

Chair Report for April 2021 Monthly DPAC Meeting

This past month has been busy with lots of work being done with the district on budget consultation and feedback, strategic planning, and as always student and parent advocacy work. This morning we (DPAC Chair & Vice Chair) met with the Ministry of Education Special Advisors that have been sent to SD57 and had a very positive and productive meeting. We are also working on recruiting interest for parents to join our board of executives at our May AGM and are hoping to draw in some new and young faces to join. We have arranged for Pam Spooner to attend our May monthly meeting as well, and she will present on the equity scan, the recently completed student surveys and the teacher surveys, and the impacts and changes to the 2021/2022 school year that those will have.

For our last meeting of the year in June, we are working with the city and other community partners (including SD57, ICBC and others) to have a special “town hall” type meeting focused on discussing traffic and student commute safety issues – more information will be coming out on that in the near future.

In our weekly meeting with SD57 senior admin we have learned:

- Erin Russell Jeneki from McBride is a certified Neufeld Institute Trainer and loves providing education and training, so if any PACs are interested in learning more or arranging an education session, please contact DPAC and we will reach out to her.
- Most of the kids that were on transition programs are back to school after spring break, except those that are clinically vulnerable, who are continuing to the end of the year.
- Angela Zummack from Stronger Schools, has been tasked to lead the work to identify all the various options, spaces, and methods that can be used to provide a full days education for students, even if they aren't physically sitting in a school/classroom all day.
 - We know that not all students can handle sitting in a classroom all day, but that doesn't mean that the children don't deserve a full education learning day.
 - The district also strongly believes and supports this and as such has dedicated Angela to this work.
- Senior Admin acknowledge that SD57 currently has a very novice group of principals and vice-principals and are working on developing training and supports for them and future novice staff.

At the April 16th SD57 Board meeting, I gave the following presentation to the Trustees and all in attendance:

Good evening trustees, and to all Rights & Stakeholders, and to the Ministry of Education Special Advisors,

It is hard to believe that we have only 50 odd school days left in this year. At this time last year, we were all struggling to comprehend the effects of COVID on our school families and communities and working through the new reality of parents walking a big mile in teachers' shoes as schools closed. We have learned so much in this last year and found resilience, creativity, and new ways of existing as a community. As people stayed apart, our communities came together.

And this is what we as DPAC are continuing to work on - brining our PAC and parent communities together. We have been hard at work to engage with and ensure that we hear parent's voices and their vision for SD57's future as we continue working on the Strategic Plan as well as the Budget Consultation with the District. In addition, we are also working on getting PAC's and parents signed up for the various White Hatter presentations, as this is something that parents have really been looking forward to and asking for.

We are really excited for our parents and PACs on the upcoming Parent Education Conference: Empowerment through Knowledge and Sharing. This BCCPAC hosted parent conference is focused on parents and guardians becoming more empowered for themselves and their children through a better understanding of all that encompasses "schooling and parenting" (during and post-pandemic) and by sharing what they learn and their experiences with their peers.

One of the most exciting parts of this conference will be the keynote speaker, Dr. Gordon Neufeld. Dr. Gordon Neufeld is a Vancouver-based developmental psychologist with over 45 years of experience with children and youth and those responsible for them. He is a foremost authority on child development, an international speaker, a bestselling author (Hold Onto Your Kids) and a leading interpreter of the developmental paradigm. Dr. Neufeld has a widespread reputation for making sense of complex problems and for opening doors for change. In addition, the BCCPAC parent education conference will also have closing Keynote Speaker Dr. Ashley Miller, child and adolescent psychiatrist, family therapist, and Award-winning educator and author of "What to Say to Kids When Nothing Seems to Work". She is a clinical assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of British Columbia where she serves as co-director of family therapy training. Other speaker sessions lined up to empower and educate parents will include:

- *An opening address and Q&A with the Minister of Education, the Honorable Jennifer Whiteside*
- *Mental Health in Schools session with Jennifer McCrae, Assistant Deputy Minister, Learning Division, Ministry of Education*
- *Policy for Enhanced Student Learning session with Shelaina Postings, Executive Director, Sector Policy and Performance, Ministry of Education*
- *Social Media Awareness, Digital Citizenship, and Cyberbullying session with Dr. Greg Gerber from Safer Schools Together BC*
- *Tyrone McNeil, president of First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and vice-president of the Stó:lō Tribal Council will be discussing First Nations Education and the Parent's Role*

As you can see, our work is ever growing and ongoing as we continue to advocate and empower parents to find their voices and get engaged in their children's development and education.

And these parent voices are the ones that we, as always, will continue to bring to table and to SD57.