

**Lord Byng Secondary School
PAC General Meeting March 23rd, 2010**

Minutes

Location & Time: Byng Library, 7:15pm

Attendees: Approximately 28 people attended the meeting including 5 from the school administration/ staff.

PAC Executive members in attendance: Sylvie Lefebvre and Daniel Chowne (Chair meeting), Julia Lian, Karen Ford, Michelle Carrington, John Hobbs, Wuling Zeng, Lucy Li; Secretary: Sylvie Lefebvre (in lieu of Monique Giard)

Adoption of the agenda: Proposed by Sylvie Lefebvre, seconded by John Hobbs, all in favor.

Adoption of the minutes of last meeting in January: Proposed by Sylvie Lefebvre and seconded by John Hobbs, all in favor.

Report by PAC Co-Chair (Sylvie Lefebvre): reviews PAC activities since last PAC general meeting of January 26: LBSO Feb 8 meeting, and the letter sent by PAC to the VSB as a meeting summary; \$ approved from wish list, and amount of receipts collected to date; dry grad plans: well underway - raffle tickets for sale, ticket orders have been sent - would be glad to answer any questions; PAC executive for next year - any takers?

Principal's report: Ms Maria Taddei (also present from staff: Jim Rutley (VP) and Alec McInnes (VP); other staff present: Jaime Tong and Maureen Bryce regarding school growth committee and Erin Zimmero (librarian and teacher representative at PAC meetings.

- Discusses budget issues and VSB proposal to extend school days by approximately 15 minutes per day & add 10 holiday days to the school calendar;
- Discusses school proposal to reduce number of hours of Parent-Teacher interviews from 7 hours currently to 5.5 hours and asks for input from parents (see attached summary of comments at end of minutes to meeting)
- Discusses LBSO decision from school administration perspective: some key points: disappointed that parents took complaints to media instead of bringing them to her attention (only two parents had voiced concerns to her prior to first publication of article); enrolment in strings and music has been dropping at Lord Byng whereas visual arts & theatre has been increasing; in her view, irreparable harm done to teachers mainly the result of what was said in paper; very disappointed in Bramwell Tovey attending PAC meeting and being vocal against her proposal and presentation.
- Also, distributes letter from Scott McLennan, one of the music teacher that informs the school that he will be teaching part time next year.

Response from Sylvie Lefebvre and comments from audience:

- Sylvie briefly provided some of the information provided to the VSB in a letter from the PAC that summarizes our views on the issues.

- Some comments from parents:
 1. Letter sent by school in January seemed final and did not ask for any consultation from parents – therefore did not encourage parents to provide their opinion; the same parent said he did not realize the LBSO was going to be discontinued until the article came out in the paper (even though his daughter takes music courses. He mentioned that the cancellation of the LBSO has had broader interest, not just in Canada.
 2. One parent re-iterated that initial letter sent to parents in January was misleading, indicating that new courses would give opportunities for strings students to play with wind instruments.
 3. One parent indicated that many issues remain unsolved e.g. audition process, particularly for strings students.
 4. Other parent indicated her surprise that Bramwell Tovey would not be welcome by the school administration – this is certainly not how she felt – parents would certainly welcome Master Tovey the school.
 5. In general, other parents continue to have some concerns over the implementation of the symphony courses and cooperation within music department.
- In the interest of time, discussion was abbreviated.

School Growth Committee (SCC): Jamie Tong and Maureen Bryce

- Purpose of SCC is to stimulate school growth and student involvement in the community, environment project, and other initiatives
- Includes student rep, teacher rep and parent representatives (Cathy Ryan)
- Maureen Bryce talks about proposed memorial garden on east side of tennis courts – are putting in a grant for the City of Vancouver; have \$2,200 left from a project of a few years ago that helped redesign the sidewalks around the school. One parent indicated her willingness to assist the group that includes Maureen Bryce and some interested students.
- One question: How does SCC differs from School Planning Councils (SPC): Maria Taddei volunteers that when she came to the school 4 years ago, teachers refused to participate in SPC as they found them too focused on achievement numbers e.g. test school results, etc. Instead, Maria Taddei instituted the SCC that focus on general school growth objectives that involve students, parents and teachers in achieving broad objectives like sustainability, etc. As well, Maria Taddei has tried to fulfill the consultation mandate of the SPC by presenting major school related issues at the regular monthly PAC meetings.

At 9 PM, adjourn to April 27th, 2010 at 7:15 PM

Notes from Discussion on Parent- Teacher Interview Schedule

On Tuesday March 23rd, Maria Taddei asked parents at the Parent Advisory Council meeting to comment on a proposal from the school to reduce hours of Parent Teacher Interviews. The changes would be as follows:

- Fall interviews: reduce from 4 hours to 2.5 hours
- Spring interviews: status quo of 3 hours
- Overall reduction of interviewing hours from 7 hours to 5.5 hours.

Maria Taddei circulated a survey. Four people out of 20 parents present at the meeting provided comments by filling out the surveys. Others participated in the discussion.

The following summarize comments:

In general, all parents who expressed comments were against the suggestion of reducing the number of interviewing hours from 7 hours to 5.5 hours.

Comments are as follows:

“Limiting time and priority to problem students discourages or effectively punishes students and parents who strive to do well. This can discourage students from striving to do well in the school.”

“Part of the reason why we don’t schedule as many teachers in the spring is based on how well or how interested the teacher is willing to share in the November session. Lack of teachers’ interest in November and feedback from our child on how the teacher is in class determines if there is any use to talk to the teachers in the spring.”

“I think limiting access for high demand courses and Grade 8 year would be very unfortunate. “I have repeatedly not been booked for requested interviews” even under the current 7 hour schedule.”

“I am not concerned about scheduling options. I would work around anything that works for the teachers.”

NOTE:

This item was not specifically announced to be on the agenda of the Parent Advisory Council. As a result, some parents who may feel strongly about this issue would not have been aware that it was to be discussed. It is difficult to know if the sample of responses and comments fairly reflects the views of the majority of parents.

ACTION: Survey will be circulated again at the April 27 meeting.