

NVPAC General Meeting APPROVED MINUTES

Thursday, November 20, 2008

7:00pm LMCC Meeting Room B1/B2

Chair: Lisa Cartwright

NVPAC In Attendance: Lisa Cartwright, Franci Stratton, Karen Stewart, Leslie Uhlenbruck, David Whitehead, Sonya Klassen, Susan Corcoran

In Attendance: Kelsey Hine, Christy Taylor, Kristin McNulty, Bruce Crowe, Rick Burns, Victoria Miles, Ernie Filzviser, Marlene Warner, Todd Dea, Mary Charleson, Christina Medland, Jennifer Grondin, Kelly Jenner, Concetta DiFrancesco, Jo Woronchak, Lynn Johnsen, Cathy Floe, Jill Joyce, Sylvia Geilissen, Michael Ouchi, Kathy Palfy, Elena Grant, Carolyn Warner, Sandra Bridgeman, Robyn Crisanti, Wendy Lawson, Leah Thomson

Schools Represented: Dorothy Lynas, Capilano, Larson, Carisbrooke, Sherwood Park Fromme, Upper Lynn, Handsworth, Ridgeway Annex, Seymour Heights, Plymouth, Braemar, Boundary, Eastview, Canyon Heights, Argyle, Cleveland, Montroyal, Lymour, Ross Road, Highlands

A. FORMAL BUSINESS

1. Call to Order and Welcome at 7:15pm
2. Approval of Agenda: Motion David Whitehead, second Leslie Uhlenbruck, motion carried
3. Approval of Minutes from Oct23'08 General Meeting
4. Introductions – attending & NVPAC
5. Board of Education – welcome to our new trustees in attendance Franci Stratton & Jane Thornthwaite; thanks to those retiring
6. Correspondence: Parent Bruce Crowe (mbcr41@shaw.ca) briefly spoke on a letter from himself and Peter Jensen sent to the District and the Minister of Education about Gender Achievement. Bruce Crowe and Peter Jensen would like parents involved in the discussion on gender disparity within education. Trustee Jane Thornthwaite mentioned this topic will be discussed at the Education and Programs Standing Committee meeting. Jane also reinforced that the goal is to ensure the needs of all learners are addressed within the District.

B. MEETING FOCUS: Communications Workshop – 7:35pm

7. Communications Audit "School Talk 44" Update by Victoria Miles, NVSD44 Communications Manager

- Initial recommendations of the Audit: The School District has made some good achievements with communication over the last couple years. The SD is now consolidating the communications role to help it fulfill the district strategy and goals.
- The SD initiated the School Talk Communication Audit, which reviewed communication channels and inputs of all partners.
- Reviewed the new district Vision, which can be remembered by three key words: Learn, Share, Grow. Remembering these you can remember what the SD is trying to do. The Vision articulates the value and goals of where the SD is going and it will be a way to talk to each other about the progress we're making within the district. It will provide a frame of reference for strategy and attaining goals.
- Best practice audit of SD was lead by independent consultants, who have provided many recommendations. The SD will now develop a communications plan that will incorporate some of the recommendations. The communications plan will interpret what the SD can realistically do. Anyone interested in reviewing all the recommend-ations from the consultants may request it directly from Victoria Miles (vmiles@nvsd44.bc.ca)
- Audit process overview: NVPAC and PAC reps spoke directly to the consultants, a survey was distributed to parents and students, and there was a review of current SD communication channels to partners. There was some comparative analysis of what other SD are doing, media coverage reviewed as of Jan 08 as well as a review of the media materials SD distributed to the media. The result was 10 recommendations, and an affirmation that in last three years there had been a conscious effort to improve communication to stakeholders, resulting in some progress but still more work is require.
- The 10 recommendations:
 1. Actively develop a communication culture within the SD, everyone is involved, has an aptitude, that the culture recognizes their influence when then speak
 2. Develop a comprehensive plan for communication. This is currently being developed with an initial draft ready before Christmas for the School Board to review for Jan meeting
 3. Define clear communication roles for all NVSD – protocols, process development
 4. Increase communications staffing
 5. Develop measurement practices and develop key indicators for measuring improvement

6. Update the NVSD visual identity, look at making NVSD look more professional
7. Revise the NVSD web site (in collaboration with IT)
8. Assess advertising expenditures and seek cost improvements
9. Establish a routine of pro-active media relations – augment and support school outreach through the SD to PACs
10. Launch a public campaign to promote pride in NVSD – very much related to student retention – amplifying the good news, improving links with schools to hear all the good news within our district
 - Currently the process is at the point of drafting a communications plan and going through the approval and budgeting process.

Q How will you address item 3 above, SD protocols?

A Key staff groups were low recognition & comprehension on what their potential is, focus on those groups to help enhance their role (i.e. welcoming to schools) – will focus on high impact roles those with more direct parent serving staff, but respective of their existing roles

Q Regarding the SD web site, will there be more consultation?

A We will need to sit down with IT to collect more info /data collection, and review what pieces missing.

Q The SD should more actively market our NVSD programs.

A Yes in terms of staffing, possibly a MARCOM position will be created to support this role.

Q What were the key issues uncovered from the audit?

A General communication to stakeholders has improved; SD is more challenged with consistency of visual ID & can gain ground in this area to be more competitive.

Q NVSD web site should consider having easy access for PACs and NVPAC to easily add their information.

A IT will need to have more input but please email a summary of concerns to Victoria to ensure concerns are addressed.

8. Communications Protocol Update

- Overview of the document: Found on NVSD web site, written by NVPAC to address inconsistent communications to parents. This can now be addressed through email protocols because most parents have email access.
- Previous issues included possibly no parent volunteer focusing on this role, lack of technology; previous school admin may have been uncomfortable with access of parents.
- NVPAC decided to get a fan out system sanctioned by Superintendent to ensure the school admin would support the parent communications.

- The Communications Protocol is your permission to have a parent email system set up, parents still need to consult and work with your principal but there shouldn't be any restrictions.
- Improved communications will make sure more parents have a broader perspective of the school district, and provides more people the opportunity to have a fair chance to be informed
- NVPAC will do a survey of PACs to see how many parents are accessed by email to their PAC

Examples:

Handsworth has successfully provided a permission system, but is labour intensive, high schools need to target different grades, copy of email sent to each grade (setup in gmail accounts), NVPAC protocol reviewed & good, suggested to include their actual name of account to alleviate problems

Lisa Cartwright (LC) – Permission form may be made standard so legal wording does not change, the format may be a central form through district & add your personal PAC ID, secondary high school have unique issues

Lynnmour – problem is to try to convince the parents to give their emails, noted that Shaw has spam limit

Argyle – have been doing this for a while but like protocols like blind copy (BCC) protocol, there are spam issues maybe need to have grade reps, one thing wondering Admin also has everyone's email – PAC had to do collection & input self. (Note LC – we are working on this with Administration, with pilot schools to work with the admin system to share email addresses)

Capilano – have one form for both school admin and PAC use. Have a two-touch system (follow-up with telephone)

Braemar – every class has 2 coordinators which cover off each other to ensure full coverage for the year

Sherwood Park - thanks to Braemar's help, in Sept & Oct we utilize the class reps from the previous year for the beginning of the school year. So by Nov set up with new reps. Class reps are assigned by teachers, but this year started setting up Plymouth's idea of parent grade fundraising rep, we now have them & have asked them to delegate. Class reps have been told they are not responsible to get info to parents that are not on email contact list. Had a PAC training workshop for the reps.

Upper Lynn – Provide PAC info & communications to new parents to the school. (LC – we need to work with office staff, to include information in registration kit. Chair is very busy & has lots of responsibilities so should have a separate communications person & its also building community to get more parents involved in the school. Also helps parents become responsible for getting themselves more informed.)

Eastview – Asked if classroom reps are PAC Executive members & do they come to your PAC meetings? (A. In many cases no, but in some cases they are expected to attend PAC meetings.)

Highlands - has a separate PAC web site, storing all their docs electronically, 260 families are connected and there are only 10 families not on email, the web site has a parent database and the admin is utilizing it as well.

Boundary – Had own site but shut down due to problems with info posted. Still struggling to develop staff/PAC cooperation to provide info for parents. (LC - NVPAC offer to come in and work with the PAC and admin. Goal to have something in place by June.)

LC – Note that it is a public web site for a public school that SD does have issues with appropriateness of content and communications, it is necessary for all information to be approved by PAC as they are responsible for it and NVPAC recommends PACs work in consultation with your Principal. Ensure all content is screened by Executive; suggest all new postings are run by Principal & PAC Exec.

Larson - have gone through protocol document. At Larson there is a good relationships with staff, changed logo & have changed pre-ambule in the permission form. Asked if they can keep forms from one year to another or need to repeat every year. LC - Wording on form will be different, i.e. "We are keeping for one year" should be able to roll over each year. If managed by class rep easier to roll over & maintain. Michael at Lynnmour has advised parents they are on list & its up to them to remove themselves. LC – on volume of emails noted that PACs are helping to educate parents, and should be considerate and use judgment on whether info is expected and appreciated.

Ross Road – Can information be rolled over with Directories, because these are very time consuming to put together?
General response is that there are no definite rules but forms and directories can be tweaked to incorporate having the information rolled over.

Montroyal – PAC has a great relationship with admin & office staff. They have used class reps in past but there have been difficulty so don't currently.

LC – if you run into problems PACs need to let NVPAC know. Other items to consider are providing an affidavit for how email list is used, sending newsletters as attached pdf's (not word documents). Leslie of NVPAC will provide a link on our NVPAC site to a free download for saving documents in pdf.

Quick Straw Poll asking how many parents are connected by email:

Montroyal - 238 for 189 families

Argyle - 975

Balmoral - 100

Boundary - 100

Braemer - 480 kids

Canyon Heights - 2 yrs ago set-up 100% of parents connected

Capilano 90% 250 students

Cleveland 416 students, 90-95% of parents connected

Dorothy Lynas 530 students – most parents are connected

Fromme - not sure but parent reps attending are not getting any communications

Handsworth 700 students - 600 emails distributed

Highlands - all parents are connected except for about 10

Larson - 80% perhaps

Lynnmour - 110 email addresses, 200 kids

Ridgeway Annex - 18 parents of 80 kids

Ross Road 540 students – est. 80-90% of parents connected

Sherwood 350 kids – est. 90% of parents connected

Upper Lynn - just in process of setting up

Requested that class reps job descriptions be shared among the PACs. Also, remember nothing beats face-to-face contact, personal invitations to meetings, etc.

Communications coordinator does not have to be elected, encouraging all PAC to look at their constitutions & add in communication coordinator position, or designate a member at large to take on this role.

Michael Ouchi offered his services as a trainer to run an NVPAC workshop on email communications. This will be explored further directly with Michael.

Meeting Adjourned 9:25 pm

PAC REMINDERS:

- Make sure your PAC Chair and NVPAC rep are both receiving all NVPAC emails....update your listings with karenLstewart@shaw.ca
- Have you let us know who the NVPAC rep is at your school ???
- Check out "NV Parent Advisory Council" webpages at www.nvSD44.bc.ca bookmark it!
- Add our new general info email for NVPAC to your address book northvanpac@gmail.com

UPCOMING DATES:

- Education & Programs Meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 13 '09, 7pm, at Seycove Secondary
- NVPAC General Meeting, Thursday, Jan. 22 '09, 7pm, location Windsor Secondary (*note: this is a change of location from our usual venue*)

Location Notes:

SBO is School Board Office at 721 Chesterfield Ave, N.Van

LMCC is Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre at 810 West 21st St, N.Van