

PAC Meeting Notes - Sept 23, 2025

Speakers

- Principal: Tamara Van Wyck
- Vice Principal: Joe (Keo) Mergens
- District Principal: Doug Roch
- PAC Executive: Ryan K

Link to presentation:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1B6M9eJdAH8611mKiap7XCWhJ541Bz1uD/view?usp=sharing>

Welcome & Introductions

- **Principal & Vice Principal:** The administration team welcomed everyone, thanked the previous admin and community for their support, and shared their vision of the school community as a "village" while recognizing the history of 'Senakw'.
- **Ryan (PAC):** Provided a general welcome and outlined the goals for the new school year. The PAC's primary focus will be ongoing fundraising for additional elements to continue improving the student experience on the new grounds. All parents are encouraged to participate and share ideas.

About the PAC

- The PAC (Parent Advisory Council) is a mix of larger monthly meetings and smaller, focused meetings with the executive team.
- The October meeting will include a formal voting process to elect the new PAC executive.
- The PAC values diversity, impartiality, and a code of conduct. More info available at <https://hudsonpac.ca/about/>
- Parent Concerns: Any specific issues regarding a child's school experience should be raised directly with the school administration, starting with the teacher. The PAC is also available to support parents and students in having a positive experience at Henry Hudson.

Construction & Seismic Upgrade Project Update

- The past few years have focused on the school's construction project. Doug provided an update on the status of the project which is largely complete..
- The project was a combined seismic upgrade and expansion. With additional funding confirmed mid-project, six new classrooms and an outside undercover area were added.

- **New Occupancy:** The school is awaiting final occupancy sign-off from the City of Vancouver, expected within the next week.
 - **Classroom Usage:** The six new classrooms will be used temporarily during the 2025/26 school year. Additional class enrollment will begin in September 2026, in line with collective agreement staffing timings.
 - **Outdoor Spaces - general updates:**
 - The courtyard will have a new large “L shaped” bench soon.
 - A total of eight new picnic tables (four in front, four in back) will be on the grounds (last four currently being delivered).
 - Bollards have been installed at Maple and Cornwall for safety.
 - A bioswale (a rain capture area with over 2,000 plants) has been added and will be used for student learning. It will be staff-supervised and not open during recess.
 - The small gravel area next to York will be the future site of a harvest table, gardening boxes and the four picnic benches.
 - The new playground area is designed to be accessible for both physical and sensory needs.
 - The rubber padding's thickness varies based on the height of the play structures.
 - The playground grass-like surface is replaceable by section as needed in the future.
-

Q&A with Administration

- **Q: Will there be garbage cans?**
 - **A:** Yes, they will be added soon. Parents were asked to encourage children not to eat outside during recess to reduce the load on custodians.
- **Q: Are there nets on the basketball hoops?**
 - **A:** No. The decision was made not to add them due to concerns about theft and safety (the 9' nets could encourage climbing and lead to injuries).
- **Q: Will there be benches around the playground?**
 - **A:** At the moment, there are no plans for benches in that specific area. However, the request was noted for further exploration.
- **Q: Will the exterior classroom be open to kids during recess?**
 - **A:** Yes, the gate will be opened in the morning and closed in the evening, so kids will have access during the school day.

- **Q: Is there any more covered bike parking?**
 - **A:** This will be looked into, as the neighborhood is very bikeable and the current racks may not meet capacity.
- **Q: Is the fence complete? Some areas look low.**
 - **A:** The fence near the intersection of Walnut is currently being reviewed. Other areas will be monitored by the grounds team and adjustments can be made if needed.
- **Q: What about the open access on Cornwall near the Walnut intersection? It's a key concern given the high traffic.**
 - **A:** This has been identified and the administration will look into the potential for a gate.
- **Q: Has there been any contact with the city regarding speeding on Cornwall? There's no evident police enforcement.**
 - **A:** The administration will follow up with the city. Parents are also encouraged to contact the city with any concerns relating to traffic patterns.
- **Q: Is the small gravel/garden area going to remain as gravel?**
 - **A:** Yes, this is an "all-weather field" and will remain gravel.
- **Q: Any conversations about changing the Cornwall/Maple intersection to a full two way light intersection?**
 - **A:** This was requested in a previous review but didn't go through. The PAC could consider creating a committee to bring this back to the city's attention, and the PAC exec team has city contacts that can help.
- **Q: How do we escalate the intersection issue given the new school position?**
 - **A:** The PAC and HH administration could look at having the City of Vancouver come for a site visit.
- **Q: What is the plan for the mud kitchens?**
 - **A:** The plan is to keep the mud kitchens in the covered area, both to prevent wear and to lock them up at night.
- **Q: The covered area gate seems to be a draw for kids to play on. Could this be a safety concern?**
 - **A:** Once the area opens, the gate will be up from 7 a.m. until the evening, so kids won't have access to it during the school day. The community can work together to monitor its use during off-school hours.
- **Q: Can we look at flashing where kids are sitting in the front area near the gym windows - lots of wear already showing?**
 - **A:** The administration noted this for feedback.
- **Q: Can we add additional bollards or blocks on Cornwall?**

- **A:** This will be taken away for consideration.
 - **Q: Can we have any natural structures for play space, like boulders from the original school? The grounds are mostly flat.**
 - **A:** The administration will consider this. They noted that the "Hudson forest" bush area is already being accessed by kids.
 - **Q: Could we add some bushes or trees along Cornwall further east for additional privacy and sound?**
 - **A:** This is something the PAC can look into as part of ongoing fundraising and future projects.
 - **Q: Could we add some trees in the asphalt area on the north side of the field?**
 - **A:** This will be taken away for feedback, and the PAC can also look into it.
-

School Community Profile & Staffing

- **Students:** 326 students
 - **Divisions:** 15 English divisions, 1 French division
 - **Staff:** 21 teachers, 6 student support workers, 3 permanent supervision aids (+2 during construction), a Building Engineer (Dana Saunders), and an Evening Engineer (David Eldorado).
-

Learning & School Programs

- **Class Composition:** The composition of classes is determined by a collective agreement with maximum student numbers per grade and class type. Special designations for specific diagnoses can also affect class size.
- **Split Grades:** The curriculum has shifted to focus on "competence development" rather than specific content, which makes split-grade classes very positive from a developmental standpoint. The VSB website has more information on core competencies.
- **Future Numbers:** The school's capacity will increase next September, and there may be an opportunity to open the waitlist.
- **Child Care:** Child care options are managed by outside organizations. There is physical space (a new rooftop), but it depends on organizations building the necessary resources and staffing to accommodate full capacity.
- **Playground Schedule:** The playground will be used on a rotating schedule: Monday/Wednesday/Friday for primary students and Tuesday/Thursday for intermediate students.

- Parents were asked to donate soccer balls, basketballs, and other equipment for the storage shed.
- **Lunch:**
 - The 15-minute lunch period was discussed, with some concern that it is too short.
 - Key factor has to do with distractions – when an environment has limited distractions, lunch is typically eaten quite quickly
 - The administration noted that teachers do their best to adapt to the needs of their classes.
 - The change to indoor eating is due to garbage management and hygiene concerns.
 - TV content (where shown) has shifted to educational programs (e.g., National Geographic) rather than narrative-driven content that is more distracting..
 - Monitoring during lunch is a mixed model, with some older students helping younger ones.
 - Individual accommodations can't be managed as supervision and student shift to outside has to be scheduled.
 - Each teacher looks at the needs of their classes and adapts accordingly
 - Early in the school season, lunch eating pace goes a bit more slowly (post summer pace) but typically increase in pace over the course of the year.
 - Principal will go back to staff to keep an eye on how things are tracking and remind them of the pace based on return
- **Nutritional Programs:** The Fruit and Vegetable program has been canceled due to funding cuts. A new [Adam's Apples](#) mental health and nutrition program is starting at HH, where students can take an apple for themselves and one to share. More info on the program can be found on their website.
- **Other Programs:** The Vancouver Fire Fighters program and a non-perishable snack program are being organized - more details to come.
 - The breakfast program depends on funding. Details TBC
 - Lunchtime clubs will be returning once teachers and students are settled into the year.
- **Other Updates:** There will be a fall cross-country team and a volleyball team. A discussion about the school's technology vision will take place in October, and the full school winter concert is scheduled for December.

