

Executive Board Report – for September 14, 2015

Executive Meeting – September 9th, 2015

Discussion about school startup, Gary Anaka session, conference, suggested trustee meeting, banking, facilities report, next presentation to board, marketing of schools, spring PAC Café, BCCPAC, BCCPAC AGM to be held April 29th to May 2nd, BCCPAC DPAC Chair meeting November 7th?, getting in touch with PACs, social media, reaching out to all our schools & PACs

Long Range Facilities Plan Committee Meeting

A meeting was held June 10th, and input from that meeting made it into the presentation to the board. We identified a number of concerns with the report itself, and decided on targeting starting sooner rather than later for consultation, with meaningful consultation, and time to change minds. Need to look at items other than numbers and buildings, but education, strong start, geography, choices, and as little disruption to students as possible.

Williams Lake DPAC & Gary Anaka

Currently scheduled for September 24th, 2015, at Duchess Park, Understanding the Teenage Brain. Morning at Nusdeh Yoh, afternoon at Spruceland.

Conference Committee Report

Conference scheduled for October 24th, 2015, at the Civic Centre. Planning for \$30 per ticket, open to all districts, 2 free tickets per PAC. We may be receiving BCCPAC funding for a regional conference, and hope to discover this soon as it is next month. The plan at the moment would be to make that funding available for other districts to be able to attend.

Policy and Governance – June 10, 2015

Discussed leave of absence policy and feedback received for PGDTA, draft policy of leaves of absence for PEA was postponed, as professional employees' association were exploring the option of joining the Prince George District Teachers' Association. Whistler-blower policy discussion postponed to next meeting.

(Draft of) Presentation to Board – June 23, 2015

I'm Sarah Holland, from the district parent advisory council, here at the end of another school year.

Last week, I was pleased to be able to attend the K12 Innovation forum, and discuss changes in education with a large number of other interested people from this district and others. There was a video from several schools in this district – including both my children's schools, and indeed you briefly saw my younger daughter in one shot. It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm for learning that these students had, the joy that they had learning things that they were interested in. We also saw enthusiastic adults, passionate about helping children grow and learn, helping them on their way to becoming confident and self actualizing adults. As a parent, I would like to thank all the hard workers in this district, who are helping our children in their work of becoming educated adults.

One of our goals as a DPAC is to help ensure that parent voice in the schools is heard. It can be difficult as a parent to know how to make your voice heard. We do have a number of resources for parents – the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils has an excellent resource for parents, *Speaking Up* - a guide for advocating for students in a reasonable, respectful, and effective manner. The SD57 website has a parents section that prominently features the ability to purchase a third party accident insurance policy for children – I would suggest that it may be of more value to feature this sort of guide, instead. We're also looking at providing a workshop for effectively advocating for your children at our upcoming conference, October 24th. All parents welcome, check our website at sd57dpac.ca for more information.

Another goal as a DPAC is to provide that legislated parent voice to the district. As such, we've already had a committee meeting to discuss the facilities report, and will be going through the report in more detail. Our first reaction is that this report is doubtless helpful for the Ministry, but somewhat less so for the district. As an example, it's odd that this report about our school buildings does not discuss their suitability as places for learning, now and in the future. It's also odd that while the report mentions Strong Start Centres, space for these programs is not accounted for when looking at capacity in schools.

Another goal of DPAC is to bring concerns to our provincial representatives, the BCCPAC. As such, we're certainly interested in discussing further the impact of the Ministry's 95% capacity threshold, and the unfair effects of this on districts with large rural areas and an urban hub.

We know that the district will be reviewing this report in the context of ongoing sustainability. We want to ensure that there is stakeholder representation on this sustainability committee, so that as the decision makers, you will have rapid feedback. We are also looking for that wider consultation. And that consultation needs to come with an open mind, active listening, a willingness AND an ability to change on your end. People can be very sensitive to the perception that you're dressing up a sales pitch as a consultation, you'll want to avoid the perception that it's a "done deal". That ability to change on your end must come with a longer time frame for consultation, than we saw in the last round of school closures. That was a very different situation – but please don't think that you have much more time than you did then.

Our goal in looking at the facilities and sustainability issues is for the best educational outcomes for all of our students. As the board, you'll need to balance concerns of geography, school populations, vulnerability of students, equity, and the importance of choice. You'll also need to look at how to implement any changes in the least disruptive and least stressful a manner as possible, for our students and our families.

It's not really about the buildings – it's about the people.

In conclusion, on behalf of the District Parent Advisory Council, thank you for this opportunity to present. Thank you for all of your work on behalf of our children. Have a wonderful summer, over-consult, don't under consult, and keep up the good work.