



District Parent Advisory Council

DPAC Pulse

April 7, 2021

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DPAC Executive Updates

- ◆ BCCPAC AGM will be held virtually on May 1, 2020, Voting and Proxy forms are due by April 19, 2020 .
- ◆ SD43 Budget: Budget Presentation April 13 at 7:00 p.m.
Stakeholder Feedback April 20 at 6:30 p.m.
Board Approval April 27 at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ **The DPAC is only as strong as the people who volunteer their time. We encourage all those who want to make a difference in our District to consider running for a position on the DPAC Executive on May 26, 2021.**

Your school events on Social Media and DPAC Website

If your school has a community event and you would like DPAC to share it on its social media channels or website, please send a .jpg and a short description to our Communication Coordinator and Newsletter/Website Editor:

communication@dpac43.ca

newsletter@dpac43.ca

Follow us on Facebook (dpac 43 - District Parent Advisory Council) and on Twitter (@dpac43)

“Intelligence plus character,
that is the goal of true
education.”
— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

CONTACT US:

Do you have any questions, comments, or suggestions?

Please contact the DPAC at:

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President's Corner, a message from DPAC President

As we return from spring break, a much-needed relief from a challenging year, the month of April will prove to be one of our busiest yet for this year. We have two DPAC meetings this month, the last two before our Annual General Meeting on May 26, three school board meetings involving the 2021-2022 budget process and as the month wraps up, we start May with the BCCPAC AGM. We invite you to attend and participate in all of these as your schedule allows.

In the midst of all this busyness it's hard not to reflect on where we were a year ago. We've now been meeting online for a year. It's impressive to see how this has increased our attendance numbers and helped us to reach more parents with our presentations. However, as I've spoken to some of our regular attendees, it's clear that the one thing we've lost is the personal contact, the parking lot chats, and the social community that was a regular part, and some might say the most important aspect of PAC meetings. We hope this next meeting, with a planned open forum, will help us to make these connections with one another again until we are all back to meeting in person.

Mask Protocols

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announced on March 29 that, as a result of an increase in new COVID-19 cases province-wide and a higher prevalence of variants of concern, strengthened guidelines for school settings are to be implemented. The revised guidelines support mask wearing for all students in grades 4-12 and all staff in schools. Students K-3 are encouraged to wear a mask indoors but are not required to do so – mask wearing remains a personal or family/caregiver choice for very young students. All students Grades 4-12 are required to wear a mask inside schools both within and outside their learning group.

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Stemming the Tide of Racial Bias in Our Community: A 21-Day Challenge

(DPAC43 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee - Tara Lyons, Rosey Manhas and Judith Obatusa)

I was in my daughter's school to attend a show she was involved in. During an intermission, I walked out to get some air. On my way out one of their vice principals stopped me to inform me that they were missing money from a student's bag in the dressing room and that I should ask my daughter. I told him I will, but for the rest of the show, I kept thinking and asking myself why he had to stop me to ask such a question. My daughter was upset about it when I told her because in her interactions with that vice principal, she had also experienced his "official mistreatment". The "stolen money" was later found in the owner's bag.

This example of a microaggression happened in an SD43 school to a person of colour and is one of the ways that racial bias comes across.

Commonplace verbal and behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward stigmatized or culturally marginalized groups is the discomfort that racialized people face daily, and sadly in the school community as well.

The DPAC43 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge is one way that the SD43 District Parent Advisory Council believes that we can stem the tide of racial bias in our school communities.

The Challenge, adapted from Dr. Eddie Moore Jr's concept, was hosted by the DPAC43 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee from March 1 – 21, 2021. Almost 350 people joined the Challenge Facebook group where each day participants were encouraged to action one activity from a list of 2 to 3, to further their understanding of power, privilege, supremacy, oppression and equity. March 21 was deliberately chosen as the end of the DPAC43 21-Day Challenge because it is the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Activities in the 21-Day Plan included suggestions for readings, podcasts, videos, observations, and ways we can act in our communities and schools to combat racism.

Some of the articles in the challenge included the impact racism in schools has on students. Racial bias in school officials affects how they interact with students and their parents. It also affects how they interpret the

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21-Day Challenge

behaviour of students and mete out discipline. This enables increased bullying from the peers of the affected students and leads to a cycle of frustration and disruption for both the students and the school.

The DPAC43 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge gave us an opportunity to confront our biases, challenge racial stereotyping and perpetuate change. The posts were eye opening, and the conversations were stimulating.

Thanks to everyone who signed up and participated!

Here is some feedback from the challenge:

Thank you! Really appreciated the links to books and articles, and also to social media - it will bring in new thoughts and perspectives all year.

Thank you so much for all your efforts! I have learned so much. ❤️

Thank you all for doing this. We've expanded our knowledge and will continue to learn more

Thank you for putting this together. I have learned so much. I still have more work to do.

Thank you ... for doing so much work to make this an opportunity for so many of us to learn. What I am walking away with, is more resources to leverage in my own un/learning, AND the commitment that I also need to ACT, as we all do! Learning is a great tool (and a privilege), and without action, commitment and changed behaviours we continue to be a part of the problem. Know that I am ready, and will continue to speak out, move our school community forward, and continue to be a better person and ally each day ❤️

Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication. I have learned a lot through this challenge!

Thank you for everything you did to put this together. There is a need to relearn and educate. I have taken so much from this...

... It has been an eye opener. Thank you to all the wonderful people who suggested books. Hope to see you awesome people on here next year ❤️ 🙌

If you would like to learn more from the posts and conversations from the challenge, including some examples of how to act and engage, please visit the [DPAC43 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge](#) Facebook page which will



DPAC Elections

Our elections will be held on May 26th, 2021. All positions from Vice-President to Member at Large are up for election. As we've stated many times, the DPAC is only as strong as the people who volunteer their time. We encourage all those who want to make a difference in our District to consider running for a position on the DPAC Executive.



RC MacDonald Elementary School: Project Salamander 2.0

Eve Gauthier

RC MacDonald Elementary School is an outdoor learning school located in a 150 year old forest that forms part of an important wildlife greenbelt. This Forest is inhabited by many animals and plants and enjoyed by many two-legged visitors. In January 2019, the forest suffered the sudden loss of over 50 mature cedar trees. This triggered students to ask the adults in their life, the logical question as to “what can we do to help our forest?”. Project Salamander was ignited, named after a domesticated salamander found clinging to a bag of garbage during a garbage clean up event that removed over 16 cubic yards of illegally dumped garbage in the forest.

Ever since, students, parents and teachers have been creating awareness as to the importance of native biodiversity and reforestation to rebuild lost forest canopy and improve the health of plants animals, and humans. They have endeavoured in garbage clean ups, invasive removals, memorial gardens, nature education, forest walk and talk with City of Coquitlam urban forest supervisor, creation and maintenance of the Salamander trail that circumnavigates the school forest, public outreach including a booth at the Coquitlam Canada Day Festival, grant applications, and requests for plant donations.

These efforts led to many tree and shrub donations from the community. 140 donated plants formed the initial prototype replanting. Just as the world closed due to covid they were awarded a \$3500 grant through Tree Canada via donations from Telus. The Tree People donated many loads of wood chips for mulch, and Tri-City Green Council provided coordination, environment site assessments as well as many plants.

To date they have planted over 500 native trees and shrubs, which accounts for the replanting requirements for half the lost trees. Managing the school forest canopy so that it can adapt to our changing climate is an ongoing endeavour and the involvement of youth, is the best investment we can make for our future.

Project Salamander has been particularly instrumental in providing emotional health benefits, stability and grounding; for all involved during this difficult time. The student signs, banners and drawings displayed throughout the replanting area, has created a school forest museum; enjoyed by many. The intent of sharing their story is to empower others!

The collaborative replanting efforts at RC MacDonald Elementary serve to educate students, teachers

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Project Salamander 2.0 Continued:

The collaborative replanting efforts at RC MacDonald Elementary serve to educate students, teachers and parents; increase community awareness; and empower stewards and stakeholders to take action. In addition, the environmental and educational benefits the project has contributed to healthy minds during a particularly difficult time. So many smiling faces and encouraging words through the sweat, rocks, roots and dirt! These little stewards have a life-time of educating and stewardship ahead of them. Thank you RC Mac “family” for everything that you do to make our communities a better and healthier place to live.

Project Salamander 2.0 currently in an active phase of invasive removal and replanting. Donations of native plants, shrubs and trees are always welcome! Please help us share their story!

Stay tuned for updates on Phase 3 replanting this spring and upcoming fall as well as their newest “articipation” mural adventure!

For more info contact Eve Gauthier at cec.evegauthier@gmail.com

Replanting

<https://youtu.be/ekZ7TnppgH4>

2019 Earth Week “Pitch-in” forest cleanup (with bonus)

<https://youtu.be/5DEn3qvcNxY>

Next DPAC General Meeting is

April 28th, 2021

BIKE to **school**
WEEK
MAY 31 ▶ JUNE 4



“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”

— **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**