qathet School District
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DPAC Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2026

Attending Members
Jessica Jantz, Co-chair (Edgehill)
Kirstie McLeod, Secretary (James Thompson)
Ben Drosdovech (Kelly Creek)
Emily Janes (Edgehill)
Angela Stevens (Henderson)
Jen McLean (Westview)
Danielle Quinney (Brooks)
Jonina Selbie-Parker (Texada)

Attending Stakeholders
Gretchen Conti, Trustee & Board Rep
Paul McKenzie, Superintendent
Chelsea Friesen, Youth Restorative Action Co-ordinator at qathet Community Justice
Irene Peters, Co-Chair & President of qathet Community Justice

Regrets
Kate Boyd, Co-Chair (Brooks)

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm

qathet Community Justice: Chelsea Frisen

qCJ has existed since 2004. It started with alternative education program, and has now been active for 5 years at Brooks. They provide Presentations, Workshops, Community Dialogues, Peer Conflict/Restorative Justice, Facilitator Training for youth, and Mentorship. The program has been free, using grants and time-limited funding for the Restorative Justice program, but current funding ends in March so they need to start charging for their services. Growth is difficult without stable funding.

Restorative Justice: bringing affected parties together for communal/co-operative problem solving and reparation.

A Typical Case Process for Restorative Justice: meet with responsible and affected parties separately, then meet together, make a resolution agreement, and follow up. Typically this resolution is acceptable to all parties and charges are dropped.

Recidivism rate: Responsible parties had a 0% recidivism rate if they completed the full program, ~30% if they completed even part of the program. Feedback was excellent as well: all participants felt respected and safe, and the vast majority were glad they did it and would do it again.

On the prevention side, peacemaking circles are community magic. They are built on Indigenous traditions and emphasise accountability, consent, and safety. The practice builds community, and a sense of safety.

The Community Justice organization as a whole has developed a Classroom Circles curriculum, teaching kids how to build community and practice conflict resolution. This curriculum is for Grades 3-12, and is currently in use in Squamish and Langley. In qathet, the prevention program has been run in Brooks, primarily at the grade 8-10 level, and occasionally with older students, usually under the restorative justice program.

One parent noted that the period that this program has been running matches with the surprising rise in high school students who reported feeling safe at school…and adopting the program at lower grades might improve those responses at the K-7 level.

Feedback on the prevention program has been overwhelmingly positive: Kids like the circle, talking/sharing/hearing others. They felt more confidence, and more connection with classmates. Teachers see more empathy, conflict management and sense of community in the classroom afterwards.

Volunteers are always needed in the program – roles mentioned were facilitators, advocates, and classroom leaders. The hoped-for demographic is peer based: high school students, and youth 17-25.

Teachers or principals can email/approach Chelsea if they want to arrange a session or series of sessions. Texada, James Thompson, and Henderson have all had them in for a session. Grades 5 and 6 have participated. This level of the curriculum is activity-heavy (not discussion-heavy), and has been well-received.

There was discussion about DPAC possibly paying for a parent presentation or district-wide training day to assist in building community in the district and familiarizing parents with the program.

Book recommendation: Reclaiming our Students by Hannah Beach and Tamara Neufeld Strijack.

Treasurer's Report

Ben has not been able to get the records from Siona. He will continue to reach out.

Superintendent's Report – P. McKenzie

The year continues to go well and Paul is very proud of how well the district is doing. The report is mostly addressing older items brought up in the past.

School Supplies

Paul brought the current parent-provided school supplies issue to the Principal's meeting. They were very receptive and will put together some options so Paul can present them next meeting.

FSA

QTA information about the FSA has to be vetted through the ministry to ensure charter of rights compliance and also so the wording doesn't cause issues with the teachers unions. DPAC and PACs can make information available to parents to clarify what their options are, but the district is strictly limited to the current types of communication.

One parent asked what we can we do to support teachers when this adds to their workload? No one is questioning the importance of the information gathered, but rather how to best extract it without adding yet one more thing for staff to do, or at least easing their load elsewhere to make it manageable.

Regarding the lower scores at the grade 7 level, it was observed that early adolescence is also a tough time to engage students in activities, especially when there is no real reason to strive for excellence.

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Sensory Rooms

Sensory rooms are not part of the district OT portfolio, but the district OT, Tawnie, is intrigued and will look into it when she is back from leave. Paul will circle back next meeting.

Tech Tips and Phone/Social Media Guidance for Parents

Communications team has been working on curating a list of possible tools. For example: White Hatter, various podcasts – so far they have identified over 20 resources that could be provided. They are till vetting to ensure they are useful and sufficient for all grades. Digital literacy is another big topic that would be valuable to share. Info could be provided as a brochure.

A weekly link in the WAG was suggested. On the other hand, simplifying the school WAG is a goal this year, so one parent suggested a webpage, with a link at the end of each WAG. Paul also suggested a one-liner, with the link also available vis an icon, sent out with all WAGs.

There are so many ways to communicate: meetings, events, the district app, but bite size information may act as the thin edge of the wedge.

OLC

Parents are looking for clarification on the resource. Children with challenges are often excluded due to resource limitations. Clarity, transparency, openness, inclusivity – these are what is wanted. Ownership seems divorced from the ability to use the resource to its potential.

There was particular interest in more overnight programs, especially in summer. Ideally, the resource would be used by the community for the community children.

It is so important for kids to have the opportunity of connection with nature. Day trips sometimes don't give that opportunity, so ideally we would ensure that kids – including special needs and disadvantaged kids - have overnight opportunities, including during the summer. During the school year it would be nice to have opportunities for more easily overwhelmed kids to have special days with smaller groups, and to have inclusive days for kids who just can't navigate the school bus or have other physical challenges.

Basically, parents would like to have more access and be aware of options. The current website is unhelpful and does not give any way for parents to know what will be offered at the centre at a given time.

Bussing is a limitation, and also a source of overwhelm for some students. Some options include buying a bus specifically for the OLC, or using smaller vans with more trips.

Paul suggested that Hugh give a presentation, open to all district parents. Another suggestion was for all interested parents to email Hugh directly to ensure he's aware of the interest.

Parents asked: What is the funding model? Could we improve access with Youth and Families grants? Could a joint effort be made with the Rec centre or Inclusion?

Paul was asked to look into the matter.

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APs under review

We have a Board Review Policy, and also review APs. We will be adding the DPAC chairs to the emails about the APs that are being reviewed.

Winter Wonderland and Helmets – K Boyd

Helmet rules differ from school to school and between kids and adults. Most schools use the rec centre rule: helmets not required for skaters over 12 unless playing shinny. In general, the DPAC reps felt that their schools required that very kid had a helmet, but adults are not required to do so. After a short discussion, it was agreed that this is poor modeling, and that there should be a blanket rule that everone, adults and kids, wear helmets on the ice. Paul will follow up with Principals.

School check-ins

Kelly Creek: Ben Drosdovech

Things are going well. December was busy with a teachers' lunch, winter wonderland, and the Christmas concert, and one parent providing $500 of gift cards families in need. The power went out at the end of Christmas concert, which made for a memorable ending. .

Hoodies are in – still green, but a darker green this time. Kelly Creek is running a seed fundraiser this spring. There will also be a K-Pop Demon Hunters sing along, snacks provided, and pizza for sale with all proceeds going to a Kelly Creek family who has been struggling with expenses related to ongoing serious medical issues in one of the students.

For literacy week there will be a scholastic book sale, and a book recycle system so kids can swap their books for new-to-them reads.

Improvements upcoming include: painting, playground retrofit, field area maintenance. There has been some discussion that maybe some lighting would be good to add, as the grounds are dark.

KC bylaws need a redo, the current quorum of 6 is too high. Ben asked if the school district has a copy of the current bylaws, as the ones they found are from 1990. Paul will look into it, but he doesn't think so. Another parent suggested that when the bylaws are updated they give provision for voting by proxy so the council can use a chat or text system to efficiently vote on matters that come up between meetings.

Laura provided movie passes for grad.

Henderson: Angela

The Haunted House is Henderson's only fundraiser, and it raised ten thousand dollars. Henderson is looking at funding some playground upgrades, and after today's meeting is hoping to bring the Restorative Justice team to the school, and provide extra time at the Outdoor Learning Centre.

Edgehill: Emily Janes

Hot lunch is still happening, but the Winter Photoshoot fundraiser, the book fair and the pancake breakfast are all cancelled due to renovations.

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Between the cancellations and little inconveniences stacking up (leaks, items stored in the hallway), morale is low. The council has not recently gotten any updates, but one is expected soon. Paul noted that CoW got a small update, but there's not much unexpected. Things are moving, but it's very much in the middle of the process, nothing will be finished in the near future.

The council is just trying to pull back and offer support to make things better as much as possible. With fundraisers not soaking up parent time and council meeting time, there is more opportunity to have presentations for the parents, and that has pulled in new faces. There was a presentation on literacy tips, and parents mentioned that it is nice to be meeting teachers outside the classroom.

Westview: Jen MacLean

Sushi Lunches continue, and PJs and Pancakes is coming up, A textiles class at lunch was funded at teacher request. In the WAG, tech tips by Jen have been helpful

The sensory room has paint on the walls, and the order sheet is in. Emily has been helping and would like a little more information on student needs guide her decisions. The schedule is a little dependant on maintenance availability, so it's not moving super fast, since most regular maintenance hours are going to the major Edgehill renovation. The sensory room uses an old change room and is quite spacious.

There was some discussion of the Track and Field concession fundraiser. There was a little confusion, and no-one is quite sure where the binder is, but it should be Westview's turn to have this opportunity. Jen will look into it and report back.

Note: Jen came back via email after the meeting and said that the binder is with Westview, but they are choosing to waive the right to the fundraiser this year. Edgehill is next in line.

Brooks: Danielle Quinney

The new Brooks sensory room has been put in and is just waiting for supplies to arrive. It took a month, but got the room and a hallway ready for items to be installed. Some students have designated areas, but it's not just for those targeted students, the majority of the area is for general use. The name of the room is still up in the air, as an age-appropriate framing will be needed. After all, it's not just for sensory needs, but rather a place for anyone who is overwhelmed and needs a reset space. Kids at the school are also struggling with anxiety, life challenges, undiagnosed issues, and just the general angst of teenagerhood. Danielle suggested it might even end up being used by staff.

Because needs will change as the student complement changes (e.g. blind students would need different supports.), there is a plan to have a separate account set aside to continue to adapt and keep the function evolving to match those changing needs. Danielle will do some fundraising – Save on Foods will be providing pink carnations on pink shirt day to be sold to students and delivered, similar to Valentines Day. There is also a change for change collection, with posters and collection bins at local schools and daycares.

Variety has never been asked to do a sensory room in a high school, and has told Danielle that they will come do a video to show it off, and install a commemorative plaque. Paul will get the communications team in there as well.

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Texada: Jonina Selbie-Parker

Texada is planning Glow in the Dark dance fundraiser, and another fun day in the field when the weather warms up. It might be similar to the slip and slime day last year, with the fire department truck providing water and buckets for slime fights.

The council was able to fund a reading materials $500 request from one teacher, and they are waiting for the delivery of a book vending machine – not vending books, but prizes for reading 3 or more books.

The council also funded swimming lessons and gymnastics, with several classes going over to PR for the day. The students have a parallel Student council that meets in the same space as the PAC meeting, and they presented a proposal to the PAC to ask for soccer nets for the little kids – proposal. They are asking for $500, but the council thinks it can provide the need for less and is looking at other options. They are also adding disk golf nets to the school grounds.

The school logo is 25 years old and the council has started the process of revamping it by consulting with parents.

Staff appreciation – They did River City Coffee in January, as a welcome back the first week of school. This was very appreciated, with teacher feedback that it was nicer than having one more thing in the scramble of December.

The council is also planning a retirement gift for Carol Wyatt, a beloved teacher who is retiring this year.

There is also a wish to support for families to afford Extracurriculars – The unique nature of Texada means that any extracurricular activities require travel to the mainland, which is costly on top of the cost of the extracurriculars themselves. One parent suggested that hose costs might be defrayed through Kidsport or Jumpstart. Paul will see if the district could contact BC Ferries about discounts for parents and cars, as the kids themselves travel free.

The PAC is looking into organizing a Pro D day for parents.

James Thompson – Kirstie McLeod

We have only 6 active members, one of whom (our secretary) is new this year. Of the 6 active members, 3 are aging out this year (youngest child in grade 7), and one more might not be at the school next year for other reasons. 2026/7 is likely to be a low registration year in general, as the Covid low-birth years squew the demographic, but the council is hopeful that the extreme interest in French Emersion will give us a pool of new parents who may step up to fill the roles that are falling vacant.

In addition, our treasurer, who is one of the aging-out parents, is having difficulty getting to meetings, is finding it impossible to get to the bank during banking hours, and is simply overextended in general. Therefore we held a snap election to redistribute the executive roles to better effect. Our new secretary kept her role, while our former president is the new treasurer, as her youngest is in grade 2, and that is a role best kept for as long a period as possible. Our new president will only be able to serve for 4 months, as she is aging out, but that is the only executive role that will be vacant at the start of the new year. Kirstie has also taken on the role of VP, while keeping her volunteer/fundraising co-ordinator role and her DPAC representative role, all of which may fall vacant next year if her youngest decides to continue at PIE.

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In short, parent engagement is at a low, which may become an emergency next year if we do not get some engagement among new parents.

Other than that, things are going well – we raised $4000 at the Halloween Carnival, and have various other fundraisers active, including a seed sale like the one at Kelly Creek.

Business Arising

There was a great information sheet sent out by the BCCPAC, listing fabulous tools for parents – e.g. foundry, the erase it tool and DPAC is encouraged to share it with our PACs (appended)

Several DPAC members had difficulty around renewing their BCCPAC membership, particularly around the DPAC codes covering the cost. Hopefully Kate will be able to clarify this process at the next meeting.

Next meeting

TBA

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm

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