



YEAR-END REPORT – 2009/2010

JUNE 2010

2009/2010 was a busy year for SD73 DPAC. In adhering to our traditional 3-pronged mandate of Education, Communication, and Advisory Role, we continued to see growth both in our public profile DPAC and in the partnership arrangements with education community stakeholders.

This success came despite an unusual executive structure that was tried this year. For the first time, the DPAC executive operated as an Executive Council, rather than as a traditional Board structure. The executive worked well together and it was a good “capacity-building” year for our organization. However, it should be noted that the size of the executive council has shrunk to 5 from 6 for the coming year, and a strategy for recruitment of executives must be a priority for the coming year, since several current members plan to retire shortly.

In 2006, DPAC recognized that there were three roles required for the SD 73 context:

- **Education** (of parents, PACs, other educational partners)
- **Communication** (with and between parents, PACs, and other educational partners)
- **Advisory / Voice** (to advise the Board of Education and other educational partners of the collective voice of parents/PACs in SD 73)

These categories continue to be the primary focus of our work. The following is a summary of progress made on each of our core roles:

1. Education

Successes...

- Full parent contingent attended “Tech It Up!”, the District’s fall conference on technology. This was a fantastic opportunity for parents to familiarize themselves with current issues in education, and all participant reports were positive.
- DPAC answered many questions on process and played a support role for many of the PACs who made presentations to trustees as part of the reconfiguration process.
- Dr. Michael Carr-Gregg, “Cybersafety: What Kids Are Doing Online & How to Protect Them”, October 24 at TRU Grand Hall. Although attendance was disappointing, the event was well-organized and provided parents with an opportunity to learn about a topic that they deem important.

- One PAC Networking Luncheon was held this year, with education and discussion on the topic of Nurturing Parent Involvement. Well attended and positive evaluations.
- “Merging Our Futures: Transition Planning for Our Children” with Beverly Ruberg, March 30 at the Henry Grube. This was well attended and provided guidance to PACs in schools set to merge/close. Very positive evaluations, especially to the section where parents viewed the challenges/opportunities through different lenses.
- Barry MacDonald, “Boy Smarts: Effective Strategies for Parenting Boys”, May 10 at Kamloops Alliance Church.” Sold out venue of 450 seats. Amazingly effective promotion and ticket sales through the schools.

Challenges...

- The SD73 reconfiguration process diverted resources from several other worthwhile ventures, which did not take place as a result (e.g. “HELP! I’ve Been Elected to the PAC Executive!” & School Planning Council training). This was a temporary situation.
- The sustainability of providing high quality speakers requires continued commitment from the School District for in-kind funding
- Finding adequate volunteers to sit on event organization committees continues to be difficult, especially with large events like Barry MacDonald.
- PACs continue to struggle with basic governance/organizational challenges that require coaching, mentoring, and capacity building to address.

Recommendations...

- DPAC work with SD73 administration to plan a 2010/2011 speaker as well as a parent delegation to the 2010 SD 73 fall conference (2010 topic : Assessment).
- DPAC consider limiting public parent education nights which require a great deal of preparation (i.e. ticket sales) to one per year in order to reduce volunteer burnout.
- Use the Barry MacDonald event as a template for similar activities in the future.
- As suggested in participant feedback, schedule two PAC Networking events per year: one in the fall and one in the spring.
- Continue running PAC-specific training events on a regular basis (i.e. HELP! & SPC). This has been identified by members as a priority for fall 2010.

2. Communication:

Successes...

- Our sd73dpac@gmail.com account is very well used, and has become the main contact point for DPAC. Over 140 parents currently are included in the DPAC email distribution list, receiving regular updates, information, and ideas. Through regular monitoring and prompt contact, this is turning into an effective 2-way communication platform between PACs and DPAC.
- The DPAC website is up and running, and content is being added on a regular basis.
<http://dpac.sd73.bc.ca/>
- PAC registration form now includes an email address component, making maintenance of our contact list far simpler.
- School principals / secretaries regularly include DPAC information in newsletters and communiqués.

Challenges...

- Although the gmail contact list has grown, it is still not comprehensive. A central system of all parent e-mail addresses in the district would be more effective.
- Contact information for PAC executives / DPAC representatives does not come to DPAC until late fall.
- PACs do not currently have a way to communicate with each other.

Recommendations...

- DPAC continue to develop website & actively promote its use via links in e-mails, etc.
- Website include a list-serve function (or another list-serve be developed/implemented)
- Website include resource repository (or another tool developed)
- Website include a list of library resources, and how they can be accessed
- DPAC work with SD73 to develop a comprehensive strategy to improve communication with all parents, whether through a complete e-mail database or other means. (This may come up in discussions with the Parent Leadership Task Force.)

3. Advisory Mandate:

Successes...

- By deciding early on to remain neutral in the reconfiguration process, DPAC was able to effectively monitor the process and speak up on behalf of PACs when concerns regarding transparency and fairness arose.
- Input received from DPAC meeting attendees and via e-mail continues to increase and DPAC representatives are getting in the habit of using the *DPAC Accountabilities* to liaise and gather input from their PACs.
- DPAC communicates with SD73 administration and the KTTA at regular monthly meetings.
- Press releases are put out regularly on emerging issues, and DPAC is often asked for comments by local media.
- Notices of Motion on SD73 policies are discussed and advice is provided regarding modifications. Policies of note for 2009/2010:
 - Policy 1121.1 – Corporate Sponsorship and Donations
 - Policy 506.4 – School Fees: Textbook Deposit
- A resolution was submitted to the BCCPAC AGM. Although it did not pass, it served to increase awareness of the provincial resolutions process.
- DPAC met with both local MLA's once and sent numerous letters to the MLA's and the Ministry regarding chronic underfunding of education.
- DPAC was successful in encouraging member PACs to protest reduced gaming fund allocations, and funding will be reinstated for next year.
- Participation on SD 73 District Committees: Parent Leadership Task Force. As a result of the 5 year plan developed by SD 73 last year, DPAC was asked to assist in the development of a strategy for parent leadership. The terms of reference and criteria were completed in the fall, and the committee is just starting its work. It is expected to finish next year.

Challenges...

- DPAC meetings continue to be long and full – policy/position development is being addressed more often; however, PACs continue to struggle with providing informed input to these discussions
- BCCPAC membership fell to 20 members and only 8 proxies went to the AGM.
- Timelines for gathering voice are often short – leading to difficulties gathering representatives opinions from members, and ad hoc input to the Board and administration. More time would allow for better quality input.
- Volunteer capacity/numbers to continue attending committees or develop voice is low.
- SD 73 PACs are not certain which issues to bring to DPAC and there is still confusion about the process.

Recommendations...

- Continued development of formal structure for DPAC position statements including mechanism for garnering PAC/parent input.
- DPAC executive / representative “portfolio” structure for capturing emerging issues and positions.
- Continued support for PACs regarding BCCPAC engagement
- Development of issue tracking strategy
- Continued education of SD73 administration and trustees regarding the 2 month timeline required to gather, discuss and draft a representative response to policies and emerging issues.