

Simon Fraser PAC Meeting Minutes – November 28, 2017

1.0 Review Minutes and Agenda

Solicited feedback from the October 24th Minutes. No comments made. Motion to approve Meeting Minutes; motion carried.

2.0 Special Guest

Trustee Carrie Bercic joined the meeting to introduce herself and explain her role within the VSB. She acts as a conduit between a parent who has an issue or problem with the system and a senior member on the school board.

Carrie described the hiring challenges that the school board is having as the perfect storm:

- Teachers are choosing districts closer to home
- Vancouver's cost of living is prohibitive to teacher's living in the district
- Last year's Supreme Court of Canada's decision to restore contract provisions on class size and composition requirements has forced required districts to hire more than 3,000 teachers
- Many substitutes have found full-time positions

Carrie went on to say that despite the circumstances, the VSB is trying hard to be pro-active. A Focus Group/ Round Table is to be held on Friday, December 1st. If attendees have issues/solutions that could contribute to that conversation, they are invited to email DPAC.

Carrie concluded her talk by telling the parents that the change, albeit turbulent right now, is good. She also said that parents are welcome to email her directly at carrie.bercic@vsb.bc.ca

There were a number questions/concerns for Carrie, many of them around the SSA shortages and the safety of the children. Carrie re-iterated that they are doing everything they can to correct the situation.

3.0 Treasurer's Report

Rachel reviewed the status of the PAC accounts:

Operating Account - \$21,595.55 (this includes the net funds raised at the Fall Social, which was \$9,057.51).

Community Gaming Account (CGA) - \$5,481.96

It was suggested that the PAC brainstorm what to spend the Gaming funds on at the Jan. meeting.

4.0/5.0 Principal's Report / New Business

- Dawn asked (on behalf of the teachers) if the PAC could contribute \$5,000 towards the Classroom Gardener program. Attendees, many of which were new, wanted more details about the program and questioned the validity if the current one isn't working optimally as it could. The decision was deferred to an additional meeting in December where the program could be sufficiently outlined and described. A vote would take place then. Attendees also requested if the details could be sent out in advance to give people a chance to review them before the meeting.

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- Follow-up: An inspector has visited the school and deemed the hand washing and lighting situations as acceptable. An undercover policeman also came to witness first-hand the safety of the streets and crosswalks around SFE. Dawn awaiting the full report.
 - Winter Concert scheduled for Dec 13th with an option for family members to come for dress rehearsals, since only 2 tickets are available per family based on gym capacity.
 - The portable for Division 6 will be complete by Friday, December 8th. Move in days will be after the weekend on December 11th and 12th. Movers will take care of the move and volunteer parents will be contacted only if needed. Ms. Ito will be teaching this class until Ms. Gaetanne returns.
 - Divisions 2, 7 and 13 have recently found teachers that are now in place until the end of the school year.
 - Numbers around the shortage of teachers were reviewed. Dawn cited stats from the most recent article that the VSB published - *Hiring Challenges remain, VSB teams head to recruitment fairs in Ontario*. Other pieces of context were highlighted:
 - Huge numbers resigning and higher than average retiring
 - Situation is unprecedented with so many teachers being hired in every district to meet the agreement on class size and composition
 - Putting many new measures in place to strengthen recruitment; i.e. VSB has brought in retired admins to help with reference checks and external applications are applying directly at the school to speed things up
 - Recruiting across the country with moving allowances as incentive
 - VSB also getting creative by hiring those with experience as behavior interventionists and early childhood educators
 - Lack of SSAs are another huge issue – October saw an average of 66 unfilled absences/day – this is due in part to the undersupply of staff with training in this area

Attendees at this time re-iterated the severity of the issues at SFE and declared it a crisis. There was a plea to Dawn to communicate the information that she knows on a regular basis. Even if she doesn't have all the answers, the parents would prefer to know the realities of the situation. Parents would appreciate a communications plan.

It was decided that a sub-committee should be formed to come up with solutions that could help the current shortage situation. Those interested should email PAC. For those that may want to volunteer in a general capacity should approach Dawn directly.

A meeting in December was deemed a necessity and has been scheduled for December 12th.