

MINUTES for the Annual General Meeting of the **SD71 District Parent Advisory Council**, held Isfeld Library & via Zoom, on **MONDAY March 4th** at 6:30pm.

ATTENDANCE:

Jennifer Fisher- DPAC Chair
Joanne Barr - DPAC Vice Chair
Megan Cowling* - DPAC Secretary - Brooklyn Alt
Kendall Packham* - DPAC Treasurer
Dana Starritt*- Cumberland Community School
Shawn Thir*- Lake Trail
JJ Morgan* - Arden Elementary
Jim Tessman*- Valleyview Elementary
Rae Walsh*- Vanier Secondary

Chelsea McCannel-Keene- Trustee
Michelle Waite- Trustee
Dr Jeremy Morrow - Superintendent
Mike Johnson* - Miracle Beach
Karyn Parkinson* - Aspen Elementary
Nancy Dietricks*- Robb Road
Tom Cutler* - Puntledge Park Elementary
Carly & Dan Wintschel - Brooklyn Parents
Chris Parker* - NIDES

12 of 21 voting reps (min. of 7 req'd for quorum)

***indicates DPAC Rep**

1 Call to Order 6:31pm

Recognition of Traditional Territories

Introductions

Approval of the Minutes from *Feb. 5th, 2024 Motion: Joanne Barr Secoded: Jim Tessman*

Approval of the Agenda for *March. 4th, 2024 Motion: Karen Parkinson Secoded: Jim Tessman*

2 Old Business

- Nothing at this time
- See attached materials from Jina Taylor re: her presentation at February's meeting

3 Correspondence:

- Outgoing Correspondence: Dated March 1, 2024 Letter to the Editor, *see below*

4 Reports

Chair Report - Jennifer Fisher:

- Two DPAC represented DPAC in the Closed Committee of the Whole Meeting on February 20th, 2024. We took the weekend previously to work together to create binders and supplementary materials to take with us to the meeting. We also sent an additional three recommendations to the Superintendent regarding Feeding Futures funding.
- We met with the Superintendent and the Director of Communications to discuss strategies to foster greater parent engagement and communication as a whole.
- We met with the Acting Secretary Treasurer to review the budget in a separate meeting and forwarded further recommendations. We thank Russell for his engagement with DPAC and wish him a happy retirement.
- In response to a recent article in the newspaper regarding we drafted and submitted a Letter to the Editor on behalf of DPAC, please see attached.

DPAC Treasurer- Kendall Packham

- Draft Budget Motion to approve as presented. Increased the amount for website hosting as per new billing request that is more than \$300. Jenn will look into if this increase is due to billing cycle (2 years?) or other reasons.

Moved: Jenn Fisher Seconded: Joanne Barr Motion Carried.

Sexual Health Committee:

- No meetings this month, as Feeding Futures meetings and preparation needed significant prep time. Please note the White Hatter content and statistics on sextortion. Some statistics referenced in the presentation:
 - CommonSense Media 2023 statistics: 73% of teens had been exposed to online porn either accidentally or on purpose
 - 15% of those under the age of 10yrs had been exposed to porn online 54% of those under 13 and 73% of those under the age of 17
 - 31% of teens had accessed pornography during school hours
 - 44% of teens stated they had searched for online porn on purpose, 58% said they found it by accident
 - Most kids see pornography online at the average age of 9-12 years, before their first kiss
 - Among 16yo girls, 30% reported using porn and of this cohort, 39% had tried to copy the sexual acts seen in porn
 - 51% of 16-17yo kids had been asked to watch porn with a partner and 44% had been asked to do something with a partner seen in porn

Speaker Series Committee - Megan Cowling

- White Hatter update. 150+ RSVPs. Some resources, specifically a module on Sextortion are available for free on the White Hatter website:
<https://thewhitehatter.ca/blog/free-online-resources-for-parents-caregivers-and-educators-on-child-safety-in-the-digital-age-online-exploitation-pornography-and-sexortion/>
- BC Women's Hospital Article on Endometriosis
(Link: <http://www.bcwomens.ca/about/news-stories/stories/lessons-endometriosis>)
- Respectful Relationships request - April with Shift Education
- Lake Trail Community School Connections, request to support, with our financial support. Lake Trail Community Education Society puts on an annual Community Connections Day. This day is a number of *free workshops and resources for families open to all throughout the Comox Valley*, and has childcare:
 - Motion: Megan Cowling: To "financially support the LTCES Community Connections Day in the amount of \$1000" Seconded by Shawn Thir, Motion Carried

Addition: The Lake Trail Community Connections Day is June 1st, 2024.

School Food Subcommittee - Shawn Thir

- Shawn was invited by the Comox Valley Food Policy Council as a School Food Subcommittee member to Lush Valley HQ. The invite included the information that Jagmeet Singh, Gord Johns and Rachel Blaney will be touring LUSH Valley's Headquarters at [2342 Rosewall Crescent](#) in Courtenay on Wednesday March 6th at 9:45am. The Federal NDPs want to push for school food funding at a national level, and they are visiting LUSH to gain a deeper understanding of what school food programs look like in action. Shawn will report back.

Emergency Preparedness Committee - Shawn Thir

- No updates

Superintendent Report - Dr. Jeremy Morrow

Very interested in the A in District Parents Advisory Committee this month. Feeding Futures led conversations, notable how passionate and engaged our community is around food when a federal leader is coming to the

Comox Valley to talk about food. There was a recent article in a local newspaper that was not complimentary towards the school district. It is a special kind of problem when feeding kids is not a good news story. Dr. Morrow acknowledged that school food programs have been led by volunteers who have given for years and years and the delays have changed that narrative. Would like to ensure that schools are protected and volunteers are protected for their great work. Internal partners presentation at the Board Meeting on March 12th. Dr Morrow referenced the generative conversations we have had as partner groups and rights' holders, and because of those conversations the presentations will put forward recommendations that are different from the recommendations within the Food Scan. Five recommendations coming to the board and filling gaps. We have an incredibly engaged community around food. Open to feedback. Feeding Futures is iterative and over a three year span that can become better and better.

Draft calendar on the website for feedback - not anonymous feedback (employees) making it anonymous. One commitment will be the three year calendar done in two years. Calendar approval is in March. Apologize for the wait. Seeking consensus from the DPAC reps as was found in the previous meeting around the question of timing.

First professional day (Pro-D) is traditionally the first day back to school. How did families find the first pro-d day? Consecutive days are great feedback.

Parent Rep Question: Can you have Pro-D Days during summer?

Answer: Four Pro-D days in the school year, to have them in summer break would be pushing the collective agreement. As the schedule currently is, it is structured to create enough time for the two week spring break for 10 days.

Parent Rep Question: Staff value in re-engaging in the Pro-D day that first week back to school?

Answer: Yes.

Understanding that communication is important with this the first week having a Pro-D Day. This year's advertising said "The First Day of School" but did not indicate it was a Wednesday. The need to add the calendar amendment threw it off. Change in district calendar to recognize the National Day of Truth & Reconciliation.

First part of Dr Morrow's introduction to the district in September was working really hard with getting to know everyone. We are now post-winter break moving forward. Strategic Plan moving forward and the survey. Four parent nights in April, Cumberland Aspen KFN and Lake Trail.

Question from Dr. Morrow: Seeking advice around Strategic Plan survey: What questions should we be asking parents if they are coming from 6:30-8? What key questions should we ask?

Answer from Parent Reps: Strategic Plan discussion to reflect key issues for parents. Some discussed included: student connection to school, critical thinking and problem-solving, assessments driving funding, do designations translate to actual supports for all children, barriers to designation process, funding per student, our role as parents/caregivers, the current statistics in readiness for the school, the impacts of mental health, and tools for educators to identify and build on those passionate educators who make true positive impacts in education and connect with students.

The Strategic Plan is the strategic direction for the school district. This could be identifying strengths, more or less of something, but will guide and inform our path.

Parent Rep Question: What's your vision?

Answer from Dr. Morrow: Purpose of the whole system is the education of students. That the gifts and attributes each child brings to school are seen and recognized as unique and cultivated. That each and every child is successful will be successful in the system. Provincial conversations are around an accountability lens. Mandatory expectations around professional learning. As a district we look at what structure best meets the needs of the kids. Perhaps for one division that is a four day week? Reflect on asking for staff to connect with kids, meanwhile every high school teacher is expected to know your kids and then we give them 210 kids each and expect them to know each and every one.

More dialogue around Strategic Plan, emails, survey, and sessions.

Trustees Report:

Michelle Waite:

- Regarding the current placement of the Pro-D Day being the first day back, that some feedback was not complimentary in terms of obtaining childcare. Sharing that the Board spent Saturday in a visioning session with IEC on the concept of co-governance. No formalized plan or direction to share as of yet.
- On the topic of the news article, thank you to the team who put the voice to paper for their perspective and finding another way to share voice in the community. The article has been received emotionally by many and would like to note that we do not know the conversations that were had with the reporter in the context of the story.
- Strategic Plan - Please go on and answer the questions in the survey: Link:
- Sexual Health Committee struck a working group and drafted Terms of Reference. This is coming to the board for the March meeting.
- Event on Wednesday National Food Program Funding, noting that it is good for representatives and partners of our school district to be part of the discussion for the benefit of students

Chelsea McCannel-Keene:

- Has had parents ask if the four strategic planning sessions are just for those schools, would note that they are open to all.
- In reference to the strategic planning process, please keep in mind that when items come into the budget and focus, that will mean that some things will need to be left out as we need to keep the funding in mind.
- Attended a Professional Day Erase Conference. Aligning Threat response. Presenter was Jen Chambers. Sounds like more Erase sessions are coming down the pipe for parent education.
- First day with the new Secretary Treasurer Carey McVeigh.
- Recognizing that with consultation in general, there may be accessibility barriers with consultation.
- Outdoor Education - Tribune Bay Outdoor Ed Society suspended operations, connecting with BC Parks, connecting to find a path forward and will have future updates to share.

5 **New Business**

- Nothing at this time

6 **Upcoming Events**

IMPORTANT STRATEGIC PLANNING DATES:

Wednesday, April 3rd, 2024 – Cumberland Community School 6:30 – 8pm – Multi Purpose Room

Thursday, April 4th, 2024 – Aspen Park Elementary 6:30 – 8 pm – Library

Monday, April 8th, 2024 – Lake Trail & Zoom 6:30 – 8pm

Monday, April 15th, 2024 – KFN Band Hall – 6:30 – 8pm

Update: Lake Trail Community Education Society Community Connections Day is June 1st.

7 **PAC Sharing:** nothing shared

8 **Next Meeting: FIELD TRIP!** Next Meeting takes place Monday April 8th at Lake Trail Community School. DPAC will attend the Strat Plan session in place of our regular meeting.

9 **Adjourn** Moved by: Joanne Barr Seconded by: Dana Starritt Motion Carried
Meeting concluded at 8:27pm.

Any questions or comments please don't hesitate to [contact us](#)

Comox Valley Record Letters to the Editor
407D 5th Street Courtenay, BC
V9N 2J7

March 1, 2024

Dear Editor,

In response to a recent article, we would like to bring to light on-going efforts regarding the Feeding Futures funding and school food programs in the Comox Valley.

Our heartfelt appreciation extends to the school district staff including the administrative support staff, educational assistants, teachers, educators, indigenous support workers, vice-principals, and principals. Together they stand on the front lines helping with school hunger, sometimes purchasing food out of their own pockets. They spend considerable time and work long hours to develop school programs to address hunger and the lingering effects of the affordability crisis on students. Recent funding for this work has only become accessible as of September, and since that time we have seen significant and positive change to the staff-led programs. For example, many schools have implemented breakfast programs to make schools more welcoming places and reduce the stress upon families and to be a safe, stigma-free setting for our students.

Food needs have grown substantially over the course of the pandemic. Families are struggling and, although the funding programs are only recently coming online, it takes time to build effective systems and develop our programs. These first steps are underway, and the last few months have been marked by evident growth. Collaboration is key, and no single entity can meet this complex challenge. We firmly believe in the commitment from Superintendent Morrow and the Board of Education, and we have witnessed it in real time through our working groups which benefit all children with more supportive and sustainable food systems. We are collaborating in the process of creating these novel food support positions and programs and want to see the most responsible use of the funding given the importance of the task. This takes consultation time and diligent planning, which is frustrating given the ongoing need.

The prevalence of post-pandemic burnout and the impact of increased cost of living is real and has impacted volunteer numbers. It is essential to recognize that not all volunteers operate from a position of privilege. Many squeeze volunteering into busy daily routines, alter their work schedules, utilize their leave, or forgo career altogether because of childcare needs. These commendable volunteers are testament to our local community. Their efforts warrant greater recognition than a recent article suggests.

There is so much potential in the current environment, and the Food Scan demonstrated as much. If our small group of volunteers, community school staff, and non-profit workers can feed more than 20% of our children, imagine the possibilities of what we can do with fully developed partnerships and on-going collaboration. This work takes time, but we are confident that we can build systems and resources to address these needs. The key to progress is a unified effort to get food into children's bellies. Together with our staff partners, we can work together to do the good work our community and our children badly need.

Sincerely,
SD71 Comox Valley District Parents Advisory Council
dpac@sd71.bc.ca
DPAC Mailbox
% 607 Cumberland Road Courtenay, BC
V9N 7G5