



**Ladysmith Intermediate School**  
**Parent Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**  
**November 5th 2020, 6:30 pm, online via Zoom**

## **Revision History**

Drafted, Steve Currie, November 6, 2020

Approved, Steve Currie, November 12, 2020

## **In Attendance**

Susan Pearson — Chair

Michelle Hiebert — Vice Chair

Jacqueline McKenna — Treasurer

Steve Currie — Secretary

Angie Haslam — District Parent Advisory Council rep

Dionte Jelks — LIS Principal

Pam Ellis — LIS Teacher

Dan Vincent — LIS Teacher

Russ Middleton — LIS Teacher

Patti Cavers — LIS Teacher

Lori Stocco

Monica Birch

## **1. Call meeting to order at 6:48 pm**

Switched to Zoom as not everyone had a Google account

Welcome/Introductions – Susan Pearson, PAC Chair

Teachers introduced:

Dan Vincent, second year at LIS, grade 6

Russ Middleton, third year at LIS, also a past counsellor, grade 7

## **2. Accept and approve the agenda – call for additions**

No additions.

Motion to accept agenda: Michelle, Lori

Motion carries.

## **3. Accept and approve October 5th 2020's meeting minutes**

Motion to accept meeting minutes: Steve, Michelle

Motion carries.

## **4. Principal Report – Dionte Jelks**

### Staffing & Students

Librarian position is still open and was re-posted. The temporary librarian, Peter Boon, a grade 4 teacher, will remain in place until interviews can be conducted and a candidate is chosen.

As of November 3rd: 259 students — 3 homeschooled, 11 of 12 transitioned into school from the COVID-19 Transition Learning Program option, 1 did not.

### COVID-19

Hand sanitizer pumps have been installed at the gym door, used by divisions and cohorts.

Vanessa Furlan, Fine Arts teacher, continues to do fine arts in classrooms instead of the Fine Arts room.

Field trips are allowed, with precautions. One division or single learning group; must be outdoors; plans are required to mitigate risk and define protocols; students will physically distance and masks become mandatory when distancing is infeasible. Plans are reviewed by Mr. Jelks for approval prior to the trip.

Transportation via private vehicles is allowed. Windows must be down and masks are mandatory. Staff are allowed to drive in emergency situations.

Parents are still not allowed in the school but we are now able to have nurses, consultants, social workers, etc. provided that they make an appointment and follow all COVID-19 guidelines.

#### Literacy-oriented grant

We are no longer a “focus school”. To compensate, we were allotted \$10,000 to spend on literacy-focused expenses.

Grades 6/7: allotted \$500 for purchasing literacy resources

Grades 4/5: allotted \$200. Will be purchasing reading materials which include 30-45 minutes per day of direct instruction.

Additional funds will be spent on a professional development committee whose primary focus will be on learning to teach students with dyslexia.

Any leftover funds will be distributed to the remaining classrooms.

#### Infrastructure

A new water fountain was installed on the first floor. We’re evaluating whether a second fountain for the second floor should be acquired.

#### Air quality

Met with district health and safety due to concerns with the air quality. We do not have a proper ventilation system to maintain circulation and fresh air exchange. Classrooms on the lower level have air filtration systems at least, but those on upper levels do not.

Recently the poor outdoor air quality due to wildfires raised concerns with our indoor air quality. Our needs were contradictory as the fires required windows to be closed but COVID-19 required them to be open.

Today Mr. Jelks had a meeting with the health and safety supervisor. They performed air quality readings in Dan Vincent’s and John Donald’s classrooms. The data showed that we’re doing all that we can.

Clearly a ventilation system is needed. It will be put into the district’s capital budget for this year but there’ll be a two year wait before anything can be done.

Mr. Jelks will take this information back to the health and safety committee to figure out contingency plans.

*Question: Regarding LIS transitioning to a non-focus school. Does this mean we were previously not meeting standards or we had lots of students with needs?*

Being flagged as a “focus school” brings the benefit of a literacy coordinator position who focuses on reading fluency, comprehension, etc. Assessments showed that it was no longer needed so we lost our literacy coordinator, thus the grant to compensate.

## **5. Treasurer Report – Jacqueline McKenna**

We received the gaming grant for \$5,760 making the gaming account balance \$10,483.

We received \$940 from students out of the \$1,000 budgeted to cover the cost of school planners. Mr. Jelks will follow-up with Patricia Churchill to check the unpaid numbers.

Upon PAC’s request, we received wish lists from teachers totaling \$11,731. Brooke and Jackie put in a fundraising request to Ladysmith & District Credit Union to help cover this. Unfortunately the Credit Union has already held their November meeting so we will not hear back until December.

*(discussion for items 8, 8a, and 9 took place here)*

*Question: How would one add themselves as a signatory for the PAC account?*

A visit to the Credit Union and authorization from an authorized party. Michelle will forward information.

Motion to accept treasurer's report: Michelle, Monica

Motion carries.

## **6. Teacher Report – Pam Ellis**

There are opportunities for hosting local speakers, services from Swell Education, and other paid online educational presentations. Teachers are wondering about field trip opportunities and just received word that bus trips are now allowed. Also wondering about field trip allocations for the year.

We’ve budgeted a total of \$4,850 for field trips but still need to discuss per-grade allocations. Last year’s allocations were \$400 for grade 4 & 5 classes, \$450 for grade 6 classes, \$500 for grade 7 classes.

*Question: If there's no option for an outdoor venue but there is for an online presenter, can we use the field trip budget to pay for them?*

Yes. Also, there are library and arts allocations that could be considered as funding sources. They paid for two authors to speak last year. Artists were also booked through the librarian which is why it was a separate budget item.

Finally, any non-curriculum events like author speakers can come from the gaming budget as well. But anything that lies within the curriculum would be ineligible for gaming funding and would need regular PAC funds.

*Comment: Mr. Vincent says thank-you to the PAC for the funding wish list request. Teachers are not often asked for wish lists so it was a welcome surprise.*

We appreciate the thanks and acknowledge that is to be shared with the previous PAC executive as it originated with them. PAC and teaching staff are certainly most effective when we support one another.

## **7. District Parent Advisory Council Report – Angie Haslam**

*(Please refer to the DPAC report included at the end of this document)*

Regarding hot lunches and COVID-19, the district permits them and some schools feel comfortable continuing their hot lunch programs. Mr. Jelks will check with such schools for their protocols and look into whether we can use them to restart our hot lunch program too.

### Foundational Skills Assessment testing

FSA testing is provincially mandated and out of the district's control. This year it has been delayed until January 2021 from its normal October date.

Parents are allowed to unilaterally request an exemption for their children from the FSA test without checking with the principal or teacher. This year the district has decided that the principal is not allowed to contact parents to confirm exemption requests. The district is clearly anti-FSA and is encouraging parents to exempt their children from it. They would prefer in-class assessments instead.

*Question: Why is the principal not allowed to confirm FSA exemption requests with parents?*

The reasoning is that parents might feel pressured into withdrawing their exemption request. In the past, Mr. Jelks has followed-up on every exemption request letter with an explanation of what FSA tests are.

*Comment: The FSA date used to be in May but is moving earlier in the year so there's concern that not everything has been covered which skews test results and increases student anxiety.*

*Comment: FSA results can be used by the teacher as they see fit, for example as a self-assessment barometer.*

*Comment: Missing foundational skills are becoming an issue. Even though the test is meant to evaluate the previous year's skills, if the foundational skills are missing then the skills will not have been learned in time and the test becomes a current-year evaluation.*

*Comment: FSA takes away from class time, teachers are seeing kids falling further behind this year because of the lost classroom time from COVID-19. It causes extra stress and anxiety. This year is expected to have poor results.*

## **8. Teacher funding requests: proposal to raise this year's allocations to \$500**

Rather than authorizing individual wish-list expenses and possibly set-up an unfair situation where some teachers feel they were overly conservative in their requests, we're proposing raising the annual per-teacher allocation from \$300 to \$500. This should cover a lot of the smaller requests in an equitable fashion.

*Question: Is this in lieu of field trip money?*

No, this is an addition and field trip money is still on table. This is because we received many requests of varying amounts and we felt it might be more fair so that people get what they ask for and others get allocations too.

There were many requests for seating options and self-regulation items which are more expensive and have long-term benefits for the whole school so Jackie requests to accommodate for those separately from this allocation (see next agenda item). The general allocation increase should handle the requests for books and other smaller classroom items.

*Question: Are we voting on the full \$11k requests today?*

No, we'll be voting on specific expenditures in future meetings after more information is gathered.

*Question: How much will be leftover after the \$500 increase?*

There will be approximately \$19,000 after everything goes through.

Perhaps the self-regulation requests could be covered by the gaming account as these are all long-term purchases.

*Question: Could the health auxiliary money be used for self-regulation items too?*

That money has been earmarked already. Grade 7 has been allocated \$350 and the meal program might need funding.

*Question: Regarding rainbow/horseshoe tables. Is the plan to buy these with the Credit Union grant?*

Yes, though we're waiting on the Credit Union to find out if we get the grant and won't hear back before December.

*Comment: Regarding the allocation increase, I'm really hopeful that it passes. It will go a long way in the classroom and will allow me to create new programs.*

*Question: Can rainbow/horseshoe tables be used considering COVID-19 distancing rules?*

Possibly, since the teacher will be in the middle with students spread around. This should be confirmed with the district to be sure since all tables were removed at the beginning of the year.

*Question: Do we have funds for the tables right now?*

There were two styles of tables requested. Four larger horseshoe tables at \$582 each and one smaller horseshoe table at \$402, totaling \$2,730.

*Question: Should we check with the district before ordering?*

Yes, Mr. Jelks will check with the district. In the meantime we will wait and use the delay to our advantage as we won't know until after December if we can use the Credit Union grant anyway.

Motion to set teacher allocation to \$500: Michelle, Lori

#### Voting Results

Yay: Unanimous

Nay: n/a

Motion carries.

## **8a. (spontaneous new item) Approve the \$1,750 request for fitness club equipment**

*Question: Is this fitness club item for general PE equipment or something else?*

This request is for purchasing fitness items: dumbbell sets of varying weights between 5 lbs and 20 lbs; kettlebells weighing 15 lbs; fitness bands; battle ropes.

This could be a lunch hour thing and it'd be best to have teachers get trained before starting, as we don't want to promote exercise routines that risk injury. We also want enough items to avoid sharing between kids within a session. We could do it outside on different days with different cohorts to stay within COVID-19 guidelines.

This would likely be geared more towards grades 6 & 7 as it will require a certain level of coordination and strength. There are concerns with lower grades and the heavier weights.

This will be a school-wide benefit for a relatively small expense.

Motion to approve \$1,750 expenditure: Michelle, Lori

### Voting Results

Yay: Unanimous

Nay: n/a

Motion carries.

## **9. Teacher funding requests: create "seating and self-regulation tools" budget item**

This will be a line item on the budget starting with \$0 allocation.

Motion to approve new, unallocated budget item: Jackie

Motion carries. As no money is being allocated we didn't vote.



## **10. Angie Haslam's request to act as a liaison between parents and the district**

*Question: Is this not the same as the DPAC role? How does it differ?*

This is meant to open a communication channel between parents and the district specifically focused on school upgrades and the funding for them. Perhaps we could help out in some way to accelerate upgrades. We want to ensure that Trustee Stephanie Higginson is reminded of her pledge to upgrade our school, to keep her updated with our concerns, and to keep us updated with their plans and commitments.

*Question: What is the scope of these upgrades? Water, air, seismic, playgrounds, more?*

Yes, water, ventilation, playgrounds are within scope. Seismic is likely not a consideration as it's cheaper to build a new school than to make the necessary upgrades.

Mr. Jelks will provide some points from his Health and Safety meetings for Angie to raise with the district.

An unnamed Victoria school's PAC got a new roof so maybe we should talk to that PAC for ideas about moving our requests forward.

There are concerns about the future of the school being up in the air as its current status is that of a tear-down so there's an unwillingness to spend any money on it, even for items like paint and blinds. Unfortunately it has been stuck in this "limbo" state for at least 18 years, thus all students and teachers over this time have been and continue to be shortchanged. Oddly, LIS was rated lower than Davis Road which was closed in 2013 for similar reasons.

*Comment: The District of West Vancouver recently bought air scrubbers for two schools (29 classrooms and 11 portables) for a total of \$70,000. Dan Vincent asked Health and Safety if we could get the same to stop-gap our ventilation issues. He was told no because ventilation upgrades are happening in two years. Exasperation ensued.*

*<https://www.nsnews.com/news/air-scrubbers-installed-in-two-west-vancouver-elementary-classrooms-1.24229939>*

*Comment: Some teachers are bothered by the Virox 5 disinfectant and Clorox 360 machine. Proper ventilation sooner rather than later would be welcome.*

*Question: Would this be a district budget item or higher up at the Provincial level?*

Both. The district would apply to the Province for large capital project funding.

Motion to approve liaison request: Lori, Monica

### Voting Results

Yay: Unanimous

Nay: n/a

Motion carries.

## **11. Find a fundraising volunteer**

We will likely have money left over from this year but we need to shore up that account for next year.

We have a group of involved people who, while they may not want to take a lead role, would be comfortable taking on individual tasks.

We should discuss what previous years have done for ideas of what to do this year.

*Question: Should we outline what such a volunteer role would encompass so that people know what they're volunteering for? Perhaps we have no interest due to its nebulous nature.*

Perhaps, and we could also rotate the responsibility among us throughout the year.

Motion to table this item: Susan

Motion carries.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you to all teachers and others for appearing and giving their perspectives.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 3rd, 2020.

Motion to adjourn: Susan, Steve

Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm

## **LIS DPAC report October, 2020**

submitted by Angie Haslam DPAC rep November 5, 2020

### ***Relevant Topics Covered:***

#### **SD 68 Policy Review**

Policy Development and Public Participation are two online reviews that parents can participate in- feedback will be accepted until the end of November.

#### **Food Security and Food in Schools**

DPAC is requesting clarity on what schools are able to do for Hot Lunches, supplying meals for vulnerable students, drop offs like the fruit and veggie program. Cafeterias are allowed under VIHA guidelines but parents in schools are restricted under Provincial Health guidelines.

#### **New School Calendar**

A new three year calendar for the district is in the final stages and will be available soon.

#### **All SD68 School reusable masks are now delivered**

Teachers can request more if needed, esp. specialty masks, the district has supplied one for each child.

#### **Transition Schooling Update**

Program concludes November 6th. 107 students have transferred back into schools and 2,734 have joined or continued with Island Connected. The lack of student enrollment in “brick and mortar” schools has equated to about a 2 million dollar deficit for this school district's annual budget.

#### **AED's in Schools**

Board decision to not supply these first aid devices in elementary schools (just high schools).

#### **BCCPAC Membership**

DPAC will continue to reimburse half of the membership cost to each PAC that purchases a BCCPAC membership.

#### **Compassionate Learning Communities**

This committee works with schools and parents to develop mental health strategies and has produced a monthly newsletter to guide families with current mental health guidelines and issues. These are emailed to parents directly VIA the school district.

#### **COVID-19 Update**

A revised symptom check list is in the works reflecting evolving information about how children are contracting the virus.

BC has seen an increase in infection rates in children since the return to school, but transmission has been traced to adults introducing the virus at home and community sports not school.

#### **FSA (foundation skills assessment) assessment in BC Schools**

This assessment tool comes from the Province and is used to see what reading, writing and numeracy instruction grades 4 and 7 have retained from the year before. This year the assessment has been postponed to January 2021. The FSA is mandated by the provincial school act and school districts must administer it and report results, with each principal responsible for their own schools assessment.

The NDTA would like to see in class assessment done instead, and would like parents to know that they can stop their child from taking the FSA, and do not have to check with their child's teacher or principal.

DPAC passed a motion that states that principals cannot contact parents to confirm their withdrawal from the FSA for the 2020-2021 school year.