

PAC Meeting October 12, 2023

(25 people present - via Zoom)

1. Call to Order, Welcome, President's Remarks

2. Treasurer's Report

We were approved for a total of \$4720 from Gaming.

Current Balance: \$19,044.76 in main account

\$5,658.56 in gaming account

Total funds as of today = \$24,703.32

3. Teacher Funding

Discussion regarding teacher funding:

- Right now if any teacher or staff member wants to access our funds for a project etc, we have an online form they can fill out to apply. If it is under \$200 it goes to Executive to discuss and approve, if it is over \$200 then it goes to the general membership for approval.
- We need to be able to track spending for a variety of reasons, including tracking shortfalls of VSB funding by DPAC.

There are items PAC should not pay for (eg. automatic accessible doors)

There is a grey area (eg. art supplies - VSB says we have enough, teachers say we do not)

There are items we will clearly pay for (eg. hockey net for gym, white boards for Grade 1 classroom)

Teachers need things that are neither school supplies nor learning resources.

Each teacher gets a budget of \$350 to \$400 from VSB in May and they put in a bulk order for items they will need for the next year. (Previous teacher would order for new teachers, new division teachers order in September)

Proposal to change the way we hand out money to teachers. Currently they fill out the online request form and we approve or deny it. There is a suggestion to move towards a structure where every teacher and staff member would be given a budget and they could access this by simply providing receipts.

Melisa motioned to vote on proposal, Lisa seconded

16/20 agree to keep as is. We will stay with the online form model we currently use.

New Funding Requests -

- Lisa Pacheco, the new counsellor, put in a funding request for items totalling \$450. This includes lighting (lamp and twinkle lights), guided breathing lamp, privacy window clings, games (Connect 4, Sorry, SEL games, card games like UNO, Exploding Kittens, Sleeping

Queens and cooperative games like The Fairy Game, Blue Orange Games), arts and craft supplies, wipeable beanbag chair (for sanitary reasons).

Approved with 95% yes - we will ask her to first reach out to the community for some of the requested items such as games, fairy lights and furniture.

- Lion Dance - This lion dance performance has been suggested to us by the VSB. They are now taking bookings for Lunar New Year 2024. The cost is \$150 for an assembly and parents would be invited.

Motion passed with 95% approval.

4. Clarification of Lunch Policies

We used to have a lunch room where all the students ate and we no longer have it and some questions have arisen.

Will there be a return to the lunch room?

Technically we could return as the YMCA only rents the room for the morning and after school, but we will not for the near future. It was a tough, uncomfortable place to eat. There were issues with kids not eating due to excitement and it was very chaotic. There were only 3 supervision aids to control the entire room.

Now with eating in classrooms, some teachers do things like question of the day (history, ethics), some do music appreciation. They've found that more kids eat more of their lunch and there are less behaviour issues. The intention is to include something that is part of the curriculum during the eating of lunch.

What is compost/garbage situation for kids eating outside?

Jonathan would like to have zero eating outside because in the last couple of weeks he's had three community members call regarding coyotes - if we keep having food waste outside, it attracts small animals who then attract coyotes. We do have multiple compost bins inside - there should be approximately one bin per three classrooms.

Would we, as parents and caregivers, be comfortable having our kids start to do Litter Duty as a class?

This could help teach about the environment and being mindful about littering. In the past they have had each class have a small garbage bin that is hung on door of classroom so each week each class knows who is on duty. It is important to note that this is never punitive. We can purchase a class set of tongs and buckets. The class of the week would go out once a day, pick up litter and bring it back. This could be part of teaching kids that the school belongs to them and we take care of our house.

Question re safety - drug paraphernalia etc. This needs to be embedded. Jonathan says they would do an educational assembly before starting the initiative this would also include condoms, needles, feces as things you don't touch with tongs (or without) - tell an adult. They will show photos and tell kids that these items, among other things, are dangerous.

What kind of sweep happens on the school grounds every day?

On-site supervision begins at 8:40 and alternates between teachers and staff members. They walk the hallways inside so that there if there is a problem or emergency, kids could find an adult. The kids all recognize the teachers/staff therefore no identifying attire is worn.

85% yes vote to start having weekly litter duty

5. Child Minding at In-Person PAC Meetings

Jay from the YMCA Before and After School Program has accepted this position. If he is not available someone from his staff will replace him. He can watch between 15 and 20 kids at a time.

We will pay him \$30/hour for two hours per meeting (5:45 to 7:45). There are four in-person meetings left this year so this will cost us \$240.

Jonathan and Jay have both agreed that if Grade 7 children would like to volunteer, they will be welcome.

The Child-Minding will take place in the gym.

94% voted yes to go ahead with the plan.

6. Other Items for Discussion

1. Ariella is our **DPAC** Representative. You can reach her directly with any concerns, comments and questions at dpac-rep@mtp-pac.ca.
2. **Toque and Glove Drive** - our school has a dedicated teacher resource (Monique) who provides support to families who need it (helps them access services, kids get included in the lunch program, helps them with winter clothing among other things). There are approximately 20 families who currently receive support. Communication regarding this initiative will be sent out via PAC mailing list.

3. MTP FIDO update

They, along with Jonathan, will work on giving our current dog signs some TLC. The issue of off-leash dogs has been raised via DPAC to the Health and Safety working group. There was an issue on school grounds a few weeks ago with a dog owner allowing their dog to roam freely on the playground, resulting in a minor confrontation. The committee wants signage extended to the playground area. We may need to put up more signs. The language could be stronger on the signs.

They are investigating beginning a social media campaign.

They will talk to Jonathan regarding getting the school board more engaged with this ongoing problem.

4. Events and Fundraising subcommittee

They are working on the Holiday Craft Market (which raised over \$2000 last year). Feedback was that signage was terrible and they needed more food. They'd like to add a lunch element (hot dogs, burgers) and a banner to advertise.

They are asking for a budget of \$500 to spend on food and a banner.

100% approved

7. Principal's report

Jonathan is required to inform PAC every year about the Code of Conduct. This year it has been standardized with similar language for all schools. The code applies to the school and school-sponsored/organized activities.

You can find the Code of Conduct here: <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/mount-pleasant/page/3285/code-of-conduct> (you will need to copy and paste as these minutes are in pdf format).

Ask the Principal

When will the website be updated with correct Division numbers and teachers' names?

It has now been updated.

Why are the gates closed during morning drop-off? Our school needs more than one easy access point. There is not enough space for parents to park around the school to drop off their kids. Today the police were talking to parents who had parked illegally near the main entrance. When the gates were open, many parents dropped off their kids on the east and south sides of the school. Also, many families are still walking down the dangerous alley and many kids are sneaking through the fence while their parents wait on the other side. This needs to change

When can we re-open the gate on the east side of the school yard? Families and kids need safe and easy access to the school. Their access should be the #1 priority.

In the morning we don't want to open the gates due to commingling with dogs, don't want to get the community used to this being a thoroughfare. There is also no one who could be tasked with this job (unlocking and locking the gate) every day.

Discussion:

Families are currently walking down the alley to school which is not safe. Multiple people are climbing the fence, multiple people are encouraging their kids to squeeze through the fence. The closed gate does not seem to actually be deterring dogs. The owners are just walking around to access the field.

The gate being open created a lot of issues with dogs, e-bikes, scooters and strangers coming through the school ground. Jonathan cannot prevent parents from choosing to walk down the unsafe alley. He would not recommend it, but cannot force them to do anything.

Why don't the kids change into gym strip before gym? It is sometimes tough for them to do gym in the clothes they wear to school, especially during the winter. Are there not changerooms in the gym?

This has not been done this for years in Vancouver - there is no requirement for kids to wear special clothes for gym class. That being said, if you think your child needs to change for gym, let Jonathan and your teacher know and they can make this accommodation. It would be the child's choice.

Why is there not sufficient support for students with special needs? There is a student in my child's class who needs one on one support. When the SSW takes their breaks, the teacher needs to cover. This means that one hour a day, the class is without a teacher. Often the child runs outside and the teacher has to follow, so the class is literally left on their own. This is not acceptable. The school needs to effectively operate and you should

be advocating for this support.

Depending on a child's disability there are four types of funding. The money goes to district and they disperse it. Specific kids generate the money but this does not mean that they actually receive the money. The VSB looks at all schools, then takes the money and distributes it as they see fit. Jonathan gets allocated a certain number of SSA's, then he must decide on distribution.

Safety is first, followed by education. So the SSA;s go to classrooms with safety risks first, then he is able to look at learning needs. Each Educational Assistant gets two 15 minute breaks plus lunch. Sometimes there simply isn't coverage. Usually the teachers organize independent activities while SSA's take their breaks. There have been a few runners lately and an adult has to run after them.

From DPAC - relative to other schools we have not had cuts in SSAs - there seems to be a lack of transparency for how the district allocates the funding. How can we advocate for more support?

There are not enough substitute SSA's for coverage due to illness. We have seven now and last year we had nine. Two children with intense special needs have left the school.

With our open area classrooms, and all primary classrooms having doors that open to the outside, and kids with sensory issues we may have a need for more SSA's

Meeting Adjourned.