

Mark Isfeld Secondary Parent Advisory Council

Minutes of the Meeting

January 19, 2009

Motion to adopt agenda – moved by Haley Humphrey/seconded by Margot Yamagishi. Carried.

Motion to adopt minutes of previous meeting – moved by Marlene Ricard/seconded by Haley Humphrey. Carried.

Notice of parent education seminar: Wednesday, Jan. 21st - Gabor Mate will be speaking.

Guest Speaker – Ms. Leanne Raymond, Isfeld Teacher-Librarian

At the beginning of the school year, there were 540 boxes of books sitting in the Isfeld library, waiting to be sorted, shelved or distributed to other schools or organizations! This massive task was accomplished, and Ms. Raymond has been getting a feel for a Grade 8-12 student population and the library needs of such a diverse group.

Ms. Raymond reported that the library at Isfeld circulates about 600 fiction titles and about 150 non-fiction titles each month; the discrepancy is related to the internet-based information culture that has most students doing research on-line. The focus in building up the library base is therefore on fiction, and Ms. Raymond welcomes the input of students and parents in recommending books for the collection. She knows the collection well, and is experienced at directing students to books that would be interesting to them.

Some items of information about the library program at Isfeld:

- The library is run on the basis of the “Learning Commons” model: using the library as a space for meeting, discussion, studying, drinking coffee and eating lunch, as well as accessing school computers and printers. The school library is no longer just a quiet zone, where the librarian’s main role is saying “Shhh!” (An article on the “Learning Commons” concept will be filed in the PAC binder in the office, or can be picked up from Ms. Raymond in the library.)
- Library books are distributed throughout the school in classrooms, so books are more readily accessible to students. They belong to the library collection, but are checked out through individual teachers.
- An Introduction to the Library was given to most classes at the beginning of the school year.
- Inter-library loans are carried out within the district.
- Literature Circle book sets are available for teachers’ use: these are multiple copies of books that can be used by small groups within English classes, so that everyone in the class is not necessarily studying the same book.

- Ms. Raymond gives out a library award at the end of each school year to recognize a student who has been especially involved in using the library, recommending books, or even volunteering time to help out in the library.
- Ms. Raymond welcomes any parent input, and invites parents to visit the library any time.

Principal's Report – Bill Village

- The school dance in December was a great success, with students demonstrating good attitudes and behaviour. Parents helped in the cloakroom, and testified to the good feeling throughout the evening. The next dance is planned for February 11, 2009.
- The band concert in December was wonderful, with all grade bands, jazz bands and the choir performing, as well as the Valley View Grade 7 marimba bands, which were a welcome addition. Kudos to Mr. Kuhnert!
- This January, the focus is on the end of the semester, and exams for students in Grades 10-12. Isfeld Secondary has decided not to require formal exams in a big gym setting of its Grade 8 and 9 students, so Mr. Fussell and a team of teachers have organized a day of community health activities (Monday, Jan. 26th) and two days of mini-electives (Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 27th and 28th). Bill is very appreciative of the staff's support of this program in planning and leading mini-electives. Thursday and Friday of exam week, Jan. 29th and 30th, are I-Days, on which students can come to school to finish projects or catch up on school work, but are days off for those students who are all caught up. For Grade 10-12 students, the week of Jan. 26th-30th follows the regular 5-day exam schedule.
- Second semester begins Monday, Feb. 2nd.
- Pro-D day: Monday, Feb. 9th.
- Reports cards sent home: Tuesday, Feb. 10th.
- There are some new teachers hired at Isfeld: Rob English will take Deb McKillican's Science 10 classes; Leslie Johnson will take over Steve Stanley's English classes, as he moves to the presidency of the CDTA; Becky Stewart will share the counselling position with Barb Clement; and Nick Dubravcic will teach Dave Graham's math and science classes for one year through a teacher exchange program with Australia. We welcome all new teachers to Isfeld.
- Bill is beginning to plan the courses and timetable for next year; most of the changes will be small ones. He and the staff are considering class sizes, linear and semester courses, and space issues.
- The administration has begun a Principal's Advisory Committee, made up of 21 students in Grades 8-12, which allows student leaders to become engaged in the process of decision-making in the school. They have had one meeting, and Bill is enthusiastic about the potential of this group.
- There is continuing discussion about the best way to handle the DPA requirements (Daily Physical Activity) for students, including the pros and cons of filling in a 'blue book' and the benefits of an on-line reporting system.

Treasurer's Report – Diana Briggs

Please see report attached to minutes in PAC binder in the office, which gives updated bank account balances, allocation of PAC funds and deposits and disbursements in gaming and non-gaming accounts.

Diana reported that all PACs are required to receive a Trust Report three times each year, which provides an accounting of each account in the PAC trust funds – the balance of funds raised by various sports teams, band groups or other committees within the school. The idea is not to allow trust fund balances to accumulate, so that funds raised by students will be spent during their time at the school. The Board will only allow \$10,000 to be rolled over at the end of each school year, so the money must be spent.

Trustee's Report – Janice Caton

The PAC welcomed Janice as our new School Board liaison. Janice has been a parent in SD71 for 25 years, and her first grandchildren will enter Kindergarten in the school district next year – she has a long history and track record of PAC and school board involvement in this district!

There have been two board meetings so far since the election of the new school board, and Janice reported that two main decisions have been reached:

1. Lake Trail will remain a Grade 8-10 school rather than gradually convert to a full Grade 8-12 secondary school;
2. The board has directed management to find a short-term solution to the issue of the use of Brooklyn and Cape Lazo schools.

In regards to making a decision about district configuration, and whether to keep to the status quo (elementary and secondary schools) or return to a model that includes middle schools, the board is committed to establishing a dialogue with the public and a consultation about the issue. In the short term there are no plans to reconfigure the district again.

There is a projected decline in enrolment next year of 150-200 students.

- There is a tentative date of March 4 for the next budget meeting.
- Next board meeting: Tuesday, January 27th.
- The board is planning to establish communication with parents through parent liaison meetings (through DPAC – the District Parent Advisory Council).

Janice is planning to come to Isfeld PAC meetings on a regular basis, and is willing to be contacted by parents or students at any time by phone (250-338-6858) or email (jcaton10@shaw.ca).

FAC (French Advisory Council) Report – Haley Humphrey

At December's FAC meeting, the guest speaker was Sylvia Dakin, the teacher of the Late French Immersion program at École Puntledge Park Elementary. Sylvia reported that the class was going extremely well, with students learning very quickly, with motivation and enthusiasm. The intention of the FAC is to have LFI students as well as secondary FI students present the benefits of French Immersion to Grade 5 students throughout the district.

The committee continues to work on an updated FI brochure.

At the meeting, a concern was raised by Mr. Fussell that the district program review on the FI program at Isfeld hadn't yet been completed, as planning for next year's program needed to go ahead.

Next FAC meeting: Monday, January 26th at Isfeld School.

Committee Reports

Grad Committee: Will be meeting next week.

SPC (School Planning Council): Will be meeting on February 16th.

Old Business

Mark Isfeld Secondary Sign: Bill met with Jordan Tinney to discuss this, and the school board would like to meet with City of Courtenay to request a sign rather than have Isfeld administration or PAC representatives approaching the City; we will leave it in their hands, although Bill will continue to remind the board that this is an important issue.

New Comox bus route: A petition was circulated among the students which collected 136 signatures, asking the Transit system in the Comox Valley to add an additional bus to transport Isfeld students to and from school at times that match the school timetable. The matter has been referred to the BC Transit in Victoria, and discussions are continuing.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Lisa Taylor

Motion seconded: Rhonda Snook

Motion carried and meeting adjourned.