

March 31, 2015

To all PJ Parents,

On Wednesday, April 1 there will be a PAC General meeting at 9 am in the library – our 4th of the year. Please join us for coffee, muffins and an opportunity to learn about the variety of initiatives taking place at PJ. In addition, there will be a special discussion on the challenges PAC is facing with its subsidy programs and some proposed solutions. We welcome your feedback and input before any changes are voted on or implemented.

Proposed Changes to PAC Subsidy Programs:

Increasing demands for spending on school infrastructure, special programs and technology is straining PAC's budget in its current form. The PAC Executive is considering significant policy changes with respect to two key areas involving PAC subsidies to take effect next fall.

The first is the Principal's Discretionary Fund (\$5,000) that offers financial assistance to families to help cover class field trip fees and Quebec trip costs. The second is the Quebec Trip subsidy (30% of total fundraising) provided to parents of participating Grade 7 students. Both these subsidy programs were originally instated more than a decade ago when large budget surpluses were the norm. In order for PAC to continue supporting great programs and initiatives that make our school special, there needs to be adjustments on where PAC is allocating parents' hard earned dollars. PAC is proposing to reduce the amount of funding for subsidies to approximately 15-17% of the budget rather than 36-47%.

Subsidies	2012	2013	2014
a. Principal Discretionary Funds	6,000	6,000	5,000
b. Quebec Rebate	34,810	24,937	23,717.60
c. Fundraising Income	86,763.49	68,843.29	79,058.68
TOTAL (a + b /c)	40,810 (47%)	30,937 (45%)	28,717.60 (36%)

The Principal's Discretionary Fund:

A number of issues surrounding this discretionary fund require PAC to make changes – or even eliminate – this program. At this time, there is no formal application process to back up the subsidy requests which makes it difficult to gauge the effectiveness of this initiative. It is an additional administrative task for our Principal to manage and is consuming over 6% of the budget. It should be noted that most of our peer schools do not offer these types of funds.

Option #1: Reduce and restructure the Discretionary Fund: It is proposed that the Discretionary Fund program be pared back and managed differently starting the next school year (2015/16) as the "PAC Financial Assistance Fund".

- ✓ Reduce the total amount available to \$1,500.
- ✓ Funds will be administered exclusively by the PAC Treasurer and Vice Chair.
- ✓ Application forms will need to be filled out and submitted (in confidence) to the Treasurer.
- ✓ Funds will be available for class field trips only.
- ✓ Requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

Option #2: Elimination of Discretionary fund: It is proposed that the Discretionary Fund be eliminated starting the next school year (2015/16).

The Grade 7 Quebec Trip Subsidy

PAC appreciates the importance of this milestone event for our graduating students and will continue to provide significant financial support. It is proposed that the subsidy offered to Quebec trip should be changed from a percentage of all funds raised (30%) to a fixed amount of \$12,000. These funds would be given to the Quebec Trip Committee each fall and put towards the costs of the trip (e.g. the grad cruise, a special tour, the grad hoodie, etc.). This change would represent a reduction of approximately half the total that has been given to this event over the previous couple of years.

Why PAC is considering this change of course:

- Reducing the subsidy levels to the Quebec trip will allow more funds to be dedicated to special projects, events and programs that benefit the entire school community.
- This policy falls into line with Ecole Cedardale, the other French Immersion school in the district, that moved successfully to a fixed amount of support for their Grade 7 Quebec Trip.
- Administratively, a fixed budget number is far simpler for the Treasurer to work with for developing annual budget projections.
- The Quebec Trip Committee will have certainty around the exact amount of funds they will be working with at the start of the trip planning process.

Timeline for Discussion and Voting

Both these proposals will be discussed at the next PAC General Meeting (April 1). Formal motions to adopt the proposals – or amended versions of them - will be put forward at the subsequent General Meeting (May). PJ parents will be encouraged to attend these meetings, engage and have their voice heard. Additional opportunities for feedback will be made available throughout the month before the May vote.