

HENRY HUDSON PAC MEETING

Date & Time: September 16th, 2013. Meeting started at 6:35 pm.

Location: Henry Hudson School Library.

In attendance: Parents (approximately 44), teachers Tso and Boyd and principal Mr Adams. In addition, a full list of attendees is available from the PAC Chair upon request. For privacy reasons a full list is not posted on the web site.

1. A motion to approve minutes from June 2013 PAC meeting was motioned by Jerry and passed by Andrea C. For parents new to the school, this PAC meeting approved payment for a new playground that the VSB removed. The Hudson community and PAC funded the \$30, 000 required for this.

2. PAC Chair Report - Robert

- a. Robert introduced himself as the PAC chair at Hudson and reminded parents that they are all members of the PAC. He brought up elections for the PAC executive in October, stating that all positions are up for grabs: one PAC chair, each one of two treasurers and each one of two secretaries. Any parent is encouraged to join the PAC's working groups as volunteers, to do what they can to enhance and embrace the school.

3. Principal's Report - Mr Adams

- a. Mr Adams introduced himself, welcomed new faces and thanked the parents for asking him to come to the PAC meetings. He said he was in his second year as principal at Hudson and was always being asked the same question: what are your impressions of Hudson? Historically Hudson was a school with low attendance because there were few kids in the neighbourhood until parents advocated to bring French Immersion into the school, making it dual track. The first of this French Immersion program saw 3 graduating students last year and will see 16 students set to graduate this year. All of this spells success, however Hudson finds itself bulging at the seams. His impressions from last year and the first meetings this year indicate we have great parents and a fantastic, social and eager staff. He described the complex role of a principal, orchestrating 15 teachers (8 English and 7 French) teaching 340 kids (175 English and 165 French), many trustees and bureaucrats, many working groups with separate contracts and unions, and trying to make what seems complicated into something all parties can focus on: teaching and learning. Both parents and staff have indicated that social responsibility should be one of the main goals at Hudson. He spoke of classes being made up of diverse groups of students (in gender, high-end and low-end learners, ethnicity and special needs) to make balanced classes rather than separating students.
- b. Robert asked Mr Adams how many special needs students there were and whether special needs students were distributed well for teachers to

manage the work load? Mr Adams reported that the school has 25 special needs students identified and, because special needs are not often defined until after a few years of school, there were more in the upper grades than in the lower grades. Robert mentioned that about 4 years ago there were many special needs students all in one grade and parents advocated help for the teachers. He asked Mr Adams to let the PAC know before there is breakdown in the classroom, so that we can support the staff.

- c. A new parent introduced himself as a father of a 5 year old kindergarten student and asked Mr Adams how long his daughter is given to eat? Mr Adams replied that all students are given 15 minutes to eat. He reported that Hudson has limited space and therefore only has 8 tables for 15 divisions (340 kids) in the lunchroom. The students have 47 minutes at lunch "hour". Asked why the students can't eat in the classroom, Mr Adams replied that there is no supervision. Hudson is given 2 supervision aids for the lunch rooms and the outside at recess and lunch. Wendy, who has witnessed lunch hour for years, as she has been a volunteer and is the coordinator for hot lunch and pizza days, sympathized and said it is hard for the youngest kids to adjust but the timing does settle down. Chantal also mentioned that a conversation at home with your child, talking about how much needs to be eaten before playtime may help.
- d. Some parents felt frustrated by the bureaucracy that seemed to be at the root of some educational issues at Hudson. Due to time restraints, Robert and Mr Adams suggested that a conversation outside of the meeting would be a good idea. Robert offered to answer any questions after the meeting.

4. Teacher's Report - Mme Boyd

- a. Mme Boyd introduced herself as one of the kindergarten teachers at the school and reported quickly that there is an enthusiastic groups of teachers this year. She didn't want to take too much time so she quickly thanked the PAC again for the Epson projectors worth \$10,000 that were donated to the classrooms. Mr Adams said that they were now all installed and that school wifi was up and running too.

5. Secretary Report - Chantal

- a. Chantal wished to speak quickly so as not to take too much time. She reported that Hudson has a class representative system that forwards emails about PAC, school and classroom activities to parents in order to help keep dates straight and help parents coordinate schedules. She is still looking for class rep volunteers for divisions 1, 7, 8 and 10.
- b. She rattled off a list of dates of import:
 - Sept. 24th: X-country meet

- Sept 26th: Terry Fox Run at school
- Sept. 27th: Pro-D Day
- Oct. 2nd: Individual photos
- Oct. 3rd: Multicultural potluck
- Oct. 7th: Family photo fundraiser
- Oct. 7-11th: iWalk week
- Oct. 9th: X-country meet
- Oct. 9/10th: Goal setting conferences - early dismissal
- Oct. 14th: Thanksgiving holiday
- Oct. 17th: District X-country meet
- Oct. 25th: Pro-D Day

- c. A parent asked the question about first day confusion and why communication was so bad. Chantal mentioned that dates on the website are not updated by the PAC. She said the VSB has been working on generic school websites that will be launched this fall for all schools to use. Certainly the PAC also needs to refresh their website (which is linked to the Hudson website) however we have not had a volunteer able to tackle this. The previous class rep lists could be used for information pertaining to the first day of school, relying on class reps from the previous year for next time, but this would not be helpful for new kindergarten parents as the PAC does not have visibility of entering kindergarten parent information. The office sent out an email with first day details so if you did not receive this, please make sure to verify your contact information with the office.

6. Treasurer's Report - Dana

- a. Dana introduced herself as one of two treasurers and presented the budget for the 2013/2014 school year. She reported that the PAC estimates revenues from hot lunch and pizza day, gaming grant (about \$20/student from the government) and some small fundraisers would be about \$36,500 this year. Expenses were estimated at about \$26,000, including all enhancement to education programs that have happened in previous years (performances, field trips, sports day, etc). This would leave a \$10,000 surplus at the end of the year, barring anything unforeseen. As devised in the playground replacement plan, \$2000 will be repaid to the PAC GICs out of these surplus funds. We are also waiting for PST/GST rebate from the playground payment. Please see budget attached for more details. The motion to pass the 2013/2014 PAC budget was put forth by Mitch and seconded by Jerry and unanimously voted in favour.

- b. There was a question from parents about who decides which field trips to approve. PAC has teachers fill out a requisition form but it is ultimately decided by the administration that field trips will provide enhancement to the classroom curriculum. A parent also asked about art programs or performances for the students as there seemed to be a lot of athletic activities and fewer arts programming. Dana mentioned that we do have musical performances and guest speakers brought in for school assemblies. Robert said if there are ever any suggestions about programming to bring it to the attention of the PAC or administration to look at funding for it. Finally a parent wondered if a parent volunteer could provide babysitting during PAC meetings instead of paying babysitting fees. Robert explained that it is Hudson students who are paid and “practice” their babysitting skills in a safe environment. The school hosts a babysitting course for this purpose and it is a good way for the students to start to forge their way into being independent earners.
- c. Dana asked all parents in attendance to make sure to fill out a fundraising survey to let the PAC know whether to continue with small fundraising efforts or, as most parents have expressed as favourable, work on a direct donation and/or volunteer time contribution drive.

7. Choir Report - Catherine

- a. Catherine introduced herself as the choir director. She said Hudson has two choirs this year, a senior choir (grades 3-7) with 16 students and a junior choir (grades 1 & 2) with 15 students to date. Senior choir is practicing Wednesdays after school and junior choir is Tuesdays after school, starting this week. Forms to sign up are in the office and on the PAC website. Kindergarten students are not being turned away, however they do have difficulty holding focus after a long day at school so Catherine is having to decide on a case-by-case basis. Heather R. was introduced as the parent/PAC choir representative.

8. Working Groups/Project Statuses

- a. Robert mentioned that there would be the annual Multi-Cultural Potluck on Thursday, October 3rd in the gym from 5:30-7:30pm, run by Wendy and volunteers. This is a social designed to share a cultural dish and get caught up or get to know new parents at the school and in classes. Staff are invited and PAC provides dishes and beverages. A parent suggested there be some ice-breaking activity so that all the parents who already know each other have fun getting to know all of the new parents. Robert made a note of this great idea.
- b. Robert introduced the Family Photo Fundraiser which is an annual event just because people have come to rely on it for their “Christmas card” photos. MJM photography (who also does the student photos at the school) comes and gives a 10 minute photo shoot and an 8X10 print to 15 groups

who pay \$15. Pets are welcome. The sign up for this will come out in class emails or feel free to contact Robert.

- c. The PAC has an annual budget of \$300 for a Halloween Haunted House and Pumpkin Carving at the school. As the parent who looked after this has graduated with her children, the PAC is looking for someone creative and organized to head this up. Grade 7s are usually allowed to help and become part of the display. Please see any of the PAC executive members if this is something you can help with.
- d. Winter Fair has also become an annual event, organized by Sheila C. and Andrea M. This requires many hours of volunteer time so we are recruiting early for this. We must have volunteers sign up before the next PAC meeting so please see Wendy if you can commit one or two hours on Friday, November 29th - the day of the fair. Although the fair was billed as a fundraiser in the past, the PAC has decided to focus on making it a community-building event. Food will be sold and a Kid's-Only Market (where kids can buy gifts for parents and grandparents) will still require donations from the Hudson community.
- e. Victoria is implementing a Guest Speaker Series at Hudson, integrating the school goal of social responsibility. The speakers would come in during school time on Fridays to speak to the kids and parents are welcome to attend. She is hoping to have three speakers over the year. Some ideas are: a police officer and dog, a motivational young athlete and a blind teacher. If you have any other connections or suggestions, please speak to Victoria.
- f. Hudson school and the PAC have made themselves heard during the planning process for the Point Grey-Cornwall Corridor Project, looking to bring a bike lane connecting downtown with Point Grey. The project has been approved by City Council so now there will be much construction in the future around Hudson. Robert and Mr Adams will be meeting with project planners mid-September to get more news about how we may be affected and how we can work together to keep things safe around the school.
- g. Wendy introduced herself as the parent in charge of hot lunch and pizza fundraisers and thanked all those parents who have offered to volunteer to help with this. She is always looking for new people and welcomes any amount of time, from once a week to once a term. She mentioned that Theresa, who is the parent who began the free BC Fruit and Vegetable Program at Hudson 3 years ago, wanted all parents to know that this program will now have a dairy component to it. Although there will be a soy alternative, there is a reverse consent form that parents should fill out if they wish their child to opt out.

9. School Planning Committee - Victoria

- a. Victoria was introduced as a member of the SPC, along with Chantal, Mitch and Mr Adams. She reported that the SPC helps to plan the teaching and learning goals for Hudson each school year, with meetings about 3 times per year and elections for positions on this committee in January. The school plan is published on the VSB and Hudson website. This year the main goals are social responsibility and numeracy.

10. Hudson Community Garden - Svetlana

- a. Svetlana announced that she, Beth L., Mme Meza and Mr Adams have been working on a partnership with Lululemon to build a community garden at Hudson. This project has received provisional funding of \$9000 (up to a possible \$30,000) from Lululemon across the street. Currently, the project team is waiting to pitch the idea to the VSB. A landscape architect volunteer is needed. Please contact Svetlana, Beth or Mr Adams if you can help. The idea is to have vegetables, fruit, flowers - whatever the team and the VSB decide are appropriate to support curriculum in the classroom, as well as open the community to sharing the responsibility of looking after a community space in partnership with a corporate neighbour. The team and the VSB will meet with SPEC, who are architects and an organizational professional who initiates such projects.

11. French Immersion Trip – Alan P.

- a. Alan reported that he and Mr Adams are working on putting together a traditional Quebec exchange program for the first large grade 7 group of French Immersion students. This is a school initiative, supported primarily by parents involved and the PAC. Mr Adams stated that this involves substantial support from the teachers and administration and therefore requires commitment and involvement from parents and students despite a likely grant coming from the government. Alan and Mr Adams will be working on a letter to go out to parents at the end of September to assess interest from families. PAC is being kept up-to-date on this project to see how we are able to support the success of the trip.

12. Next Meeting

- a. Next PAC Meeting to be determined as soon as possible with PAC executive and Mr Adams.

13. Motion to adjourn the meeting by Aviva was seconded by Jonathan at 7:58. Motion passed.