

# Executive Board Report – for October 6, 2014

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## Meetings

Board executive meeting held October 1<sup>st</sup>. Elected Leanne as DPAC chairperson, thank you Leanne. Discussion on trustee forum, held jointly with partner groups – scheduled November 4<sup>th</sup>. Do we want childcare options? Looked at costs, will be arranging for video to be posted, so didn't see reason to go for childcare.

Discussed options for publicizing DPAC more with PACs. Can we do a survey of all parents, through district? Pine Centre mall booth? Volunteer PG, send job ads to PAC, try to get in personal contact with all PACs.

Discussion of upcoming BCCPAC conference. Now has instructions on how to apply on website.

External committees elections. Discussion of fall events - let's see how many people show up in October to gauge interest.

Idea sent in - donate BCCPAC booklets to public library?

## Media

A small amount on back to school, and also notification.

## External Committee Meetings – Policy and Governance

Discussed board's committee of the whole modification to 5119 – moving some sections back into regulations, from policy. Also discussed some of the outstanding policies, and prioritization of what to review.

## Presentation to Board – September 23, 2014

We're delighted to have school back again. Our kids are back in their classrooms, with their committed teachers, and caring staff members. The labour dispute has been difficult for everyone, and it's important to restart strengthening the relationships and trust between staff, administration, parents, and students. We have great people out there, with our kids, and it's important to value that.

Our DPAC will be continuing to advocate, along with other parent groups, for additional funding to address student needs - resources and supports to enhance the learning of all of our students. This needs to be a continuing discussion at the school, district, and provincial level, and not one that only seems to become *public* during contract negotiations.

In our schools, we look for parents to assist in those school wide discussions on what is required for the school, with all the members of our school communities. We are parent ADVISORY councils, not parent FUNDRAISING councils. Parents can participate on a district level by carrying the voice of their school community to DPAC. Likewise, parents can participate by communicating the voice of the school and district community, to the BC Coalition of Parent Advisory Councils, for that provincial voice. By the way, we look forward again to some assistance from the district in finding out who our PAC volunteers are, because for DPAC to work effectively with PACs, it is important to be able to communicate with them.

Relationships are built on communication. And communication is always difficult, try though we may. We were pleased to see a new district website, and new school websites being implemented, and we hope that these will be used more to communicate with parents, to help get parents more involved with their school community. Students do better in school when parents are involved and included, no matter what their income or background.

However. The district, and schools, had an amazing opportunity to become a trusted source of information last week. Parents were anxious for official information. When was school going to start? What were the details? When do we need to take time off of work? Parents were reaching out, looking for this information, and looking for the school and district to supply this information to them.

And the district didn't. Instead, the most recent information on the district website was from the previous week. Not only did you not tell people important information, but you didn't tell them why you weren't telling them. Not having the agreement ratified was probably a good reason for not finalizing plans – but *tell* people that you are waiting, why, and when they might find things out.

So what did parents learn from this? Not to look to the district for accurate and up to date information, or respect for our need for information. Parents learned that rumor and the media are the best sources of information when it comes to the schools.

And that was a tremendous lost opportunity. The message that schools should be getting to parents is that they value parents – that the district values our time, our inclusion, and wants to work together for the benefit of our kids.

Lastly, I had a parent turn to me last month, and say in a tone of surprise, did you know that the public school system in BC is actually pretty good, when you look at other countries? She had no idea that was the case. We don't have a perfect school system. We very definitely have room for improvement. But what we have - right here, in the Prince George District - is a pretty damn good one.

Let's work to make it even better, this year.