

École Margaret Jenkins School

Parent Advisory Council Meeting

Thursday Apr 29, 2021 (7pm, on Zoom)

Recording available here: <https://youtu.be/TQlgqgU9mic>

1. Welcome and introductions
 - 15 attendees
 - Regrets: Suzanne Weckend – stepping down from PAC Executive
2. Approval of minutes from February PAC meeting
 - First: Betty Greer
 - Second: Britta Bentz
3. Update on proposed SD61 budget cuts (Anja Rebstock/Bobbi Bartle-Clar)
 - Anja Rebstock provided overview of proposed budget cuts.
 - School board has proposed that in order to cope with the \$7 million deficit for next year, cuts to music programs will be necessary. These include cuts to all the Strings programs in Grade 5 and Middle School and many Middle School music programs that typically start in Grade 6, which include, but are not limited to choir and band.
 - The new proposal put forth on April 23rd included funding band in Grades 6, 7 and 8; however, cuts will still result in only 50% of music programs, which is a huge loss to the music sector.
 - This would still result in:
 - No Grade 5 Strings or any Strings in Middle School;
 - Some band programs, but much reduced; and
 - No choir at middle school.
 - Bobbi Bartle-Clar
 - Many parents have been advocating through email correspondence to trustees and MLAs; protests have been mobilized at the middle and high school levels.
 - Energy should be put into letters to the trustees in particular trustees who are on the fence: [Ryan Painter](#) and [Angie Hentze](#).
 - Another trustee to write to would be [Ann Whiteaker](#) (trustee representing Oak Bay Family of Schools , which includes EMJS).
 - Perhaps it can be stressed how important music is for mental health.
 - Elementary schools are being hit hard and if we don't start programs at elementary level, the middle school programs will suffer. Studies have shown that music started at an earlier age is easier to grasp.
 - There still appears to be opportunities to change the budget as the issue does not appear to be clear cut.
 - The Education Minister said this week that the Ministry would have a surplus. The Superintendent is meeting the Education Minister tomorrow.
 - The next budget vote is on May 17th.
 - Question from Grade 4 parent: If there is a PAC surplus can PAC money be put toward some type of music program. Of course, funding from a higher level would be preferable, but is there an option to fund some form of music?
 - PAC Exec. Response- Given our lack of fundraising this year, we have enough to cover

our current programs.

- We can revisit spending priorities as we vote on budget at AGM; however, costs would have to be evaluated.
- One concern is that infrastructure around renting instruments would be difficult and complicated. Another concern is that this would not be equitable as other schools would potentially not be able to afford a privately funded music program. All kids need equal opportunity. District is currently trying to reconcile equity among schools.

4. Parent Committee and Event Updates

- Passive fundraising- Britta Bentz
 - We had success with Purdys with a profit of \$1234.01)
 - Passive fundraising continues to be important this year and next.
 - Smile Card Program has changed to a bulk order program where pre-paid cards must be ordered in bulk and sold back to families. \$4000 worth of cards must be sold to make a 6% profit. With such a small return, the PAC will look at other fundraising opportunities (passive and other) for next year. Potential local businesses who may want to support EMJS through passive fundraising include the Root Cellar (Cook Street) and Red Barn (Oak Bay Ave.). Britta to follow-up.
- Bottle Drive- Jen Flaherty
 - April 10th contactless drive-through Bottle Drive was a success
 - Earned \$2518 for the Grade 5 Camp Thunderbird year-end trip.
 - Bottle depot was great to work with and gave excellent instructions. Recommended as a special event fundraiser in the future.
 - Jen has written notes for next time.
 - More volunteers would be useful to direct traffic, also more advertising in the general community.
- Grade 5 Year-end activities- Emily Ross
 - Cost to each student for Camp Thunderbird will be about \$25.
 - Each year the Grade 5 students have had a small celebration on the grounds.
 - Thrifty Foods has donated three cakes for the celebration in the event that the Grade 5s can have a covid-safe gathering. Bobbi to donate GF cupcakes.
 - Could use a volunteer to create a slideshow or other visuals for the event.
 - Lindsay commented that a cake per cohort would be fine, but they can continue to discuss.
- Growing Smiles Fundraiser to help the garden committee- Heather Macdonald
 - A big thanks to Alix Freiburger on her work with this.
 - Plants will be delivered to School May 4th with contact-less, drive through pick-up at school occurring 3:15-6 pm.
 - We need more volunteers to assist with the “pick-up”. Please [email](#) us if you can help.
 - Another successful and easy fundraiser to consider for next year.
- Walk and Wheel to School- Heather Macdonald

- Will be May 31- June 4th, 2021
- Capital Bike will sponsor the event (with posters “bike to school” etc.). More inclusive to do the “walk and wheel”
- CJ will help drum up support/prizes from local businesses.

5. Richardson Bike Route Updates

- Council approved the Richardson Street bike lane last week. Construction to start this summer.
- SJD is concerned about diverted traffic from there onto Moss St, Fairfield Rd. etc, that may impact student safety.
- 20 questions from SJD have been developed and will be brought to the attention of Sarah Webb, who is the Manager of Sustainable Transportation and in charge of the proposed bike network.
- An open forum was suggested, but the City is past consultation. It is anticipated that the City will reassure the school community that safety concerns will be addressed. Please contact [Heather](#) with additional questions.
- Potential concerns raised by parents:
 - Why is Chandler not a bike route when it is heavily used by bikes at this time?
 - This pathway may improve route from EMJS to Central School; however, the French Catchment Middle School is now Lansdowne, and there has been little to no consideration of safe bike routes there.
- On radar....EMJS may participate in the City of Victoria’s [School Streets](#) program look to block off Chandler during pick up and drop off – program as was piloted by SJD and George Jay. This would require considerable effort from the parent and school community including, but not limited to parent volunteers to help with signage and letters to residents adjacent to school etc. but could be a great opportunity

6. PAC AGM

- Last PAC meeting of the year/AGM is on May 27th, 2021. Voting on exec. and budget for 2021/2022.
- Some volunteers have stepped up for nomination:
 - Kenna Miskelly and Kate Brown - Co-treasurers
 - CJ Young- Member at large
 - Heather Sanche- Secretary
 - Co-chair position still vacant.

7. Teachers’ Update

- Ashley Frketich (Grade 1 teacher and teacher representative)
- Thank you to the whole school community.
- The garden is a lovely space to be in. The scope of learning is incredible. The students have learned so much about seeds, plant identification, soil preparation and even math! Students are fully engaged and enthusiastic. Farmer Brook through Growing Young Farmers has been exceptional.

- Fieldtrip and PAC funds being used up.
- Science Venture is happening in the next couple of weeks via zoom
- Ms. Maddern organizing a virtual presentation by a local author for all classes

8. Administration Update

Lindsay Swan (Vice Principal)

- Student-led conferences – early dismissal at 11:45 (English) and 11:50 (French) on May 6th. Classroom teachers will be in touch.
- Leadership team getting ready for rainbow week, which is a celebration of gender diversity. Students will be encouraged to dress in different colours for different days of the week.
- Virtual talent show will be happening this year. Details to follow in coming weeks.
- Island Sexual Health will be delivering maturation talks for Grade 4 and 5 students in the next few weeks.
- PAC emergency supplies- Guidelines have been provided by District (eg. 1-3 hours- immediate supplies (i.e., food and water) followed by longer term supplies. Suggest to start organizing the immediate supplies. Development of yearly protocol for emergency supplies is required. Lindsay to assist on Administration end.
- Grade 5 Legacy Project. Wooden triangles to be put together into a mural in a wave formation and will be multicoloured. Each child will paint a triangle and layer a nature image onto it.

James Hansen (Principal)

- Kindergarten orientation planning underway.
- Gave overview of process for a potential Covid exposure in the school community.
 - When there is a Covid exposure, the Medical Health Officer (MHO) takes over.
 - MHO will ask teachers, admin. and family detailed questions about school seating plans, who plays with who, teacher etc.
 - Three letters are sent out: Self-isolation letter; Awareness letters (cohort); Notice of exposure (whole school).
 - Administration cannot advise parents about which child and what class.
- Parent questions:
 - Maggie- relayed parent questions re: recent covid exposure at EMJS
 - One whole class asked to isolate, only half of another class asked to self-isolate. Is this correct? Yes, based on instructions from the Medical Health Officer.
 - Some parents were contacted by the school directly, on behalf of the MHO. There were so many families to contact, therefore MHO may have asked school to make the phone calls.
 - Through the process, the teachers were informed as soon as possible. Positive feedback from parents suggests that those that needed to be informed were informed. It appeared that the tiered process was successful and well-executed.
 - Jessica: If a child tests positive this week, but the child has already been home in self-isolation, is it reported in a different way, or at all, as an exposure? This would be up

to the MHO. The goal of MHO is to limit exposure and stop spread. J Hansen thinks that they would likely let more people know if it were necessary.

- Great news! Sink installation has almost been completed.
- A new crossing guard (also EMJS parent) started two weeks ago at Fairfield Road and Irving St.

9. New business- Open Q&A

- Emily Ross- It appears that the Fairfield-Gonzales Association may be changing their mandate. Will this affect out-of-school care? J Hansen reported that preparations for next year are underway as always, such as securing spaces for out-of-school care. One change is that increased enrollment at EMJS will result in an 11th division in English. This means that we will have a class using one of the rooms from out-of-school care.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.