

DPAC Chairs Report Prepared for June 9th 2022

I would like to do a DPAC Chairs report now at the end of the school year rather than to just leave it for next fall. I will add to this report for the summary that is required for the AGM in October.

First off I would like to acknowledge, respect, and honour the First Nations in whose traditional territories the Kootenay Lake School District operates and all Aboriginal people residing within the boundaries of School District #8. I am honoured to have been born and raised on these magnificent lands, to share in their bounty and beauty and raise my children here.

I would like to start my report by acknowledging the wonderful DPAC leadership team that I had to work with this year. I can only try to begin to explain how much the DPAC executive has done this year to support each other and to make this year a success.

I would like you all to know how much Kendra Mann (co-vice chair) has done to help me when the times got tough. Kendra has been with our district for so many, many years and has such a wealth of knowledge and I am sad to say that she is moving on to a new district next fall. Kendra you will truly be missed! Whenever I needed a sounding board or just couldn't manage to do something on my own, whether it was due to an injury, just pure exhaustion, or inexperience, Kendra never hesitated to step in and lend a hand. Many weeks we were emailing and sending messages back and forth every day multiple times a day trying to get things figured out and we always managed to get the job done together. Kendra has taken on every role that was ever thrown her way and I am sure that our long standing friendship, that started before either of us ever had children will continue, and I will still be messaging Kendra for her expertise in the future. I have no doubt she will remain a valuable asset to us all.

Next I would like to thank Kristi Wray for stepping into the role of co-vice chair. Kristi is relatively new to DPAC but she was always eager to learn and to volunteer for attending meetings. Kristi has a very full life and we appreciate all that she has done for us this year. Kristi was also a representative on the Education Committee and the Finance Committee this year.

Michelle Sylvest has been our treasurer for a number of years now and she is always prompt in returning emails and offering to help navigate tricky situations. Michelle has been an amazing asset when it comes to getting the wording just right to get our DPACs message across. Last spring we had the privilege of submitting 2 questions for the Superintendent hire and Michelle worked tirelessly to get the wording perfect with all our suggestions and edits. Michelle is a valuable asset to our DPAC and I value all that she contributes. And finally our books look good! Thank you Michelle.

Taryn Stokes has been a DPAC rep for Crawford Bay for a number of years. This year she took on a different role at DPAC and joined the executive to be our secretary. Taryn has always had the minutes ready for proof reading well in advance of our next meeting and I never once had to ask for the minutes and they have always been presented very efficiently. Taryn has also been a representative on the Education Committee for a number of years and always brings back

great reports to DPAC that show us what is happening in our District. Taryn has attended almost every parent education event that we were invited to or put on this year. She has been an extremely valuable executive member and is becoming a wealth of knowledge. Taryn brings valuable expertise to our table and is always a joy to work with.

I would like to thank our past chair Lorien Quatrocchi for helping out with any issues that arose and joining in to our executive email threads adding in her voice of experience. Lorien has had a very full life this year and we are grateful for the time she was able to spend with DPAC.

Eden Dupont has been a member of the Policy and Governance Committee for a number of years and she has been a great asset to our DPAC. Eden has a deep understanding of the parent view and the importance of the parent voice when it comes to education. I have had the pleasure of sitting on this committee with Eden who has a great understanding of the policies and issues. We have worked well together as a team on this committee representing DPAC.

This year Colleen Bayly took on the role of sitting on the Finance Committee. She took this responsibility very seriously and enthusiastically. She was always an active participant in the meetings and had a real understanding of the issues facing our district and how they affect families. Colleen was very conscientious making sure the needs of students and families were being met on both sides of the mountain. Colleen's reports back to DPAC have been extensive and very informative. Thank you Colleen!

This fall we started the school year having to navigate a second school year with the constant unknowns due to Covid. In many ways this year was more challenging than the last as regulations and rules were changing weekly and we were all sitting on edge waiting to hear what was coming next. I admire the steady, calm voice that we received from our new Superintendent Smilie in these uncertain times.

We started off our parent education in October with an Advocacy seminar series presented by Susan Wilson. We had an unprecedented amount of parents sign up for these seminars and attend the Advocacy 101 and Advocate training seminars. We were able to offer both of these over zoom and had parents from across the district attend and sign up to be advocates for parents facing challenges in our school system.

We had our DPAC executive attend the BCCPAC leadership summit over zoom in November. This is always a 2 day seminar that is packed with information and I always find it inspiring.

In January we had the opportunity to send a DPAC representative to sit on a brand new anti-racism council to help write a new district policy on anti-racism. Thank you Marya Folinsbee for being our representative on this council.

This spring we had a parent education night with a presentation on the District new Anti-Racism toolkit presented by Gail Higginbottom and Jann Schmidt. It was a well attended evening that was very emotional and informative. We have had many requests to run it a second time.

Late in the spring Scott Rothermel presented a Digital Media Safety series for our families. These 4 presentations are always very well attended and parents are always grateful for the information that Scott presents. We can never be too careful with our children and Digital Media.

In April we had Cathy McMillian of Dyslexia BC together with the Dyslexia Institute do a 2 day presentation on Dyslexia. DPAC decided to open up both of these presentations to all families, staff and trustees in our district for free. We also opened up these presentations to everyone in our province for a \$5 fee. We had close to 100 people register for the simulation and the information was invaluable in helping us better understand this common yet commonly misunderstood diagnosis.

In May the DPAC executive and the PAC chairs had an opportunity to attend the BCCPAC AGM and conference. It was going to be in person but at the last minute it became an online event. They had great presenters and as always a very inspiring information filled 2 days.

I would like to take a moment to thank Superintendent Trish Smillie for always being there to discuss DPAC issues and to support us this year. I have been very grateful for all her support and her willingness to listen to any concerns that DPAC had. I have always felt that DPAC was treated like a valued partner group and that our concerns were always heard. Thank you Superintendent Smillie for your strong leadership!

Finally I would like to thank the trustees for coming to our meetings and helping answer the tough questions that parents brought forward. I would especially like to thank Chair Lenora Trenamen for all her support this year. We had a number of phone calls and emails that took time from her busy schedule and she never made me feel like it was an imposition. Lenora always responds to my inquiries in a timely and professional way that is human and doesn't leave me wondering what was just said. As a parent it is always nice to feel heard and understood even when you know that you are looking at things from a different perspective. We had 2 other Trustees that came regularly and contributed greatly to our DPAC meetings. I would like to acknowledge and thank Vice Chair Trustee Sharon Nazaroff and Trustee Sheri Walsh for their time and dedication to DPAC. Thank you.

In closing I would like to say even though it was a challenging year, I think it was a good year. We had incredible parent and PAC involvement at our DPAC meetings this year and we were able to offer a fair number of parent education opportunities. Looking at the attendance numbers they were topics that parents wanted to learn more about and felt were valuable.

I am extremely grateful for having the opportunity to be the Chair of DPAC this year as I have learned so much and am truly humbled by this experience.

I bow to you in my traditional custom and express my gratitude in my first language.

Spa-see Hohn-padee! Спаси Господи! Thank-you!

Natalia Nazaroff
DPAC Chair