

Kootenay Lake DPAC Meeting
Thursday November 27, 2008
Nelson School Board Office, video conferencing to Creston Ed. Centre

Present:

S. Wilson – WEG DPAC rep, DPAC Chair
G. MacKinnon – LVR Parent, DPAC Vice-Chair
K. Mann – DPAC Secretary
S. Pol - Redfish DPAC Rep
R. Marsden – Erickson DPAC Rep
G. Pasutti – Rosemont PAC Chair
R. Zimmerman – Creston Homelinks

Education Partners:

Lenora Trenaman, Trustee
Kevin Hergott, CUPE
Verna Mayers-Mackenzie - Trustee Elect

Regrets:

Becky Blair, CVTA

- 1. Welcome** – called to order 9:00 am
- 2. Approval of agenda** – as circulated
- 3. Acceptance of October 30, 2008 minutes** – by consensus
- 4. Correspondence** – see attached list
- 5. Discussion Items**
 - a.) Business arising from correspondence
 - The BCCPAC board voted Ann Whitaker as the First Vice-President
 - A question was asked around the transportation letter sent to district staff. S. Wilson will follow up.
 - b.) BCCPAC
 - BCCPAC membership forms are due ASAP. DPAC will pay the \$65 fee on PACs behalf. Susan will follow up with those who haven't sent in their forms yet.
 - c.) DPAC BUDGET 2008/2009
MOTION: DPAC's Budget be accepted as circulated.
K. Mann/S. Pol – carried
 - d.) DPAC February 2009 meeting
 - Meeting has been moved to an evening meeting and will now be at 6:00 pm Nelson time, 7:00 pm Creston time at the Nelson board office, video conferencing to Creston Education

Centre.

e.) Full-Day and Pre-Kindergarten

- S. Wilson provided some background to the Early Childhood Learning Agency: The Agency asked for input into the feasibility to of implementing a full-day and pre-kindergarten program. Input was sought from school districts, early childhood organizations and all interested parties between June and August 2008. DPAC spoke directly with the Agency's Executive Director Susan Kennedy about their accepting late submissions. The Agency is still accepting input on this subject and Ms. Kennedy shared that the Agency is no longer looking at including three year olds in this program.
- There are other education systems that see their 3 and 4 year olds attend school – Europe for example. Ontario also has a pre-school program for early learners. New Zealand's education system was mentioned (www.minedu.govt.nz) as a possible model, as they have early learning programs for children birth to age six.
- DPAC asked five questions of PACs:
 - 1.) How might the provision of full-day kindergarten and pre-kindergarten benefit your community?
 - 2.) What challenges would your school district face in implementing full-day and pre-kindergarten programs?
 - 3.) What are your thoughts on whether full-day or pre-kindergarten should be optional or mandatory?
 - 4.) What are the main messages that our DPAC should provide to the government regarding full-day and pre-kindergarten on behalf of parents across our district?
 - 5.) What other information do parent need about full-day or pre-kindergarten?

What PACs had to say:

- Canyon/Lister – Felt it would be helpful to working parents, but should be optional and suggested that there could be one school offering full day kindergarten.
- Trafalgar:
 - 1.) Agreement among parents that kindergarten helps prepare kids for Grade one, some thoughts were that full-day kindergarten had different views; more cost effective, same bus schedule; easier for working parents to manage. Those in favour of 1/2 days, put kindergarten students first for attention span, more involvement from parents, no bus schedule usually meaning parents go to the school to pickup students, therefore more traffic at school to manage unless a bus is available.
 - 2.) Who will be delivering the program? More teachers mean more staff dollars and FTEs, if delivered by ECE then who pays? What's the impact on teachers? More rooms required in the schools, may affect/ impact lunch programs, more supervision and security at the schools, more responsibility for Principals
 - 3.) Most favoured mandatory to help prepare students for Grade one and their adjustment to attending full school days. Optional was mentioned if preference was for home schooling.
 - 4.) PAC should support what is best to enhance childhood learning and preparing young students to enter the school system.
 - 5.) Who will deliver the program? What will the programs consist of? Will it be available in all schools? If not which ones? Mandatory or not? Open and timely

information and communication about the proposed programs is required in order for parents to make informed choices about their child's education.

- Homelinks - Brought up busing concerns about 3 and 4 year olds not being restrained properly. There was a suggestion instead of putting money into school programs maybe support for stay-home parents could be the focus.
- Erickson – Feels half day kindergarten isn't long enough and is problematic for working parents. Full day kindergarten could be offered only a few days a week, rather than all five because some children are simply not ready. Concerns about the wide range of abilities of students currently entering Kindergarten: some can read while others can barely hold a pencil. Full-day Kindergarten could be supported with a TA to work with students not ready for a school environment.
- Redfish - feels that there are pros and cons to both and could help address children at risk. Discussion was focused on Pre-K and who would be teaching. By making it mandatory you're taking away the parents rights of teaching their child in the first years of life. If it's optional children at risk may not attend.
- Rosemont – Who's going to be teaching - Teacher or ECE? Majority of our Kindergarten Teachers are happy in their role and are trained for their role.
- There are at least two pre-school/nursery schools currently available to students in our schools district: Kootenay Kinder School and Creston Nursery School. Each program welcomes 3 and 4 year olds. Creston Nursery School offers a Kindergarten readiness program for children aged 4-5.
- At the end of discussion it was decided DPAC will ask Superintendent Pat Dooley if the district would support a survey of parents regarding full-day and pre-kindergarten. Questions will be created by interested parents with a draft survey to be circulated at the December 18 DPAC meeting. It is expected the survey will be administered in January 2009.
- A summation of input so far:
 - Preference to optional, rather than mandatory, full-day and pre-kindergarten – could help working parents, but should also support and/or compliment stay-home parents
 - Huge questions around who will be providing the service: Early Childhood Educators or classroom teachers?
 - Bussing concerns for very small children
 - Concerns funding isn't adequate now, what happens when more children enter crowded buildings?
 - Concerns about assessing and grading children's playtime. Children learn at their own pace and may not fit into ministry curriculum. Who decides the curriculum for early learning?

f.) All Parents Belong! Conference

- Discussion around a few evening workshops versus full day conference. It was felt DPAC could reach more parents by offering a few evening workshops throughout the school year.
- Carol Ann Fried is coming to Cranbrook on April 18, 2009 and is willing to do an evening presentation. We can benefit by a reduced workshop fee.
- Other workshop ideas include: internet safety, BCTF Presentations for Parents and a June Walker presentation on Irlen's. PACs will be asked to provide other workshop ideas for the next DPAC meeting.

g.) DPAC Christmas Party

- Will take place December 18th after our regular meeting, from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm, 12:30 – 1:30 pm in Creston.

MOTION: DPAC spend a maximum of \$250 on the Christmas party

K. Mann/G. Mackinnon – carried

h.) Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA)

- Ministry of Education requires all Grade 4 and 7 students to take the FSA test, which is designed to be a gauge as to where your child is provincially.
- The Fraser Institute uses the FSA results to unfairly rank schools.
- DPAC has taken a position against classroom teachers handing union material to students to deliver to their parents. Parents would rather see a concern from their child's teacher, and not the union to which the teacher belongs. There has been a court ruling regarding teachers using students to deliver union material, to the favour of the union. The school district will look at creating policy around this.

6. Committee Reports

a.) Treasurer

- Regular Account: \$403.26
- Gaming Account: \$2376.63

b.) Executive – see attached

c.) Budget Working Committee – ***WE NEED PARENTS FOR THIS COMMITTEE***

d.) Education Committee – next meeting December 11, 2008 12:30 pm (lunch included) ***WE NEED PARENTS FOR THIS COMMITTEE***

e.) Healthy Lifestyles – next meeting TBA ***WE NEED PARENTS FOR THIS COMMITTEE***

f.) Policy – Quite a few draft policies have been sent out for feedback. Each PAC will have received them in their mailboxes. ***WE NEED PARENTS FOR THIS COMMITTEE***

District Discussion - 10:30 am Nelson/ 11:30 am Creston

- School Reports

Erickson - Looking into spring fundraising. One teacher per month is attending the PAC meeting. June Walker did an Irlen presentation on color schemes on paper. Fundraising for the school in Chile continues. Looking into the “grow your own lunch” program.

Homelinks - Looking into spending their money on field trips. They had a presentation on Anaphylactic shock from the health nurse, and filed a playground application. They found out that Creston Homelinks is actually part of the Distance Education School of the Kootenays (DESK) and therefore must fall under the Central Education Centre's PAC.

Rosemont - Wrapping up the fall fundraising. Looking into purchasing library books. Flydini the magician is coming next week. Christmas school dance planned for sometime in December. They're fundraising for the big field trip to the Creston wildlife centre in the spring.

L.V. Rogers - The smoking area has been moved causing other student to walk past posing a possible 2nd hand smoke concern. Perhaps more emphasis should be how to get kids to quit smoking. There is a \$5000.00 challenge to encourage students to stop smoking, with support from

the P.A.R.T.Y. Program and Mountain FM. Oversize in the classrooms is another discussion at this time. PAC is working with the principal for better transparency when it comes to school finances. There are some discrepancies with money reserved for specific programs.

Mt. Sentinel - is hosting the Provincial "A" Girls Volleyball, held at Selkirk College, Castlegar Campus. Mt. Sentinel currently ranks 2nd in BC.

Kevin shared information on a recent Destination Conservation meeting at Trafalgar. Destination Conservation is a 3 year program; 1st year focus is on reducing energy costs; 2nd year is water. Tests that came back for lead levels in the water at Trafalgar came back within limits aside from one wing. All water has been shut off in that one wing. Shower and Foods areas came back with acceptable levels.

Verna plans to visit all the schools and welcomes parents to contact her via telephone or email anytime. She's returning to the Board of Education after 6 years as an Area Director for Regional District of Central Kootenay.

Lenora expressed that parents should pay attention to the Education and Policy committees of the board. Anaphylactic policy is currently under review. It is expected that a newly formed Finance Committee will be struck soon, offering seats to parents through DPAC. Ben Eaton Director of Student Services has began a Special Education Internal Review Committee to review how the district delivers special education. Our district is part of a Ministry of Education pilot project, to review how special education can be better delivered across the province.

A question came up around cleaning products our school district currently uses. Kevin assured that everything is very safe and they've taken the products out that are harmful, most products are green products. Joint Safety Advisory Committee (JSAC) reviews these products, and any concerns can be directed there.

Discussion around PST rebates for PACs. Please visit the web site below for more information:
http://www.rev.gov.bc.ca/documents_library/bulletins/sst_116.pdf.

Adjourned 11:20 am