

Merritt Bench Elementary PAC
September 16, 2025
Meeting held at Bench Elementary Library & via Teams

Present:

Daniella Bennie, Principal

Sue Sterling

Bailee Allen, President

Stephanie Johnson, Treasurer

Gordon Swan, Trustee

Dana Grebinski, Fundraising

Kayla Sofiak-McNaney, Secretary

Amy Douthwright

Meeting called to order: 6:31pm

Approval of minutes

A. Motion to approve the minutes for June 3, 2025 made by Bailee. Seconded by Stephanie.

AGM Executive Nominations

President - Bailee nominates Bethany Ryan. All in favour. Bethany accepts.

Vice President - Sue nominates Bailee Allen. All in favour. Bailee accepts.

Treasurer - Stephanie nominates Amy Douthwright. All in favour. Amy accepts.

Fundraising - Bailee nominates Dana Grebinski. All in favour. Dana accepts.

Secretary - Bailee nominates Kayla Sofiak-McNaney. All in favour. Kayla accepts.

Stephanie and Amy have been appointed to be the two reps to participate in the DPAC.

Need to change over the signing authority to Bethany and Amy.

Old Business

A. Parent Engagement

- Figure out when we have to use the \$350 by. Can ask DPAC to possibly extend the date if needed.
- Open House is on Sept 25th from 5-6pm. Plan for the same night.
- Water bottle with Bench PAC sticker on it, PAC information newsletter inside. To hand out to all students. PAC trivia (ex. How much did PAC fundraise for to go towards playground?), Idea box (ex. Something students would like to see in the school), table in gym displaying things PAC has helped fundraise for. Information letting students know what we're currently fundraising for - guitars. Set up in gym?
- Dana and Bailee will grab water bottles. Amy will print Bench PAC stickers to attach to the water bottles.
- Idea box - paper, pen, box/bag etc. (Vicki has a suggestion box)
- Newsletter with information about the PAC needs to be done up.

A. Guitars

- Set goal for year - fundraising money to go towards purchasing guitars.
- Bailee will also speak to the Legion regarding funding towards guitars for school.

New Business

- A. Neufeld fundraiser has been started. Sept 26th the link will go out to parents. Ordering window will close at midnight on October 15th. Delivery to school on October 23rd at 2:30pm. Dana may not be around to hand out orders, Bailee and Kayla can do it.

Treasurers Report - attached in email

<i>Checking</i>	\$
Opening balance :	10,260.62
Deposit (VG Fundraising, chq from Bench):	2034.00
Deposit interest of:	66.41
Expenses (VG fundraiser, Sunpeaks Bussing):	2330.16
Cash balance of:	10,030.87
Outstanding chqs:	60.00
Reconciled Bank Balance:	<u>\$9970.87</u>

<i>Gaming:</i>	\$
Opening Balance:	2700.32

Expenses (Requests & books):	2145.58
Ending balance:	<u>\$554.74</u>

Kayla motions to accept the Treasurers Report. Bailee seconds it.

Trustee Report - *attached in email*

School closure

- Government wanted a school named in last meeting, Central and Colletteville were named.
- After flood, proposal was made to build a new school but was turned down as would cost 20-30M beyond flood recovery costs. Insurance money was to get back to pre-flood conditions. Major repairs still needed at Central, approximately \$4M worth. Oldest part of the building is 1936.
- Bench is high growth area, 127% capacity. Needs an expansion.
- Diamondvale is at 50% capacity, Central is at 70% capacity, Colletteville is at 58% and Nicola Canford is at 82%.
- Coldwater and Upper Nicola are bussed to Central School. They have rights to choose what school they go to if school closes down.
- Declining enrolment, dropping by more than projected by Ministry. Down over 100 students in the last 5 years in brick-and-mortar schools.
- Enrollment across all grades is declining over the last few years. Last year had 318 grade 12s and only 109 kindergarten. Without SCIDES, still have twice as many graduating as coming in. Split classes due to the low enrolment.
- SCIDES enrollment has increased, however contract has only been extended for 1 year by the province rather than a renewal. For majority of SCIDES students we are not school of record – they are taking 1 or 2 courses but belong to another school district and funded through that district.
- Board still pushing for funding support for EA's, government promised one in every classroom and increase in funding.

Principals Report: - *attached in email*

- a. School wide fitness runs are happening now. Grades 1-7 on Mon, Wed and Fri. Kids seem to enjoy it.
- b. Cross Country runs will be starting this week. First one is this Thursday at Central Park. The rest of the runs will be optional.
- c. Terry Fox run this Friday. Encouraging children to bring a loonie. Assembly will be at 11:15 followed by run.
- d. Open house is on September 25th at 5-6pm.

- e. Monday Sept 29th is Orange Shirt Day in recognition of Truth and Reconciliation Day. Hoop dancer coming in to perform.
- f. Christmas Concert will be on December 18th. Breakfast with Santa on the 19th.
- g. Hot Lunch Program to start on Sept 22nd. New program for ordering, seems to be easy to follow and going well.
- h. Reading volunteers needed for the Joyful Literacy Program which will be starting back up soon. New parents will need to get their criminal record checks done.
- i. Students reconnecting on playground, splits have been hard on the students this year.

Next Meeting: October 7, 2025 at 6:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm