried
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