

Merritt Bench Elementary PAC  
December 2, 2025  
Meeting held at Bench Elementary Library & via Teams

Present:

Daniella Bennie, Principal  
Bethany Ryan, President  
Bailee Allen, Vice President  
Amy Douthwright, Treasurer  
Dana Grebinski, Fundraising  
Kayla Sofiak-McNaney, Secretary  
Gordon Swan, Trustee

Meeting called to order: 6:31pm

Approval of minutes

A. Motion to approve the minutes for November 4, 2025 made by Bailee. Seconded by Amy.

Treasurers Report - attached in email

*Checking*

|                                           |            |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| Opening balance:                          | \$ 9974.30 |
| Expenses (babysitting, literacy Merritt): | 320.00     |
| Incoming (cards, Neufeld's, spirit wear): | 2123.70    |
| Reconciled Bank Balance:                  | N/A        |

Approved to spend \$900 for teacher requests but it hasn't come out yet.

*Gaming*

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| Opening Balance: | \$ 554.74 |
| Ending balance:  | \$ 554.74 |

**Motion to approve Treasurers Report for October made by Dana. Seconded by Bailee.**

Will approve Novembers report at next meeting once we have the statements.

Old Business

A. Fundraising

- Christmas Cards
  - lots of orders, everyone very pleased with them
  - maybe try a thank you card in the spring
  - to increase profit margins on cards in future, email parents the artwork rather than doing up sample cards

B. Student recommendations

- Goalie gear: teachers said they wouldn't use it as kids don't play hard enough to need it and it is time consuming to take gear off and on. Other suggestions were: new sticks or foam balls.
- Books: Ms. Ottens has some books set aside, waiting on approved funds before ordering.

**Motion to approve \$250 for books from Scholastic Book Fair for the school library made by Amy. Seconded by Dana.**

C. Teacher Request : Peter Schmidt requests \$1000+ for annual ski trip to Sun Peaks with grades 5-7

- Daniella to let him know that we will help fund trip again and would like to get the kids involved in fundraising for it.
- Amy volunteers to drive the school bus to save on costs. Can also look into a Charter company; they have a flat rate/damage deposit. Remember to do inspection of bus before and after.
- Ideas for kids to help fundraise: Movie night and bake sale again. Entrance to movie by donation, popcorn and bake sale. Shoot for early February date.
- Other possible ideas: Bottle drive - a lot of work, hard to get commitment from people and location to store and sort etc.

**Motion to approve supporting the ski trip in principle made by Amy. Seconded by Bailee.**

D. Guitars

- No new quote but assuming it won't be too much of a difference from last one - \$5600 for just the guitars.
- Guitars can be stored in their box for the time being in the room off the gym. Look into cases and stands at a later date.
- Because this is a club, can pull out of the gaming grant as well for funding.
- Daniella to ask Mark re: district purchasing guitars. Submit for GST and PST exemptions.

**Motion to approve purchasing up to 30 guitars with a cost of up to \$6000 with up to \$3000 coming from the Gaming account, made by Bailee. Seconded by Kayla.**

#### New Business

A. Calendar survey:

- Poll was confusing. Bethany will draft up a clear email to go out to parents so they know what they are voting for. Will be sent out on behalf of the PAC. Bethany will ask for an extension for feedback.

B. DPAC Report

- BCCC PAC, encouraging everybody to join back in.
- Survey was talked about a lot.
- Authorized another \$300 for anything we want to use it for to increase parent engagement. Amy is going to ask if they can pay for babysitting at PAC meetings.

#### Trustee Report – attached in email

- A. Harrison Company - Educational Law Conference document (included in Gordons email) - information re: undo hardship, accommodation in schools, family law issues in schools, lockers and laptops, privacy and charter rights, inclusive education. Court cases attached and how they've ruled.
- B. Potential school closure process - Community consultations 1 more to do at Shackan. Next round to start over again at all schools in January through February. Board has to make decision by April. Teacher layoffs have to be made only on 2 days of the year, one being in May. Student count is made on September 30<sup>th</sup> which determines funding received. This year we were down 49 kids across district, down 545 over last 20 years. Gradual decrease in numbers which are declining quicker now. Central school parents and bands don't want their kids split up.
- C. Numeracy and Literacy – Grade 10 district average: Numeracy 18% are proficient and 82% are not, Literacy 51% are proficient and 49% are not. Grade 10 provincial average: Numeracy is 42% and Literacy is over 70%. Bench literacy is highest in district. Kids missing more than 10% of their time in school, province wide for secondary 92% of Indigenous kids are missing more than 10% of time. Presenting at First Nations Education Steering Committee re: 89% graduation rate with indigenous population, which is well above Provincial average of 42%, so been asked to discuss what we're doing here.

Principals Report: - attached in email

- A. Come Read with Me says thank you for cheque. Literacy Merritt will be here on Jan 30th in library at 1:30-2:30. Will track attendance for next year.
- B. Christmas concert - communications have gone out, only had about 1 negative comment about seating capacity. Lots of available seats at the moment, most that have requested additional tickets will probably get them. Draw will be on Dec13th.
- C. Breakfast with Santa will be on last day of school. Daniella will make pancakes in the morning before Santa gets there at 9am. Gordon will pick up 2-3 pancake mix bags and 2 syrup bottles from Costco.

**Motion to approve up to \$150 for pancake mix and syrup for breakfast with Santa made by Amy. Seconded by Bailee.**

Next Meeting: January 6, 2026 at 6:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm