

## DPAC MONTHLY MEETING: 2 FEBRUARY 2021

*Nicole Woods called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.*

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In attendance:

Nicole Woods	Chris Wright	Robin Grazley
Erin Prescott	Katie Shaw	Adrienne White
Marika Glickman	Alison Hamer	Cindy Luchka
Amy Verdun	Penelope Barillaro	Cyndi Whaley
Elena Schultz	Laura Mercer	

Staff: Mrs. Cindy Harte, Mr. Tim McCreesh

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1. January 2021 Minutes to Approve: motion to approve by Adrienne White, seconded by Alison Hamer.

### 2. Parent Education (White Hatter Presentation)

- Nicole gave a brief recap on the White Hatter presentation, as Jen G is not able to be here tonight. Only about 30 people came, which was a bit disappointing with two schools -- we have had a larger turnout in the past .
- Relevance of this presentation, especially with growth in remote schooling -- next time, going back to what we've done in the past with EventBrite preregistration to raise commitment to attendance.
- Amy offered some feedback on the presentation, noting that life happens. Nicole added that the revision to the recording availability (dropped to one day from one week) was a last-minute surprise.
- Alison: good presentation, a lot to learn, but didn't need to be live -- might watch it later next time instead. Nicole raised this as an option for next time? Adrienne: same as Alison -- some discussion about pricing followed, possibility of reduction if we chose a prerecorded option.
- Penelope: Q & A was good for live portion, but the questions asked were fairly standard.
- Jen had graciously agreed to organize this one, then hand the reins over to Jennie as long-term Parent Ed Coordinator. Jennie was going to ask about another parent ed presentation in the spring -- throwing it out there for ideas, suggestions -- please let Jennie know, or pass ideas on to Nicole
- Amy: post-covid period -- anxiety -- anything we can draw on about moving out of the pandemic, psychological dimensions of kids being at home, and more socially isolated -- not enough attention on long-term effects on children? Speaker from UVic (CYC), or something similar? Digesting the switch ... Nicole: great suggestion -- would be great if we're able to find someone who could help parents understand ways to support our kids as we move into the post-pandemic period. Interesting to figure out who might offer that -- will pass this idea along to Jennie. Amy: UVic Speakers are offering a service to the community, so no honorarium costs.

### 3. Hot Lunch Program

- Nicole: no one here among the coordinators -- Cindy H & Tim were front & centre for the first official hot lunch -- impressions? Cindy H: vendor was Subway -- food was delivered by division, each division's order boxed, and Hilda and I delivered the boxes to be dispersed. Popcorn went well the week before as well -- without a hitch! Pizza is hot, so might be more coordination, but should be fine.
- Nicole: we thought about having a coordinator there to help, but it's great that we didn't need that. Thanks to Cindy H, Tim, and the staff for rolling this out so successfully!

### 4. West Coast Seeds Fundraiser

- Nicole: Morgan has had the lead on this one, working with Erin, but can't be here tonight. Summary: up to \$1100 in sales so far, and we get 40% -- able to sell until Feb. 15. Another reminder will go out in that last week -- worth highlighting the fact that people are going to save the shipping charge by ordering through the school fundraiser --- nice incentive (two free seed packets worth!).
- Once sales end on the 15th, Morgan will finalize the order. When it arrives at the school, we'll need to figure out best way to distribute -- could send orders home with kids, or offer pickup from the Dragons' Den -- this is one outstanding question mark that Morgan has.

### 5. Growing Smiles Spring Fundraiser

- Nicole: not much to report -- have signed us up, ball is in their court, and it's still fairly early -- waiting to set up delivery schedule, brochure and product listing. No one will want these products (hanging baskets, annuals, veggie starts) until May -- Mother's Day-ish launch date
- In the works, registered -- stay tuned!

### 6. Garden Update

- Erin: I have been emailing with Abigail -- passing on an update from her tonight.
- First, the shed -- coordinating with Lambrick Park TASK program (woodworking) -- allows us to purchase shed for the cost of supplies. Many thanks to Natalie, our contact at Lambrick Park, for facilitating!
- Abigail mentioned looking into getting woodchips, asking for families to help spread them -- possibly classes might do it as well
- Also time we're starting to look for composters, tools, shovels, rakes -- if anyone is interested in approaching places to ask for donations, that would be helpful -- please talk to Erin or Abigail
- A brief discussion followed about this request for donations:
  - Tools should be new (i.e. donated by businesses) or in good condition
  - Cindy H confirmed that the school can store donated tools until the shed is in place, but all agreed it is better to wait if possible
  - Abigail will do an inventory, assess what's needed and sizes (adults/kids, class sets)
  - Adrienne will put a request for donations in the newsletter at a later date, once we have a better idea of what's needed

- Amy shared some experience: had been corporate sponsorship chair for sports teams -- worth spending time on the letter you would give parents to send out to businesses -- what they could get back, recognition -- has a template she's willing to share
- Nicole asked Amy to send in template for starting point -- thank you, Amy!
- Erin confirmed that Abigail will know toward the end of the month whether she needs adult volunteers, will put out a call -- some of teachers applying for grants for garden as well

## 7. Magic Forest Cleanup

- Erin: check-in with Cindy H & Tim, others, about interest in forest cleanup -- worth doing a spring clean on the weekend (as before) -- sweep for daphne, dealing with ivy -- perhaps early April?
- Cindy H: classes have been spending time out there -- good maintenance, but not around invasive species -- would be good to think about this for April
- Nicole suggested we table this discussion until the March meeting -- choose a date then, see where restrictions are at -- better safe than sorry

## 8. Budget Update

- Erin shared her screen with a budget update:
  - Revenue/fundraising:
    - we have actually done fairly well considering what we had budgeted -- current total does not include hot lunch, Thrifty's, upcoming fundraisers
    - So far we have taken \$14K in
    - bank accounts healthy (but total does include \$8K in hot lunch money ) -- about \$20k, then savings/GIC
  - Expenses:
    - items we budgeted for but did not spend, e.g. Art Starts
    - Resource room (wiggly stools), library books, money toward outdoor learning spaces
  - Check-in:
    - Abigail has asked about more money for garden, from PAC or from the school (Cindy H/Tim)
    - Cindy H: from our perspective, the budget is very generous -- impressed with where we are, considering! What is the playground fund? Erin: traditionally, we save \$5K a year toward playground replacement -- lets us build it up slowly so we don't have to do a major push when something needs to be replaced. Nicole: that money could also be spent on things like a gaga ball pit -- but we could also consider redirecting to other projects.
    - Cindy H: support for gaga pit -- we rotate through 6 playground zones through the week -- a gaga pit would be an amazing feature, especially with fields being closed.
    - Budget? Cindy H can look into costs -- Erin: would be great to know what it costs.
    - N: would love to see something like that sooner rather than later
- Current deficit is \$13K, and we still have fundraising \$ to come in

- Erin opened the floor for questions, but none raised.
- Thanks, Erin, for preparing this update!

#### 9. Potential Cuts to Strings Program

- Tim: this issue came up just over a year ago -- for the last few years, SD61 has been looking at equity among schools. Not every elementary school has strings -- apparently parent advocacy played a strong role in keeping program at schools which have it. Now the Board are looking at the budget differently. They rolled over the budget from last year. Spoke with the Superintendent today, and it is something they are going to look at again -- how they fund arts in general, how they will make it equitable among all schools -- cut? Redistributed? Something the parent community could have input on.
- Cindy H pointed out that there are teachers' positions, jobs attached to that program -- Ms. Rebstock is with us two afternoons a week, as well as at other schools -- if they cut the program, that's a job lost.
- Cindy L: The information I saw gave the suggestion that if parents want it to continue, they should be writing letters to trustees, speaking at meetings, attending council meetings when they occur close to the budget. I will write a letter, but am not sure how we gain more attention to this -- funny as it's only for grade 5s -- some parents may not even know it exists. We are very lucky to have it at Doncaster, especially during school hours -- my daughter loved it, but my son is only in grade 2. It's a music program without comparison, even at the middle school level.
- Tim: the kids are so excited when they finally get to go -- we are really fortunate to have the programs we do have -- supt. in conversation said they are starting the process now.
- According to trustee Paynter, letters are the best approach.
- Discussion followed about how best to raise the profile on this issue, present it from a PAC perspective.

#### 10. Principal's & Vice-Principal's Reports: School Updates

- Cindy H announced that she will be taking a short leave to support her mom through cancer treatment -- Tim will be at the helm for the next 5 weeks -- will be back after spring break. Tim will be moving out of hybrid, and Robyn will be back in again -- we will add more learning support blocks, support learners in different ways.
- Nicole expressed our support for Cindy H and her family at this time.
- Tim: Cindy H mentioned staffing changes already -- Robyn, learning support -- Cindy H: we'll be using existing staff (Dayna Mottishaw, Kim Atherton) -- they already know where to start and can work in both English and French streams.
- Assessments/surveys, especially for gr 4s:
  - Cindy H: grade 4 is a big year in BC -- working independently, think for themselves, and can answer assessments online. If data is used at school level, it can provide amazing tools (the hope).
  - Tim shared screen with information about Provincial Assessments and Surveys
    - Foundational Skills Assessment (gr 4 & 7)
      - provincial

- Numeracy, reading, writing -- the one we hear about in media, sometimes controversial -- why we do it
- Starts in about a week
- Sometimes confusion about how/why data is collected -- some parents have decided to opt out, which can skew the results. If it is used by the school, district, it's useful -- when an organization like the Fraser Institute uses it for ranking, that's problematic
- We're hoping to use it to benefit our own instruction, as one tool we can use -- ways to set school goals, etc.
- Cindy H: cohort-level, it lets us see how students are doing -- then can compare with other schools across BC, but if it's used properly we can use it to support kids in their learning
- Tim: conversations with staff about what we can do with this information -- how we can make this useful
- Parent questions:
  - Q: is it anonymous? A: no -- individual results are available
  - Q: Is it just for grade 4? Are parents notified? A: everyone is notified, parents can opt their children out -- also rare cases where the school would exclude or exempt a child based on their best interest
  - Q: Have these tests been happening for a long time? A: yes -- 4/7/then provincial exams in gr 10 -- province uses it to gauge how we're doing as a province
  - Q: Why does Victoria have low participation? A: GVTA sends a letter home through teachers, indicating they do not support FSA -- some parents may sign without being fully aware. Supt. Green is trying to increase engagement with video.
- Discussion around why parents might opt out of standardized testing -- Tim pointed to issues with American school system and standardized testing influencing the negative aspects -- FSA different, as it doesn't affect student's report card -- tool for the ministry to get a sense of where they are going. There is value if you take the time to look at it, make use of the data.
  - Q: do parents get the assessment? Students? A: once it's marked (by SD61 administrators), they review, mark, then booklets come back with scores and that goes home to parents -- score out of 4.
- Amy asked for clarification around how the school would use these results to allocate resources. Tim explained that this is referring to, as a school, our decision making around where we put our budget, for example, if tests identify areas that we could strengthen our support for learners -- setting goals that reflect where our students are now, where we want to bring them.

- Cindy H: this is just one piece of evidence
- Amy raised concerns about the security of this information, since it is not anonymous -- future issues?
- Student Learning Survey
  - Ministry of Education
  - Belonging, welcoming, safety
  - Again, can help guide understanding of students, school goals -- this one not individualized but does allow students to ask for help if they need it
  - Tim shared data for last 3 years -- Doncaster trending upwards on belonging, feeling welcome, feeling safe overall
- MDI survey
  - Gr 4-7 or 8 -- health of the community
  - UBC Early Learning partnership
  - Not just Doncaster, but whole community -- after school activities, OSC
- Students do not do these tests all on the same day
- Amy: is this information available to everyone? Nicole: how are we doing during this covid year? Tim: MDI data is available to the public (for Victoria) -- not specific to students/schools, but you can see regions -- student learning not until later, not sure it's available to the public
- Nicole: could you add it to school updates once it becomes available? We are very interested to see trends, and it would be good to get a sense of how children are feeling this year. Cindy H: the questions are funny because you have to fully agree or disagree, but covid affected some aspects -- would have thought they would adjust questions?
- Amy: put this in the newsletter with explanations, so it might encourage parents to participate? Educating parents as to why something is useful -- positive news
- Thanks to Chris for posting links to UBC resources in chat

**Next Meeting: TUESDAY, 2 March 2021, via Zoom**

*Nicole Woods adjourned the meeting at 8:19 pm*