

PAC Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 25th, 2024

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Location: Multipurpose Room, Lord Nelson School

PAC Executive

Emily Lefebvre (EL) Co-Chair;

Tegan Williams (TW) Co-Chair;

Julie Cole (JC), Treasurer;

Sara Osenton (SO), Secretary;

Mike Joe (MJ), Hot Lunch Coordinator;

Sara Hyde (SH), DPAC Rep;

Marlene Cummings (MC), AOWG Rep;

Megan Atkinson (MA), Member at large, Garden Committee Rep;

Taryn Hayes (TH), past Chair

School Representatives

Jason Eng (JE), Principal;

Additional Speakers

Joanna Guyrkovics (JG)

Rachelle Woodman (RW)

ITEM	LEAD	TIME
1. Welcome, Land Acknowledgement and Introductions	EL	6:30-6:35
2. Additions and Approval of Agenda	TW	6:35-6:36
3. Overview of PAC and What we Do <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Focus on communicating what the PAC does, make it more visible. Some discussion around adding PAC information to the school newsletter or creating a stand alone PAC newsletter. Jason said he would give us space in his newsletter.● Call for volunteers for PAC Vice Chair - we have an awesome supportive PAC, which makes this role fairly low key. Please email Tegan or Emily to find out more.	TW	6:36-6:48

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for a new social media rep - Jennica has been our amazing social media rep for the past 4 years. She would love for someone new to step in and take over. Please contact Emily or Tegan if you can help. 		
<p>4. Treasurer’s Report</p> <p>Julie reviewed the budget - please see the attached.</p> <p>There was discussion about the surplus of \$103,000 in the PAC bank account. The surplus is partly from the big fundraising push for the playground back when the school was being built. Not all those funds ended up being needed, as more was covered by the VSB than was expected. Since then, we have continued with some fundraising efforts that has been fairly successful every year. This year, the PAC proposes to continue with the annual fundraising events that are popular (such as hot lunch, apples, Purdy’s and Donald’s card) but the focus this year will be to draw down the surplus. Hot lunch will be run without margin.</p> <p>Here are some of the thoughts regarding the surplus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a raining day fund or lump sum for any unexpected expense that comes up • Make some of our activities “at cost” events, like the canteen at Movie Night, to make these more accessible • Contribute money to make field trips more affordable and more frequent • Donations to other local schools as required (Britannia is raising money for a new playground, for example) • Potential to support the school with specific items if required (repairs of AV system for example) • Increase the yearly stipend for teachers • Fund projects put forth by the teachers <p>All budget requests over \$500 must be approved at a PAC meeting. We have not come to a resolution yet, but we welcome anyone interested in this discussion or those with ideas to fund to come out to PAC meetings or reach out to any PAC member.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the budget - unanimous vote, carried 	<p>JC</p>	<p>6:48-6:56</p>

5. Fundraisers	EL	6:56-7:11
----------------	----	-----------

<p>While the PAC won't be focussing on active fundraising this year, we will run the annual fundraisers that are popular and present a convenience for the community.</p> <p>Here are the fundraisers we will run:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apples ● Donald's ● Purdy's ● Mabel's Labels ● TruEarth and Eco-Collection ● West Coast Seeds (proceeds to the Garden Club) 		
---	--	--

<p>6. Garden Committee update</p> <p>Rachelle provided an overview of the Garden Club activities. The club meets once a month (twice per month in the spring) with classes to provide a 45 minute learning opportunity where the kids and teachers get to garden, sample the foods grown and do a nature-based craft activity. Teachers sign up for the Friday afternoon sessions at their convenience. We usually have two classes per afternoon and we average about 15 afternoons per school year. The club members also care for the garden throughout the year.</p> <p>Fundraising - The club will run the West Coast Seeds fundraiser again (fourth year running), which usually makes about \$800. The Garden Club also writes grants independently of the school or PAC and has raised approximately \$5000 through these efforts over the past 2-3 years. The club also approached the PAC for some funding last year to assist with some planned projects for 2024/2025 (see below). Last year, the club funded the acquisition of the three new VSB garden beds which arrived last April and have been assigned to CR teachers who expressed interest in having a plot.</p> <p>The projects that will be supported this year by the Garden Club with funds and our love and attention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Kindergarten Bear Den</u> - developing a small area near the kindy classrooms at the request of the CR teachers. There will be planters with evergreens added to this corner. Students will also plant spring bulbs. Older classes will create biodegradable “toys” made from natural elements like pinecones and dried flowers, for the kindy students to play with. • <u>Indigenous Plantings in the upper garden</u> - this year we will work to improve the soil in the upper beds and garner support 	<p>RW</p>	<p>7:11-7:13</p>
---	-----------	------------------

<p>to remove some of the prickly bushes that have regrown in the area. The long-term plan is to plant the area with native plants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Chill Zone</u> - the club was approached by some grade 5 students who were looking to create a quiet area. This idea has potential to overlap with some other initiatives planned by the Neurodivergent Pride club. • <u>Indoor gardening</u> - We purchased the supplies to grow plants indoors last year. This year we will attempt growing some plant starts indoors in time for spring time. If it works out, we may hold a plant “sale” with the plants grown by the students. <p>The Garden Club is always looking for volunteers for everything from watering over the summer to assisting with any or all of our many projects or supporting our Friday Garden Club sessions. Please reach out to meganatkinson33@yahoo.com</p>		
<p>7. Hot Lunch</p> <p>Mike gave an overview of hot lunch, now underway for the year. Current provider and use of Munch a Lunch remains the same, as does Friday special lunch offering Providers such as Uncle Fatihs, Sal y Limon, White Spot. These special lunch days, in particular White Spot are high demand days and require more volunteers. We currently have 6-7 regular volunteers but often are not meeting the numbers required. Volunteers are needed between 11:30 and 12:15. In light of this year’s budget priorities, there is little focus on profit for hot lunch, and money made is used to subsidize lunches for families identified as benefitting from lunches provided at no cost.</p>	MJ	7:13-7:18
<p>8. Speakers, Services & Events 2024/2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movie Nights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This year the PAC will host two Movie Nights ○ The first of which is Oct 18. Wallace & Grommet Werewolf will be screened. ○ We still need more volunteers. Two of the three main organizers have children graduating at the end of this school year. It would be useful to mentor new volunteers before then. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In light of budget priorities, Movie Nights will be made more accessible, with no suggested donation amount and concession items sold at cost. ○ Money raised will go to support a local cause. While PAC 	Various	7:18-7:33

has discussed hosting a Movie Night to support		
--	--	--

<p style="text-align: center;">Britannia's Playground fundraising efforts, there was not consensus on if we should give parents more than one option for their donations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Saleema Noon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This year is a Saleema Noon year. This speaker visits the school every other year to offer body/sexual health education for students. ○ Discussion around whether to provide a parent information night for Saleema Noon. This is generally one of the better-attended speaker nights. ● Neurodivergent Pride <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A group of parents have created a small group to build up awareness, love and support around neurodivergence. This group is looking to have some access and use of the PAC announcement board. ○ Discussion about the idea of creating quiet spaces, and how to achieve these, including the possibility of altering lunch schedules. Questions were raised by parents about the possibility of the front of school space but Jason addressed the challenges of supervision in this space. Jason explained the current philosophy of changing process rather than infrastructure to achieve some of these goals. 		
<p>9. AOWG update</p> <p>Marlene updated us on current AOWG events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On Monday Sept 30th, Truth and Reconciliation day there will be an “Orange shirt day” event at Grandview park beginning with a walk to the event leaving from Nelson. Marlene also discussed the current use of the “Walking in Good Relations” board game by students in the school. ● The AOWG is working to invite two of the “Militant Mothers” who fought for safe access to school across train tracks to come speak at Nelson, and to screen a film on their fight, hosted by the film maker Camen, who is a parent at Nelson. <p>The AOWG is currently working to revamp its mission statement. Included in this process is considering what are the priorities for Nelson families.</p> <p>Sara H raised the question of Latino heritage month as a possible topic for next year.</p>	MC	7:33-7:45

<p>10. DPAC update</p> <p>Sara H gave an intro to what DPAC does. Currently there are working groups for facilities, accessible education, transportation (safe routes), Policy and Governance committee, and a Finance and Personnel</p>	SH	7:45-7:48
---	----	-----------

<p>committee. Anyone can join without being on DPAC. Sara will continue to update PAC on DPAC events as they are posted.</p>		
<p>11. Class Reps/Class Parents</p> <p>Sara O updated the current state of class lists. Class lists are distributed once a substantial number of families have signed up for the lists to prevent multiple updates. Tegan raised the question of being added to Whats App lists without consent and Sara clarified that class lists are separate from this, and are excel sheets of parents who have consented to share their info with other class parents.</p> <p>Jason recommended putting a call for the class lists in the next monthly newsletter under PAC announcements/communications.</p>	SO	7:48-7:50

<p>12. Principal's Report</p> <p>Jason's report emphasized the ways in which the school administration and staff are working to develop supports for families. Jason highlighted the difficulties faced in identifying which families need support but that outreach has resulted in building trust and connections in the school community in private and respectful ways to increase food security, and accessibility of support through an equity lens, ensuring that available funds reach families. Jason discussed the funding available through the Student affordability grant which can be used to reduce costs or support but not for food.</p> <p>Jason gave an overview of the start of school logistics which culminated in a "Pretty smooth transition into classrooms." This year there are many combined classes (splits) due to a multitude of factors that influence class composition decisions. There are currently waiting list at every grade level.</p> <p>Jason feels he is growing to understand the role of community here at Nelson and the ways that DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) are built into this community and in practice here everyday. His current priorities include providing leadership opportunities for children, and sourcing new sports jerseys with a new logo, in part voted on by students.</p> <p>Current Professional Development priorities in the school focus on Neurodiverse awareness, and the staff are considering ways to Rethink the environment our students are learning in rather than making infrastructure changes.</p> <p>A second PD priority is considering next steps for student inclusion including bringing in a District staff member to talk about the ways in which Special education has evolved through a provincial lens to better understand how to meet student needs.</p>	<p>JE</p>	<p>7:50-8:05</p>
<p>12. Communications / Other items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GWAC Field Closure Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tegan (PAC co-chair) attended a meeting held by the Grandview-Woodland Area Council regarding the field closures. Two school board trustees and approximately 	<p>TW/EL</p>	<p>7:05-8:10</p>

40 people in attendance. The trustees explained the VSB's position.

- There were several organized volunteer groups offering to carry out maintenance on the fields, such as collecting dog feces, filling holes.
- The consensus in the room was:
 - The field should be open to the public after school hours, including to dogs and their owners
 - If the fields cannot be properly maintained, then the fields should be opened for members of the public and school kids after hours but the use of the area for dogs should be excluded
- To clarify Nelson PAC's role and stance regarding the field closures, we have prepared this statement:

Decisions about school field closures are made and executed solely by the VSB grounds department. In our capacity as a connection point for the parent community, Nelson PAC has fielded many questions on the matter which has resulted in spirited discussions at our regular meetings with split opinions between the benefits of closure to protect and maintain the field versus the right to public access for municipal green space.

There is widespread agreement that the field should be available to the public. However, the tendency to use the field as a dog park presents negative impacts (presence of uncollected dog feces, holes caused by dogs and uncontrolled dogs jumping on children and damaging personal property) that have resulted in a large portion of our community not supporting opening the field. The field is not and has not been a legal dog park at any time.

Currently, the perceived negative impacts of using the field as a dog park supersedes general support for public access. If a suitable remedy to these negative impacts could be found, it is likely that more of the parent community would support opening the field. No suitable solution has been proposed to date.

However, regardless of the PAC communities' opinions, the management of the field is the responsibility of the VSB and decisions around closure will continue to be made by the VSB. The PAC has no authority to make decisions relating to the field.

