

**David Thompson Secondary PAC  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, September 22nd, 2020**

**Attendance (via Zoom):**

- 7 PAC executive members (Regina, Manjit, Altan, Ian, Noor, Melody, Amy),
- 1 administrator (Principal Lopez), 1 Teachers' representative (Yashoda Reddy)
- 22+ parents participating as Zoom attendees

Called to order at 7:05 pm by PAC Chairman Regina Prakash. Thanks to Altan for setting up the online meeting and to Ian for taking the meeting minutes.

Introduction of the 2020 – 2021 PAC Executive, as follows:

*Chairperson* – Regina Prakash

*Vice Chair* – Manjit Mand

*Treasurer* – Altan Uludag

*Secretary* – Ian Macdonald

*Members at Large* – Amy Choy, Noor Balolia & Melody Sum

The PAC Executive chief responsibility will be to review funding requests from the various school teams and clubs once they are submitted by the requesting teacher sponsors. Once this is done the gaming funds that are allocated to the PAC by the provincial government are disbursed to the school clubs.

The PAC wishes to thank all of the teachers and the school administration staff for their extraordinary efforts to ready the school for the return of students this year in the face of the COVID pandemic. Truly this is an ongoing challenging and difficult time for school staff, parents and students to weather together.

**Approval of previous PAC meeting minutes (May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020):**

Motion to accept by Manjit, seconded by Altan. Minutes were approved.

**Ms. Reddy's VSB Staff Liaison Update:**

Ms. Reddy introduced herself as a longtime staff member at DT who presently is the teacher-librarian at the school, and who also represents the DT staff as a union liaison with the VSB.

Ms. Reddy had nothing new to report at this time, and noted that the staff feel that they are in good hands, feeling confident and comfortable coming back to work. The staff is proud of the students' and staff efforts, and everyone is remaining thoughtful and caring of one another, taking safety into consideration every day. The students are doing a fine job and are showing up to school well prepared each day. It's a good feeling to walk into the school and to know that everyone feels safe. In the past two weeks the staff has concentrated on giving instruction on school safety protocols, and on welcoming the new Gr. 8 students.

**Principal's update (Mr. Lopez):**

The principal thanked everyone for joining tonight, and Altan for setting up the Zoom meeting. He's encouraged to see such a good attendance turnout to the meeting and hopes it will continue for the subsequent PAC meetings this year.

- Getting ready for this year has meant dealing with an incredible amount of change, moving from a linear school timetable to a “quarter” based system, a big change to be sure and the principal apologized for bombarding parents’ inboxes with information. The confusion that all participants must be experiencing should diminish as everyone gets used to the implemented changes as the year progresses.
- The school’s priority has been the health and safety of all school occupants and the first two days of schools involved instruction on health and safety, gathering information via forms, and working this through the homeroom environment. Classes started in earnest the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>. The students have been great and have responded in an impressive fashion, all are wearing masks and cooperating with one another. The majority of students leave the building quickly after their last classes.
- Adjusting to a new school and life under a pandemic is more challenging for the Gr. 8 students. The NFL (New Face Leaders) students in their yellow T shirts met the Gr 8’s in the hallways on the first day to attend their orientation with them, to hand out some small welcome items and to make some connections with them so that the Gr 8’s know they have some older allies in the school who can answer questions and help out. The teachers gave the new students a tour of the school and the student councilors have also reached out to the Gr 8’s so as to help them feel a bit more comfortable in their new surroundings.
- The school staff and councilors recognize that there’s more uncertainty and stress dealing with this year’s school start and want to emphasize that they are all here to connect with and support the DT families with thorough communication by phone, email or in person.
- The teaching staff are dealing with major adjustments this year and the principal hopes that as we head into October that life gets a little easier for the staff.

#### Questions from parent attendees

##### 1) What is the status of extracurricular activities such as school sports?

- Extracurricular activities play a big role in the mental well being of the students. At present, extracurricular activities are on hold; BC School Sports (governing body for athletics) has approved schools to go to Stage 2 of their Return to Sport plan, which means back to some level of activity carried out under health and safety guidelines and restrictions. This is contingent on receiving the District Senior management team’s approval, which is currently in the works. Hopefully soon there will be some athletics allowed. The school will not be allowed to compete against other schools, but the staff’s goal is to enable the DT students to have some “house league” type competitions within the school. Mr. Durnot (Athletic director) is working out details with the other school coaches. For example, cross country running would be an easier activity to socially distance while doing because it’s outdoors vs. eg. basketball
- The principal noted that community-level sports face less stringent health and safety restrictions as school sports do
- All safety procedures will be followed once the green light is given

##### 2) If a case of COVID 19 is discovered at DT how quickly will parents be informed?

- The school will follow direction from Vancouver Coastal Health since the school’s staff are not medical experts. VCH will carry out contact tracing work and once this is completed a letter will be sent to the school, which will then share it with all parents.

Confidentiality restrictions will apply, so no names of those affected will be made public. The principal guessed that the tracing and process would maybe take 1 – 2 days, depending of course on the complexity of the tracing scenario.

- 3) How many students returned this year vis a vis those that chose to home school?
  - The school has just under 1300 students this year, with maybe 10 students who are home schooling. Regardless of which options parents choose for their kids the school wants to respect and support the families who make up the DT community to the best of their ability.
- 4) If I withdraw my child from the school is their enrollment eligibility affected?
  - If parents decide to keep their child at home, for whatever reason, they will not lose their spot in the school as an enrolled student. However, a student who withdraws from school and then returns at a later date might find that their access to specific courses and electives has been impacted by their absence. If this is the case the school will make their best efforts to accommodate the student's needs.
- 5) Can students meet with their grade counselor in person?
  - Yes. Wearing a mask is required. Best to make appointments by email so as to avoid lineups at the counselor's office.
- 6) Do school fees cover scholastic materials?
  - The school fees cover the supply of the planner/agenda book, as well as the student council BBQ and Gr 8 orientation costs. Each course offered has its own required supplemental fees, which are posted on the school website. Examples include Math and science workbooks, Art sketchbooks, required food ingredients for Cooking classes etc. Supplemental fees range from \$5.00 - \$25.00.
- 7) How often are rooms in the school cleaned?
  - The school's custodial staff have been included in the back to school planning protocols and they are excellent workers. High touch areas (door handles, desks used all day) are cleaned twice/day. Some teachers have set up their rooms so that kids aren't sharing their desks over the school day.
- 8) What do you think the PAC's role will be this year?
  - This is a very fluid situation we're in, with things changing on an ongoing basis. For now, as per usual the PAC should concentrate on accessing and distributing the provincial gaming funds to any clubs that put in requests. The school will advise the PAC as changes occur and information is made available.
- 9) Is the school library open?
  - Yes, from morning till after school, and also for use during flex time in the timetable. Students can use the computers there and connect to the internet, as well as using their own devices to connect to the Wi-Fi there
- 10) Masks in the classroom?
  - Regulations concerning mask use in the school come from Vancouver Coastal Health, and at present masks are required to be worn by all occupants in open public areas

such as the hallways. In the classroom, as long as the occupants are socially distanced, it's their individual option whether or not to wear a mask. If cohorts are mixed for an activity then all occupants must wear masks. The principal estimates that 95% of students are choosing to wear masks in the classroom, as are most teachers. Students who are concerned about mask use in their classrooms are free to check in with their counselor to discuss this issue.

11) What are examples of mixing cohorts?

- All Skills classes are run during Flex time and so entail mixing cohorts. Class sizes are restricted to 15 students or less, and masks must be worn.
- The same applies for some of the Special Ed classes

12) What about student GoCards?

- The photographer, Artona, has taken the student ID pictures. The cards take a couple of weeks to be made and then are distributed in the classrooms.

13) Student photo retakes?

- There will be a re-take day; once the date is determined the students will be notified.

14) What will be the grading system used this year?

- Gr. 8 and 9 students will be graded using a proficiency scale (as was used in the past years at elementary schools), which means they will not get letter or percentage grade. Grades 10 through 12 will get letter grades and/or percentages on their report cards.

15) How many washable masks were given to the students?

- Students were given one to start with and will receive another soon once delivery from the school board is made.

16) Are there masks with filter pockets available for the students?

- The masks that the school board supplied to the students do not have filter pockets. If they don't want to use them they are free to use different ones of their own supply. Costco sells the type with filter pockets, as does Noor.

17) Did last year's Gr 12 grads get a copy of the grad ceremony video?

- The grads were sent a link to enable a download of the two hour video. The fees paid to the videographer covered filming and a significant amount of editing.

18) Will students need to complete volunteer hours?

- If a course has a completion requirement that includes volunteer hours, the staff will have to work with the students to work something out. For now, the most important requirement of the school is to keep its community healthy and safe.

### **Additional business**

- The Chair asked for a list of email addresses to be prepared with the names of all who attended tonight's meeting
- *Treasury report* – Altan hasn't had the opportunity yet to review the PAC financials and to create the report. He will have a better picture by next meeting and apologized for

not having more information to present at this time.

- *Co-chairs' message* – Any parents interested in working with the PAC, or who require more information about PAC activities please contact us and let us know how we can help.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:52 pm

**Next Meeting: October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020**