



SD70 PACIFIC RIM BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC MINUTES
5:00 pm – October 13, 2020
Administration Office – Port Alberni

Trustees P. Craig, S. Leslie, J. Bennie, L. Ransom, R. Buchanan, C. Watts (via MS teams)
Administration: G. Smyth, B. Witte, L. Cheetham
P&VP: D. Maher

Call to Order – 5:04 pm Trustee Craig in the Chair.

Trustee Craig acknowledged the Tseshaht and Hupacasath people on whose territory we live, work and learn.

Questions/Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Leslie and seconded by Trustee Watts that the Agenda of October 13, 2020 be approved.

CARRIED

Conflict of Interest Declaration – Nil

1.0 Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Trustee Buchanan and seconded by Trustee Watts that the minutes of September 15, 2020 be approved.

CARRIED

2.0 Announcements of the Chair

- Trustee Craig announced that the Order in Council regarding the District name change to SD70 Pacific Rim has been approved.

3.0 Good News from the Schools

- Trustee Craig highlighted a poster highlighting the timeline of the Alberni Residential School that was created by the Indigenous Dept at EALC.

4.0 Trustee Statements

- Trustee Buchanan attended a EALC presentation at the Harbour Quay.
- Trustee Craig attended a Learning Council meeting on October 10th.

5.0 Petitions/Delegations/Presentations

5.1 Bamfield Community School Association – *Sally Mole*

6.0 Staff Reports

6.1 Superintendent’s Report

The Superintendent provided his monthly report – *attached*.

6.2 Enrolment

The Superintendent reported on the recent 1701 submission which resulted in a \$1M shortfall due to a decline in enrollment. The report showed a decrease of 230 classroom students with a 125 student increase in the DL program. Enrollment will be reviewed again the end of October.

6.3 Executive Compensation Report

The Secretary-Treasurer presented the PSEC Executive Compensation Report for 2019/20.

6.4 Expenditures for September 2020

Moved by Trustee Buchanan and seconded by Trustee Leslie that the expenditures for the month of September 2020 be approved as follows:

Description	September
Supplies and Services	\$1,296,633.12
Salaries and Benefits	\$2,459,523.47
	\$3,756,156.59

CARRIED

7.0 Executive Committee Reports

7.1 October 7, 2020.

8.0 Unfinished Business/New Business

8.1 Air Quality Council

Trustee Buchanan attended a recent meeting of the Air Quality Control committee where she was asked to investigate the possibility of using district sites as a shelter for ESW workers during wildfires. Ms. Buchanan will pursue more details regarding the request.

9.0 Policy Development - Nil

10.0 Correspondence – Action Required - Nil

11.0 Correspondence – For Information

- 11.1 copy of the Ha-Shilth-Sa News dated September 24, 2020.
- 11.2 copy of the Westerly News dated September 30, 2020.

12.0 Board Committees - Nil

13.0 Internal District Committees

- 13.1 DPAC – *Trustee Craig*

14.0 External or Community Committees

- 14.1 BCSTA/VISTA – *Trustee Craig*

Moved by Trustee Ransom and seconded by Trustee Buchanan that the Board support Trustee Ransom in bringing forward a motion to Provincial Council asking that MoE Capital Funding include outdoor learning/play structures.

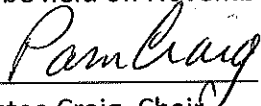
CARRIED

- 14.2 Port Alberni Museum & Heritage Commission – *Trustee Craig*

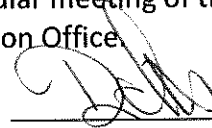
Audience Question Period

- CUPE Vice President Andrew Schneider asked for clarification on the budget process to which Mr. Smyth replied.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 6:13pm. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on November 10, 2020 at 4:00pm at the Administration Office.



Trustee Craig, Chair



L. Cheetham, Secretary-Treasurer



COVID19 Exposure at ADSS

It is important to offer some insight and reflection on the COVID19 exposure at ADSS and to express my gratitude to those involved in SD70's response. While there was a bit of chatter on social media that suggested SD70 knew much earlier than it acted and that communication was insufficient regarding the extent of the exposure, I want to be clear that we first learned of the exposure on the afternoon of Saturday, October 3rd and within 24 hours we had worked with health officials to complete the contact tracing and issue a notice to ADSS parents and staff. It is unfortunate and a bit problematic that some people made social media posts before our notice was issued but we are bound by and respectful of our privacy requirements. We have debriefed with Island Health about how we can be clearer in our communication in any future exposure but messaging is difficult when the process of confirming someone has not been exposed might unwittingly identify someone who has been exposed. Our intent is to be as open, specific, and transparent as possible but there are protocols we must follow.

ADSS Principal Rob Souther and I jointly issued a follow up letter to parents last week and I've attached the text of this message below (my emphasis added):

*This letter is a follow up to the October 4th correspondence alerting you to the positive COVID-19 test for a member of our school community. **We received confirmation yesterday afternoon from Island Health that the period of quarantine/self-isolation has ended for students and staff identified as possible contacts of the individual who tested positive. Island Health also confirms no additional cases were identified during the period of quarantine/self-isolation and there has been no transmission of COVID-19 in our school. We would also like to correct the rumours and misinformation posted on social media and to be clear this was an isolated, individual case that was dealt with by the individual, Island Health and SD70 exactly as it should have been. The choice of the individual not to come to school upon onset of symptoms, the follow through with COVID-19 testing, and the immediate response of Island Health and SD70 upon receipt of the positive test result happened exactly as was set out in the BC Centre for Disease Control's protocols. While we recognize and respect the deep levels of concern and fear associated with COVID-19 and schools, we continue to work diligently to create and maintain a safe environment in our school. We are confident in the systems and protocols that have been put in place to minimize the impact of COVID-19 should a member of our school community come in contact with the virus, and trust that members of our school community will continue to be diligent and committed to proper personal health and safety practices.***

In short, we did quite well given the circumstances and the best case scenario – no further illness, no school transmission, students and staff back to school – was realized. Thanks to all those whose weekend abruptly ended around 400 pm that Saturday afternoon.

COVID19 Protocols

As noted in blue above, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of individuals and communities being committed to following recommended health and safety practices to minimize and hopefully eliminate COVID19 transmission. There are a lot of rules, expectations and protocols that guide our behavior yet I sometimes worry that a focus on 'enforcement' obscures the real goal of voluntary commitment. To this end, it remains one of our primary goals to educate students about simple health and safety practices and to model behaviours that are important both during and after our current pandemic. I think we're doing a good job in schools and I hope we remain driven more by commitment than compliance, but we need to constantly remind ourselves to be vigilant in our efforts. Consider it part of our Personal and Social core competencies and a lesson about one's contribution to community.

Part of the reason for highlighting personal commitment relates to wearing masks. Generally, masks are neither recommended nor required in school settings, and there are only a few situations where we expect staff and students to don approved masks. We know wearing a mask might be strange or uncomfortable and have heard from those claim it's an infringement on their rights and freedoms, but where masks are required by BCCDC guidelines we will expect masks will be worn. It's a requirement for secondary students riding a school bus and part of the expectation in hallway/common areas in secondary schools, and it would be extremely unnecessary and unfortunate that non-compliance might result in students forfeiting their right to ride a school bus or attend school.

Home Support Program nearing October 30 review date

The first month of school has seen a small number of students delay their return to regular classrooms based on personal/family health and safety reasons. Largely, these families sought 'a little more time' to see how schools would operate before sending their child back to school. To help these families, a short-term Home Support program was created to connect learners to their classroom and their school while they transitioned back to regular instruction.

The Home Support option was never intended to be a permanent "fourth option" under Stage 2 Restart Plans, and a large number of students participating in this program have since returned to regular classrooms. Staffing is in place in most schools through October 30th at which time SD70 will reassess need and, based on current numbers, likely bring the Home Support option to a close. This means that as of November 2, 2020, then, the majority of these learners will likely be back in regular classes or moving to a Distributed Learning or Homeschooling option. On the West Coast, Home Support/Outreach offered to on-reserve learners will continue through January and discussions are ongoing regarding the Home Support program.

What's "normal" in the 2020/21 school year?

I also want to acknowledge that while we are back in session, I am under no illusion that we're back to normal. We're not, and it won't be anywhere near normal until we have all our students back in class, mixing on the playgrounds at lunch and recess, and getting back to many of the non-classroom activities that complete the schooling experience for students and staff. We're currently looking at how we expand access to spaces in our schools, exploring school activities and field trips, and awaiting guidance on issues like school sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities, hopeful that COVID19 circumstances improve enough to make these things happen. Until then, I remain grateful for the work of school staff to support students and to normalize their school experience as much as possible, and note the other things will happen only when and if they are approved under BCCDC and Ministry of Education guidelines.

We all lament the absence of many activities and experiences that enrich a student's school experience, and it is tough to say "no" to many fun, schoolwide activities and events because they don't fit under current COVID19 protocols. But it is for now, not forever, and we continue to be focused on finding the best way to group and teach students within current Health and Safety expectations. It's fair to assume, however, that a lot of activities and events that we take for granted are unlikely to happen or will happen in different ways this year. We're working on finding ways to make the other fun stuff happen, but COVID19 will determine what does or does not happen.