

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

Date: Wed, Feb 3, 2021 at 8:30 AM

Subject: General feedback - "return to school" - Feb 2021

To: VSB Trustees

Hi there:

As previously mentioned, I'm trying to gather parent feedback and provide it to staff and trustees on a more regular basis. I trust you'll have already heard much of it in various forms -- but I think it is valuable to gather it here (and provide some perspective from DPAC)

(ONE) Option 4 transition program - continuation to year end

Numerous option 4 transition program (O4) parents have been expressing their deep concerns and fears regarding the end of the O4 program. O4 families have had to continuously advocate for the continuation of a program that allows them to keep their children's places at their schools and keeps their families safe during this health emergency. This causes undue stress during an already stressful time.

At this point in the year, the majority of families that are comfortable returning have likely already done so -- and given the current numbers in the pandemic and concerns about more transmissible variants, the remainder are understandably currently unwilling to return. Our parent survey results clearly show a large percentage of O4 families are simply unable to return to school until vaccines are widely available and it is safe for their children to do so.

DPAC believes that the pandemic has created a new group of vulnerable children, based on the medical vulnerability of their families, and that it is the district's responsibility to provide an educational program that includes those students.

Therefore, DPAC asks that the VSB extend O4 until the end of the pandemic.

(TWO) O4 resourcing and expectations

O4 parents have understood since the start of the year that they would need to be closely involved with their child's education. They have been sharing information amongst themselves and with DPAC from the start of the school year regarding their experience with the O4 model.

Our parent survey results show that the majority of O4 parents are looking for additional support. Anecdotally, their learning experience is very uneven. Furthermore, parents are concerned that there is insufficient support for teachers, as it seems their work with O4 students is being done during lunch breaks or actually during class time (with a class to manage in the background).

I would just like to share two separate parent experiences:

#1 - An example of two different grades at one Vancouver school:

(redacted)

Vancouver school #2:

(redacted)

These O4 anecdotes are both encouraging in that they inform us about what a positive O4 experience looks like and concerning because the majority of survey respondents don't feel they are getting the support they need.

DPAC asks that the VSB set minimum expectations for O4 instruction, allocate additional FTEs to meet those minimum expectations and create a community of practice to share best practices.

(THREE) Synchronous remote learning

DPAC has received feedback from parents of secondary school children concerned about the secondary model in the VSB. Our parent survey shows that a majority of parents at the secondary level do not believe their children are receiving the support they need. A majority of parents across the district want their child to receive more in-person instruction.

Parents that accept that additional in-person learning opportunities are limited by the PHO cohort guidelines believe that the VSB should embrace the transformational change seen in many industries to deliver synchronous remote instruction. For example, they believe that classes should make use of technology to allow in-person classes to be live streamed to the remaining remote students in the class, so that all learners would have additional instruction hours.

DPAC recognizes that there are technological and pedagogical hurdles to overcome but believes that the VSB should work with stakeholders to address those barriers as soon as possible to benefit our students in the 2020-2021 school year and to provide additional capacity and resiliency to our education system in future years.

Thank you for your time.

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Gord Lau
Chair, Vancouver DPAC