

Strathcona Elementary PAC- Meeting Notes

January 30, 2019

Dinner: 6:00pm

Meeting: 6:30-8:00pm

Notes taken by Krista Sigurdson, PAC secretary: krista.sigurdson@gmail.com

Guests

- Melissa Clements, Henry Hudson Elementary PAC Vice Chair
- Shaun, District PAC Chair
- Barbara Parrott, VSB Trustee
- Jennifer Reddy, VSB Trustee (Jennifer.Reddy@vsb.bc.ca)

Action	Lead	Timeline
Confirm funding from gaming grant for PAC activities	PAC (Alec)	10 weeks from now
Get reconciled books from David; cut the school a cheque per budget promises	PAC (Alec)	3 weeks from now
Draft equity policy for Strathcona Elementary to be reviewed by PAC	Equity Committee (Andrea) and Jason	February-March
Henry Hudson Proposal: Compile summary of issues and questions raised for the PAC to provide to the VSB and report back to parents.	PAC (Andrea)	ASAP
Draft letter from PAC opposing cuts to Food4schools program and circulate for parent endorsement	Food4schools Committee (Sara)	ASAP
Poll parents on Facebook on what social events they would participate in as alternatives	PAC (Krista)	February-March

to spring fair and plan committees accordingly.		
Seek funding and carry out design for phase one of playground update	Playground Committee (Katie)	February-March
PAC will work on collecting parent email addresses and will discuss with PAC board what mechanism to use for a distribution list.	Krista	Ongoing

1. Opening Prayer (Alain Williams)

2. Acceptance of minutes (Alec)

[2018-11-07 PAC General Meeting Minutes](#)

- **Alec: Motion to accept November minutes**
- **Seconder: Krista**
- **Disposition passed**

3. Financial Update (Alec & Lina)

- PAC Gaming Grant applications open April 1-June 30; represents approx. \$10k
- Recipients notified at the end of September
- 2017-2018 PAC board did not apply during normal window
- Application was submitted in January; 12 weeks for processing
- Expect to meet commitments (e.g. activities funding for school) and maintain \$5k reserve
- Spring fair cancelled.
- We seem able to meet commitments to fund school events (activities grant) for the year but not able to have spring fair given the uncertainty around finances. (Updated books will confirm when received from David.)
- **Action: Alec will continue to work on accessing the books/bank account and write a cheque to Jason per our budgeted promise at the beginning of the year.**

4. Addressing Equity at Strathcona (Andrea)

This came up at last meeting where we brainstormed some ideas on this and struck equity committee. Discussion at last meeting was in depth and many parents from different grades shared their experiences at the school, in particular with respect to the different ways that the French and English programs are treated/perceived. Following the meeting, many parents approached me and shared their support for the idea of addressing equity at Strathcona. Seems effective to proceed with working directly with the school on equity issues and involve the full PAC via updates and interest. Talked about the idea of parent representatives from each class, for example. Would like all the kids to feel that they had the same level of opportunity as other classes. Wanted to address things such as deep seated attitudes about English program versus French program, for instance the belief that certain kids not “ready” to go on field trips. Jason and Andrea have talked about ideas for mixing and flow between programs. An equity policy might be a good place to start. Need to respect that teachers have their own programing.

- Question from parent: would there be a way to have all kids speak English v. French?
- Answer: not part of equity committee mandate to challenge existence of two programs.
- Question: has there been a PAC motion to assure there wouldn't be a French PAC vs. English PAC?
- Answer: not to anyone's knowledge. We work to get balance on PAC of parents from both programs.
- **Action: Andrea to draft equity policy with Jason.**

5. Message from the Principal (Jason; 5 minutes)

- Summary of positive community building events at school: Winter concert, pancake breakfast (all teacher/staff run), 4 basketball teams in French and English program, Harry Potter Week. Project Chef. Lots of great turnout and enthusiasm by families and teachers.
- Continuing dialogue around encouraging STEM at the school.

6. VSB Henry Hudson French Immersion Proposal (30 minutes)

Proposal details: [Committee Meeting Agenda](#)

- Introduction of the proposal (Jason; 5 minutes)
- Barb Parrott is the school trustee, and liaison for Strathcona Elementary. Last Wednesday evening, facility planning committee presented proposal that came out of French Immersion review, which had recommended increasing EFI programs. One of the recommendations of the review was to find a way to use available space to house FI programs.
- Jason's role is to provide information regarding communications and consultation.

- Underlying idea: taking 154 EFI spaces at Hudson (which is currently overcrowded) and moving to Strathcona, working toward the goal of having two K classes each year in all EFI schools which was identified in the French Immersion review. From current report: 3 proposals re Hudson.
 - 1. Not make a change (status quo)
 - 2. Gradual switchover beginning 2020
 - 3. Immediate switchover in 2020

- Information is out to the public. Consultation process is as follows:
 - There is a VSB/PAC executive consultation set for Feb 25, 6-7:30pm.
 - March 6: VSB information session at the school for parents. Time and location not confirmed. Jason described this as open house consultation, likely at Strathcona auditorium or gym.
 - Throughout that time will be an online way of getting feedback.
 - Should get back to trustees by April for a trustee vote.
 - Jennifer Reddy, trustee introduced
- Parent: Question regarding gradual entry: Hudson has 154 students.
 - A. Gradual entry could be one class at a time starting in kindergarten. Maximum numbers in each class, so doesn't necessarily mean bringing full classes over.
- Jason: Area E buildings are seismically sound is my understanding
 - Parent: needs to be clarified if building E is seismically sound.

- Andrea: What is not made clear in the letter that it is ultimately up to the trustees at facility meeting. Though we are being consulted, they will ultimately vote on it.
- Barb: vote likely to happen in April by the facilities committee.

- Questions/feedback from parents for VSB (Facilitated by Andrea)
- Parent question: where are Hudson kids going to go? Do they currently have school? After care?
 - Answer: Hudson is in the midst of seismic. There is no proposal that doesn't have space for Hudson kids.
 - Barbara Parrott: Hudson needs to be expanded to provide for catchment kids. Ministry will not expand the schools while there are spaces available in other schools. EFI is a district program so district is saying it won't expand for that program. Hence the proposal to move Hudson EFI (district program) to Strathcona.
- Parent: It would seem that the Hudson school is getting more space while we are getting compacted.
 - Barbara: FI considered a district program. Vast majority of FI kids at Hudson are coming from out of catchment.
- David: What will happen with traffic? It will become a nightmare to drop kids off? What about internal culture of the school?

- Parent: If you now bring more kids from out of catchment, will the likelihood of getting in to FI at Strathcona go down?
 - Jason: there is no longer catchment priority with FI applications. So, it would be the same.
- Roni (Strathcona Community Center): needs to clarify that school owns entire block; school board runs E building; childcare is NOT the school's program; it's the community association's program. Child care will go wherever the school tells us to go and wherever wherever licensing tells us we can.
- Current allocation: Next to dental office: 20 kids, portable 25 kids, gym 39 kids, cafeteria 30 kids, upstairs in 3rd floor 60 kids.
- Childcare waitlist was closed at 200. Now open again. Henry Hudson people: put yourself on the waitlist. However, if the E building is gone, I will be closing 60 places.
- Parent: Strathcona's EDI scores are the lowest scores in kindergarten. Highest at time of leaving. This is an amazing school and kids are lucky to be here. There will be change at some point because there is an empty building, whether it is more FI or another program. Whatever new families come, we'll make it work.
- Question: is the E building seismic?
 - Buildings a, b, c has been seismically upgraded. Building E has H3 designation. Not highest risk designation.
- Question from parent: would they be taking preschool room?
 - Roni: no suggestion of that but many rooms belong to school so up to them.
- Parent question: would the entire EFI classes come right over? And stay together? Or would it just be an opening of new classes to apply to?
 - Trustee: understanding it would be the classes moved right over but they would be mixed with current students.
- Parent Question: would kids at Hudson get the opportunity to stay in English if they chose?
 - Parent: Yes.
- Parent: thing about equity conversation: Not sure how parents coming in from another neighborhood will help equity/integration issue.
- Alec: can work on ways to address concerns with Henry Hudson PAC.
- Jennifer Reddy, trustee: thank you for having me listen. Please get in touch by email. Email Jennifer to get in touch. Acknowledge parents that weren't here tonight. **Jennifer's email is: jennifer.reddy@vsb.bc.ca**
- Barb: could not answer whether inner city designation would change.
- PAC summary/strategy (Andrea)

- Summary of issues: OSC space, tier 1 designation, equity/culture of school and neighborhood, whether buildings being used will be seismic, traffic and parking.
- **Action: Compile summary of issues and questions raised for the PAC to provide to the VSB and report back to parents.**

7. Proposed cuts to food4schools program (Sara)

- Sara: Program currently funded at \$320,00, Proposal is to to cut in half.
- I think the PAC should get together and write a letter and the council at the current level. Encourage school board to take a firm position.
- PAC should bring to DPAC.
- Parent: I've already emailed them. Everyone please also send emails.
- Parent: suggest that people go to actual chamber regarding vote in addition to writing letters. Perhaps send a delegation.
- **Elin: Propose a motion to have the PAC write a letter addressed to city council and school board of maintaining program.**
 - **Secunder: Carla**
 - **Disposition: passed**
- Grade 6/7 teacher: very concerned about these cuts that would affect how we build community here. Many kids use this program and it is non-judgmental way of creating community and equity at the school over breaking bread.
- Staff/teachers is interested too in sending a delegation. Should be no meal missed.
- Question: how to get information to parents? Staff could help with that.
- Katie: this is one of the challenges community. How do we come together as a community when we don't have a solid way to communicate with each other.
- **Action: Sara Rozell will chair committee on opposing cuts to food4schools. Will draft letter and help organize parents. sara.rozell@gmail.com**
- Parent suggestion: get letter published in Courier.
- Question: what form would cuts take? Food more expensive? Or cheaper food?
- Trustee: wanting us to look at cost of meals. Cuts could take different forms.
- Roni: Courier - pits breakfast program against lunch program. Here breakfast program funded by SCA, so not same funding.

8. Communication with parents (Krista)

- School has asked PAC to start sending out our own updates. Are now collecting email contacts from parents. If you would like to be on our distribution list, please email krista.sigurdson@gmail.com with parent/guardian name, email address and children's names/division numbers.

- Krista: think that at the beginning of the school year, PAC should include a flyer in back to school information with an opt-in sign up for PAC email list.
- In the meantime, PAC will work on collecting email addresses.
- **ACTION: Krista will work on collecting parent email addresses and will discuss with board what mechanism to use for a distribution list.**

9. Spring Fair Alternative Event (Krista)

- Krista: am the PAC secretary. Have been running coffee cart. Happy to put on social coordinator hat.
- Dave: Apologize for not getting gaming grant in last year for 2018-2018 year. Offer to self fund Spring fair. Could be done with enough volunteers.
- Alec: Understand. We are also cancelling because we don't have volunteers from last year to chair event.
- Krista: I think we can run annual events that don't need to be the Spring Fair. Here are some ideas. Please chime in with what you like but given time constraints I will post poll on FB for people to chime in comments or interest. We are looking for people willing to help out with these ideas as they all require parent volunteers and we could do multiple events.
- Ways to bring French/English parents together. Perhaps a matter of revisiting old events, inventing new ones or collaborating with teachers/staff on events they are already working on. Some ideas:
 - a dance. I heard that there was supposed to be a halloween dance that didn't happen (perhaps run by the community center). We could do a spring dance.
 - a talent show. there are so many kids that play music, dance, do all sorts of things at the school. We could work with the music teachers to set up a PA etc. but I think this would totally be feasible.
 - a bingo night. Numbers, letters, good for all ages.
 - a mid year teacher appreciation event (lunch perhaps)? David reports that the PAC usually organizes something at the end of the year, but we could also do something mid year.
 - back to school and/or end of year potluck (maybe each grade should have their own - this could be a good mixer for French/English programs)
 - parents night out - his could be based on grade so as to not be overwhelming. I would be happy to organize two: one for kindergarten parents and one for grade 4/5 parents. Again good mixer for English/French parents.
 - spruce it up event - we used to have these at my kids' old school. It's where the parents come in and help teachers organize/tidy/clean/organize classrooms.
 - STEAM night
 - Sports day
- There was not a lot of time for discussion at the meeting on these topics.
- Mary Ann Purdy offered to run a cedar hat making workshop for kids and to sell hats as a fundraiser.

- Jason: could be a parent component to sports day. Running a station. Could build connectedness
- **Action: Krista will poll parents on Facebook on what events they would participate in and plan committees accordingly.**

10. Playground Committee (Katie)

- Got a quote over the holidays that one of the areas seems reasonable: \$18,000 for a structure outside the kindergarten classrooms. Involving maybe another garden area. Some questions remain about whether there is enough sun for a garden.
- Parent: I think there is funding from VSB available for playground improvements. Need to inquire into that.
- Parent: What are the chances of getting DPAC and VSB together to move it forward?
- Alec: We will get gaming grant \$ potentially and this could go toward playground.
- Katie: how do people feel about pursuing clean corporate \$? Nods among PAC.
- **Andrea- Motion that the PAC supports the Playground Committee advancing forward to fund and design phase one of the playground upgrade.**
 - **Seconder- Carla**
 - **Disposition- passed**
- **Action: Playground Committee seeks funding and designs phase one of playground update**

11. Next PAC General Meeting

- Rescheduled from March 6 to March 13th to accommodate VSB consultation.

Agenda items for future meetings

Communication with parents (10 minutes)

- Could the PAC update our section of the website with minutes and contact information? Should we generate our own separate website?
- Could the school post sports schedules on the website?
- Some glitches with the calendar. Any other parents having problems?
- Can teachers assist with getting parent contact info for PAC distribution list

Sex Ed and Empowerment Education (Krista or Danielle Sherring
10 minutes)

Safety at the school - more monitoring (Krista; 5 minutes)