

Chair Report for December 7th, 2020 DPAC Meeting

This last month has been busy for both the Chair and Vice-Chair with a lot of "behind the scenes" work happening. We continue to have weekly meetings with SD57 Senior Administration and these meetings have been extremely constructive and helpful in growing collaboration and communication between DPAC and the district. Some of the major work and information we have engaged in this last month includes:

- LEA (Local Education Agreements) - This came up at an EPPC meeting recently and we had asked for more information. LEAs are agreements between the local Indigenous groups and the school district for the delivery of education on reserve. The way they work is that bands receive money from the federal government and transfer it to the district, and then the district provides the education on the reserve. Our last LEA agreements were signed 2017/18 and they are currently working on new ones because the current ones expire in 2021. We have 3 separate LEA agreements in our district. More information on LEA agreements can be found here:
 - Government of BC - Ministry of Education: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/resource-management/school-district-financial-reporting/lea-isc-self-government>
 - First Nations Education Steering Committee: <http://www.fnesc.ca/lea/>
- White Hatter - DPAC provided the information for parent sessions from White Hatter to district senior administration and they were quite receptive. This is something the district has been doing for 5 years and given that most presentations and related were cancelled for the year due to Covid it had been overlooked. The district believes that given our current culture that they should continue to support these presentations in the district and will look further into how to move this forward; DPAC will provide further updates as we get them.
- Strategic Planning - With the new Minister of Education there are new mandates. The district must complete a new 5-year strategic plan this year. Anita is hoping to have an initial meeting that will lay out the process this time sometime before Christmas. Watch for an invite as this is critical work for the board and admin. The district has been given very specific direction as reporting is significantly different than before.
- Phase 3 review - The Superintendent reiterated her willingness to review the Phase 3 plan with all stakeholders, and this will possibly be done at the same time we meet to discuss the Strategic Plan Process. DPAC executive is reviewing the last version of the plan and preparing questions.
- Washrooms at Shas Ti Kelly Road - Work continues at the school level on implementing the previously shared solutions to parents and school members and to engage with student to address any concerns.
- Truth and Reconciliation and Anti-Racism - The Indigenous Education Department has been delivering a workshop to staff pertaining to Cultural Awareness and district senior administration will work towards making this workshop available for parents sometime in the new year.
- Extended Christmas Break - There has been no indication that the BC Health Office will recommend extending the Christmas break. On the contrary, the PHO has repeatedly stood behind the messaging that schools are safe places. We do not anticipate the Christmas break being extended at this time.
- Health Orders and Influencing Youth - DSAC is working on how they can help spread the word about social distancing and mask wearing, as we know that at the Secondary level students are more receptive to peer influence thus have worked with DSAC to get them promote and educate.
- We have formally requested a closed door meeting between DPAC and the Board of Trustees to discuss the issues around policy and governance, among other things, that require a safer setting to facilitate an open and honest communication than a public board meeting setting.

- Calendar committee met to discuss the school year dates for 2020/2021 and that work is still ongoing - we will share the school year calendar as soon as it is finalized.

Presentation to the SD57 Board of Trustees for the November 24th, 2020 Public Board Meeting

Good evening,

Firstly, I want to thank the board for the excellent work and open, hard, but honest discussion that took place at last month's board meeting relating to the letter of support for our Indigenous bands and communities. While I know that the majority of the debate was not captured in minutes, and public understanding of the issues and debate was varied, nonetheless DPAC appreciated the work this board put into ensuring the nature of issue, their role in it, and how to best support the values and priorities of Truth & Reconciliation.

Two weeks ago, as I was reaching out to our parents and collecting their thoughts, concerns and suggestions on what DPAC needs to focus on in the coming months one parent said to me "I don't know - it feels as though the past month has been the calm before the calm of the storm....I feel like I am just in a holding pattern and trying to get through each day one day at a time". This resonated with me as I think it sums up how every student, parent and family has been feeling. As I said to the board last month, it feels as though we had finally found footing but as the increasing COVID numbers and new restrictions showed us, this temporary reprieve was just that - temporary. There are ever increasing concerns from families and students on what plans are being put in place by the district to both support students ongoing learning to prevent further disruption as well as continue to ensure their safety. DPAC looks forward to working with the district in developing plans to determine what would be needed should we need to go back to Phase 3. The Phase 3 plan that was submitted in August 2020 for approval from the Ministry should be reviewed, with DPAC and other rights & stakeholder groups at the table, in light of lessons learned and new knowledge gained since then and ensure this information is communicated out to parents, families and students in a clear and timely manner.

Last weekend the provincial BCCPAC Summit for DPAC from across the province occurred and our DPAC is working hard to put the information we learned out for PAC's to our parents and families. However, in this we have again come across an issue that is of standing concern, which is that of the ongoing suspension of the Policy & Governance Meetings for District 57. As a district we have become quite stagnant and are unable to review or update processes as needed. For example, policy changes are required in order for PAC's to obtain permission and be able to contact the parents and families in their school district via the email addresses which individual schools use to communicate with parents. Especially in light of COVID and the very increased need to have solid, consistent and reliable communication pathways open for parents, families and students during these uncertain and increasingly difficult to navigate times. We ask the district to prioritize getting the Policy & Governance meetings started again so that our district is able to update critically needed documents in order to support not only families and students, but schools, teachers, and all other front line staff who rely on guidance from district policies and documents to make decisions.

In closing, DPAC would like to once express our thanks to the board for their work in the first part of this year but we also formally request a meeting between the board and DPAC to further discuss educational matters and those issues we raised today.