



2125 Keating X Road, Saanichton, B.C. V8M 2A5

CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS OF SAANICH

February 2007

Saanich District (63) Report on School Fees and Other Related Issues Survey

The Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils of Saanich (COPACS) was one of 18 DPACS in British Columbia that collectively surveyed parents on the school fees issue. Saanich had 442 parent responses with 139 adding commentary to their numbered.

We would like to acknowledge the Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils along with the other participating districts for their collaboration and guidance:

Comox Valley DPAC	Fort Nelson DPAC	Kamloops/Thompson DPAC
Kootenay Lake DPAC	Langley DPAC	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows DPAC
Richmond DPAC	Saanich DPAC	Sooke DPAC
Vancouver DPAC	Victoria DPAC	North Okanagan-Shuswap
Abbotsford	Burnaby	Delta
North Vancouver	Howe Sound	Coquitlam

The purpose of the survey was to obtain parents' input on questions around such things as what is considered "core" education and what are appropriate funding sources for public education?

This report summarizes the findings of the Saanich District responses. We have also agreed to allow our district results to be included in an overall analysis of the responses being done under the guidance of the University of Victoria.

Demographics of the Respondents

- Parents across all grades responded to this survey with 74% in elementary grades, 32% in middle school and 26% in secondary.
- 97% of the respondents have children in public school with 3% having children in private school.
- 90% of those responding said they were two-parent families.
- 38% of the respondents have served on a PAC or SPC.
- 408 people responded to family income question and 60% show a household income of \$70,000 or greater.

Public Education

Our results show that parents (98%) strongly believe that the public education system should provide every student with the opportunity to develop his/her own full potential. In addition, 97% responded that schools should be places where every child has access to opportunities regardless of family income or capacity.

74% of parents expect to pay for enhancements to their children's public education experience, however, 56% feel it is appropriate for government to fully fund programs of choice. 83% of respondents feel the Ministry of Education should cover the fees that can no longer be charged due to the Supreme Court ruling.

Other responses show that parents favor having input into the school fee amounts (82%) and that one school fee charged at the beginning of the year makes more sense than smaller amounts throughout the year (72%).

Parent fundraising is an acceptable alternative to paying school fees (65%), however, fundraising should NOT be increased to replace the previously collected school fees (84%). A surprising result showed that 57% of the 404 parents responding to the question on corporate sponsorship replied that it is an appropriate way to raise funds for a school.

Equity and Opportunity

61% of parents responding feel that all students are now able to take advantage of "programs of choice" that our schools now offer and a strong 93% of parents feel that specialty programs such as sports academies and apprenticeships are critical to keeping students in school.

83% of the 394 parents responding on this believe that the existing practice of waiving fees for those who can't afford them ensures equity for all students, although 88% feel that families will pay school fees even when they can't afford them.

81% of parents believe that increased reliance on parent fundraising will lead to greater inequalities in our public education system and 70% of parents do not agree that the prohibition on school fees will lead to a more equitable education system.

Parent Involvement

The majority of parents responding (64%) disagree that spending too much time on fundraising results in reduced time with their families. 61% of parents responding feel that increased fundraising shifts "advisory" capacity away from PACs. A strong 96% feel that all school fees should be accounted for and parents should have access to financial information related to resulting expenditures.

Core Public Education

80% or more of Saanich's survey respondents indicate that core education includes:

- Fine Arts (art, drama, music, etc.) 85%
- Industrial Arts (shop, mechanics, woodwork, etc) 81%
- Technology (computer programming, keyboarding, etc) 93%
- Physical Education 90%
- Textbooks 95% – Course Workbooks 93%
- Deposits for Lockers, textbooks 85%
- Educational Field Trips (science exhibits, etc) 81%
- Trip to skating, bowling, swimming as part of PE 93%
- Library Books 95% - AV Equipment 93% - tools for apprenticeships 93%

School Fees

80% or more feel that schools fees should NOT be charged for items such as:

- Technology, textbooks, course workbook, field trips to skating rinks, swimming pools, computers, library books, Audio Visual equipment, tools for secondary apprenticeships

On the question of what the PAC should pay for, less than 30% in almost all areas feel that PACs should NOT be funding any of the expenditures for resources, field trips, specialty programs, safety items, technology, language immersion programs, playground equipment, etc. Interesting results considering that many PACs have had a history of assisting with funding many of these items.

We want to thank all the parents who took the time to respond to this survey. It was a great venue for initiating conversations and soliciting parent feedback on this important topic.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Barber, President
Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils of Saanich
March 1st, 2007