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École Powerview PAC on rebound

Renewed interest set to bring parent advisory committee back from the brink

By Simon Ducatel

The École Powerview School Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is on the rebound after almost dissolving due to a declining active membership at the end of the last academic year.

Debbie Majeau, who has served as the PAC's chairperson for the past eight years, is looking to scale back her involvement to focus on other life priorities. She had been worried that dwindling interest would ultimately leave little choice but to pull the plug.

"We invite the administration and the school trustee to come present at the meetings; there's been times when it's just been me and them sitting there," Majeau said. "Everybody's got busy schedules, and sometimes it's hard to fit in one more meeting."

After putting out calls and approaching people during the last school year did not bear fruit, she decided to try once more before shutting down the group's social media pages.

"When we started the Parent Advisory Committee, the school didn't have a Facebook page, so we were the big source of communication between parents and the school," she said, adding the page remains used, but that she can no longer invest the amount of time needed to keep it up.

But with a few people stepping in to pick up the proverbial torch after her latest call, Majeau sees renewed potential for the PAC as she intends to remain involved during the transition into new hands.

"They're going to keep it going so that I can step back," she said. "It is a lot to take in, and that would be overwhelming for them and doing them a disservice by not being there to support."

École Powerview has an average of 480 students from Kindergarten to Grade 12, and also provides a room for an unaffiliated preschool. The committee plays a valuable role in keeping open the lines of communication with the school administration. Above and beyond providing an avenue for parents and guardians to offer feedback, Majeau said the committee also helps to steer parents through the bureaucracy.

"It's a resource for parents who maybe aren't comfortable going to administration," she said. "We'll help guide them through the process. So we will not circumvent the process, but we will help them navigate it."

Fundraising is another element the committee is involved with. Every year they award a scholarship to a student or students who have surmounted challenges and persevered to reach graduation. Funds raised also help ensure the surface of an outdoor rink remains functional for use in both the winter for skating as well as the summer for sports like lacrosse. Lighting was even installed courtesy of the committee's efforts.

"It's about building a community... it's about supporting our entire student body, supporting our families and supporting our staff, because they're working hard for our children and we want to take some of the load off of them, too."

Including herself, Majeau said the committee now has three members with a few more who regularly attend meetings and give feedback. Moving forward, she anticipates the committee will share the leadership role through co-chairs.

"I'm very happy to say that there's already interest in keep-

ing it going and I have no doubt that together, they will figure out something that works."

Anyone interested in getting involved or simply learning more can phone Majeau at 204-340-6655 or send an email to powpac@sunrisesd.ca

"We would love to see more parents involved," she said. "Even if they don't want to be on the executive, we definitely would love to have them at the meetings. We want the best environment for our children, and we want to see eve-

rybody thriving and supported."

Although a schedule had not yet been set, Majeau said meetings are typically held monthly at the school during the evening.

From the Sunrise School Division's perspective, Powerview trustee and board chair Paul Magnan was pleased that the committee rebounded.

When Magnan first became a trustee six years ago, he said PAC meetings generally had about eight to 10 parents actively attending and participating, which

provided an ideal opportunity to keep open the lines of communications between families and administration. He said the main focus was to give parents a voice to share with the school information, input and ideas.

"I think it's critical," he said. "Do I want to get engaged as much as possible from parents, from students, from the public, about the education? Absolutely. I think that that's really valuable for us to go ahead and hear from the community."



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Photo submitted
Congratulations to Lac du Bonnet Fire Department Deputy Fire Chief Devin McMurren (left) and Captain Dan Nilsson for recently being recognized for 25 years of fire service by the Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs.

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