

**Minutes of PAC Meeting
Langley Fine Arts School
March 30, 2011**

The meeting was held in the Library at Langley Fine Arts School.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by PAC President, Sherril Gilmour at 2pm. Minutes were recorded by PAC Secretary, Rachel Chin.

Attendance:

Introductions

There were 26 parents and 2 school administrator in attendance.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION was made by Stuart MacDonald and seconded to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2010 Meeting. *Motion Carried.*

Treasurer's Report:

Stuart distributed financial statements and gave a brief overview of the PAC accounts. He noted the various ways areas that PAC has funded this year. Currently the remaining undesignated funds in the general fund total approximately \$1100. \$6000 remains in the gaming funds account and that can be carried over for 3 years.

Principal's Report

Jon Bonnar gave a report and answered questions. The following items were discussed:

School Budget:

- April is budget and staffing month for the administration. At the district level we continue to deal with the deficit and next year we will need to make further cuts. Next year LFAS needs to cut \$200,000 which will represent approximately 2 teaching staff positions.
- Jon receives projected numbers April 8th and has to return it on the 21st. By April 30th he is required to declare surplus staff for 2011-12.

School Calendar for 2011-12:

- The school district is reviewing the school calendar for 2011-12. They are asking for input regarding adding six non-teaching days to the school calendar across the district, specifically an extra week at spring break and an additional day in conjunction with November 11th to create a four day weekend.
- LFAS already has a unique calendar because we have both secondary and elementary. Our major dates will stay the same but if the district goes forward with the six extra

days that would include the four non-teaching days that we already. If the 2nd week is voted down we will apply for a calendar variation.

- A two week spring break is not standard province wide because individual school boards determine calendars and calendar variations are not coordinated.

Community Forum:

- Tonight, March 30th, 175 people from around the school district are meeting to talk about plans for where the district is going to be heading in the next 5 to 7 years, through the deficit and into future planning. Focus will include a combination of structural changes, curriculum changes, and technology, etc. Special guest is former superintendent of Richmond school district. Each school will bring 3 guests.
- The guests for LFAS include Sherril Gilmour for parents, Duane Kroeker for staff, and Jon Bonnar for administration. We also get 1 student at the secondary level.

The parent letter to trustees regarding the idea of LFAS relocating its elementary program:

- Prior to the erroneous letter being sent, Jon had been working on a proposal to grow LFAS at the grade 8 and 9 level in order to bring in more funding. The plan would have included a reorganization of our middle school. There would be 2 classes of grade 6, 2 classes of grade 7 and 4 classes of grade 8. The middle school would have 8 dedicated teachers operating the pod. This would strengthen the 6-7 pod and address some current issues.
- Growing by 60 students would create a need to adjust the timetable because at our current 925 students we are really full. However there are empty classrooms at the grade 1-7 level when classes are out doing arts rotations.
- There was negative fall-out from the letter. The plans that LFAS administration were working towards were put into abeyance. Everything was taken off the table. The board said that it does not want to take on anything that involves any kind of controversy.
- The issues that were raised in the letter are not and were not on the table in any way. The administration/school district is not planning to relocate the elementary program of LFAS to West Langley Elementary School. The idea came up during long term discussions and was not seriously considered. It was a rejected brainstorming piece which was unfortunately taken and run with. Several schools were mentioned during the brainstorming, in an “if we were to ever look at something like this what would make the most sense” type of discussion. It was not anywhere close to being a serious conversation.
- Jon was at Blacklock when it converted to a fine arts program and that took a whole year of discussions. The logic alone would suggest that if the idea to move LFAS’ elementary program came on the table there would be multiple public discussions and facilities would be part of that discussion. Blacklock had arts facilities built in.
- A parent noted that it is hard for people to know what is brainstorming and what is real. There is a perception that consultations in our district happen after decisions are made. The Stafford change was raised as an example of changes being made in the face of enormous resistance without consultations. It was noted that a real problem is that we are not being funded properly for what the students are taking.

- Jon explained that we are funded on a different formula in Langley than other districts. We are funded on a per student basis. They are full time if they take minimum of 8 classes. Our grade 10-12s take an average of 10 classes but we only get money for 8 classes. Other districts are funded by block. This means that each year LFAS subsidizes our building \$200,000 for arts classes.
- 97% of LFAS' budget is spent on staffing while other schools might be staffing at 94% of their budget. Based on this reality there is discussion to fund LFAS differently. Last year we got a \$60,000 increase for our situation but this year we are back to zero again.
- Jon was asked about his own position on the restructuring brainstorming idea. He replied as follows: "There are many elements of 1-12 that are fantastic. From a structural perspective it is difficult. I am the principal of three different schools and timetables and that is hard. I don't know what the best model is. I've been in both. There are strengths and merits in both. If it was to go back on the table I would want to spend time listening to staff and parents. In long term vision for where we need to be, it needs to be there in the continuum of conversations as an idea."
- When Blacklock switched to a fine arts program 90% of the existing school community stayed. You either absorb a school that invites fine arts or the boundaries are redrawn. It has been done both ways, both work, and there is always dissent.
- If LFAS were to ever relocate the elementary program we would be big enough to have our own school. We could easily fill a whole school from our waiting list.
- One thing that makes people want to be on the waitlist is that we are grade 1-12. That is what makes us so special.
- The deficit would be cleared well before this type of idea was on the table.
- A parent commented that there is a perception that things will be a done deal. You hear about things and can understand people reacting. It has been described as an erroneous letter but it is understandable. Jon responded that he did not perceive it as done with malicious intent. It was very much around the kids but if there had been a bit of fact checking the letter would not have gone out.

President's Report

PAC Involvement

- Sherril Gilmore noted that the day before the erroneous letter was written and sent out, the matter in question was discussed at the PAC meeting. If people had come to the meeting they would have known and the letter would not have been sent.
- We have also talked about FSAs at a PAC meeting.
- If parents want a voice in the school and the district they are encouraged to come out and participate. Several current members of the PAC have been involved for 8+ years and have seen a lot.
- We don't know if the elementary re-location idea is going to be on the table in 2-5 years but if you have younger kids and are concerned about this you need to get involved.
- The PAC gets almost \$20,000 every year from the government and we get to choose how we spend that on the school. In the past funds have been used to pay for items

including playground equipment, elementary art room supplies and musical instruments.

- The PAC AGM is coming up and there will be PAC executive positions available.

PAC Meetings:

- Parents have asked about being informed of agenda items in advance and whether minutes can be made available to those who can't attend meetings.
- Minutes will be made available on the school website at [insert link]
- Agenda highlights will be made available prior to meetings
- PAC meetings this year have been typically scheduled for 7pm. Sherril is willing to change the time to the afternoon like we have done today, if that works better for more people. A show of hands indicated that an afternoon time slot works very well for many parents.

Spring Carnival:

- The Spring Carnival is coming up on May 13th. We are looking for volunteers to staff games for 30 minute time slots and/or help in other ways. A letter will be coming out asking for volunteers.

PAC Clothing Drive:

- The PAC Clothing Drive is being run until Friday, April 1st.

Staff Appreciation Lunch:

- Staff appreciation lunch will be held on a Wednesday with the date yet to be determined. The PAC has designated \$400 for this event and will be seeking dessert donations from parents. PAC is looking for parents to take on this event.

New Business

Laurie McGinness expressed appreciation to the PAC for support given to the library this year. The kids are really enjoying the graphic novels; monies have been well spent and appreciated.

Laurie presented two items for the Spring Carnival: A certificate for 4 lessons of belly dance for 1 person and 5 friends (valued at \$300) and a certificate for massage/reflexology.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:55pm