

**MINUTES** for the General Meeting of the **SD71 District Parent Advisory Council**, held via Zoom, on **MONDAY February 3rd** at 6:30pm.

## **ATTENDANCE:**

Joanne Barr - DPAC Chair	Kari Pratt* - Isfeld Secondary
Jennifer Fisher- DPAC Vice Chair (Isfeld Alt)	Carly Wintschel* - Brooklyn EI
Megan Cowling - DPAC Secretary - (Brooklyn/Highland Alt)	Erica Davis* - Arden EI
Kendall Packham* - DPAC Treasurer - Glacierview	Jim Tessman* - Valleyview Rep
Susan Leslie- Trustee	Emily Hanson*- Airport Elementary
Dr. Jeremy Morrow - Superintendent	Rae Walsh* - Vanier Secondary
Tara Ryan - District Vice-Principal Inclusive Education	Mackenzie Leslie* - Courtenay EI
Jen Storey* - Miracle Beach EI	Jenn McQuoid* - Puntledge Park EI
Shawn Thir*- Lake Trail Community School	Karen Parkinson* - Aspen Rep
Aimee Pollard* - Cumberland Community School	Catherine Crowe* - Ecole Robb Road
Brooke Finlayson*- Highland Secondary	

## **15 of 21 voting reps (min. of 7 req'd for quorum)**

*\*indicates DPAC Rep*

### **1 Call to Order 6:32pm**

Recognition of Traditional Territories

Introductions

Approval of the Minutes from *January 6th 2024* **Motion to Approve: Kendall Seconded: Jen Storey**

Approval of the Agenda for *February 3rd 2025* **Motion to Approve: Jenn F Seconded: Shawn Thir**

### **2 Correspondence:**

- *Family Smart Sessions - In-person events coming up through January & February*
- *BCCPAC*

### **3 Presentation**

- Accessibility Committee & Audit: Tara Ryan, District Vice-Principal Inclusive Education Chair of the Accessibility Committee. The Accessibility Committee started two years ago, with 7-8 folks on the Committee decided on by application, over 80 people applied, it was a robust application process. Planning on inviting two students. Any questions please feel free to ask. SPARC BC (see website [Here](#)) partnered and backed SD71 to do several audits tracking some training. Through asking the Principals, 7 schools initially volunteered to be the pilot audit schools. Auditing entailed things like measuring (height of handles, washrooms) and looking at all kinds of accessibility factors within the schools. Finished the seven audits this fall. An additional project with SPARC BC funded by SPARC BC was an opportunity to choose three conversations about Accessibility to be represented by a graphic artist. They came and listened and beautifully represented. The artwork is currently on display at the Inclusive Ed building, which is located at the old Board Office location. Two thirds of conversations are now complete. Seven goals for this year. The first goal for the Committee started with a questionnaire about a year and a half ago, which is to create a reporting tool on the website. Instead of emailing, this would help if parents and families notice an accessibility issue (e.g. an example from this year, a dumpster placed on a handicap parking spot.) This is a plan to create a reporting tool for the public in schools or on school properties. Accessibility plan not on website yet until updated but should be on the website by end of year hopefully by Spring.

The second goal is to update the Accessibility Plan and share on the District website. The third goal was to work with the artist Melissa Kendzierski to capture and illustrate the conversations about accessibility. The fourth goal relates to the large amount of data from questionnaire and audits, they would like to culminate the data in a meaningful way. Present in cost vs impact. Starting with what is low-cost but high-impact. E.g. closed captioning because that helps more than just hearing impaired but also assists with people who struggle to focus and those with sensory issues.

The fifth goal is to recognize, highlight, and celebrate national Access-Ability week. Find more here: [National Accessibility Week](#)

Sixth goal - formalized process for Accessibility Committee membership where we add members and keep it small but have it representative of diverse needs and backgrounds.

See the slides from Tara's presentation to the Committee of the Whole: beginning page 2: [COW Accessibility Presentation Slides](#)

- In working with parents we know the importance of working with families for accessibility in new builds and new additions e.g. installing sound fields in new build is less expensive than retrofitting.
- "Nothing about us without us."  
Two conversations represented graphically by Melissa, can be seen on social media. Students in attendance were ages 9 and over. Conversations of inclusion, accessibility and belonging. 15-18 students, also having interpreters present, and a sound field. Created it in the former board office, U shape for the students and helpers/parents sit behind the students. Students have a voice, once they felt comfortable they opened up.
- For working on the second conversation, focus was on members of the public, but parents came too. What will the Third one look like? Add Indigenous voice, focus on parents of students with lived disability.

Question: Will you dissect the audit results based on the schools that went through the process, we're stoked on it, understand it's a lot of work, any plans to either draw from the other results, how would that rollout, or add more schools to audit?

Answer: It is tricky because we are all doing this off the sides of our desks but we want it front and centre because it is such important work. We were doing 2 audits a week for a month. Re: with the data, do we do something with it first or wait - we learned the common themes were standard in almost every school that we went to e.g. (changes in elevation - for vision impairedness) (where an accessible space for a van can park where a student can cross.) Some patterns we saw in the seven schools were things we can't do without funding. The legislation did not come with funding so with this legislation we cannot not replace stairs with ramps. We will start with high-impact low-cost items. Two boys in wheelchairs taught us with their perspective, e.g. partial paralysis rise & run of a stairway, the traffic flow right-hand side balance issues. A solution for the future is a stair rail up the middle, wouldn't learn this without talking to him. New builds do better. The Committee will be changing members as kids graduate and move on.

Question: Catherine: New grant for playground upgrade at Ecole Robb Rd, designed to be accessible for a future student in a wheelchair. Current playground is inaccessible, can't move around on the playground, and they are fundraising to resurface the playground. Did they mention anything about playgrounds? Other students with ability needs.

Tara: With Ecole Robb Road there are accessibility challenges, e.g. narrow hallways to navigate. One thing we did when we created the audit format could a child with a wheelchair sit at a picnic table with a wheelchair. Are we clearing the snow for kids with vision impairments to get to class? We're talking about children and they need to access playgrounds. At another school the muster station was down a big hill and they couldn't get to it. Accessible playground equipment is very expensive. For a student accessing the playground, what is their travel path? Do they have a 6 inch step versus a ramp. Running on dirt out the doorway. Things to be considered.

Question: Is there a way we are collecting that info before kids register? Highlight these needs? You don't really know you have options until you know you have options? Hard of hearing student has a great meeting with staff as they enter a highschool. How do we connect people to know this is an option?

Answer: Certainly with kindergarten kids we work with the Child Development Association (link [Here](#)) for everyone that they have listed or designated. We do a brief intake for all of the kids that have been recommended to CVCDA. We meet with family and school to evaluate needs. This process has been in place for quite a few years. We have a good heads up who will be starting in Kindergarten. IEP transition meetings between schools. Older school team comes down, meets with designated kids and kids on IEPs. This information can be very helpful in setting classes and home rooms. When we have kids moving from out of district, it can vary depending on age. There are always surprises and we try to make that transition as smooth as possible.

Question: With the audit, were you also looking at lack of accessibility for lack of EAs?

Answer: Interesting because when we had the original questionnaire, feedback said "our schools need more EA time" in some responses. With the audit, we were looking at hard features less than staffing because of close link to funding. We talk about the lack of EAs, and we find there are not enough bodies in the community to fill all the positions we need. EAs are important but only part of the toolbox. Our District has some pretty amazing specialists, and these specialists can fix the programming and adapt them. It is not always an EA that can fix things. We haven't gone into EA numbers (210 spaces) this morning we were short a lot of them. To prevent a child missing school we do everything we can to send out our specialists. This would only happen in a safety situation. Eg. food and feeding tube.

Note: The BC Ombudsperson is investigation exclusion from schools and there is a confidential survey here: [https://bcombudsperson.ca/news\\_release/ombudsperson-investigating-exclusion-of-students-from-bc-public-schools/](https://bcombudsperson.ca/news_release/ombudsperson-investigating-exclusion-of-students-from-bc-public-schools/)

Question: You mentioned the reporting tool, will it be geared towards parents to raise issues with the District?

Answer: Yes it will, the phrasing will be similar to "Where did you notice the barrier?" (e.g. Accessibility button was behind a totem pole.)

Question: Are you working on raising awareness and/or education - e.g. where you place a dumpster? Plans for an education piece internally?

Answer: I am often doing presentations to our leadership PVP groups about these issues and AccessAbility week we will highlight and work with teams and auditors to increase awareness. If there isn't an educational piece we could repeat our mistakes.

Thank you so much for your time Tara. Thank you for staying and answering all of our questions. If parents have follow-up questions, should they directly email you or would you prefer they come through DPAC email? Either is fine: [Tara.Ryan@sd71.bc.ca](mailto:Tara.Ryan@sd71.bc.ca)

## **4 Reports**

### **Chair Report - Joanne Barr**

- Thank you Jenn Fisher for supporting me through the transition from Vice to Chair. Jokingly holding my hand and dragging me along. Congrats Megan & Kendall. We look forward to continuing the work we've begun tirelessly advocating for students & families. Have not set goals yet but we have the passion for growth and advocacy in our committees. Enhance our quality as a Partner Group for these committees. Jennifer and Megan have been attending the BOE and COW in-person. If you are interested as reps, you can watch live on youtube or watch recap. We are here as your DPAC Exec to help if you have questions.

### **DPAC Treasurer- Kendall Packham**

- Not much to report, budget presentations are not great to do on Zoom. We have to pay the printshop for the flyers we distributed for Benoit Valliant.
- At some point we can make decisions with the money. No totals at this time as nothing has changed since the last meeting.

### Anti Racism Committee - Carly & Dan Wintschel

- New resources to share - will bring hard copies of the posters to the next meeting. Two members of the Committee will be taking Anti-Racism Response Training. The training is a joint venture through the [Comox Valley Community Justice Centre \(CVCJC\)](#) and the [Immigrant Welcome Centre](#). It is two days of training. We have an upcoming meeting with Karma Taiji, currently following an every other month check-in. The posters from CVCJC to hand out have wording on interrupting hate & racism. We have a draft flowchart from the student/parent perspective outlining what we think are the best practice steps for reporting, potentially places to get help, and information about the system and components of it. Draft versions to the Committee prompted feedback that information and arrows needed to circle back to the student/parent reporting. We hope to meet with Karma and get more information about whether we are on the right track. We would also like to better understand ERASE and need more help with that. Hoping to have the flow chart finalized for June at the latest.

### Sexual Health Committee - Megan Cowling/Brooke Finlayson

- Improve experience and purpose of committee to review policy relating to GBV seeking reports of personal or misconduct of GBV, we are not asking people to share their stories or going down that road. We meet Wednesday, working on an online survey seeking input and suggestions, all focused on better preventative measures and better ways to address reporting. Fine-tuning questions on the survey. Please share this info with your PACs. Ticking along doing our thing, lots of great conversations. Brooke is the parent rep on the Gender-Based Violence Committee through DPAC and at this time, there is not much to report re: the DPAC Sexual Health Committee, role has morphed into this GBVC where the bigger committee work is happening. The Province has declared GBV as an epidemic in January 2025 and we're working in collaboration with our partners to make schools safer. Bounce to Jennifer Fisher.
- Jennifer Fisher:
  - At the last School Board meeting our Trustees voted to submit a motion to the BC School Trustee Association AGM in favor of *"advocate for the Ministry of Education & Child Care to develop, promote, implement and fund a K-12 Action Plan to address misogyny & sexism (akin to the K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan, released January 2023) and which specifically includes strategies for educators and for students to identify and respond to gender-based biases and sexual harassment."*
  - Building on what our District has already successfully advocated at the BCCPAC and Ministry level regarding Consent education, it would be a wonderful partnership for Trustees and parents come together to ask the Ministry to work on this, Government has already acknowledged this issue at the College/University level, but those students come from High School, so let's take that one step further and take that initiative to the High Schools.
  - **Motion, "for DPAC to support a submission to the BCCPAC Resolution committee: *That BCCPAC advocate for the Ministry of Education & Child Care to develop, promote, implement and fund a K-12 Action Plan to address misogyny & sexism (akin to the K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan, released January 2023) and which specifically includes strategies for educators and for students to identify and respond to gender-based biases and sexual harassment.*"**

Moved by Jenn Fisher, Seconded by Megan Cowling. Open for questions. Text of motion put in Zoom chat. Question around looking for including expanded and inclusive gender language. Input for change of wording will come in future. All in favour? Unanimous. **Motion Carried.**

### School Food Subcommittee - Shawn Thir

- School Food Subcommittee did not meet. School Food Advisory meets this week on Wednesday afternoon. Any questions?

### **Speaker Series Committee - Megan Cowling**

- Parent education session in partnership with CDTA, working with the Teachers association, who are organizing Teacher education during the February Pro-D. We are excited to feature Madame Reader and her son Martin. For anyone who has had a child lucky enough to have Madame Reader you know how much of an impact she has on the students she teaches. And the apple doesn't fall far from the tree with her son Martin. They are both passionate about bringing out the best in their students/athletes.

### **Transportation Committee- Joanne Barr**

- Committee on pause for now. Until September when it can be reinvigorated.

### **Emergency Preparedness Committee - Shawn Thir**

- Nothing to report. Supposed to meet, it's been postponed and rescheduled for tomorrow

### **Superintendent Report - Dr. Jeremy Morrow**

- Please excuse technical difficulties. Would like to express appreciation for DPAC as a partner group, with parents as leaders in our district. Relentless advocacy from the Executive. We have lots of places to catch up and amplify. From the GBV committee and Anti-Racism work there are many examples of relentless advocacy. The district is responding with the learning we're engaging in with a recent seminar focused on anti-racism. Coming up we have a SOGI Masterclass as we continue to find better ways, but we are still missing the mark for so many of the kids we need to serve. We are working on a template school growth plan that will be publicly available and actions for Strat Plan. This time of year is Kindergarten registration. We have projected numbers for the 14th. Very modest growth, not significant growth. Gauging growth is a complex process and we use software programs to work together. If we undercut our enrollment numbers, we have to make hard decisions about where to cut back. If we overproject we have the same problem but we've hired them in advance. Currently Comox Valley Schools spends 86% on salary. Excited to meet with Shawn re: Emergency Preparedness and hopeful to have a meaningful update for Shawn to bring back to DPAC.
- We will see tomorrow about snow - we have tried to upgrade the website with more rationale so people can understand the decisions.
- Questions? When calling a Snow Day, do CR & CV work together?
- Answer: We try but also the weather may be different for our regions.

### **Trustees Report**

- Grateful for the DPAC leadership in our district, especially in the view of GBV, the bones of motion have stemmed from the past work. Proud to be part of the Board that has put this forward, specifically acknowledging Trustee Shannon Aldinger in all the work she has done with details. We all have felt the need for this work.
- Updates from the last board meeting had a presentation by Naomi Robert and Taylor Hartwig from the Comox Valley Food Policy Council ([here](#)) and they presented about the CVFPC.
  - Find the presentation here starting on Page 9 - [BOE January Package](#)
- Noted that their priorities agenda and policy are quite different from the district's: including: emergency preparedness, school food, ecosystem resilience, food access and agency.
- Specifically for the District Feeding Futures Funding, the fund usage is intended to expand food available to students in schools, those are the funding parameters, but the amount of funding doesn't enable us to do what we'd like it to.
- Also had School Food Services Coordinator presenting after: (see slides here starting on page 183 - [BOE January Package](#))
- Food Services Coordinator - Thea Cockerton - Thea talked about various programs and delivery and focused on school community and school needs. Equitable universal and consistent food programs across the district. Accumulating info from across the district. Putting together a plan for the district to make the best use of the plan. Programs focused on delivering food without shame, stigma, and anonymously. Not quite there yet with the lengths of the funding.



- Motion passed for CVRD to create a business case for arena 3 - business case will lead to decision about whether to pass this or not.
  - *Motion 1: THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) direct staff to respond to the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), in respect of their request regarding work in developing a Business Case for Arena 3, received October 16, 2024, advising that the district is prepared to support the CVRDs work in developing a Business Case for Arena 3, which may ultimately lead to a request from the CVRD to grant a license to occupy agreement for land use, understanding that the new District LRFP*
- Working on draft policy for for one of the policies within the [Strategic Plan](#), the Trustee Code of Conduct, that's what is on our table right now, [Equity Scan](#) steering committee meets soon, the Steering Committee is made up of all Indigenous individuals, and will be synthesizing survey questions for all of the school groups that interact with the school system (list: IEC PVP Gov't Students, Families, Staff and more)
- Surveys will be released in many different ways delivery according to who the survey is drafted for. The Committee will go into Community and meet with people. In-person meetings and gatherings, many interaction opportunities. Questions?
- Question: Please describe Thea's role and Food Scan role? Relationship between Board and schools and how decisions are made? Thea connected and looked at the Food Scan work done and continues to gather information re: School District food researching, sourcing, and preparing. With the [Feeding Futures](#) money, it's not enough to what is needed, in terms of giving students free food. Not operations; which falls outside the role for the Trustees. Thea responds to our Secretary Treasurer Carrie. They are developing or have developed Terms of Reference for the School Food Advisory Committee. Most needy 20% 1.50 per day for the 20% of most vulnerable. Dr. Morrow: The School Food Advisory Committee is the intersection of Trustees and Food Policy Coordinator. We have really engaged Trustees and we really engaged the community on the issue of food. Day-to-day operations and direction for the position are with staff.

## 5 **New Business**

- Resource Library - PAC Resource Library. This came about after hearing the ebb & flow of PAC volunteers, that it can be hard to start from scratch and there are so many amazing initiatives a PAC can do. It wasn't work to write this up because this particular event is one of my favorites because it's a low-barrier, circular in giving local to the community, and promotes literacy. Hope this package helps replicate this event around the District, here are some FAQs and tips, reach out to [BrooklynExec@gmail.com](mailto:BrooklynExec@gmail.com) if you have any questions. Every PAC adds better versions, if you do it and a variation or a different version works better for you, please let me know and I'll add it to the document.

## 6 **Upcoming Events - Family Smart**

### 7 **PAC Sharing - running into 8:30**

### 8 **Next Meeting:** Monday, March 3rd, 2025

### 9 **Motion to adjourn 8:30ish pm, Jen Storey - Seconded Jenn Flsher**

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