



Surrey District  
Parents Advisory Council (DPAC)

*STRENGTHENING PACS & EMPOWERING PARENTS*

**Annual Report**  
**2019-2020**

## A message from the President

Dear Surrey parents:

Last year started out great. Our goals in September were set for a year of internal restructuring of our organization and finding new ways to engage with our parent community. We had new parents stepping forward to join in on the work, giving us a full Board of Directors. Our participation had nearly doubled since previous years. However, we ended up having quite the short and unprecedented year.

Although our meetings came to a stop, our work continued. Discussions with the District were ongoing as we worked tirelessly to address the many concerns our parent community had regarding COVID-19 and the effects it has had on our children.

Although the majority agreed that we should return to school, we also agreed that other options should be provided for the families that did not wish to return. This concern was shared with our parent community via a Survey our Directors created. Based on the results, a plan of action was taken to lobby the Ministry of Education. This work should show how strong our voice can be, as it proved to be effective and an announcement was made giving Surrey Parents another option.

Change has been good for Surrey DPAC. A new path that truly represents Surrey parents has been paved. We started down that path and worked hard to amplify our voice, resulting in other districts recognizing our work and seeking us for guidance.

Surrey is the biggest District in the province, representing the largest number of students. We must amplify our voice even more, we must continue down the path of truly representing our parents, and we must continue the work of getting meaningful results for our District.

Sincerely,

Rina Diaz | President

*Strengthening PACs & Empowering Parents*

### **Surrey District 36 Parent Advisory Council (Surrey DPAC)**

14033 92 Ave Surrey, B.C. V3V 0B7

Website: [SurreyDPAC.ca](http://SurreyDPAC.ca)

Facebook: [@surreydpac](https://www.facebook.com/surreydpac) Twitter : [@SurreyDPAC](https://twitter.com/SurreyDPAC)

## 2019-2020 Board of Directors

<b>President</b>	Rina Diaz
<b>Vice-President</b>	Jyotika Jasuja
<b>Secretary</b>	Amanda Grimson
<b>Treasurer</b>	Lakhhbir Johal
<b>Communications</b>	Dean McGee
<b>Director</b>	Tajinder Bhatti
<b>Director</b>	Megan Carbonetto
<b>Director</b>	Jagwinder Mahal
<b>Director</b>	Harvir Sandhu
<b>Co-Director</b>	Jesse Sandhu
<b>Director</b>	Eka Sidhu
<b>Co-Director</b>	Rani Senghera
<b>Director</b>	Rajeshri Singh
<b>Director</b>	Alexandria Villafane
<b>Resigned</b>	Jacqueline Izowski ( <i>District staff unable to hold Board seat</i> )
<b>Resigned</b>	Robert Ran ( <i>no longer in District</i> )
<b>Resigned</b>	Anissa Rimer Ly ( <i>District staff unable to hold Board seat</i> )

## Treasurer's Report

*Note: The previous year's financial statement is included here. The budget remained unchanged for 2019/20, and due to circumstances the financial statement is still being finalized. It will be amended to this report once finalized.*

2018-19	Budget	General		Gaming		Term Dep.
<b>Bank Balance June 1 2018</b>		<b>8827.59</b>		<b>2884</b>		<b>2233.35</b>
		<b>Withdrawals</b>	<b>Deposits</b>	<b>Withdrawals</b>	<b>Deposits</b>	<b>Deposits</b>
Outstanding Costs Associated with 2017-18		507.24		1643.28		
Bank Fees (June - April)	36	16.5		16.5		
Cheque Printing Fees		4		1		
Term Deposit Interest			58.72			
Term Deposit Increase		2766.65				2766.65
Refreshments - General Meetings	1000	539.12				
Conference Fees & Expenses	2000	893.5				
BCCPAC Annual Fees	75	75				
Supplies	1968	185.42				
Annual DPAC Board Retreat	300	262.5				
Gaming Grant					2500	
GCD Surrey Schools			4513.23			
<b>BALANCE APRIL 30 2019</b>		<b>8149.61</b>		<b>3723.22</b>		<b>5,000</b>
<b>Outstanding Cheques/ Invoices</b>						
Honorariums	65	119.02				
BCCPAC Conference & AGM Fees	2500	1300		765.16		
Mileage				485.28		
<b>Outstanding Bank Fees (May 2019)</b>		<b>1.5</b>		<b>1.5</b>		
<b>Less outstanding cheques / invoices</b>		<b>1420.52</b>		<b>1251.94</b>		<b>5000</b>
<b>General Account Cash Position</b>		<b>6729.09</b>				
<b>Gaming Account Cash Position</b>				<b>2471.28</b>		
<b>Term Deposit Cash Position</b>						<b>5000</b>
<b>TOTAL CASH POSITION</b>		<b>14200.37</b>				

\* Term Deposit matures Jan 30 2020 @ 2.8%

## District Committees

Surrey District decided to eliminate all Standing Committees and create the Learning Liaison Committee. A summary of these changes is provided below. DPAC has two seats in the learning Liaison Committee and attended the one meeting that was held last year. The first meeting was about the introduction of the Learning Liaison Committee and included a discussion that mapped out what choice programs were in the District.

*The following was submitted to the Board of Education by Superintendent Jordan Tinney, January 2020:*

The Board of Education and trustees participate in numerous committees. While some are dedicated Board Committees such as Budget, others are external and are an important part of the work of the Board both for outreach and specific liaison.

The Board of Education currently participates on 32 committees. From hiring Principals, to helping shape the City's Parks and Recreation, to liaising with our community stakeholders, each committee serves a different function. The committees are:

### Standing Committees of the Board of Education

- Budget Committee (to be renamed Finance Committee)
- Policy Committee
- Audit Committee

### Stakeholders and Elected Officials Liaison Meetings

- Board/City Liaison
- CUPE Liaison
- DPAC Liaison
- EPEG Liaison
- SPVPA Liaison
- STA Liaison

### Advisory Committees for District Choice Programs

- French Immersion
- Intensive Fine Arts
- Montessori
- Traditional

### District Committees

- Aboriginal Education Council
- Student Voice (iDEAS36)
- Principal and Vice-Principal Selection Committees
- Trustee Representation on External Committees

- BCPSEA
- BCSTA
- Metro ELL Consortium
- City of Surrey
- City of Surrey – Parks, Recreation and Culture
- Teacher Qualification Service
- BCSTA – Student Initiatives
- BCSTA – Credentials
- BCSTA – Professional Learning and Legislative Committees
- BCTF/BCSTA Group Life Insurance
- Board of Trade
- City of White Rock
- District Parent Advisory Council
- Make Children First (White Rock)
- SEEDS (Food Action Coalition)
- Surrey Crime Prevention

Through these 32 committees the Board participates directly in bringing the voice of education to matters locally and provincially.

In any governance structure, there are times to refine and adjust. Surrey has close to 75,000 students and there is a desire to adjust our Advisory Committees for District Choice Programs so that they are better positioned to represent all students in Surrey rather than a subset of our diverse population. When you consider enrolment, our Programs of Choice represent a small percentage of our population (5004 students in total), but they hold the status of holding four dedicated committees for the Board. In total:

- There are 577 students in Montessori at three schools.
- There are 363 students in dedicated Fine Arts at two schools.
- There are 809 students in Traditional programs at three school.
- There are 3255 students in French Immersion at 16 schools.

As we adjust our committees, we want to ensure that our dedicated Board committees directly support the goals of the Board of Education which are:

- Supporting the design of engaging learning environments for all students.
- Operational efficiencies that prioritize resources to directly support learning.
- Relationships with community partners to broaden opportunities for students.
- Advocacy for necessary facilities and resources.
- Supporting schools and workplaces that are safe and caring for all.

As a Board of Education, we have a committee for Policy, a committee for Audits, and a committee for Finance. We have no standing “Education” committee that helps create a liaison between school trustees and the public on the questions of how we are delivering educational programs as a district. While our Programs of Choice are important and certainly our status of a bilingual nation is critical and central to who we are as a nation, there is an imbalance with four specific advocacy committees

representing fewer than 5000 students and no committee representing all students and the myriad of programs and services we provide. For one example, we have over 18,000 students who are English Language Learners and there is no advocacy committee for their needs.

We are proposing to create a structure for the Board to continue to work toward its goals and provide a direct link between the public and the members of the Board on the broader topic of educational programs for all students. This option merges our current Advocacy Committees into a formal liaison meeting which can address the needs of our community and all children.

Under policy 2680 Stakeholders and Elected Officials Liaison Meetings, the Board has opportunities to ensure that meaningful dialogue is created around policy direction. Guided by Policy 2680 which defines Liaison Committees we propose that the Board establish a new more inclusive way to engage with our public around a broad range of educational topics.

This liaison committee will be comprised of a core of trustees and staff in addition to invites to members of the community. This core group of participants then will be supplemented on an as needed basis depending on the topics at hand. The Committee will be called the Learning Liaison Committee.

Under the general terms of reference for Liaison Committees as described in policy 2680, there shall be one liaison committee to directly explore how the Board is achieving its educational goals. Tasked with exploring each of the goals, how we are working to achieve those goals and how we are performing as a district, this liaison committee will meet six times per year and will align its meeting agendas with the goals of the Board. Each meeting is anticipated to be two hours in duration. Potential meeting agenda items include:

- How are we doing – District Performance
- Aboriginal achievement
- Student Support Services
- Leadership – building professional capacity
- Post-Secondary partnerships
- Curriculum and Instruction

Composition of committee:

- Chair – Trustee as designated by the Chair of the Board.
- Trustees – two others as assigned by the Chair of the Board.
- Senior Staff – Superintendent or designate
- CUPE – two representatives
- DPAC – two representatives
- SPVPA – two representatives
- STA – two representatives
- Students – two representatives
- Other guests and staff as appropriate and as invited by the Chair or Superintendent depending on the topics on the agenda. All trustees are invited to the meetings.

Agendas will be published and distributed in advance.

For the remainder of the 2019-20 school year, it is suggested that there be three meetings in February, April and May with the agendas being:

- February: Programs of Choice
- April: Curriculum changes and core competencies
- May: Supporting students with special needs

## Written submission to Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

*The following was submitted on behalf of Surrey DPAC in June 2020:*

Surrey School District 36 Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) is a non-profit organization, representing the interests of Surrey parents and students in the public education system. We represent the parent voice of the largest district in B.C. which is home to approximately 74,000 students and continues to grow by approximately 1,000 more each year. 3,200 of our student population is of Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations, Métis and Inuit). More than 8,000 of our students are studying in portables, which is equivalent to the student population of New Westminster.

Our district has 101 elementary schools, 20 secondary schools, five student learning centres, three adult education centres, a distributed (online) learning program and a variety of satellite and inter-agency programs serving a wide range of specific student needs. All of these are experiencing multiple levels of underfunding.

Surrey Schools 2019/2020 Budget (preliminary):

Operating Budget: \$725,233,116

Operating Breakdown:

Instruction .....	\$ 613,464,915
District Administration .....	\$ 18,596,151
Operations & Maintenance .....	\$ 74,605,385
Transportation .....	\$ 7,077,520

Surrey Schools devotes proportionately more of its 2019/2020 operating budget to instruction, 86%.

Surrey has approximately 360 portables. Each new portable costs \$210,000 with additional costs of \$75,000 per portable to move a unit to a new school location as the district tries to shift and adjust to demand.

Portable classrooms negatively impact our students in many ways such as



- taking up valuable outdoor play space,
- not providing basic washroom facilities,
- unsafe learning environments

With most of our budget consumed by instruction and portables, we are left with basically nothing towards providing our students with a safe and equitable education. That means that our students will receive reduced educational services such as:

- Student support services for our most vulnerable
- Less counselors, librarians and, janitors in our schools
- Reduced opportunities for choice programs.

On March 01, 2019, a story featured by The Vancouver Sun reminded Surrey parents of a promise:

Premier John Horgan’s government promised in the 2017 election to eliminate the use of portables in Surrey schools within four years and cut their use in half within two years.

However, executing on that promise has proven difficult so far and Horgan has admitted the timelines will not be met. The number of portables in Surrey has continued to climb because the district has the fastest-growing enrolment in the province.

“Regrettably many children suffered underfunding in the K-12 system from 2002 to 2018 until the Supreme Court finally brought sense to the former government,” Horgan told reporters. “And that has led to an increased demand for portables because the class size and class composition language the B.C. Liberals ignored unlawfully are now being implemented. On top of that Surrey is the fastest growing district in the province.”

Whether we agree or not, that the “problem” was caused by another government, we can certainly agree on the fact that we need a solution. We need to invest more into our education system, and we need to do it now.

In a 2001 report, THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN CANADA, The Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) stated:

“We believe that education is a lifelong learning process and that we must continue to strive to create a learning society in which the acquisition, renewal, and use of knowledge are cherished. We also believe that the future of our society depends on informed and educated citizens who, while fulfilling their own goals of personal and professional development, also contribute to social and economic progress. On the international scene, our activities should reflect these values and our priorities, while contributing to strengthening our role globally. Above all, we want all citizens to have a fair and equitable opportunity in whatever educational and training endeavours they may pursue.”

Insights on Canadian Society, The association between skills and low income

A study conducted by Andrew Heisz, Geranda Notten and Jerry Situ:

The article explores how skill proficiencies are related to household income for Canadians aged 16 to 65 using data from the first wave of the Longitudinal and International Study of Adults (LISA), conducted in

2012. The article also demonstrates how the relationship between skill level and low income changes after controlling for other characteristics known to increase the risk of low income.

- In 2012, 17% of Canadian adults aged 16 to 65 had a literacy score corresponding to level 1 and below, meaning that they could only find single pieces of information in shorts texts or only had a basic vocabulary. About 13% were in the two highest categories of literacy skills (level 4 and level 5).
- The median household income for individuals who were in the lowest category of literacy proficiency (level 1 and below) was \$49,700, compared with \$84,600 among those who were in the two highest categories (level 4 and level 5).
- Literacy skill level and household income are positively related. At \$84,600, the median household income for individuals with the highest literacy proficiency (level 4 and level 5) was 70% higher than it was for those with lowest literacy proficiency (level 1 and below), and 33% higher than for those in the level 2 proficiency category.

Other research has shown that skills have a positive effect on individual earnings even after controlling for other characteristics such as educational attainment.

Building on this evidence, this article examines the relationship between skills and household income. Specifically, this study examines whether having low skills increases the likelihood of living in a low-income family, and whether the effects persist after controlling for other factors known to increase the risk of low income.

The article further showed that skills were related to demographic characteristics, such as educational attainment, as well as whether the individual was a member of an at-risk group. In this section, a regression model is used to test whether the relationship between skills and low income persists once controls for other characteristics common to low-income populations are applied.

Several low-income models are tested. Each model controls for a different number of factors that are expected to affect low income such as educational attainment, immigrant status, the presence of activity limitations, family type and other demographic characteristics. The strategy is to compare the regression coefficient estimates across multiple models to see if the relationship between skills and low income persists as various control factors are added.

As data shows, our society and economy cannot wait another 16 years.

In 2018 the Ministry of Education assigned an Independent Review Panel to look at the funding model for British Columbia. This Committee met and collected data from various stakeholders and organizations to complete the final report (pdf). Listed are a few of the concerns expressed by various districts:

- frustrated that they are expected to contribute to capital projects, as requested by Treasury Board.
- fluctuations in the salary differential supplement, which does not recognize all employee groups.

- districts experiencing rapid enrolment growth or decline may require constant reorganization of school boundaries, putting significant pressure on school facilities as districts try to ‘right size’ their facilities and operations to match enrolment

Annual Facilities Grant does not meet the needs of many school districts, which means that they must supplement this grant with surpluses to address facility maintenance issues, which can be costlier in the context of older and/or underutilized facilities.

The Panel also reviewed all factors that are within the scope of school district operations and, based on this information, it is clear there are two predominant areas that drive additional costs: students that require additional supports and unique school district characteristics. This is consistent with feedback provided by school districts during the regional sessions and with the results of the stakeholder surveys completed in early 2018. These specific needs represent additional costs for education programming and should be funded before the per student allocations to ensure all students have equitable access to programming. The Panel expects that as a result of these recommendations, the balance between per-student funding and the supplements for unique districts and inclusive education will change; part of the per-student allocation will need to be reallocated into the supplements. The panel provided 22 recommendations.

The panel concluded that:

“Education, particularly the K-12 public system, is the foundation of our future. Curious, passionate learners who value diversity and become productive members of society are the graduates British Columbia needs. All British Columbians benefit from a great education system, and every student should have equity of educational opportunity to achieve their potential. Education funding allocations should support this aspirational goal.”

Upon revision of our district budget, we request that this Committee further recommend to the Treasury board that Budget 2021 include an increase of funding in Education to allow the Ministry to implement recommendations 1, 4, 5 and 6 which would effectively provide much needed relief to our overcrowding and underfunding issues.

Surrey DPAC, on behalf of all Surrey families, also requests that the Provincial Government waive district financial contribution on new schools or expansions.

We understand that in order to accomplish these recommendations it will mean that the amount for Education allocated by the Treasury Board needs to increase. However, if we continue to receive the same amount without an increase and our districts continue to reallocate and cut the same amount of funds, we will never change anything.

We ask this committee to consider the Surrey District PAC’s recommendations that are critical for every Surrey student to have equitable access to public education with the supports and services they need to thrive and succeed according to the School Act.

We thank you for your time.

## Resolutions submitted to BCCPAC AGM

A lot of work was put in to assisting PACs with their own resolutions. Our directors reached out to PACs to guide them in the registration with BCCPAC and proxy voting to be ready to represent our District at the Annual meeting. However, due to the pandemic, all resolution submissions were cancelled along with the BCCPAC AGM.

Surrey DPAC was unable to submit any resolutions nor attend the Annual Conference and AGM.

## Survey submitted to Minister of Education

[Survey results can be seen here.](#)

## Written submission to Minister of Education

*The following was submitted on behalf of Surrey DPAC in August 2020:*

[Open Letter to the Minister of Education, Rob Fleming](#)

Re: K-12 Restart Plan 2020

Dear Mr. Fleming, Surrey DPAC is the parent voice representing the largest district in the Province. Surrey is home to more than 74,000 students, almost one-quarter of the provincial student population. With the previous Government, our district dealt with many issues regarding funding, deteriorating school buildings and overcrowding. Today we find ourselves having to deal with the inability of this Government to deliver educational options that meet the needs of our families during a pandemic.

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*“Physical distancing has been the most effective part of B.C.’s infection management,” - Fleming.  
June 2020*

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Since the cancellation of classes back in March, our families have been patient and flexible. We have done our part by adhering to the recommendations from Dr. Henry with physical distancing and keeping our bubbles small.

Since June, our families have been waiting anxiously for B.C.’s Back to School Plan. On July 29th, 2020 what you delivered was a framework for Districts and Boards of Education to follow. However, that

framework did not include hybrid or remote learning as an option. Something that our district desperately needs due to overcrowding schools.

As of today, our parents only have the option to return to overcrowded schools as per our district plan or choose an alternative such as homeschooling. Distributed learning is no longer an option as our district is reporting that they are at full capacity.

What we need is, the option AND funding for our district to create a remote learning hub for our families that do not wish to return to school due to COVID-19 concerns. This program needs to be flexible to allow students to remain enrolled in their current school while they attend the learning hub (like Calgary's' return to school plan) and once safe to do so, students can transfer back to in-class instruction.

Providing our families with this option, will in fact alleviate the crisis we are facing right now of not being able to have smaller classes due to overcrowding and allow for proper physical distancing. Remote learning would also allow our families that wish to remain at home, the opportunity to do so without the risk or fear of exposing their loved ones.

Our families agree that the education of our children needs to continue, but we also agree that it is not worth more than the safety of our families. The mixed messages coming from Dr. Henry and your B.C.'s Back to School Plan are extremely confusing when it comes to the rules in place for our schools. Our understanding is that there are two sets of rules, one set for our schools and one set for the general public. Our rules need to be the same. We are having trouble understanding how a family cannot host a family gathering (Surrey is home to large families of 20+) but our children can sit for long periods of time in a room of 30. A small room that does not allow to properly distance. 30 people outside of a family bubble not wearing masks. Then, they can go and interact or cross over to mix with another 30. If a staff member that moves around learning groups comes into our children's learning group, that exposure number of 60 has doubled.

**Minister Fleming, we call on you to immediately implement the following to the stated back to school plan:**

- 1. Provide an option AND funding for our district to create a hybrid/remote learning plan for our families that do not wish to return to school due to COVID-19 concerns. This program needs to be flexible to allow students to remain enrolled in their current school while they attend the learning hub (like Calgary's' return to school plan) and once safe to do so, students can transfer back to in-class instruction.**
- 2. Mandate mask use whenever physical distancing is not possible for staff and students in classrooms, labs, and libraries—not just common spaces like hallways—with the exception of medical reasons.**
- 3. Provide more funding for cleaning**

Data collected by our Surrey DPAC Board indicates that 90% of our families are experiencing anxiety and stress from returning to overcrowded schools. 57% answered yes to returning to school reluctantly as they feel it's their only choice. While only 18% of our respondents are confident with our current plan.

When we asked about masks, 60% responded that it should be mandatory for all in any space, while only 15% agreed the current plan was enough.

We know a hybrid or remote learning option would work for our families as 47% of our respondents said the model used back in June worked for their families, while 37% agreed it worked, however it was not sustainable.

We understand that the evidence that children are at a lower risk of developing and transmitting COVID-19, it is clearly outlined in your plan, but that small possibility is still there. That is why we need you to understand the anxiety and stress we are facing. We need you to understand that for some of our families, it means playing a game of Russian Roulette with the lives of their loved ones.

This pandemic has been spreading since 2019. That means we have almost completed a year living in a pandemic with no vaccine and no end in sight. Our families continue to sacrifice many things. Please do not leave our families with the alternative to choose to sacrifice their loved ones for the sake of their children's education.

Sincerely,

Rina Diaz | President

*Strengthening PACs & Empowering Parents*

**Surrey District 36 Parent Advisory Council (Surrey DPAC)**

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