

# Executive Board Report – for March 7, 2016

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## Executive Meeting

Held Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup>. Topics discussed include HR & superintendent search, various district committees, board priorities for the remainder of the year, staffing changes at board office, BCCPAC resolutions & resolutions meeting, BCCPAC conference, FoodSafe, and PAC Café.

Executive members were also invited to a meeting with the human resources consultants managing the superintendent search.

## Media

- Vista Radio – information gathering for a potential piece on radon
- Rocky Mountain Goat – February 14<sup>th</sup> – “...in a post on the Prince George District Parent Advisory Council’s blog, council chair Sarah Holland said the district is facing financial pressures from the provincial government, and she expects more serious cuts to come.... In the post, Holland says the DPAC is concerned about the fee, the impact it may have on parents, and how it may be implemented, but also about the district’s financial position.”

## Policy and Governance – March 2, 2016

Review and minor updates of following policies, to bring into compliance with current provincial law:

- 1170.1 Rights & Responsibilities of Students
- 1170.3 Rights & Responsibilities of Employees
- 5131.7 School Codes of Student Conduct
- 5145.5 Sexual Harassment of Students
- 6179 Acceptable Use of Networks
- 5145.4 Child Protection

The majority of these policies will be brought to the board for immediate approval, as changes do not require going out for public comment. The policies may well also need a more intensive review.

## **Calendar Committee Information – report from Sarah Foot, February 12<sup>th</sup>**

The committee met yesterday which included partners group representatives from senior district staff, PGDTA, CUPE, Principals/Vice-Principals, trustees, and DPAC. The committee reviewed changes to the 2016/217 School Calendar (due to addition of an in-service day for new curriculum implementation) and the draft for the 2017-2018 School Calendar. The calendars will be posted soon on School District 57's website for review by partner groups.

Of note for the 2016-2017 School Calendar

- 1) Dec 5th chosen as NID (non-instructional day) to encourage participation in the prestigious "Learning Forward" conference.
- 2) Exams set by Ministry were Jan 23 to 27 making the semester turn around day Jan 30 (semesters are not equal in length).
- 3) June 5th NID is new.

The instructional minutes lost due to training for and implementation of the Ministry mandated curriculum have been waived.

Of note for the 2017-2018 School Calendar:

- 1) NID will be contracted with PGDTA at a later date once the Ministry of Education has set the final exam schedules for each semester. We expect to know the NIDs by the second Calendar Committee meeting on March 31, 2016.
- 2) Spring break is tentatively set for March 19th to Apr 2 (which goes through the Easter long weekend). However, PGDTA would like consideration of a Mar 12th to 23rd spring break so that its members would more likely participate in provincial meetings.
- 3) Lisa Carson, Committee Chair, was especially interested in feedback from families on the March 19th to Apr 2nd spring break versus March 12th to 23rd spring break.

As a committee member, we have been asked to seek feedback from our members, to collate this feedback and present it to the committee at the second meeting on March 31, 2016.

## **Board Work Plan – as discussed by School Board on February 23, 2016**

These are notes taken from discussion at the public board meeting.

The top items to accomplish between February and June are as follows (and they recognize there will definitely will be emergent items):

### **#1 - Strategic plan**

had hired Alberta company to go through, have variety of stakeholder meetings, they wrote up strategic plan progress at now - had a chance to look at info, as submitted, they've come up with draft plan, have asked hard working staff to look at wording, spelling, grammar, that will be under taken under the next while. will be sharing with stakeholder groups and implementing. as soon as final revisions are done, will have a plan on how to present strategic plan.

### **#2 - budget priorities & construction**

will have # of meetings. Budget consultation meetings for partner groups are April 4th and April 20th bus fee - referred, those meetings will tackle that subject.

**#3 - Go Futures** - contracted out - helping with process of finding new super & asst super. Board has met with company, criteria, what job posting would look like, and time table. Main thing - how to get stakeholders and community groups involved. Go Futures in town next week, will talk with groups, etc. Hoping to have hired sometime in May, would then be involved to hire new asst super, that position filled late May, early June.

#4 – Additionally, filling position of **District Principal of Student Support Services** - position closes March 4th

#5 – Trustee Bennett keeps talking about **district technology plan**, tablets and we're they're going. haven't figured it out, know it's something that needs to be addressed.

**#6 - Rural adhoc committee recommendations.** Feb/March, have gone to committees & individuals, hoping come back at April 26th meeting.

**#7 - Long range facilities plan.** number of things that board needs to deal with, going to have to look at boundaries & populations, very important item on the list.

**#8 - Policies** – big one for board, continue to look at policies, and hiring of admin staff policy, getting it right.

## **(Draft of) Presentation to Board – February 23, 2016**

I'm Sarah Holland, representing DPAC, the district parent advisory council.

I'm delighted to see in the agenda the Board Work Plan, which I understand will consist of updates - and perhaps dates? - for some of the important work that the board has been working on. We keep on being asked what's happening with things such as the facilities plan, or budget consultations, or the superintendent search, or the strategic plan, and I'm anticipating being able to provide them with some answers other than "beats the heck out of me, this would be nifty to know".

Speaking of budget consultations, the motion on charging for student transportation was referred to the budget consultation committee at the last meeting, by a 4 to 3 vote. I noted that DPAC cannot support charging for busing. However, as trustees, this is a financial issue that you have an obligation and a duty to explore and discuss, no matter how unpopular it may be. We need to know what the alternatives are. I'd also like to note, as a correction to the minutes, that I didn't say "allow parents to pay monthly instead of annually", but asked for guidelines - offering payment plans, that the language in the hardship policy around privacy, dignity, confidentiality, and fairness be strictly followed, and that hardship fees be covered by the transportation department, rather than individual schools or PACs.

DPAC is working on a number of different things. For one, we're holding our annual event, PAC café, Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. This is a low-key get together type of meeting for PAC executives, so that volunteers can sit and talk about some of the common challenges, concerns, and issues that they have. We feed people lunch, we keep the conversation moving, and people always seem to find it worthwhile. If you're talking to parents, please do let them know about this!

We have also sent a couple of resolutions to the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, BCCPAC, AGM, for the end of April AGM. One is that BCCPAC lobby the Ministry of Education to adjust the capacity utilization calculations, in order to take into consideration the needs of districts with rural and urban areas, or districts that cover a large geographical area. We look forward to explaining geography to some of the lower mainland districts.

Another resolution is about radon testing, given the increased risk for cancer when exposed to elevated levels of radon. We're currently in discussions with another DPAC that has also brought forward a similar motion. I believe the email chain on this is about 60 emails at this point, so it's a hotly discussed item.

One item from that discussion that I thought may be of interest was information about the impact of energy efficiency on radon - specifically, "efforts continue ... in ... programs to retrofit buildings to achieve greater energy efficiency but they rarely consider the need to test for, and if necessary mitigate, elevated radon levels that are known to result from tightening the building envelope. Alongside the general lack of public awareness about radon, risk created by energy retrofits is another aspect of this issue that is often overlooked."

I'm not sure if radon has been brought up again, after our comments at several meetings. I should note that I was talking to a parent whose young daughter has had cancer, who was wondering about coming to address the board on the topic of testing for radon in school buildings. Please let me know if that would be helpful in moving this matter forward.

DPAC and PAC volunteers work for free, as you know. Trustees don't - and shouldn't. To compare your roles to other local government, in 2014 the mayor of Prince George was paid \$94,182, while the salary for a city councilor was \$31,394. School trustees govern a large district with a large budget, with the goal of improving student achievement - the future of our children. I know that doesn't really rate next to filling potholes, though. While we can see why you may not want to give yourself a raise, as per this agenda, there's also something to be said for modeling how to index payments to inflation, which perhaps the provincial government can then learn from. We do not want to contribute to the pernicious societal undervaluation of work done on behalf of children.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak, and let's have a great meeting.