

## DPAC Minutes General Meeting

Wednesday May 15, 2019.

1. Call to order @ 6:45 p.m.
2. Attendants: Susan Bungay, Paulina Cannon, Nav Chonker, Carl Cooper, Kristi Darnbrough, Victoria Derby, Robyn Drew, Teresa Fuller, Jessica Gawley, Lerae Gidyk, Corryn Grayston, Estera Hazlewood, Erna Jacobs, Tammie Koroluk, Nadine Kowaski, Carol-Ann Leidloff, Toni Low, Nikki van der Meer, Leila Meyer, April Midan, Christine Ondang, Angela Parker, Melissa Parmenter, Shannon Prosser, Shannon Saunders, Joyce Schwartz, Shannon Seed, Monica Seys, Kelly Stalker, Shannon Stockbruegger, Shannon Thio, Sandy Thon, Tamara Timmers, Marianne VanBuskirk, Kari Wilkinson, Nikki Wilson, Nykol Woods, Christy Wright.

A welcome is extended to everyone in attendance, in particular Carl Cooper – Assistant Superintendent SD83, Carol-Ann Leidloff – Director of Instruction SD83, Inclusive Education, Nav Chonker – District Principal of Inclusive Education SD83, and Marianne VanBuskirk – Chair Board of Trustees SD83.

3. Motion was made by Christy W. to adopt the minutes of the general meeting April 25, 2019, seconded by Nikki van der M.; carried.
4. Business arising from the minutes:
  - No response has been received by the School District from Len Wood Middle School about changes for their gym at this time.
5. Amendment to the agenda to move financial report to the beginning of the meeting made by Kari W. Also, Call for Nominations will be put on the agenda again for June, as the AGM will be moved from the June meeting to the October meeting in the upcoming school year, as it is hard to recruit new people at the end of the school year.
6. Financial Report:
  - Gaming Account :
    - Balance as of April 30th, 2019: \$2,590.05
  - Income: \$0.12 interest.

Motion made by Melissa P. to accept the financial reports for the gaming account; Lerae G. seconded; all in favor; Carried.

➤ General Account:

- Balance as of April 30th, 2019: \$2,664.92

Income: \$0.19 interest;

\$493.00 FTE cheques:

Pleasant Valley Secondary School \$191.00; Armstrong Elementary School \$164.00;

Falkland Elementary School \$138.00

Expenses: Advertisement Saleema Noon workshop in Friday AM newspaper \$84.79

Motion made by Christy W. to accept the financial reports for the general account; Nikki van der M. seconded; all in favor; Carried.

7. History that lead to today's discussion:

DPAC held a general meeting at A.L. Fortune Secondary on April 25<sup>th</sup> and had put autism on the agenda. There it was discussed what challenges students (with special needs in general and autism in particular) and parents of these students are experiencing which brought on the need to establish a DPAC Special Needs Subcommittee to cement the issues and follow up at the next meeting. It created an opportunity to meet on a regular basis to have a discussion about the supports and create communication pieces that will be presented to SD83 Leadership and the SD83 Board of Trustees for information, discussion and effective resolution that are necessary for our students to remain in our school system.

The DPAC Special Needs Subcommittee met on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and identified a number of key issues.

Concerns relate to insufficient access to support services for special needs students.

The SD83 Inclusive Education Vision Statement is felt to be a well-rounded statement in which supportive relationships are built upon collaboration and communication among parents, communities, agencies, school staff and students.

Ms. Carol-Ann Leidloff is thanking everyone who attends this meeting and explained the history of special needs education and what is happening at the provincial and district levels. The total budget for inclusive education is \$12 million; \$8.65 million was generated from the ministry.

We are moving away from separate schools and from separate rooms going into the classroom where inclusive education is moving to the forefront. This evolution towards inclusive education supports the belief that all students should receive their education in age-appropriate regular classrooms in their neighbourhood schools and every student is working on their individual goals; in an ideal world one student cannot be distinguished from another student. The inclusion should be open and obvious for all students where everyone is engaged in meaningful activities.

Ms. Leidloff works with LRTs and Principals to work on inclusion which should trickle down to teachers. As there is no new training, they should feel the need to do more training. Accessing the curriculum can build teacher capacity. This new curriculum works on student skills and competency based items. However, changes are slow. Parents felt that monitoring skills isn't there combined with a lack of training of the teacher and therefore a lack of support for the student. Programs that are available are not well-known and should be more advertised to parents.

Ms. Nav Chonker explains the bigger picture in the School District. She is working with school teams which also include the school Principal and the Learning Resource Teacher (LRT) to build capacity and redefining goals.

An LRT needs to have a Master's Degree in Special Education and are hard to come by. An LRT creates a scale, prioritizes and weighs the need. Together with the school-based team, the LRT works on a strategy. Quantity is not always being looked at; we should look at the child. The question, "is the allocation of

resources working equitably and transparent”, is being worked on as the SD is experiencing inequities with the number and the needs of students. The new process to address equity is called INADS and is in its first year of implementation and addresses student needs of every identified student. It will represent the services required more accurately. Schools will also be moving from a static assignment scheduling model to a dynamic model for Certified Educational Assistants (CEAs) that considers more specific student needs related to time of day, location and activity so support becomes more flexible. Every K student with a designation has a Kindergarten CEA as some have significant needs. As there is a significant increase in need, recruiting becomes a problem for both LRTs, as well as CEAs and is also a provincial issue. Recruiting, deployment and replacement of CEAs are issues that cannot be resolved by budget enhancements at this time.

CEA assignment changes happen often. CUPE union is involved to reduce the movement of CEAs and has built in that the worker moves with the student. It is felt that CEAs with training are needed for more consistent help and intervention. Parents feel they keep things together and CEAs can address as much as possible. More people are needed and the needs in the SD are not addressed with provincial funding. The Ministry of Education is moving towards less requirements of recording and reporting back to justify funding, which should result in fewer costs for the SD.

Assessments: There are many students who should have a designation, but don't have one. As these students don't receive funding, some peers are piggy-backing on the designated students when it comes to support. Funding for more assessments is felt to be crucial. Educators are the ones making the calls for an assessment. For the last 2 years, psych-ed assessments (1:100 students) in the SD have been increased within the same school year for students with learning disabilities. Identified students are counted at the beginning of the new school year with a recount in February. Conflicts arise as pediatricians require a psych-ed assessment from the student to get an appointment who can later refer the student to IHCAN, but IHCAN will defer an assessment of the student when a school psych-ed assessment was done previously. IHCAN provides assessments and diagnosis for children and youth who demonstrate significant impairment in a number of domains of functioning, including development and learning, mental health, adaptive and social skills, or biomarkers such as prenatal substance exposure. They see children under three assessment streams:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Complex Child and Youth

IHCAN referrals must be driven by a pediatrician, psychiatrist, or medical specialist.

The waiting lists in the SD are big and there is pressure in particular communities for support services resources.

- Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) prioritize elementary school students rather than middle and secondary students. It is recognized by the District that there are needs in secondary schools and work is being done on a consultative basis.
- At this time, the District has an Occupational Therapist (OT) hired for 0.4 FTE which covers about 2 days a week and is not enough to cover every child with needs.
- Outside service providers have worked occasionally at the schools. There is a concern when conflicts arise, as well as issues that are of personal/private nature. In the past, the School District had to deal with unprofessional behaviour and therefor decided to not allow outside service providers into the classroom.

However, the parent, together with the school-based team, can invite outside service providers and work with SD83 staff for planning purposes and share observations.

When an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed it is being discussed with the parents. Parents feel overwhelmed, intimidated and a cultural difference from the top down. Some would like to have an impartial person attend as parents need support to help them guide through the explanation as the IEP is not always well understood. Parents feel that they are not being heard at the school and being judged too often. The go-to person in this case should be the Principal of the school. Parents wish to have an inclusive conversation at IEP meetings as no one has the same skill level. Parental input in the IEP and working together is suggested concerning goals, triggers and more practical things.

Info on progress of the student is not being shared with the parents in various cases.

As the LRT is the case manager, the CEA reports back about a student's progress to the LRT. There is no collaboration between parents and CEAs, although this relationship can be established.

It is recognized by the SD that parents are the advocates for the students and that they need to be heard. Parents feel that there is more support going towards behaviour issues while additional support is needed for educational support.

Many children are being sent home and parents get a call from school to pick up their child as there is no CEA or other support available. Students get behind in their education and parents don't have to agree to that.

Once the student enters high school, there is a lack of support. There are an increasing number of behaviour challenges at this point. Some ASD students do not get the support in favor of the behaviour challenged. ADHD students do not get the support as the resources go to mental health related issues. Categorizing should be looked at. French speaking LRT is not available at the high school.

The Surrey school district has a system in place and our school district could borrow from what is working there. The Hewko court ruling states that there should be instructional control in the classroom with meaningful collaboration which benefits all. Some people had to move to another school district to keep their child's support and the province was supportive of this.

8. Report Mr. Carl Cooper: Presented two provincial standardized tests. Participation rates are high for both indigenous and non-indigenous students which impacts results. For reading and writing (with the participation rates factored in) the achievement results are at or even above the provincial level (without the participation rates performance shows an upward trend but not yet at provincial rates). Numeracy is behind the provincial average, consistently. Results have been improving though. Every year students in grades 4, 7, and 10 write specific Ministry standardized tests. One provincial measure is the Foundation Skills Assessments and the other is the Grade 10 Numeracy Exam. The results do provide some broad generalizations. The results also suggest some district priorities, particularly given that the results are consistent over several years and between subject areas.
9. Meeting adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erna Jacobs, DPAC Secretary

