

DPAC MONTHLY MEETING: 2 MARCH 2021

Nicole Woods called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

In attendance:

Nicole Woods	Chris Wright	Robin Grazley
Erin Prescott	Katie Shaw	Adrienne White
Cindy Luchka	Cyndi Whaley	Jennie Bartosik
Elena Schultz	Warren Weicker	Remik
Alison Hamer		

Staff: Mr. Tim McCreesh, Ms. Anja Rebstock, Mme Helena Ewald

1. February 2021 Minutes to Approve: motion to approve by Nicole Woods, seconded by Cyndi Whaley.

2. West Coast Seeds Fundraiser

- Nicole talked to Morgan, asked for update ... There's good news, and bad news. Good: we raised over \$900, which is very encouraging! Bad news: there is a delay in shipping -- we were supposed to have the order already, and it might be another two weeks before it arrives. West Coast Seeds are backlogged and may have underestimated timelines.
- Morgan will be working with WCS about potentially shipping our order to her, and then she could work on getting seeds to people during the break -- more notifications to come.
- Thank you Morgan and Erin for your work on this fundraiser!

3. Growing Smiles Spring Fundraiser

- Nicole: specific info has now come in -- quite a few products, hanging baskets, veggies, annuals, planters ... The delivery date is set for May 6, with the intention that we can get product in time for Mother's Day, planting season. We will open up ordering around April 5 for 2-3 weeks, with product to arrive two weeks later.
- Everyone will be pleased with this fundraiser -- lots of choices!

4. Garden Update

- Erin: Abigail [Bigam] wanted to pass on that there was a work party Friday to spread woodchips in the garden -- thanks to those who were able to come! We only had half the woodchips, so the work went quickly.
- We might put manure on over Spring Break -- might need more help to do that
- Workshops with Growing Young Farmers may be coming up
- Tim: good turnout, got all the woodchips down -- haven't touched base with Abigail since -- only half of the woodchips arrived from Vancouver, but it looks good
- Nicole: stay tuned for volunteer opportunities!

5. Strings Update

- Anja Rebstock: last year, there was some talk of cutting the Grade 5 Strings program, but that was tabled due to the pandemic. This year I expected it would be up for discussion again, so I sent an email to all my parents (from all schools), asking for letters to trustees in support of the program, and stating what value parents see in the program -- proactive way of expressing support for the program. Doncaster parents were amazing, and many wrote letters (even those I don't know) -- amazing and heartwarming.
- I spoke at Feb 22 Board meeting -- I wanted to sound very encouraging and positive about it, rather than just saying don't cut.
- Some parents may have been alarmed by my parents' letter -- trickle down -- fantastic to see the support, but let's make sure we're not jumping the gun. There is no need to protest yet -- just wait it out and see if they're even discussing this.
- The Board are currently discussing their strategic plan, programs they want to grow -- wait and see -- we'll hear or not -- if we need to take further action, I will notify my parents.
- Nicole observed that the letters she saw were passionate, clear, well-written -- clear message from Doncaster that this program really matters to us.
- Anja: the next step will be the discussion at their March 8 meeting (Operations Planning and Policy Standing Committee). [NB: the response DPAC received from Jordan Watters on behalf of the trustees describes this meeting as "the next opportunity to engage with the budget process")
- **Anja requested that parents please stay away from social media on this issue for now** -- it has caused a greater impact, public discussion, than intended -- social media a bit tricky this way. If the program actually is in jeopardy, then it could be a tool to use, but we're not there yet.
- Thanks to Anja for joining us to share this important information!

6. Budget Amendments/Approvals

- Nicole introduced budget issues:
 - this budget was set up at beginning of this school year, in the earlier stages of pandemic -- allocations made without really knowing how things would go
 - Erin has reviewed the budget, and seen opportunity to reallocate funds in places where we really need them -- greater-need areas, where can we be most useful as a PAC. We have a nice bank account now, and have managed to continue to raise funds during the pandemic, which we didn't really expect. We're in a good position, so now let's take advantage of that and make our spending count.
 - Last week the core exec had a preliminary meeting about some of the asks, where requests were coming from -- now we need approval for proposed changes.
- Erin: thanks, Nicole, for this summary -- we don't normally do this kind of budget revision during the year, or spend almost all of our budget, but there are some good suggestions.
- Erin shared her screen with the revised budget document (appended to these minutes):
 - we made more than we expected, possibly up to \$5000 more by end of year

- Expenses like the Art Starts program will not be happening this year -- allocating that funding instead to some of the requests that we've had, mostly around outdoor education support, activities:
 - covered structure
 - gaga ball area
 - garden workshops for students
 - courtyard enhancements or equipment
 - playground stencilling and physical literacy opportunities (through Chris)
- This would involve \$1000 more than we anticipated spending originally, but involves moving money from things we know won't happen to outdoor learning.
- We also have a request from Jennie for additional parent ed workshop funding
- Erin opened the floor for questions/comments
 - N explained further background about the outdoor ed projects. Principle: what are some things that we could do now where our kids will see a direct impact sooner rather than later? Kids are restricted to cohorts, limited spaces at any given time, and this is causing additional stress and conflict -- kids and teachers are feeling the pressure. Lots of time is spent outside -- how can we help engage them, bring in new aspects to outdoor space, add to how they are experiencing school?
 - Question from Cyndi W: to be clear, does this mean we'd spend \$10 000 more than planned, or \$1000? Erin: in total, about \$1000 more than planned -- we had already planned a deficit, but we're also recognizing that we have \$30 000 unallocated in our bank account -- takes into account the expenses we'll have this year. Cyndi W: the big kids' playground is so great, but it is smaller than the old one -- I am definitely in favour of the gaga ball court. All the things listed, I would support.
 - Nicole acknowledged that there may be some mixed feeling about gaga ball. Tim spoke to teachers re: their feelings about it, and got very positive replies and encouraging responses -- one teacher had a good report from their time at Campus View, so elementary comparable. Cyndi W pointed out that Lochside Elementary has two gaga ball courts.
 - Tim: this is an idea we have been tossing around for a while -- I confirmed this week that many staff are interested. Some teachers will set it up in the gym with benches, but outside would offer extra learning and play space. One concern from parents: what would the management of that look like at recess? Direct supervision? Tim: Probably, yes, as kids learn to play properly, but at other schools they don't have that any more -- teachers on board for instructional time, PE, also at recess. To echo Nicole's comments, there is a lack of stuff to do outside at recess -- kids have been in cohorts for a while. This would really add to the playground -- especially would add to the hardtop zone -- very positive feedback.
 - Nicole pointed out the benefits: teachers would use it during PE and instructional time, engaging the class as a class; all kids learn to play together, which sets groundwork for recess, more likelihood that they will continue to work together. Even better, if we act soon, we're potentially looking at a 6-week turnaround -- could get it done by mid-April.

- Cyndi W: is this the total cost? Tim: to have it purchased/shipped/installed, around \$8000. Cyndi W asked about the surface for the bottom -- gravel, or floor? Tim: floor would probably be an additional cost -- this cost is to go right onto the hardtop surface. Cyndi W expressed concern about kids scraping their knuckles -- should we price out a plastic floor, as at Cedar Hill Middle School? Tim noted that the company that Lansdowne purchased from offers a thick rubber surface -- might be costly, but can look into it.
- Nicole: for the sake of moving forward, perhaps we could approve pit as is and look into adding the floor at a later date? I agree with Cyndi W that it would be worth looking into for elementary kids ... could look at it for next year's budget? Tim: not sure how easy it would be to add later, but will look into it -- they are quick with answers.
- Nicole: does anyone have major concerns or questions with these reallocations?
- Robin noted that we'd need to make a motion to amend the 2020 budget.
- Before the motion, in the interests of transparency Nicole provided a recap on the outdoor shelter situation. After SD61 did not approve the shelters we purchased from Costco, they offered us two structures they would approve, which were quoted at \$10 000 each. We [PAC] committed to providing \$5000 toward these two structures. The District recently came back to Tim with a new quote, and it's actually now \$17 000 for one shelter. So, we're getting one shelter, which will be placed in the gravel area on the primary playground. Nicole opened the floor for questions, concerns:
 - Nicole: SD61 can be more expensive, doing our best to work with it.
 - Tim: brought this issue to the staff, asked what's the best location if it's only one? We did talk about ideal location -- decided that best location would be the playground location (can look at other areas out near the forest at a later date?). The playground location would provide shelter for the garden too, and for classes gardening -- that location is also nice for community to use as well when visiting the playground.
- **Nicole: Motion to amend the budget for 2020-21, reallocate funds according to the shared document.** All in favour, with one abstention: **Motion passed.**

7. Reminder of AGM (and election of Treasurer and Secretary)

- Nicole: AGM is coming up, and we have two major positions coming up which need to be filled -- Erin and Robin are both stepping down. Both, especially Erin, are committed to helping the new person transition -- plant the seeds now! April's meeting will be our AGM, and we need to have quorum -- can try again in May if we don't have quorum. Please give some thought to whether you would like to join the exec!
- Robin and Erin both reiterated that they will be around, and happy to support the new Secretary and Treasurer, answer questions -- it is great to be involved, support the school, and it's a great group of people to work with.
- Nicole: it was not my first thought to be President this year, but when you get more engaged, you realize the impact you can have with our school, our kids -- I encourage people to get involved! Please come to us with any questions, pass it on to anyone who isn't here who might be interested.

8. Principal's & Vice-Principal's Reports: School Updates

- Tim: after last month, keeping it really short :)
- Staff Updates:
 - Kirsten Pierce, Grade 3/4 English, has taken a position at Hillcrest which starts after Spring Break -- we have posted for her replacement, will be getting a new teacher 0.4 time for that class
 - Literacy week is coming up first week of April -- celebrating everything literacy
 - Staff committee meeting today -- the issue of hot lunches was brought up -- there was some difficulty with the last one, so I will share what staff talked about. Some has been resolved, but:
 - This was the first pizza lunch, and there was some difficulty with the handing out -- restaurant packaging was an issue.
 - Tim will see if parent volunteers may come in to help teachers hand out the lunch, as it took a while to get it into the hands of kids, and took away from instructional time. Will need to clear this with the district, but it will help teachers out if parents can help.
 - Nicole: back end -- we have three volunteers, two of whom are completely prepared to come in, but they haven't been required until now. Ideally there should be at least one parent volunteer on site -- we have people who are absolutely willing and able to come whenever is necessary, as long as school board is okay with it.
 - Tim will confirm that it's okay first, then will be in touch with Lynda/Kim/Leanne, or Nicole, and they can step in as needed.
 - Subway went well, but pizza is just more complicated -- should be an easy fix.
 - VCPAC points of concern during pandemic:
 - Tim shared his screen -- the district has been getting feedback from VCPAC on key points. Question: is this reflective of all PACs? Are these issues of concern across the district, or are they localized and can be focused on with individual schools?
 - Summary of key points:
 - Lunch period: not enough time for elementary students to eat? Difficulty with focus when eating and working at instructional time? Several parents present had heard this concern, either from their own kids or from other parents they know. It's most frequently heard among the younger grades, but may be affecting grade 4s and 5s as well. Tim will bring this issue up with staff.
 - Consistency about what PAC events are allowed, e.g. hot lunch, field trips -- we've done mostly walking field trips, except for gr 5s at end of year -- request is that we have applicable protocols in place. No real concerns expressed by parents in attendance.
 - Gaps in literacy/numeracy because of interruptions last year -- requests for resources to be sent home? Tim noted that only hybrid/remote learning families have requested this so far -- some teachers are using Google Classroom, other platforms put in place last year, but haven't heard any requests from parents to fill gaps. No real concerns expressed by parents in attendance.
 - Racism: need for equity committee beyond just Indigenous students. Jennie noted that the workshop she is planning for April 20 is on Raising Antiracist Children -- good learning for all of us!

- Outdoor learning hasn't materialized, despite PAC support: Parents present confirmed that this is not really an issue at Doncaster.
 - Lack of equity in outside areas: Tim observed that some school grounds in the district don't have as much space as we do ... parents did not think this really applied to us.
 - Parents want to see what inside of the school looks like now: a few meetings ago, we discussed how Cindy H and Tim could share what's going on in the school, and Cindy H began adding pictures to her weekly updates, which parents have really appreciated.
 - Delayed assessments for learning support: There were some delays in the spring -- Erin would agree that has been a problem in the last year. It has taken some time to figure out how to do it with protocols in place -- Tim thinks assessments are now coming back on track.
 - Fundraising and paying for PAC-funded things: we are good.
 - Emergency supplies: district is trying to standardize what's in the kiosks -- Tim will be working on that over the next week or so. We got a new kiosk last year, and there were some things we had to throw out -- maybe things to replenish next year?
 - Tim will forward the list from VCPAC to the DPAC exec -- if we have concerns, we'll share them with Tim, who will share with staff
 - Nicole observed that quite a few things on that list are things we are already really focusing on -- interesting that other PACs are concerned -- good that we're getting in front of it!
 - Tim: does this list represent all PACs? Parents felt it was not really reflective of our experience.
- Nicole opened the floor to questions, other business -- encouraged parents to bring up issues of concern, either at the meeting or by emailing her in advance -- this is your meeting!
 - One more reminder of AGM next month -- Robin: AGM is much the same procedure as our regular meeting, but with voting and at least 10 of us here
 - Tim: if you want Cindy or me to bring anything up, share any info, please let us know
 - Adrienne confirmed with Jennie that we are ready to advertise the parent ed workshop in the newsletter -- will add reminder of AGM as well.

Next Meeting: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, TUESDAY, 6 April 2021, via Zoom

Nicole Woods adjourned the meeting at 8:07 pm