



## Meeting Minutes February 19, 2020

**Welcome:** Meet other parents, have a refreshment, review agenda and December meeting minutes. January meeting was cancelled.

**Acknowledgement:** Co-chair Jo-Anne began by acknowledging that the land in which we gather is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil Waututh First Nations.

**Approval of Agenda:** Any new items to add? No new items to add. *Carried.*

**Approve Minutes from December:** Meeting attendees were asked to review the previous meeting minutes in advance or during the welcome time. Meeting minutes were approved. *Aaron (first), Tamlynn (second).*

**Introduction of Marvin Mures, David Livingstone's New Librarian.** We are fortunate to have Marvin as our new Librarian and resource teacher! Marvin wants us all to know that he's delighted to be at Livingstone! It is his 30th year with the VSB. The library is open to all families, and to all parents from Monday-Friday 8:40- 9:10, and also after school on Mondays-Thursday from 3:00-3:20 for browsing and borrowing books.

**Guest Speakers:** Skye Richards, DPAC Liaison

Skye is from the District PAC, which represents all PACs in the Vancouver area. This is the first year that we've had proper interaction with the DPAC, and there is huge value in participation and engaging as a PAC with the DPAC, and particularly because of upcoming

seismic changes to David Livingstone. Advocacy is important from parents, as it ensures our children's needs are better met, and when we can work collectively as a group, our advocacy is strengthened.

- There are 12 people on the DPAC committee. They are trying to create relationships so we all have someone to talk to. At general meetings, they try to highlight certain topics. Everyone is welcome to attend DPAC general meetings, however, our DPAC chair is the only person who can vote. This DPAC group joins with other districts in the province to form the BC PAC, (who directly presents issues to the Ministry).

### **Principal's Report: Carrie Froese**

**Enrolment** - our current enrolment for the 2020-20201 school year is hovering at around 325 students. Kindergarten registration is up to 50 students. Choice programs were offered today, so we'll see how many Kindergarteners we'll have after parents have made their final decisions to accept/ decline choice program placement. Kindergarten classes have a maximum of 20 kids per class, but at this point it is too early to decide if we will have a third / split class. We do have one extra classroom at this time.

**Arts performances:** On March 5th, Ache Brazil will be at David Livingstone. All preschoolers and Sparetime kids welcome to watch!

**Ready Set Learn:** We're in the process of booking *Ready Set Learn*. This is different than *Welcome to Kindergarten*, which is specifically for Kindergarten kids coming to Livingstone in September. *Welcome to Kindergarten* will be on the final Tuesday in May. *Ready Set Learn* is for all Preschoolers AND kids coming to Livingstone in September. Principal Carrie Froese and Librarian Marvin Mures are thinking of bringing in an Indigenous Author for *Ready Set Learn*.

**Health and Safety:** We do 5 fire drills a year, and lockdown drills. We had one last week. Principal Froese has been preparing kids by speaking to them and explaining that it is only a drill and that the school is just practicing. Next week there will be a drill for locking the perimeter down.

Parent question: Is it possible for parents to get a heads up ahead of time -before the end of the day, so they can be prepared to speak with their children and address questions? Many kids were distressed after last lock down drill, and parents were not aware it was happening.

Ms Froese will mention this in future school newsletters to inform families when drills will be happening and send home links with more information to VSB site. However, she would prefer to leave it to classroom teachers. She will tell teachers that they should also communicate with the parents.

**Student and School Support Assistants (SSAs):** We've been in good shape since January, we have 5 SSA's that are regularly coming to our school.

**Seismic:** The seismic meeting was well attended. On our school website, there is a link to the District site where there is a survey where parents can make comments.

**Parking:** There have been cars being ticketed at front of school, even during drop off- so be careful!

**Chair Report:** Julia & Jo-Anne

**Parent Ed Speaker:** On Jan 22, we had our Parent Ed speaker, Trish Mugford on "Supporting Your Child's Learning". Sadly, 35 people registered, but only 7 came. Because of this, the next speaker series has been cancelled.

**Jan 31: National Hot Chocolate Day:** We had hot chocolate for all the kids, and it was very well received. Great parent volunteers came out, thank you to all!

**Livingstone Spirit Wear:** The Spirit Wear sale has closed and items will be available in early March. There may be more opportunities to purchase again before the Track and Field season starts.

**East Van Soiree:** It is on Feb 29, and is sold out! All the expenses have been covered by parents and companies who have donated. Money raised will be split between Livingstone and Brock. There will be some amazing auction items available, such as a weekend at Whistler, a Middle Beach Lodge getaway in Tofino, magnums of champagne, and more!

**PAC Executive 2020/ 2021:** If anyone is interested in joining PAC Exec 2020-2021, Please email [livingstonepac@gmail.com](mailto:livingstonepac@gmail.com). There will be a co-Secretary position open.

**Car Free Day:** We are looking for a co-lead for they event. Car Free Day is on Sunday, June 21- Father's Day. Dave Mackenzie has been in charge of this the past few years and would like to have a co-lead this year, with the intention to take it over for next year. Please email [livingstonepac@gmail.com](mailto:livingstonepac@gmail.com) if you are interested!

**Seismic:** We are hoping to organize a Parent Committee (will discuss as part of new business).

**Walk-A-Thon:** We will have our Walk-A-Thon sometime at the end of May. We will discuss this after March break. At the meeting there were some ideas suggested to help encourage kids to raise more money, such as having a raffle for prize items. All kids could get a ticket, but extra tickets given to kids who raise more money.

**Treasurer Report:** Krista

[November Treasurer's Report](#), December's Treasurer's Report and January need to be approved. Krista (co-treasurer) presented the report, and explained how they have worked to clean up and better streamline our accounts. All the money is in the DL PAC account now.

Teachers have (mostly) all been using their allocated funds, and you can ask Krista at any time if you have inquiries about specific Divisions.

Dec, Jan and Feb treasurers reports: *Motion to pass: Newell (motioned) Melissa Seconded-Jillian (1 abstain). Passed.*

In the spring, we will put forward a new budget for next years spending, which we will all vote on.

**Unfinished Business:**

No unfinished business at this time.

**New Business:**

**Student Support Assistant (SSA) Letter written by DL Parent: Jodie Siu (please see the letter at the end of Meeting Minutes)**

Jodie Siu has been doing some advocacy work with respect to SSAs in our school and district. She shared a letter that she wrote with the PAC and the DL Community on the Facebook Page, and she is presenting this letter on behalf of a group of parents at Livingstone. Our school had a significant SSA shortage from September through November. Despite the fact that we are now in a good position, this could always happen again in September. In fact, the

challenge bigger than just at Livingstone, because there is a shortage of SSA's in the district, and this letter is to address this.

SSA is short for Student and School Support Assistant, or also an EA- an Educational Assistant in other districts. They are a bridge between the teacher and the curriculum. This additional support is allocated to particular children (determined by the VSB) with extra needs- neurological and developmental issues, medical issues, and a range of social and emotional issues. They help these children function in the school system and access to the same education as their peers.

Although we are fully staffed now, if anyone is sick, it is still a problem. Last week one SSA was away, and Principal Carrie Froese called for a backup from another school. We learned there are 50 SSA vacancies- meaning there are 50 children not receiving essential support and therefore unable to access their right to the same education as their peers. And we don't think its good enough. The district prioritizes SSA support based on safety and medical issues (which it should be) but we want our kids not to survive, but to thrive.

While SSA's are allocated to classrooms through specific student designations, SSAs offer support for all of the children in the classroom (and often other children they have worked with in the past in other classroom settings). They offer not only extra support for the whole classroom, but also enable classroom teachers to help kids that need more help, or support more challenging work. SSA's are also on the playground and help with first aid to ALL the kids in the school.

This letter calls on the district boards and elected officials to train, hire and retain SSA's to stay in the VSB system. She would also like to call for a cultural shift to recognize and respect the work that they do. They are helping some of our most vulnerable students reach their education, and are often not valued as educational experts.

Jodie has been working with Skye through DPAC, but hopes that this letter can come from our community as a whole, especially because this has been an ongoing issue, and was a very large issue in our school for the first few months of the school year. She hopes the next steps would include more awareness of the role of SSAs and the support children need, to distribute the letter, to have parent support from the DL community, and work with the DPAC further so that this can help all schools in the district.

Feedback from Principal Carrie Froese: Principal Froese wanted to be clear that in terms of school safety, if an SSA is away, and if the principal perceives that there is a safety issue, they call the district to get an SSA to come to fill in at our school for the day. She also wanted to make clear that how the Ministry allocated funding is through designation. For kids who have a designation, part of the IEP is developing independence, so there is a vested interest in making sure that is allowed to happen. She doesn't feel it is helpful for SSAs to be working solely with the one child (who is requiring the support) but rather, would prefer that the SSAs help out in the classroom and provide support for everyone. Ms. Froese also highlighted that the classroom teacher is actually the one who is legally responsible for the child's educational program. We also have 3 resource teachers (1 full time, 1 part time, 1 once per week) that step in and are generally the experts in putting the IEP together. So not all the support comes from one person, but a team. She feels that we are in a very good position right now. We have 2 people permanently hired, and another person hired to the school. She acknowledges that there was a time when she was regularly making calls to the district because we did not have enough help.

Comment: The funding for the employment for the SSAs is generated by the students with the designation who need the support.

Comment: A parent expressed some concern with how a 1 day/ week resource staff can know what is going on.

Principal Carrie Froese's response: She is managing the work and the team to work collaboratively so that the one day a week person can appropriately address the same work. She is looking forward to dividing up the work differently to support the students.

Parent question to Principal Froese: Since the letter is not specific to DL but speaks to the nature of previous and future shortages for the district and advocating for more training, hiring and retention of SSAs, does Principal Froese have concerns about the letter?

Principal Carrie Froese explained that her concerns about the letter are centered on not everyone being aware that children's safety and educational needs are being met. She also wonders what the perception might be when the letter is coming from Livingstone, and that people will not have the confidence that safety and educational needs are being met at Livingstone.

Parent Comment: This parent doesn't believe that the letter is specific or an indictment on Livingstone, but it acknowledges that there were problems in the past, and that things are improving, but these problems are an indication of systemic problems in the school board. It is not a criticism of the way things are now at David Livingstone. Co-chair Julia agreed that it is not an indictment on Livingstone, and although the landscape has shifted, doesn't mean that there weren't valid concerns earlier this year about whether our children's needs were not being met at that time. And we don't know if this will be the case again in September. We are in a privileged space now, but it is a recognition that there was a systemic problem, and that it is actually supporting our Principal and showing that our principal is working within those limitations to get the needs met.

Another parent: wondered if the letter is too strong.

Co-chair Jo-Anne agreed that we should send the letter.



There were ideas of sharing this as a link to share with other PACs, and possibly to other schools.

Parent recommendation: A parent would like this letter to be made available to everyone for the next meeting.

Co-chair Jo-Anne and DL parent will follow up to see if there is another way to distribute this letter.

This has been tabled for now.

### **DPAC Representation, Long Range Facilities Planning Committee**

We need people to join the Long Range Facilities Planning Committee. We need a parent rep from our school, as many people as want to join together. This position is not defaulted to our DPAC rep. Because of Seismic, it is a very important time to join this, and to spread the word on this! This committee's main initiative is to create a toolkit so all schools could have resources to know how to navigate Seismic, and to build support as schools go through the Seismic process. There is value in some people in our school to be a part of this committee. They have knowledge and there is value in having someone represent.

This committee has a voice for advocating VSB spend, separate from Seismic (water pipes, etc).

Committee meeting is 1x month. Does not need to be the same person.

Everyone should also go onto the Survey - the link is on Livingstone Website and Twitter feed.

Jo-Anne is going to put together a priority list on a google sheet and distribute to the class reps.

We are also putting together a Parent Committee, Andrew Nolan is our Parent Rep, chairing this committee. This committee also includes Principal Carrie Froese, the district Principal, Spare Time, Out of School care, to meet with VSB and Project manager.

Next steps: Making google sheet. Sign up to join this committee on the tab on this sheet.

**Last Business:** We need to move June meeting to June 10th - bumping up 1 week earlier.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, March 11th, 7:00 p.m. in the library

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:43 p.m.**

**February 11, 2019**

**Janet Fraser**

**Allan Wong**

**Fraser Ballantyne**

**Lois Chan-Pedley**

**Carmen Cho**

**Estrellita Gonzalez**

**Oliver C. Hanson**

**Barb Parrott**

**Jennifer Reddy**

**Joshua Harris**

**Board of Education Trustees**

**Vancouver School Board**

**(via email)**

**To the Board of Trustees:**

**We, the parents of David Livingstone Elementary, write to share our grave concerns regarding the systemic shortage of full-time and on-call Student and School Assistants in the Vancouver School District. The Vancouver School Board is not meeting its obligation to provide all students with equitable access to learning as mandated by the BC Ministry of Education.**

**We believe Livingstone is but one example of the problems created by the SSA shortages. Our students have a variety of medical, social, academic and physical needs, including students with potentially life-threatening illnesses. Our school has been designated to have five SSAs to assist our students and teachers.**

**Yet, for three full months this year, the school had a maximum of three, and on many weeks only two, certified SSAs on site. On-call SSAs were not provided with any consistency, even though the vacancies were not unexpected or short term.**

**On Tuesday, November 12, 2019, there was only one certified SSA at Livingstone. An SSA from another elementary school had to be seconded to Livingstone to ensure a minimum level of safety, and one parent had to take a week off work to ensure their child's safety.**

**The District must do better.**

**Although two new SSAs were finally hired for Livingstone in December, we remain concerned about staff retention and hiring to meet future obligations (for incoming students and students with newly identified support needs).**

**We understand and support policies that allocate SSAs with priority for medical and safety reasons, but we believe this is insufficient to ensure that our students can access their education. SSAs assist students and teachers in meeting a wide variety of safety, medical, academic, social, emotional, physical and other goals. We also believe that allocations of SSAs from one school to another merely move the problem around; all over the District, there are children whose needs are not being met.**

**The Special Education Services Manual of the Ministry of Education states that “British Columbia promotes an inclusive education system in which students with special needs are fully participating members of a community of learners. Inclusion describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs.” Without a full complement of SSAs to fill both full-time and on-call positions throughout the District, the Vancouver School Board is not meeting its legal obligations.**

**We call upon the Board and staff of the VSB to take immediate and significant policy and budgetary actions to train, hire, and retain SSAs, both in the short and long term. Such actions should include increased wages; improved benefits; more training; and a cultural shift that recognizes and respects the commitment that SSAs bring to some of our most vulnerable students. Legal requirements and moral obligations demand nothing less.**

**Yours truly,**

**Parents and Guardians  
Parent Advisory Committee  
David Livingstone Elementary**

**cc Carmen Batista, Associate Superintendent, Employee Services  
Aaron Davis, Director of Instruction, School Services  
Mette Hamaguchi, Director of Instruction, Learning Services  
Carrie Froese, Principal, David Livingstone Elementary**