

## **McMath PAC General Meeting (Hybrid)**

September 19, 2023 (7pm)

Online Attendees: Yutiang J, Silvia B, James G, iPad, Carol, Cheyna, iPhone 2, Iratzlaff, Lisa F, Karen F-H, HM, Eleanor C, Sharmila, Jocelyn B, Joel W, Sue-Ann R, Jacob M, Jasmin, Hao, Peter, Aiyang Z, Chloe F, Joel W, Ledi D., Ms Naidu (Vice Principal), Mr Banta (Vice Principal)

In Person: Jeff Johnstone (Principal), Robert (PAC Chair), Winson (PAC Treasurer), Lingly (PAC Secretary), Fiona F., Kristine D., Victor T, Yuehan D., Vicky L, Eleanor C., Cathy S.

**Territory Acknowledgement** – We would like to start by acknowledging the land where we gather today, the unceded territories of the people of the Hə́n̓qə́m̓iḥə́m̓ language group who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial.

### **Opening:**

- Robert opened the meeting with introduction of PAC Executives and some housekeeping reminders to those attending the meeting via Zoom. To ensure we don't get a lot of audio feedback, please mute your device if not speaking and the chat room is monitored for questions during the meeting.
- Agenda was shared via Zoom for those who did not get them in advance. Rob shared the screen.

### **1. Adoption of the Agenda**

1st: Eleanor C.  
2nd: Winson L.

### **2. Adoption of the Minutes - May 2023 AGM Minutes**

1st: Winson L.  
2nd: Sue-Ann R.

- Robert advised that the Gaming grant had been secured for this year (2023/2024). For PACs to secure Gaming grants there has to be a full Executive group. Without Chair, Treasure and Secretary positions filled mean a PAC would not qualify to apply for grant.
- It was suggested for everyone to be sure their email is updated with PAC for meeting minutes and PAC updates. Meeting agenda and minutes are emailed out directly to families while the notice sent out from Admin does not include meeting minutes.

### **3. Principal's Report and addressing pre-submitted parent question(s)**

- Mr. Lee Banta, Vice Principal, introduced himself via Zoom. Mr. Banta comes from Steveston London. Ms Naidul, Vice Principal, also via zoom introduced herself.
- Busy week with plans for Truth & Reconciliation and Orange week

#### Staff update:

- Lots of new staff starting this year.  
Counselor: Fanoula Arvanitis  
LS: Katelyn Steblin (Job Share with Anita M.)  
Leadership & English: Riley Hass  
Science & French Immersion: Julie Grondin  
Art & Home Economics: Karen Myskiw  
English: Elisha Smirfitt, David Track  
English & Humanities: Michael Nguyen  
Education Assistant: Keith Lee  
Business Assistant: Lisa Hu

#### Enrollment Update:

- Enrollment in May 2023 was 1140, by August enrollment was 1183. September enrollment is at 1185. School is staffed at 1168 so McMath is a full school. Two more blocks added (ELL4 and Drama 9/10).

#### Facility Update:

- Some vandalism and break ins, had been better this year.
- Still 4 small fires set over summer in the field. Fortunately staff was here and caught it before it spreaded. To think if the fire caught among the dry grass it would have spread fast.
- Also reported a dozen broken windows and flipped bike racks.
- Some bathrooms were vandalized.
- School is working with RCMP and security cameras are waiting to be installed.
- Jeff reminds parents to be aware of what their children are doing. Question them if they are out late at night and know where they are.
- Seeing a lot of litter on school grounds over weekends. Janitorial staff are regularly cleaning up every Monday.
- Large crowds of 50 plus are seen drinking and littering on weekend evenings.
- Parents and students are reminded - if you see something, report it. Email the school or report anonymously.
- What are we doing about this? Security guard will now patrol grounds, Admin working closely with RCMP and security camera installation some time this year.

#### District Procedures:

- School fees & Provincial Stability Fund: This year school fees are \$28 for all schools with the following breakdown.
  - Student Council \$4
  - Agenda and App \$4
  - Athletics General \$3
  - Communication \$4
  - Awards \$4
  - Activities \$4

- Leadership Program \$4
- Follett(Textbook Barcodes) \$1
- The Ministry last year gave district funds based on student heads, approx. 28.00 per student. \$20k still remains for hardship students. There is currently a list of 15 students on the hardship list. If you know of anyone who needs help, email the principal or counselor. No document or proof is required or asked.
- Agenda and My School Day app are important tools to stay up to date with what is happening at school. There is lots of information on the app, you can see announcements and calendars that list events.

#### Communication changes:

- Important and immediate school updates will be posted on school's social media platforms like X (aka Twitter), Instagram, website and My School Day app. Emails will no longer be sent out. WAAG (Week At A Glance) is also full of information for upcoming events. Monthly newsletter will also be going out.
- Why move to an APP agenda? The choice of using the app was to go with tools students use well at the same time reducing garbage from unused paper agendas. Grade 8 students are still given paper agendas while other grades can ask for paper agendas. Agendas are published in French and English.

#### AI & ChatGpt:

- AI Is a powerful tool but can impact learning. Teachers are talking with students on when to use the tool and when not to. There is an Academic Dishonesty policy that helps guide concerns on plagiarism and honesty. Teachers are finding it harder to figure out issues, still at a learning curve stage. Families are encouraged to have discussions with students on the use of these powerful tools in their learning.

#### Gentle reminders:

- Phone in or email early warning if your student will be late, leaving early or away. Calls and emails can be sent anytime.
- Make an effort to be on time. Recently Jeff had counted approx. 100 cars pulling in after the bell.
- PLT is a valuable time. Discuss with kids what their plans are on PLT and encourage them to attend.

#### Traffic:

- Pick up and drop off issues. Getting some complaints from residents along Regent St regarding parking concerns. Jeff reminds parents that they should not be parking in the townhouse lots, that is private property, and to not block driveways. Please follow traffic law when driving and parking.
- Slow down around school zones and watch for both pedestrians and cyclists.
- There is a new bus for special needs students that have been having challenges with parents clogging staff parking lot and interfering with bus pick up and drop off.

- Parents encouraged to pick up their children off school grounds.
- Last year PAC got the City staff to observe Garry St traffic flow. Feedback was not a lot of issues of concern were observed. Some suggestions were made for clearer direction flow signs. Jeff has submitted a request to the district for painting of traffic flow arrows leaving the school grounds.

#### Communicating with staff.

- Jeff asks that parents contacting school to be patient, it takes some times, 1-2 days for admin to respond to calls and emails. Reconnect after a few days if you don't get a response. Reminder to do a 24hr rule before sending out passionate emails.

#### Upcoming dates:

- September 21:  
Grad Kick Off  
5:30 Grade 12 Parent Info Night  
6:30pm. Meet the Teacher
- September 22 – PD DAY
- September 27 - Collaboration Day – 9:30 Start
- September 29 - Orange Shirt Day
- October 2 - Truth and Reconciliation Recognition
- Gr8: Wild Play day tomorrow
- Thursday is busy with Meet the Teacher. This year will only be 1 day due to low turnout from last year.
- Busy with course change requests. Not everyone got what they requested. Those who did not get what they wanted may see accommodation for Semester 2.
- Steveston London is now over 1200 students, McMath no longer the biggest school population.

#### Parent Question:

Question: If there is time could you add a question about the counseling situation?

At the assembly at the start of term my student understood that counselors would not be available for in person meetings this whole school year. I wondered if that was the case or if it is just temporarily while they sort out all the course changes?

Also wondering about the status of course changes. My student contacted their counselor in the summer and submitted a course change form the first day of school and has heard nothing back despite it being the third week of term.

In general I just wanted to express some disappointment with counseling services. My student emailed for advice in the spring re course selection and never got a response, so had to select without all the info they needed. Now it seems very difficult to change anything or talk to a counselor to get it sorted out.

Response: Reconnect with the staff if you are not getting a response. Reason counselor could not see kids in the first week was due to multiple forms having been submitted by individual

students. Students should be submitting one request form for all their changes, not a form for each change request. Staff will be debriefing in early October to review the process. Another issue was there was no space for some of the students which is why some kids did not get what they requested. Last year there were less staff but more space while this year there is no space. Councilors meeting with students again.

Question: Could you clarify the block order for meeting the teacher.

Response: ABCDEGH, first and 2nd sem. Leadership students will be present to guide students and parents. Schedule and details on the website.

Question: What is collaboration day?

Response: There are set times, minutes, of instruction allowed through the school year which is dictated by the ministry. Collaboration is used to adjust time and allow teachers, once a month, to come together to brainstorm or discuss how to address school issues. School facility is still open, students can come to school, but no teachers are on hand.

Question: Will there be an update of Grad 2024 on the school website?

Response: Update will be coming soon. Still some info missing like grad dinner dance pricing. So far the Boat cruise is scheduled for Oct. 6.

#### **RDPA Report:**

- No update. RDPA has not had their first meeting of the school year yet. A parent representative is needed to represent McMath on the district PAC level. Responsibility includes attending general meetings to put forward any PAC concerns, report back to PAC updates from meetings and vote on behalf of Mcmath for RDPA AGM.
- Please email if you are interested.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

- Winson shared the financial reports and explained the breakdown.
- McMath PAC holds two accounts, a General account and Gaming account.
- General account holds funds from donations and is used at PAC's discretion. Teacher Appreciation luncheon expenses come from the General account.
- \$1400 was used for Teacher Appreciation in June. Appreciation was well received and the end of school year was good timing since there is no rush. Teachers were able to enjoy their lunch and socialize. This year, PAC would like to ask parents to donate possibly \$5 per student to help fund this annual event. Discussion with Administration to see if a line can be added to school online payment systems for parents to donate.
- Gaming account income can be from donations or Gaming grant. The expenses from the gaming fund (ie account) should follow the grant guideline. As such, we always deposit donations cheques to the General account rather than the Gaming account so we have higher flexibility on what we spend. Club expenses come from this Gaming account, covering club needs. Sponsor teachers submit expenses, PAC review requests and write cheques to reimburse clubs.

- Last year was the final year that the Gaming grant could be used for scholarships with 7 students given McMath scholarships. This year the Ministry has made changes and we can no longer use gaming grant for scholarships. Schools now may need to raise their own funds for scholarship, approx \$3500.
- Winson shared spreadsheet that showed expenses from Gaming grant that were used. Expenses like school club, new tennis tables, picnic tables, etc were purchased for the school. PAC will be reviewing submitted budget and put forth for approval in the next several meetings.

Question: Are most PAC money from grant? Elementary schools fundraise, do high school fundraise?

Response: Robert answered.

- \$20 per student grant was given to PAC through the Ministry. In the past those ministry funds were used for scholarship, this year \$3500 is not available for scholarship. This year we may need to reach out to communities or school populations to fundraise to raise funds to replace the lost scholarship funds.
- Cash Online may be used this year to ask for family donations for funds like scholarship and support school activities.
- Gaming grant has limitations on how it can be used and PAC needs to follow guidelines. Reports need to be submitted for gaming grants, because there are limitations fundraising may need to be asked from the community.

Question: Why do we not do more fundraising? Possibly sell emergency kits and have % for PAC. We can use Cash Online to help collect from that.

Response: Robert agrees that fundraising opportunities should be considered. We welcome more parents who can step up and help with that.

#### **PAC Update:**

- Robert catching up to speed on his new role as Chair.
- Parents are reminded to subscribe for PAC email. Currently about 57 emails only on PAC mailing list and that is low compared to school population. PAC sends out meeting minutes and agenda along with any PAC events.
- Club day scheduled for the first 2 weeks of October. Encourage your kids to partake.

Question: Will there be funding for parent events?

Response from Robert: There are plans for PAC to discuss for Parent Education nights. Funds currently come in from Gaming Grant to cover costs. There will also be district and RDPA events that we can piggyback off of.

- PAC is seeking more Member At Large and a Co-Chair. It would be ideal to have parents from other grades for better representation and also for succession. The follow position are needed:
  - Co- Chair
  - Treasurer Co-Chair

- Secretary Co-Chair
- 2024 DAG Chair - preferably a Gr. 11/12 parent who had participated in last year's DAG.

Anyone interested in helping out in any of these roles are very much appreciated.

- June 27 is scheduled Grad Dinner & Dance and DAG
- No dates set for club day. Right now Admin is aiming for the first 2 weeks of October.
- Winson: PAC would welcome anyone to help step up for Co-Chair roles for succession. This allows anyone to help shadow before the exec leaves in 2yrs. Currently Robert, Lingly, Ledi and Winson have children in Gr.10 which means in 2yrs they all will be leaving PAC. Shadowing now will allow better transfer of roles. Please reach out if you are interested.

**Meeting Adjourned - 8:07pm**