

Tupper PAC Meeting

January 14th, 2021 7:01 pm

Location: Remote via ZOOM

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In attendance:

- Co-Chairs: Christy Thomas & Mary Levitan
- Co-Treasurer: Angela Crampton
- Acting Secretary (Jan 14): Daryl Hutchings
- Members at Large: Daryl Hutchings, June Adamson, Andrea Sinclair, Andrea Mitchell, Jacqui Thomas
- Other PAC Members in Attendance: Libby Taylor, Rachel Sanders, Danielle Goldsmith, Libby Taylor
- Also present: Jason Lauzon, Dara Hendren

Apologies:

Avri Snitz, Dawn Dunkerley, Vira Jackson, Bronwyn Carrodus

Agenda:

- 7:00 - 7:10 Introductions, Welcome and Aboriginal Acknowledgement – Christy

Meeting called to order at 19:02. Welcome and land acknowledgement took place according to our usual practice.

- 7:10 - 7:15 Review of November 12 2020 Minutes & Vote to Accept as Published

Andrea S moved acceptance, Daryl seconded; approval carried.

- 7:15 - 7:20 PAC Positions Still to be Filled

- Co-Secretary (With Dawn Dunkerley)

Daryl volunteered; Christy proposed and Mary seconded; carried.

- DPAC Representative

There were no volunteers for this position.

- 7:20 - 7:45 Principal's Report and questions – Jason Lauzon

Jason began at 19:08. He feels very good about the school's general response to Covid, despite having a relatively high number of infections. Following every letter that goes out, Jason calls an "exposure meeting" for staff.

On November 27th the school had an anti-racism Pro-D day which was very successful. The Board is doing its best to equip parents to continue that conversation. Pro-D days will continue, with a roster of experts making their abilities available.

Jason thanks PAC and Dara for coordinating the funding.

Timescales this year are very compressed: ten-month courses being delivered in ten weeks. No one signed up for this, and it stresses everyone, but needs must in Academic Q3 and Q4.

Homework club successfully started yesterday.

Susanne Hoffman, the superintendent, has reached out to Jason to represent the school at a conference with the Deputy Minister on school management under Covid. He appeals for any messages we'd like him to pass on.

Jason really appreciates the feedback that parents give. He hopes we had a chance to fill in the Parent Survey that was recently circulated; there are already going to be "tweaks" and "refinements" in the school's scheduling based on that. There is ongoing work to be done on this, on the basis of occasional updating subsequent to what was originally devised at short notice and presented to the Ministry. The forthcoming changes will come to pass around January 20th.

Questions followed at 19:22.

- Government Funding for Schools - have those funds been received and how have they been earmarked?

Funds were given to schools in November, with some "parameters" - the money in fact was devoted to technology acquisition (e.g. laptops). Jason will follow up as to whether the money has spent yet, and will report back to us. Andrea S supplemented Jason's report from her work on the Steering Committee, to the effect that the \$12M money (or the \$10M that wasn't held back) was principally devoted to hiring, mental health supports, health-and-safety, before- and after-school care. There are a further \$21M that remains to be released - the question is will it be divided as it was last time. The government requires all that money to be spent during this academic year.

Christy asked whether there has any person-to-person transmission of Covid within the school? The answer is: not as far as anyone knows (including Coastal Health, who call Jason periodically). At Tupper, there have been 11 cases but no transmission on school grounds.

Christy asked how the Homework Club came about? Jason said it was a result of parent voice, passed on by him to the various players on staff.

- Any update on the discussion of moving to one week intervals for in-person learning?

This was raised at our last meeting; Jason and Mary think it would be premature to discuss it at this point, pending forthcoming guidance from the District. Christy urged that the teachers continue to check in on vulnerable youngsters, as they have been doing. Mary asked: maybe the ten-week semester program is not sustainable except as a response to the present emergency?

- Grad Update?

There's nothing new to report here. A booking has been made at the Chan Centre in case we're able to use it. Some former students fondly recall graduating at their own schools; only over the last twenty years have grander events become the fashion. But compliance with Provincial Health directives around gatherings is not negotiable.

Danielle asked whether parents could organize Covid-friendly, non-group events for our grad kids that could be supported by (though not held at) the school. Snowshoeing? A scavenger hunt? Jason liked the idea but has concerns about the school's liability in the event that it is seen to "sanction" events that turn out to be problematic in terms of health regulations.

Christy asked who was on the school grad committee and Jason listed the members. Jason would like to improve parent participation on the grad committee, and he will take that back to the committee itself.

- 7:45 - 7:55 Teacher's Report - Dara Hendren

Dara started at 19:54. She is a parent and sympathizes with our concerns about student stress; she'd like us to encourage our children to reach out to their teachers in times of difficulty.

- Health & Safety Update

Teachers are asking the Province to mandate mask usage in classrooms. Despite claims that some younger ages are less susceptible to Covid illness, teachers are sceptical and would like a blanket mandate requiring masks in class.

Use of the Library and Resource Rooms by children on Flex Time who need to use the space to do homework, sit quizzes, perform plays and so forth without distractions has been quite successful and is being encouraged. Jason thinks the definition of Flex Time needs to be clarified: Flex Time is instructional time and should be used for quality instruction. The prevailing sense of what Flex Time is unfortunately leads to the students who don't need it being the ones to turn up for it, while those who need it avoid it as a waste of time.

On the subject of technology, Dara and other teachers would rather have students work on full laptop keyboards rather than smartphone keyboards.

- 7:55 - 8:05 Treasurer's Report - Angela

Started at 20:03. Angela had not prepared a formal report, but emphasized the decisions at the last meeting and the email discussion afterward; there is no other news. Christy reported that the Hampers we agreed to fund were well received. Jason thanked us for the Staff Appreciation event last June.

- 8:05 - 8:15 Fundraiser for Counselling Department Update - Christy

Started at 20:06. Christy doesn't have an exact amount received because of the way the gift cards arrive piecemeal, but the Counselling Department are very pleased with the number that arrived and the way they were therefore able to help families who need it. Christy thanked the Counselling Department for their recent presentation of mental-health resources from jack.org.

- 8:15 - 8:25 New Business?

Started at 20:10.

- June highlighted that our AGM is scheduled for May and we'll need to think about PAC and executive membership - especially for comms after June herself is no longer on the PAC after her child graduates.
- Christy would also like us to consider "putting our thinking caps on" as regards conceiving a "big idea" around springtime student celebrations.
- Andrea S suggested we consider postponing the AGM to September.
- Libby asked about Grade 8 Camp? It didn't happen last year due to Covid; but possibly we could come up with something for this coming September. On the other hand, we did have a strong Link Crew and that was very successful. The intention is to book a venue for Grade 8 Camp and do our best to make it happen. Dara suggested having a belated Grade 8 Camp in spring of 2022; Christy proposed putting Grade 8/9 Camp on the agenda for our meeting in February and that was well received.
- 8:25 Motion to Adjourn

Moved at 20:21.

Thank you for coming, please join us for our next meetings! All meetings start at: 7:00 PM

- Thursday, February 11
- Thursday, April 8
- Thursday, May 13 – AGM & PAC Elections
- Staff Appreciation Breakfast: Target Early June Date TBD