

**Denman Island Community School PAC Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2025**

Meeting Minutes: Kathryn West

Chair: Emily Anderson

Vice Chair: Becky Nykwest

Treasurer: Kristen Wright

Secretary: Kathryn West

DPAC Rep: Sara Schouten

Members at Large: Quinn Lundberg, Mitch Metsar, Leanna Pugsley, Lleilah Chernovsky

Regrets: Tahiti Rey, Will Lepore

In Attendance: Lindsay McGinn, Sara Schouten, Rebecca Moore, Trevor Thompson, Kathryn West, Jack Fletcher, Mitch Dublanica, Gerli Metsar, Kristen Wright, Quinn Lundberg, Brittany Smith, Becky Nykwest, Emily Anderson, Taina Uitto, Leanna Pugsley, Scott Shaw, Lleilah Chernovsky

ZOOM participants: Alicia Black

Guests (non-voting): Chelsea McCannel-Keene (Elections Chair, District Trustee), Megan Cowling (DPAC), Becky Kaulback (DI Community), Grace MacDonald (DICES), Karla Neuffer (Vice Principal)

Meeting Called to Order at 6:08pm by Emily

Agenda Item	Action Required
Welcome	
Area A School Trustee Report - Chelsea McCannel-Keene Updated the Board on her change in role becoming part of the BC Public School Employers Association representatives, and advocacy efforts for BC Ferry transportation priority boarding	

<p>for school district employees, including occupational therapists and speech pathologists and other professionals that should fall under health education.</p> <p>SD #71 school district's surplus budget of \$400,000 allocated to student safety and highlighted recent events and programs focused on safe travel and anti-discrimination.</p> <p>Shared a joint statement with CDTA, CUPE principals, and the District about anti-discrimination and harassment - Document Linked Here</p> <p>Mentioned two public engagement sessions planned for November 18, 2025 and March 10, 2026, focusing on budget and long-range facilities planning.</p>	
<p>DPAC Representative Report - Megan Cowling</p> <p>The School District's anti-racism subcommittee is looking at school codes of conduct to make sure they're inclusive, specific and equitable.</p> <p>Discussed the Sexual Health Committee's report on gender-based violence.</p> <p>Discussed the Speaker Series Committee's events partnering with CVFDA, including the recent Understanding IEP's for Parents & Caregivers event, an upcoming documentary screening on unpacking our own childhood trauma, and a discussion on drug prevention.</p> <p>Distributed packages that included info on Inclusive Education, 'A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education', 'Your role as a parent/caregiver', 'More Info On Understanding IEPs', 'Advocacy, Understanding Ministry designations for students', 'Common Acronyms and What They Stand For', 'Advocacy: Changing what is into what should be' and SD #71's Strategic Plan For Education. Copies available on the PAC info board in the school front hallway.</p> <p>Emergency Preparedness Committee's Great ShakeOut event at 10:16am on October 16. Master of Disaster is a free classroom program designed to help young people learn</p>	

<p>about emergency preparedness. The program teaches youth in grades 4 to 8 about hazards in B.C., like floods, wildfires, earthquakes and tsunamis, and shows them how to get prepared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reminder of the need for ID when picking up kids from school after a disaster, for emergency contact <p>Mentioned the Early Literacy questionnaire and the importance of community feedback.</p> <p>Question from the Floor: School District allocates funds for PAC meetings (snacks, photocopying) How much does Denman receive - \$150/year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan and Chelsea mentioned that the School District is looking into this funding as secondary schools don't usually need childcare, and receive more funds based on number of students <p>Question from the Floor: Possible perceived bias if teaching staff's partners are Members at Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair will be responsible for recusing staff and partners of staff from votes that would be in conflict of interest just as they would for any Members in similar circumstances where perceived bias or conflict of interest are identified. 	<p>Action Item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Survey for families of K to 3, DPAC wants to know what did you feel were useful practices regarding literacy and reading in grades K to three, what helped your family and what did not help? <p>Sara to to create Survey Monkey or Google Form and collate the responses</p>
<p>Outgoing Coordinators Report - Becky Nykwist See Attachment Page 7</p> <p>Response from the Floor: Karla congratulated Becky on excellent advocacy in the last year with the School District Superintendent and Trustee. DICES Executive Director now keyholder and has independent access to the school again.</p>	<p>Action Item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a separate meeting or committee to review and update the PAC's bylaws and constitution.
<p>DICES Report - Gracie MacDonald See Attachment</p> <p>Gracie discussed upcoming events like Bingo, Movie Night, and the Haunted House, and the need for kitchen and garden help.</p>	<p>Action Item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit volunteers for the school kitchen and garden, and for field trips.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 70 after school spaces (many students participating twice, plus homeschoolers) - free option (because it is volunteer run) is popular (soccer) - 35 youth registered with teen night - upcoming fundraisers are K pop movie night (Oct. 20 at 4:30), Bingo night (Oct. 29 at 5) and the Haunted Barn (Oct. 31 and Nov. 1) - Most students signed up for school lunches, plus 6 from BBL. - Seeking volunteers in the garden and the kitchen Looking for produce to process for winter (apples, squash etc), DICES has purchased an extra freezer and fridge to store donated and or bulk items for school food. - Garden connections: Div 1 in garden/once per week, school lunch using herbs, tomatoes zucchini from garden. 	<p>Kathryn to set up with Gracie an online volunteer scheduling platform to help coordinate volunteer needs for the school and forward to Karla and Isabelle</p> <p>Action Item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sara to make a poster for DICES to request food and ingredients donations from the community.
<p>Vice-Principal Report - Karla Neuffer See Attachment Page 10</p> <p>Provided an update on the positive school environment; recent minor incidents during class breaks have all been behaviours that are developmentally appropriate.</p> <p>Discussed their strong working relationship with Gracie at DICES and the support from the DICES Council for community school programs.</p> <p>Upcoming DICES events: Bingo, Movie Night, and the Haunted House, and the need for more volunteers to support after-school programs.</p> <p>Highlights the success of the community school model and the hiring of a new BC certified teacher to support homeschool kids.</p> <p>Discussed the need for more volunteers to support community school programs and the importance of parent involvement.</p> <p>Mentioned the District Equity Scan, the Winter Concert, and the completion of FSA's for grade four and seven students.</p> <p>Question from the Floor: Are the FSA results public? Literacy support needs were identified by parents last spring along with Math.</p>	

- FSA results are confidential, parents/guardians can view the results. Whole school results are not shared publicly due to small class sizes.
- Discussion on the importance of understanding and interpreting assessment results for parents. Emily asked that an email or letter be sent with the results offering support to families in understanding the FSA process & results.

Question from the Floor:

A parent/guardian expressed a desire for more communication about their children's work and learning. Karla suggests parents reach out to teachers directly for more information and support.

- **Discussion** on educational afterschool DICES programs - Homework Club, Reading Group, Math Club.
- **Discussion** about last year's Math Club afterschool program in particular that was formed with the intention of supporting students who were struggling. Although apparently well received by the kids that did it, this program didn't do what was intended, and the plan is to revisit after school academic programs next PAC meeting

Question from the Floor:

Will field trips include students in the Blended Model Class?

Karla: Yes, depending on the trip.

Spoke of the upcoming Pumpkin Patch trip Oct 30th and the importance of parent volunteers for school activities.

Question from the Floor: Will Div 1 have field trips this year?

Karla: Yes, the pumpkin patch and skating if date could be found

Discussion Feedback from 1/3 of parents at the meeting that Courtenay skating field trip last year was not a success. Issues with student safety, participation and bussing costs.

Action Items:

- Next PAC Meeting: Revisit the idea of an after-school literacy support program or club
- Next Pac Meeting: Explore reinstating a math support program or club
- PAC to communicate to parents that they can always reach out to their child's teacher directly to discuss their learning and ask for any support or additional resources as needed, not just for extra work, but for connection with their children.

Action Item:

- Field Trip Committee to find new field trips. Karla will discuss with teachers and consider replacing the skating field trip.

<p>Field Trip Committee Report - Leanne Pugsley</p> <p>Provided an update on the field trip committee's efforts to compile information and logistics for potential trips. SD #71 List of approved field trip providers and locations being used to make a spreadsheet of info, pricing.</p> <p>Challenges: finding enough volunteers to drive children and the cost of using the school bus.</p> <p>Discussion on whether it's important that field trips be educational experiences and the need for practical logistics.</p> <p>Suggestion from the floor: Suggested Leanna connect with teachers to identify themes for field trips that would support the curriculum. Karla encourages to focus on the experiences.</p>	<p>Action Item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Trip Committee to prepare a resource list of possible field trips for whole school, and each division too
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Meeting Adjourned at 7:17pm

Next Meeting: November 4, 2025 at 5:30pm in the Denman Island Community School Library

2024–2025 PAC Year in Review–Coordinator Report, Becky Nykwest

Fundraising & Expenditures

Last year, the PAC received a \$2,000 Gaming Grant, which was fully allocated to school field trips. We have reapplied for the grant this year, though we applied late for it and have not received word yet about whether we'll receive funds.

We were incredibly fortunate to receive \$10,250 in donations from members of the community. We brought in about \$5500 in profit through our fundraising initiatives after expenses, which included our taco stand at the Christmas Craft Fair and our joint Trivia Night fundraiser with DICES. We also received nearly \$500 in deposits from DIRA, though our bin at the bottle depot. We started the year with a balance of \$2753.79 and ended with a balance of \$15,467.97.

Last year, the PAC contributed \$3500 to school field trips, with money allocated to each division. We allocated \$650 to DICES to pay for contractors who ran the new after school math program, and gave over \$1200 directly to the school to help pay for tables and match funds for the Variety BC grant, which was meant to help provide sensory materials for the school.

Advocacy & Engagement

Throughout the year, the PAC served as an active liaison among parents, staff, and the district on several key issues:

Principal Transition & District Advocacy:

With both Denman and Hornby welcoming new principals last year, we collaborated with the Hornby PAC to advocate for shared concerns. These included:

- Renewing community access to the school,
- Revisiting post-COVID custodial restrictions,
- Ensuring that DICES had unrestricted access to their office space in the building,
- And highlighting the challenges associated with the model that divides our Principal's time between school leadership and teaching. While this model is unlikely to entirely change given the size of our schools, our school leaders have been allocated a larger percentage of admin time this year.

Inclusion & EA Support:

The PAC advocated on several fronts for stronger supports and more qualified staff for students with diverse learning needs, engaging both through formal letters and direct conversations with district leadership. Work remains to be done here, but the district has been responsive while acknowledging that the challenges we face here are shared district-wide.

School Leader Hiring Process:

When our principal announced her departure after less than one year at the school, we worked closely with trustee Chelsea McCannel-Keene and Superintendent Jeremy Morrow to ensure Denman parent

voices factored into the next hiring process. We arranged a visit from Dr. Morrow to the school, where he met with teachers, and then with school parents and guardians and some members of the public and listened to our concerns and hopes for our next school leader, and for the school itself. Dr. Morrow committed to heeding parent wishes wherever possible, and to including the PAC in the hiring process.

PAC executive members were invited to participate in the interview process for the new school leader, and our presence helped ensure Denman's needs as voiced at that meeting were heard. We sat in on interviews and were able to share our thoughts and impressions. We of course did not participate in the selection, but we felt that Karla's hiring reflected the district's consideration of parent concerns and wishes, and the expressed hope that qualified candidates from Denman Island would be given priority for all positions at the school.

Staff Retention Campaign:

As part of that same initiative to retain our island teachers and staff members wherever possible, we advocated for our qualified Denman teachers to receive priority consideration for positions at the school. This included a letter advocating for our division 2 teacher to receive an interview for the position she already held.

Community Engagement

As one of the few Community Schools in SD71, we are committed to revitalizing and strengthening that designation, and to recentering the school as a place and provider for community learning. With DICES, we are working to promote and rebuild:

- Community access to the school,
- After-school and in-school community programming,
- The vision of the community school as a hub for lifelong learning, to include programming for learners of all ages.

This year, we initiated:

- A **Community Volunteer Database**, to connect local experts and skilled residents with teachers and students. This is not meant to dictate curriculum but rather to serve as a flexible resource for teachers seeking enrichment opportunities.
- Continued support for events like **Trivia Night** and the **Variety Show** that bring the community together

Goals for 2025-2026

At our final meeting of the school year, we outlined the following key goals:

Community Engagement:

Launch and grow the community volunteer database to support teachers and enrich student learning.

Work with the new school leader to enhance school culture and emphasize kindness, inclusion, and safety.

Field Trip Committee:

Build a shared resource database for local excursions, including:

Hosts willing to receive students,

Local destinations aligned with place-based learning,

Logistical support for students on field trips

PAC Constitution Update:

Begin updating the PAC Constitution. We want our Constitution to reflect

The current size and structure of the school,

Our Community School designation,

Evolving needs around advocacy and governance.

Vice Principal's Report to PAC - Karla Neuffer

Oct. 14, 2025

There continues to be a very positive feeling in the school. Students are working and playing well together, with just very minor incidents needing to be addressed and all falling within developmental norms for learning and growing children.

The biggest controversy to date that I have needed to address was the unfortunate death of the last of the heritage apple trees. Not a happy event.

We are building up the Community School model and Gracie and I have a strong working relationship. I appreciate all the extra work from her and the DICES council. We have had many fruitful conversations. The school is open, the courses are filling up, Teen Night, the Food Bank, Feeding Futures (lunch program), fund raising, and connections to community are healthy and flourishing.

Our new Blended Learning program started last Thursday. We have hired a B.C. certified teacher, Olena Starchuk, who is committed to our Community School model, has worked hard to set up a shared classroom space, and is keen to participate in school activities as a staff member. We are pleased to welcome another teacher to our team and new students to our school. Many thanks to the school district for supporting this venture.

Up coming work for the staff includes participating in the district Equity Scan, organizing the Winter Concert, completing the FSA and district grade assessments, trekking to the pumpkin patch, and choosing our Halloween costumes.

We have a healthy, thriving school thanks to the commitment, energy, and positive support of parents, staff, and volunteers.

Thank you so much!

Karla