

DPAC Chair Report for September 2021

As another school year starts our DPAC is excited seeing classes up and running in person across SD57 and BC. Over the summer we have continued to meet on a weekly basis with SD57 senior admin to plan for a smooth and successful start to the school year. DPAC also had representatives at the Communicable Disease Safety Plan review meetings that were held by the district in the last few weeks and worked hard to bring parents voices and concerns to the table to ensure that our children are safe as our school communities re-open.

Prior to the summer DPAC met the Ministry of Education Special Advisors as part of their information gathering process on what was actually happening in SD57. The results of their work, the MoE Special Advisors Report (which can be viewed [here](#)) was released late this summer. While the report was distressing and exposed raw and uncomfortable truths about our district, our DPAC believes by coming together collaboratively despite the challenges is the only way forward. We as DPAC are committed to staying the course and are actively working with SD57 to create positive, long-lasting change in the wake of the MoE Special Advisors report. We are reviewing the recommendations and actions outlined in the report and working together with the remaining Board members and Senior Administration to determine our role and work to make our district better. Advocacy and change are hard - but it is important and we will persevere.

Additionally, this highlights the important work that continues with the recently released new [Strategic Plan 2021 - 2026 "The Pathway to a Diverse Learning Community with Purpose, Options and Choices for All"](#) for SD57 in which DPAC is involved and making sure that parent voices are heard.

In other news, we are excited to announce that we have secured Ivan Coyote to do a live presentation for parents and school communities on October 28th, 2021. Ivan Coyote is a writer and storyteller. Born and raised in Whitehorse, Yukon, they are the author of thirteen books, the creator of four films, six stage shows, and three albums that combine storytelling with music. Coyote's books have won the ReLit Award, been named a Stonewall Honour Book, been longlisted for Canada Reads, and been shortlisted for the Hilary Weston Prize for non-fiction. In 2017 Ivan was given an honorary Doctor of Laws from Simon Fraser University for their writing and activism. Coyote's stories grapple with the complex and intensely personal topics of gender identity, family, class, and queer liberation, but always with a generous heart, and a quick wit. Ivan's stories manage to handle both the hilarious and the historical with reverence and compassion, and remind us all of our own fallible and imperfect humanity, while at the same time inspiring us to change the world. Ivan's 13th book, Care Of, will be released in June 2021 by McClelland and Stewart.

Internally our DPAC has also been working hard to re-organize our own way doing business and decided to try some new and innovative approaches to support our PAC and parent communities. This year we are trying something new – we have decided to focus on certain themes for each month of the school year and have lined them up with other events and district work happening throughout

the year. We are also looking at utilizing some new tool such as Survey Monkey to ensure that we are able to more fully understand what topics and issues are important to our members and make sure your voices are heard.

Our theme for the month of September is Advocacy. So, this month we will explore what advocacy is, what does it mean, how does one advocate and what challenges or barriers there are to advocating for our children and schools (and how can we overcome them). We have asked that each of our Partner Groups, Rights & Stakeholders present to our PACs & parents related to or focused on the monthly themed topic for 5 minutes and then we have planned for 5 minutes of Q&A for each partner group as well. The schedule of monthly topics will be on our website and is as follows:

| Month | Theme |
|----------------------|---|
| September 2021 | Advocacy |
| October 2021 | SOGI; Inclusivity & Equality |
| November 2021 | Safety |
| <i>December 2021</i> | <i>Where's Waldo? Where are things at? PACs to provide updates to Partner Groups, Rights & Stakeholders</i> |
| January 2022 | District Innovation & Strategic Plan |
| February 2022 | Catchment & Capacity in SD57 |
| March 2022 | Financial & Budgets |
| April 2022 | Mental Health & Wellness |
| May 2022 | Extracurricular Activities |
| June 2022 | Truth & Reconciliation |

While the year may feel like it is off to a chaotic and uncertain start given recent news and the next “wave” of the pandemic, now more than ever it is important to come together as a community and provide strong advocacy, voices and leadership for our children and our schools.

Our DPAC looks forward to the challenges and working with our PACS and parents to support them in this journey moving forward.