Executive Board Report – for January 6, 2014

Meetings

No executive meeting held. Executive attended meeting with school board members January 7th, discussed various items informally. Various emails.

Media

- CKPG news – Federal government anti online bullying initiative
- Prince George Free Press - calendar

External Committee Meetings – Education Programs and Planning

Meeting was cancelled, to surprise of parents from Mackenzie.

External Committee Meetings – Calendar committee

Committee discussed variety of methods to alleviate issues with spring break in 2015. No really good alternative was available.

External Committee Meetings – Policy and Governance

Discussed policy 5119 again. Covered sibling priority for non-catchment students, and students in choice programs attending dual track schools being denied busing. Committee asked board for indication of philosophy about non-catchment siblings. At January 28th board meeting, board debated question of whether or not catchment students being registered in a school should always have priority over siblings of non-catchment students being registered. Trustees Bennett, Hooker, Bella, Bekkering, and Bourassa spoke in favour of catchment always having priority. Trustee Cooke spoke against the motion. Trustee Warrington did not vote.

SD57 EdSC - DPAC minutes Jan 13 2014

1. Accept minutes

2. Motion Referred by Board of Education on Dec 3 2013

Motion to recommend Board of Ed create a SD57 staff working group to debate BCESIS replacement was denied. Ministry of Ed has decided on Aspen by Fujitsu after looking at about 700 possible applications. Results from group would duplicate Ministry Efforts. Another Application was suggested that was developed by another BC SD and has backing from a few other SD's
New Motion to recommend Board of Ed Proceed with replacing BCESIS with ASPEN was passed
New Motion to recommend Board of Ed request Ministry of Ed provide a Representative to give ASPEN decision making choice info to SD Staff was denied.

3. Report on Student Registration

Alan Reed stressed these reports took a full 8hrs of staff time to generate.

4. Report on Student Transfers

Registration Transfers Doc is not useful and a motion was made to regenerate with Admittance/Withdrawal by month and grade. The motion was denied.
SD Senior staff does not see how this information can help anyone.

5. Service Delivery Project - Update

Deloitte & Touche has recommended SD57 Tier1 Service Delivery be moved to a provincial support model from local support. Potential to save up to $60m over all SD's. The main hurdle is bandwidth to a centralized location.

6. Long-Term Facility Plan RFP-Update

SD57 Currently does not have a long term plan as outlined as a Ministry requirement. An RFP was created and 4 applicants were received. Cascade Facility Management Consultants won the bid to create a Long-Term Facility Plan with the SD.

7. Carbon Neutral Capital Program - Update

1 Project request submitted to program. Southridge Hot Water Heat replacement

8. Purchase Orders over $25K

No questions

9. Web Site Upgrade Motion

Staff already updating SD57 website and request was made for SD staff to provide EdSC a progress report.

Draft wording - Presentation to Board – January 14, 2014

As we start 2014, welcome back, and let's hope week 2 of 2014 is a little less busy than week 1.

While busy, last week was good. We had our monthly DPAC meeting, with our new trustee representative – we would like to take this time to welcome Betty Bekkering, and thank Kate Cooke for her service as trustee rep.

DPAC also had a meeting with the board, which was also appreciated, along with the cookies. It's great having that opportunity for discourse.

And I also participated for DPAC at the policy and governance meeting, in which there was a discussion on policy 5119. I described my reaction about this to other DPAC members as being cautiously optimistic about the process, after going into it with some concern.

This concern was driven by the experience to date with the process. DPAC has been asking for this policy to be reviewed for a while, and in February 2013, we actually sent a letter to the chair of policy and governance, asking for this to be put on the agenda. We were asked to speak to it again in June.

Come September, we were rather surprised to see a revised version of it presented to the committee. While some procedural issues were taken care of, that DPAC had concerns with – items that never should have been in the Regulations to begin with – there didn't seem to be any other of our concerns addressed with the changes that were made by senior admin.

The policy and governance committee then sent that policy, almost untouched, to the board to send out for public input.

When I read in the board agenda that as only minor changes were being made, public input wasn't required but was being done anyway, I have to admit that actual blasphemous language was used.

You know, when reviewing the minutes from October 2010, I see that removing the ability of kindergarten students to register at a non-catchment school was likewise considered to be not a major revision to the policy, but because "the issue was of interest to parents, the committee was recommending that it be distributed to reference groups for input".

It may well be that the intent of the changes was not to produce major changes, but that is what actually happened.

As noted, DPAC members were pretty upset about that. As a result, we did miss making a comment about the timeframe of the 60 day time period, which ended January 6th. You may have noticed that January 6th was the first day back at school, after 2 weeks of vacation. We found this to be an extremely challenging issue for time, as a number of PACs didn't even meet in December, and couldn't send back input that they had asked for in November. Please do not do this again – just like summer vacation is not counted in the 60 day process, don't count in the winter or spring break. It is a problem.

But wait! You say. We were trying to work with you – kindergarten registration starts at the beginning of February! In order to have the policy amended and adopted, the district did need to rush this process through!

And that was our other concern with the process – that it was being rushed through. Several DPAC members, including myself, remember the previous board's deliberations on 5119. You may also remember them – there were changes to the policy January 25, 2011, February 8, 2011, March 29, 2011, June 28, 2011, and February 21, 2012. This is not what we would call a GOOD sign when it comes to carefully thought out and considered policy.

I am very pleased – and I hope it's OK to say this - that the policy and governance committee has chosen to have some more deliberation, rather than try to force this through for the 2014 registration process. From a DPAC perspective, there was some real concern that you'd ignore our hard work on this, and just push it through without looking at making any changes, or having real discussion on it.

I've referred to minutes from previous board meetings, and recollections from back then. At no time, do I find record of, or recall, the board having a philosophical discussion on non-catchment kindergarten registration. This wasn't really much of an issue, in the past, as elementary schools had more capacity. At this point, with the closure of multiple schools, removal of portables, and an increasing elementary school population, that discussion at a board level becomes much more important to have, and to have in public.

In conclusion, thank you, as always, for listening.

Draft wording - Presentation to Board – January 28, 2014

I'm sure it will be a surprise that I'm going to speak regarding the student registration priority request for clarification from the policy and governance committee.

We'd like to make it really clear what DPAC is asking for in this area. As background, this applies to registration of students – most commonly, kindergarten registration. This is for programs and schools where catchment applies, so regular track students. This does not apply to "choice" programs or choice schools.

It does, however, apply to a number of parents who have made a choice other than attending their catchment school. There can be a many good and valid reasons for students attending a non-catchment school. Some of these reasons are:

- • Distance – the non-catchment school is closer.
- • Room – the non-catchment school had room to take a student, while their catchment school did not.
- • Student conflict – transfers to non-catchment schools can happen for a lot of reasons.
- • Moving – a family can move from one neighborhood to another, either by choice, or because there was an issue with their accommodation.
- • Daycare location, work location – the list grows ever on.

We also believe there are many students attending non-catchment schools. Data from back in 2010 showed some 40% of regular track programs – English only –attending the 3 dual track elementary schools were from out of catchment. That's almost half the school. That's a lot of people.

This wasn't really much of an issue, in the past, as elementary schools had more capacity. It is now becoming more of an issue.

Once accepted into a school, a student becomes a student of that school. Your policy states you can't throw them out, just because they've moved out of catchment. But they're not fully a student of that school. You could say that their family does not become a family of that school. And we're not sure that all parents know this.

A family who has a child who has already made it into a school who lives in that catchment has priority, after that first child has been accepted. Everyone has to get at least one child in! We're all on the same footing to begin with. They have priority over other children, who's families do not already have a child at that school.

However, that exact same family, if they happen to live one block out of the catchment does not have that priority. Even if they apply at the earliest possible moment to get into that school, and there is a spot available at that time, that spot may be kept for a family who moves into that catchment at the beginning of September.

This is a dreadful choice, no matter which way you look at it. Whichever you choose, someone is going to be disappointed.

Some districts handle this in different ways. Some districts give a certain period for applications for students in different categories - the Nanaimo district gives out of catchment siblings until March 31st to register, and new in catchment students have until June 13th to apply. The decision for who gets in is made usually no later than June 30th.

Some will group catchment children and non-catchment siblings together, and break ties by either chance or date and time order from that group of people – not making a distinction between these two very good choices, and leaving it up to fate. That's how Chilliwack, does it, for example – their first group is continuing catchment students, and their second group includes both catchment area students and siblings of non-catchment students.

Some will group all siblings together, as long as they are school district students, and prioritize all siblings – non-catchment and catchment – ahead of other catchment area children. That would be the policy of both the Vancouver and Surrey districts, both of which also give students attending child care programs in the catchment some priority.

And some may indeed decide that catchment rules supreme. Take the example of the New Westminster school district, which takes catchment seriously enough that they commit in policy to adding portables, and/or staff, to a school to ensure that all catchment students will fit into that school. For our kids who don't get into their catchment school, such is our commitment to catchment, that our policy doesn't even commit to bus fare to get to some school that can take them.

Whichever choice the board decides to make, we do want to know that you're making it from knowledge of the options that are available, and the hard choices that are inherent in this issue.

Good luck. You're going to need it.