

October 24, 2019 VCPAC Meeting
Location: Central Middle School
Minutes - by Janine Konkel, Director

VCPAC Meeting called to order at 7:08pm

Present:

REPS - Starr Munro (VCPAC, CTS, Glanford), Elena Schultz (Doncaster), Lori Wallis (Mt Douglas), Sean Birdsell (Marigold), Kristil Hammer (South Park), Allison Hyatt (Central), Mark Loria (Oak Bay), Jennifer Childs (Vic West), Nicole Nyvall (Colquitz, Spectrum, Tillicum), Janine Konkel (VCPAC, Campus View), Chris Reck (Hillcrest), Aly Smith (Northridge), Audrey Smith (VCPAC, Spectrum), Alison Bottomly (**Lansdowne**)

NON-VOTING - Jodi Whiteman (VCPAC), Lisa Gunderson (Mt Doug),

Immediate Action Item: Janine Konkel to contact Diana Kool about school access for VCPAC meetings (locked out of Campus View, library double booked at Central). Ask school district administration to send reminders to schools about bookings, making sure janitorial staff are actually informed of meeting and that administrative staff at each school earmark that library is being used by VCPAC, so as to not double book it. (Janine contacted Diana on October 27 via email about concerns).

+ No September minutes to approve.

+ Agenda - accepted.

Chair's Report from most recent Board Meetings:

- Vic High Land Use is being reviewed. Work on the actual school to (hopefully) begin in Spring 2020.
- Inclusion is a "hot topic" button - a variety of parents spoke at meeting regarding lack of transparency about EA problems, how SD61 plans to actually meet the needs of all of it's students.
- Jodi has regular meetings with Superintendent Shelly Green to discuss topics like:
 - inclusion (getting parent input about school programs, using Inclusion Committee to help guide Inclusion survey SD61 parents will receive from SD admin sometime in November to gather useful feedback about current system)
 - getting clarification on the school cash online donations (donation buttons earmarked for school PACs - how it works, how does a school's PAC know about funds, get access to funds)
 - late french immersion
 - other pertinent topics

Donations – School Cash Online:

Almost all SD61 schools have a School Cash Online button on their school website. When accessed, this system allows for:

- Payment of books, school clothing, lunches, lockers, donations to school, athletic program costs, etc.
- Donations to be made to each school's PAC.

How the money is earmarked by the website is through a drop-down menu (user chooses the school or the school's PAC).

Important Points:

- Financial clerks at each school have varying degrees of training on how to use the system.
- It's unclear for some school PACs how to find out how much money is earmarked for them, and even how to access it (the school's admin are the ones with access to the money).
- Donations have been made and still haven't appeared in the PAC's account (Sean Birdsell at Marigold tested this).
- PACs do control these funds.
- PACs should receive reports of funds when they ask the financial clerk for a report.
- PAC Presidents and Treasurers should work with the schools' Principal to review school vs PAC donations to better understand how much \$\$ has been donated to either group, to help plan for how money can be best spent by both groups.

Action Items: (For Treasurer, Audrey Smith)

- Ask SD61 administrators how larger donations sent to SD for tax receipt purposes but designated for a specific school/PAC are earmarked to be sent to that school/PAC, and show record trail that "said donation" actually is given to the designated school/PAC.
- Consider hosting a PAC Treasurer meeting - ask SD61 financial administrators to answer questions any school Treasurer may have about the position, rules to follow, how to access funds, work with financial clerk, etc.

Communications:

(copied below are Starr Munro's notes from the agenda item she spoke to during our meeting asking VCPAC reps for recommendations on how to improve VCPAC communications to parents)

1) SNIPS

Challenge: Not all VCPAC Reps or PACs are getting SNIPS Weekly Announcements. SNIPS is subscription based.

Solution/ACTION:

1. Reminder at meetings that SNIPS exists and how to subscribe
2. Regular reminders in monthly meeting Agenda Email about SNIPS

3. School Liaisons to remind contact schools about value of SNIPS
4. Explore other avenues for sharing content on SNIPS (share SNIPS Archive)

2) Pre & Post Board Meeting & Board Committee Meeting Updates

Challenge: Engaged parents are looking for "easier" ways to know what is going on at Board without having to attend meetings, slog through meeting minutes & large agenda pack ups.

Solution/ACTION:

1. Continue to do a quick summary of key agenda items of interest to parents in weekly SNIPS **prior** to the Board or Committee Meetings
2. Provide a quick summary of key items of discussion that might be of interest to parents in weekly SNIPS **after** Board or Committee Meetings.
3. Clearly communicate when "calls to action" may be warranted to parents on a particular topic

3) Better sharing of Meeting Minutes

Challenge: Meeting minutes are posted to website after they have been approved. We don't have quorum at all meetings to always approve minutes. Some parents would like to be able to review meeting minutes for meetings they cannot attend.

Solution/ACTION:

1. Consider possibility of posting draft meetings from last meeting with Agenda for next meeting for parents to review.
2. Consider emailing out approved minutes (after they have been approved) in SNIPS
3. Consider regular opportunities to share link on website to listing of Meeting Minutes for the current year (in SNIPS or with monthly meeting agenda)

4) Big Issue Topics & VCPAC Positions / Letters

Challenge: On large big issue topics in which VCPAC is or isn't taking a position, the larger parent group may wish to provide feedback to VCPAC or have some understanding of the position VCPAC is taking in advance of the position being "formalized."

Solution/ACTION:

1. When possible give heads up on main points or positions of VCPAC position (or lack of position) and allow for feedback. This may need to be done in a meeting and/or via email.

2. On big topics where parents/PAC's may disagree with VCPAC position, provide encouragement, resources and discussion of processes for parents/PAC's to ensure their position or voice is contributed/heard separate from VCPAC.
3. Letters to Board or News Releases from VCPAC do not need to be reviewed in full by parents in advance of submission. However, key VCPAC ideas/position statements/perspectives may want/need to be shared in advance to help with effective formulation and representation of parents as a group.

5) System for asking/collecting parent focused questions at Board Meetings

Challenge: VCPAC Executive Members would like some direction on how best to get information from Board or questions answered by Board, on topics of interest, to ensure parent concerns and voice being recognized by Board (and to better inform VCPAC and parents on topics of interest)

Solution/ACTION:

1. Develop two way communication system to collect questions from parents/PAC's to submit to Board and to be able to report back on responses
2. Assign Executive Member to be "question collection" person on monthly basis
3. Use weekly SNIPS & VCPAC meetings to collect parent questions
4. Use weekly SNIPS or VCPAC meetings to report back on answers to questions

6) Better promotion of VCPAC Website as a resource

Challenge: VCPAC website contains a great deal of useful information and resources for parents, but unless parents know to go there to look for specific things they are not always using it effectively.

Solution/ACTION:

1. Use SNIPS to provide reminders and links to useful website resources (be specific). Pick different items/topics/resources to share monthly.
2. Use VCPAC meetings to provide reminders about website as a useful resource for specific resources/items.

7) Better understanding primary focus, goals and role of VCPAC at given time

Challenge: Some parents want VCPAC to focus on being successful on representing parents/PAC's on "big issues," some want VCPAC to focus on making PAC's more successful, some want VCPAC to focus on helping with individual school PAC/parent related issues.

Solution/ACTION:

1. Develop and communicate (to larger VCPAC parent body) the strategic focus of VCPAC for a given time (monthly, quarterly, annually).
2. Take time to do "strategic planning" sessions or discussions and report back on all areas of parent support/advocacy (systemic and localized)
3. Keep meeting Agenda focused on strategic plan (with room for new unpredicted items)
4. Executive Committee to develop a strategic plan and "report back" processes

8) Opportunities for PAC's to to share and discuss challenges/successes at their schools, to resource share and network

Challenge: Some parents are looking for more opportunities to connect with other PAC's, to share their stories (successes & challenges), to check in on if issues are systemic, and to resource share.

Solution/Action:

1. Create more formalized opportunities for PAC's to share their challenges and successes and connect with other parents.
2. Consider securing time regularly in VCPAC meetings to provide parents to discuss topics of interest (outside the scope of the Agenda items). Could include larger group or have break out sessions.
3. Consider holding special event (a single VCPAC Meeting, PAC 101 or PAC Congress, or other) to allow parents and PAC's to connect with one another and share resources and knowledge

Inclusion Plus Committee:

As a reminder, SD61's new approach to inclusion → reintegrate students into classrooms.

- The new model is human resource rich, and currently, the school district is doing a poor job of meeting students where they are.
- There is often chaos in the classroom.
- They are promising unique programming if needed, but are also cutting or considering cutting it (ie: Braefoot, Arbutus Low Incidence Program).
- IEPs are not being implemented.
- There is an EA shortage.
- Trustees are not receiving information in a cogent way to understand what is being implemented correctly or being completely missed.
- Parents don't know process/procedure for how to best get their child's needs met. SD61 Policy 1155 explains how to cycle through a complaint process.

VCPAC members Kristil Hammer and Audrey Smith are on the Inclusion Plus committee.

- There are 40+ parents currently engaged on the committee, discussing pertinent topics as to how SD61 is rolling out their new policy, what is being missed, what parents are experiencing with their children, what schools and teachers are experiencing with students in classrooms, etc.
- The Committee is proactively creating survey questions (with the guidance of an expert) they would like to see included in the SD61 Inclusion Survey that the district administrators want to roll out in November. They plan to work through the Policy Committee Meetings (November 4th meeting) to get their voices heard.

One VCPAC member asked for clarification on what VCPAC/Parents would really like to see implemented in the school district. Responses from around the room:

- That the school district created a model tailored to the actual needs of the students. Each student's learning need is reviewed and put into consideration for best choice of action:
 - integrated into classroom (potentially with an EA);
 - attends a special program at a designated school with educators who can meet the student's learning needs where they are (Arbutus Low Incidence);
 - attends a designated school for more intensive learning needs (Victor School).

Action Item: (for all school VCPAC Reps to do)

Talk to the parents at your school. Are there stories of struggle, lack of understanding, needs not being met, successes? What's happening out there?

General PAC Comments/Questions:

Water/Earthquake Kiosks -

One school asked how others stock their earthquake preparedness kiosks at their schools for drinking water needs. Campus View Elementary suggested contacting Mt Doug Springs water company. The school can order 5 gallon jugs, pumps to add to the top of the jugs and cups to drink from. This cuts down on plastic waste from individual water bottles. Mt. Doug water needs to be replaced every 2 years - simply contact them and they will come out and rotate water supply.

Parent Education Night -

- SD61 has finally updated their form for PACs to complete to receive Parent Education funds to support continuing education opportunities.
<https://www.sd61.bc.ca/parent-student-resources/parent-education-fund/>
- EventBrite has become a popular tool for registering parents - links to register can be shared with multiple schools; reminder emails are sent before the event.
- Parent Ed night at Doncaster - New Math with Nikki Lineham
- Parent Ed night at Hillcrest / Arbutus - Child Anxiety (elementary / middle school focus)

- Parent Ed night at Spectrum - Social Media Internet use brain development with Jesse Miller

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, November 26, Oak Bay High