



Chair (Vancouver DPAC) <chair@vancouverdpac.org>

Gratitude, thanks and ongoing COVID measures (was: rapid antigen tests and air quality monitoring)

Chair (Vancouver DPAC) <chair@vancouverdpac.org>
To: "Chair (Vancouver DPAC)" <chair@vancouverdpac.org>

Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 5:14 PM

From: **Chair (Vancouver DPAC)** <chair@vancouverdpac.org>

Date: Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 5:13 PM

Subject: Gratitude, thanks and ongoing COVID measures (was: rapid antigen tests and air quality monitoring)

To: Janet Fraser <Janet.Fraser@vsb.bc.ca>, <hmcgregor@vsb.bc.ca>

Cc: David Nelson <dnelson@vsb.bc.ca>, David Green <dgreen@vsb.bc.ca>, Vice-Chair (Vancouver DPAC) <vicechair@vancouverdpac.org>, Carmen Cho <carmen.cho@vsb.bc.ca>, Estrellita Gonzalez <estrellita.gonzalez@vsb.bc.ca>, Fraser Ballantyne <fraser.ballantyne@vsb.bc.ca>, Lois Chan-Pedley <lois.chan-pedley@vsb.bc.ca>, Jennifer Reddy <jennifer.reddy@vsb.bc.ca>, Allan Wong <allan.wong@vsb.bc.ca>, Oliver C. Hanson <oliver.hanson@vsb.bc.ca>, Barb Parrott <barbara.parrott@vsb.bc.ca>, Ricky Huang <rhuang@vsb.bc.ca>, superintendent (Jan Unwin) <superintendent@vsb.bc.ca>

Hi Janet, trustees, staff:

Thank you.

We were pleased to be able to communicate our exec concerns with VCH MHO. It was a short conversation and we are appreciative that they were open to a followup conversation with VCH DPACs to speak to our collective concerns.

Our executive look forward to meeting again with VCH. In that meeting, we hope to obtain a more detailed understanding of why BC asserts that more broadly available rapid tests are not supported by the evidence.

Many other jurisdictions believe asymptomatic rapid antigen tests are an important layer of protection. DPAC executive does NOT believe that rapid tests will be a panacea but we question why the province is not using tools at our disposal to blunt the impact of this next wave, and to provide additional information to help families make appropriate decisions.

Given the use of rapid tests in other Canadian jurisdictions and the coming impact of the latest variant, it was disappointing to hear about our province's lack of preparation for use of this tool. We believe that if there was provincial support to add more broadly distributed rapid antigen tests to our layers of protection, packaging and distribution concerns would be surmountable through volunteer networks that include parents.

Parents want to help make the return to school next year as safe as possible.

We recognize that the District wishes to follow the guidance and advice of public health. **That does not preclude the District from showing leadership and advocating for additional safety measures for our students.**

Last year, we thanked district staff for working within the constraints provided by the province to create an innovative secondary model that was the envy of many parents around the province. We have been supportive of the incredible work that district staff have done on ventilation in the last 12 to 18 months. This fall, we supported and applauded trustees for their leadership extending the mask mandate. We believe your leadership protected VSB students and students around the province.

VSB trustees and staff have shown that they are willing to go above and beyond to keep our students safe from the time they leave for school in the morning to the time they return home.

On behalf of parents, I want to express my respect and gratitude for that work, and I encourage trustees and staff to continue to advocate for additional safety for our students.

Wishing all of you a safe holiday for you and your families.

--

Gord Lau

Chair, Vancouver DPAC

Honouring the traditional, unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh Peoples

Website: vancouverdpac.org · Twitter: [@VanDPAC](https://twitter.com/VanDPAC) · Facebook: [@VSB DPAC](https://www.facebook.com/VSB DPAC)

On Thu, Dec 16, 2021 at 2:48 PM Janet Fraser <Janet.Fraser@vsb.bc.ca> wrote:

Dear Gord,

Thanks again for your email and for sharing the concerns and perspective of the DPAC Executive. I understand you had the opportunity to share these concerns directly with Dr. Choi in her key role as Medical Health Officer for Vancouver Coastal Health and I am pleased that you were able to connect with her directly.

Re: Rapid Antigen Testing:

As a District we continue to work directly with Children' Hospital to make PCR test kits available for families. Test kits can be picked up at the school, the test can be completed at home, and the kit can then be dropped off for analysis. We understand from public health that PCR tests continue to be the most accurate and reliable of the tests available and are the preferred method of testing in regions where access to testing and timely results are available. The good news is that in Vancouver PCR test results continue to be available quickly, often in less than 24 hours. Should the Ministry and public health provide new guidance on the use of Rapid Tests, District staff will work quickly to implement any such direction in Vancouver schools. It is important that as a District we continue to follow the guidance and advice of public health in this regard.

With regards,
Janet Fraser

Janet Fraser (she/her)
Chair, Vancouver School Board

Honouring that we are unlearning and relearning on the unceded traditional lands of the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations

From: Chair (Vancouver DPAC) <chair@vancouverdpac.org>

Sent: December 13, 2021 4:29 PM

To: Carmen Cho <Carmen.Cho@vsb.bc.ca>; Estrellita Gonzalez <estrellita.gonzalez@vsb.bc.ca>; Fraser Ballantyne <Fraser.Ballantyne@vsb.bc.ca>; Janet Fraser <Janet.Fraser@vsb.bc.ca>; Lois Chan-Pedley <Lois.Chan-Pedley@vsb.bc.ca>; Jennifer Reddy <Jennifer.Reddy@vsb.bc.ca>; Allan Wong <Allan.Wong@vsb.bc.ca>; Oliver Hanson <Oliver.Hanson@vsb.bc.ca>; Barbara Parrott <Barbara.Parrott@vsb.bc.ca>; Ricky Huang <rhuang@vsb.bc.ca>

Cc: Superintendent (Jan Unwin) <superintendent@vsb.bc.ca>; David Green <dgreen@vsb.bc.ca>; David Nelson <dnelson@vsb.bc.ca>; Vice-Chair (Vancouver DPAC) <vicechair@vancouverdpac.org>

Subject: {EXT} DPAC on ongoing COVID measures

Dear Trustees,

Last week, we had our DPAC Executive Meeting. The topic of COVID safety is one that still concerns parents and our executive. DPAC would like to ask for your help in two ways:

- To promote and attain a safe return to schools after the winter break; for the Trustees to quickly and formally request that our provincial government release Rapid Antigen Test Kits to the VSB so that VSB can make available a kit of 5 Rapid Antigen Tests available to every VSB student prior to start of Winter Break. This is

being done in similar sized school districts across Canada; for reference check out Hamilton-Wentworth District that has 49,520 students: <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/blog/rapid-antigen-testing-kits/>

- We would also like you to know that our executive passed the following motion:

"DPAC write a letter to the VSB asking for continuous air quality (CO2) testing at all of the portables (there are a total of 114) that are used by VSB students to either assure parents that the environment is safe and meets ASHRAE recommendations or provide mitigations to improve the environment."

The ask here is for the Trustees to find the monies (our estimate is approximately \$30,000) for this important air quality testing at their earliest opportunity, hopefully at either the Private Meeting or the Board Meeting on Monday, Dec 13, so that this testing work can begin in January 2022 as time is of the essence.

We are aware that newly built schools have real time, ongoing monitoring. All students should have access to safe, healthy classrooms during a pandemic. The CPHO has recognized that airborne transmission of COVID-19 is significant. Dr Katherine Smart, president of the CMA and Dr Henry, PHO, have stated that children are at risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 and/or contribute to community transmission of the virus. Allowing classrooms to monitor the continued functioning of ventilation and filtration, allows the occupants of that room to take actions to minimize risk of transmission. If the occupants of a room are aware of higher CO2 levels, they are able to take actions to mitigate the risks. Monitoring CO2 levels validates the work that the VSB has done. Not providing that information equates to not providing a safe, healthy learning environment which is in direct opposition to the BC Ministry of Education's School Act and the VSB' own COVID-19 plan.

Looking forward to your action and thanking you in advance.

Thank you,

--

Gord Lau
Chair, Vancouver DPAC

Honouring the traditional, unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples

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Gord Lau
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Gord Lau
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