



2125 Keating X Rd.
Saanichton BC
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December 2007

Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils Saanich Around the District

Saanich Board of Education held their Annual General Meeting on Monday December 3rd, 2007. Congratulations to MaryLynne Rimer who was acclaimed as Chair of the Board from December 2007 to December 2008 and to Peter Garnham who was acclaimed to Vice-Chair of Board from December 2007 to June 2008. We are very pleased to see their great work will continue on behalf of all of us in Saanich.

COPACS has been provided with an overview of the district's Accountability Contract Transition Plan and its focus on reading, writing, numeracy, social responsibility and graduation successes. Included were some very positive results for Foundation Skills Assessment and DART assessments, with all areas showing improvement. We were pleased to see our district's improvement in the 6-year completion graduation rate, up from 72% in 2006 to 78% in 2007. Adjusting for post-September corrections and removal of international students, whose attendance was brief and not intended to lead to graduation, the Saanich completion rate goes up to 82%. The District is tracking students who are not graduating with the intent to contact those leaving and encourage completion where possible.

Congratulations to Lizanne Chicanot who has been appointed as continuing vice-principal initially assigned to North Saanich Middle School; and to Vijay Pereira who has been appointed as continuing vice-principal assigned to Parkland Secondary School, where he has been serving as term VP for the last 2 years.

Policy Revisions for Saanich Schools

We are still looking for your feedback on policy revisions in the works for Saanich schools. Deadlines are fast approaching so if you would like your feedback included in COPACS response to the Board, please drop a note to Cathy Barber at fcbarber@shaw.ca. If you need another copy of the proposed revisions sent to you, let us know.

Field Trip Policy #3040 – suggested revisions for out of province trips. COPACS members discussed these proposed revisions (attached) and we have noted the following:

- parents agree that field trip approval process should allow for maximum efficiency and speed in order to allow for school groups making plans to have some certainty as soon as possible

- Parents would like to be given summary reports of decisions made about out of province field trip applications
- Parents agree with process for funding waiver process, however, would not want to see district's pulling funding from other areas to accommodate this
- Parents would like to see detailed descriptions of field trip categories in the policy for clear understanding (ie 1AN, 1BN, etc)

We will be forwarding our responses to the Board for the December 14th deadline – if you have any other comments, please let us know by December 13th latest.

Programs of Choice Policy #3060 – the addition of provisions around Specialty Academies will be going to the January Board meeting – please give us your feedback no later than January 5th. These proposed revisions were discussed at December's COPACS meeting and comments to date are:

- regarding fee waivers and bursary opportunities for students, we would like to ensure that funding is not coming from district and school budgets thereby affecting all students
- parents are generally in favor of offering specialty academies in our school district

Around the Province

Satisfaction Surveys to be administered in early 2008 for students in grades 4, 7, 10 and 12, their parents and all school staff.

First Nations Education Act had first reading in the legislature on Nov 22nd. This Bill will allow on-reserve First Nations schools to have their own system of K-12 education based on provincial curriculum learning outcomes.

Red Cross Anti-bullying Video Contest – to encourage bystanders to intervene when they see bullying, Red Cross has launched a contest for a 30 second video public service announcement produced by amateurs. Groups and individuals may enter – all details on their website at www.redcross.ca

Ministry seeking input on Physical Education – BC Ed Ministry is interested in receiving feedback on the Physical Education 8 to 10 Draft (2007) from education and community partners. Please feel free to go to this link if interested in providing feedback. <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/drafts/welcome.htm>

Manual of School Law has been distributed to all schools and district offices, containing a collection of legislation pertaining to K-12 schools, students and teachers.

COPACS Clips -December 2007

Highlights of December General Meeting

Saanich Teachers Association President, Ken Babcock, reported that FSA material is being distributed to parents in Sooke and Victoria districts, however, Saanich has chosen not to send material home with students. The biggest challenge for teachers in Saanich is the class size and composition numbers, particularly in secondary schools. Parents expressed concern to Ken about the shortage of Educational Assistants in Saanich. We seem to be losing EA's to other districts offering more competitive salaries.

Attendees to the recent BCCPAC Fall Conference reported on their experiences and workshops attended. Comments on main platform speaker, Barbara Coloroso, were that she was well worth seeing. Another session of great interest was the one on Internet Crime. Parents were also shown an overview of the LearnNow BC website and feedback was that it didn't seem to be worth the money to launch this website which is a portal to other websites. Comments about the StrongStart centers that were reported on at the Conference were that they maintain a "Learn and Play" culture and not be allowed to evolve into formalized learning culture. Thank you to those parents who took time to attend the Conference – we hope that you will share your experience with your school communities. Please have your PACs submit to COPACS a request to reimburse them 50% of the fee (up to 2 parents from each school).

The discussion topic for November's meeting was around proposed revisions of policies coming to January's meeting as reported on previous page. In addition, parents discussed the option of a policy specific to sexual preference harassment and felt this was more than covered in existing district policies on Human Rights, Discrimination and Harassment and wasn't needed.

Motion made and passed to have COPACS support the 3rd Annual South Vancouver Island Parent Conference by sending a cheque in the amount of \$500 towards costs from the District Parent Involvement Fund. Sooke and Saanich are working with Victoria District to plan this parent education opportunity scheduled for Saturday, February 23, 2008. Full details to be announced – mark your calendars now as you don't want to miss it!

Motion made and carried to send a letter to the Minister of Education to express our concerns about mid-year funding changes that had been announced to secondary funding in October. This letter has been sent and a copy is attached for your information.

As a result of a motion made in November's COPACS meeting, a letter has been sent to the district outlining parents concerns about hand washing facilities offered students and staff asking that they be upgraded to meet the VIHA safe hand-washing standards. A copy is attached to this newsletter.

New COPACS Vice-President Elected

Christmas came early for COPACS as we have a newly elected Vice-President, Barb Lund. Many of you may already know Barb from her work in the District with Healthy Schools. We are pleased to have Barb join our team and look forward to her continued support of public education in Saanich.

Comprehensive School Health Update

COPACS attended a recent Healthy Schools Steering Committee meeting where representatives from most of our schools in the District outlined their activities in this area. Initiatives taking place in schools include Fruit & Veggie programs, the Eat Well-Get Moving challenge, breakfast programs, health fairs, new menu variations, popcorn days, walking days, Jump Rope for Heart, Hip Hop Wednesdays, Recycling Programs, Friends program, monthly food challenges, and many many more.

If you want to get going on some new healthy schools programs, talk to your neighboring schools or check out the resources available on the websites below:

www.actionschoolsbc.ca
www.dashbc.org
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/hsnetwork/

Supporting Parent Leadership Seminar Series

It gives us great pleasure to announce that a candidate has been chosen from Saanich to complete this BCCPAC program and she is, Nancy Borden. Nancy will complete four training sessions over the next year and a half with other parents chosen from around BC. Upon completion, we look forward to having Nancy support the Saanich learning community in her new role with BCCPAC. Congratulations Nancy!

Second Annual Parent Congress

Parents from around BC are invited to apply for attendance at the Second Annual Parent Congress being held by the Ministry of Education on January 28, 2008 in Vancouver. Seating is limited so applicants will be chosen at random. Please visit the website at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apc/ and complete your application by December 21st, 2007. Share your vision for the future of education along with other parents from all over BC.

Dates to Remember

Jan 10 COPACS General Meeting – DRC/Keating 7:00 pm
Jan 16 Public Board Meeting – 8:00 pm
Jan 28 Ministry of Education Parent Congress - Vancouver
Feb 23 South Vanc Island Parent Conference – Full Day

COPACS Executive 2007-2008

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