



Committee of
School Councils

Meeting Minutes

Central Office Boardroom, Sherwood Park

April 8, 2020

7 p.m.

In Attendance:

Chair: Jacquie Surgenor, Salisbury Composite High,
Sherwood Heights Junior High & Westboro Elementary
Vice-Chair: Krista Scott, Fultonvale Elementary Junior High
& SCA Secondary

Secretary: Lesley Bowman, Pine Street Elementary

School Council Members

Ken Allen, A.L. Horton Elementary
Jackie Anderson, Ardrossan Elementary & Ardrossan
Junior Senior High
Aaron Box, SCA Secondary
April Childs, Lakeland Ridge
Curtis Christopher, École Campbelltown
Ginger Hassett-Koza, Fultonvale Elementary Junior High
Cara Kern, Pine Street Elementary
Devon Marshall, SCA Elementary
Robyn Michaelchuk, Fort Saskatchewan Elementary

Melissa Pressé, Davidson Creek Elementary
Jessica Winship, Glen Allan Elementary

Board and EIPS

Chair: Trina Boymook
Trustee: Annette Hubick
Trustee: Collen Holowaychuck
Trustee: Don Irwin
Trustee: Jim Seutter
Trustee: Harvey Stadnick

Superintendent: Mark Liguori
Associate Superintendent: Sandra Stoddard
ATA President: Deneen Zielke
Principal: Jon Elizga, SCA Secondary
Consultant: Jon Thomas
Communications: Corrie Fletcher

Welcome

Jacquie Surgenor, the COSC Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda

Jacquie Surgenor asked if there were any additions to the April 8, 2020 agenda.

- No amendments were made to the agenda.

Motion: To accept the April 8, 2020 agenda as circulated.

Moved: Jackie Anderson

Seconded: Ginger Hassett-Koza

Motion Carried

Approval of the March 4, 2020 Minutes

Jacquie Surgenor asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the March 4, 2020 meeting.

- No changes were made.

Motion: To accept March 4, 2020 minutes as is.

Moved: April Childs

Seconded: Krista Scott

Motion Carried

Board Report – presented by Trina Boymook, Board Chair, EIPS

Board Chair Trina Boymook presented the Board Report. Highlights include:

- Currently, the Board is working on the 2020-21 budget. It's particularly challenging given the new funding framework and the freeze on education funding. Both the Board and Superintendent are exploring ways to stabilize learning in the classroom over the next three years.
- On April 16, the agenda for the caucus meeting includes several budget-related reports.
- At the April 23 Board meeting, trustees will review the administration fees and transportation fees for the 2020-21 school year, key budget assumptions, and allocations for schools and departments.
- The Board has held several caucus meetings to deal with the recent decision to reduce education funding while in-school classes are cancelled. The basic education allocation dropped by \$2.3 million. For student transportation, it dropped by \$1.5 million.
- With many upcoming conferences cancelled, including the annual Alberta School Councils' Association Conference, the Board is redirecting funds from its governance budget to help with the decrease in funding, announced on March 28.
- The Board is also exploring ways to deal with school fees and student transportation fees for the 2019-20 school year.
- The Board is reviewing its Four-Year Education Plan and refining the goals within the priorities.
- At the March 26 Board meeting, trustees approved the Three-Year Capital Plan. There are two No. 1 priorities: a replacement school, grades 7-12, for Fort Saskatchewan High and Rudolph Hennig Junior High, and a Sherwood Park placeholder based on results from a future Value Scoping Session. The session will focus on Sherwood Heights Junior High and explore EIPS facilities in the core section of Sherwood Park. The session is tentatively set for September and will include school council representatives from Pine Street Elementary, École Campbelltown, Sherwood Heights Junior High, Clover Bar Junior High, and Salisbury Composite High.
- While social gatherings restrictions are in place, EIPS Board meetings are taking place using Zoom. Work is underway to live stream the meetings. EIPS will share the details before the Board meeting on April 23.
- April is the month, EIPS recognizes its many volunteers. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Chair Boymook extended thanks to all COSC members for the time they give to their school and the Division, which is vital to its success.

Comments and Questions:

Question: How does the COVID response impact the new funding structure?

Answer: If the question refers to the money moved to the COVID response, it has not affected the funding structure for 2020-21. But the \$200 million pulled from base instructional funding is impacting all school divisions. As a result, there will be temporary layoffs between now and the end of the school year.

Q: I understand the redirection of ASCA funds. Thank you for ensuring they will appear again next year.

A: You're welcome.

Q: There has been a rollback of funding or wage rollback for EAs, is there any indication there will be a wage cut for teachers who are going from 40 hours per week to 10?

A: People's wages will not be impacted in terms of hourly pay. The funding cuts may impact people through temporary layoffs.

Q: How will parents be consulted before the May presentation? Will there be any vehicle for parent input on changing the goals under the Division's priorities?

A: The Board will bring a draft of the Four-Year Education Plan for COSC members to review at the meeting in May.

ATA Report — presented by Deneen Zielke, President, Alberta Teachers' Association Local No. 28

Deneen Zielke presented the ATA Report. Highlights include:

- On March 6-7, the Local executive and Aaron Box, a COSC member, attended a political engagement seminar, which included sessions on how to lobby members of the legislative assembly of Alberta.
- It was good to see the head of the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) at the political engagement seminar.
- On March 13, the Local hosted a Beers and Budget event, which was attended by Sarah Hoffman, the NDP Critic for Education, and COSC members Aaron Box and Lesley Bowman.

For Information

a) ASCA Update — presented by Jacquie Surgenor, COSC Chair

- The 2020 ASCA Conference is cancelled.
- ASCA will still host a modified annual general meeting—a virtual AGM with the bare minimum. There are no resolutions. ASCA is hoping to have a fall AGM, if it's reasonable.
- ASCA isn't sure about proxies. It previously secured ElectionBuddy to do online voting. It's possible, but there is likely not the means to do this for the resolutions.
- The AGM will include voting for the President, one nomination, Vice-President, one nomination, and five Board positions, five nominations, including Jacquie Surgenor and Krista Scott.
- ASCA felt, either way, online voting or not voting, contravene the bylaws. So, it's adjusting.
- Alberta Education is holding a task force on transportation budgeting. Surgenor was nominated for the task force, set for the summer, and she's excited to be a part of it with some help and information from Mark Liguori, Superintendent, and Sandra Stoddard, Associate Superintendent.

b) Communication During COVID – presented by Krista Scott, COSC Vice Chair

- It's a tough time for everyone, and it is a good opportunity for parents to connect and stay connected throughout this situation.
- Fultonvale Elementary Junior High is using its school Facebook page to facilitate some of these conversations.

NEW BUSINESS

a) COSC Operating Procedure – presented by Jacquie Surgenor, COSC Chair

Surgenor asked if there were any questions, comments or changes to the new Operating Procedures.

- No changes were made.

Motion: To accept new Operating Procedures as is.

Moved: Ginger Hassett-Koza

Seconded: Aaron Box

Motion Carried

b) Google Classroom – presented by Jon Thomas, Consultant, Supports for Students, EIPS

- EIPS chose Google Classroom because it's the most common platform used throughout the Division.
- When a student logs on, they can see the classes they are taking.
- Only people with EIPS email addresses are allowed into the classroom—this is for the safety of students.
- For the COSC presentation, EIPS asked three teachers to allow access to their classrooms—teachers who've used the platform for years and are familiar with the system.
- When you go into Google Classroom, there are tabs—this is where the student gets information. Once used to it, it is straight forward to use. Be patient and take your time.
- Students can see complete assignments, see class materials, take quizzes.
- After a few weeks, it becomes easier, and students will gain confidence with the learning that happens through the platform.

Questions and Comments:

Question: My child has a document that has to be graded weekly. Does she have to open a new document each time, or can the teacher see the ongoing document?

Answer: The document can continue to go back and forth. If the teacher wants each answer or response in a new document, the teacher will request this. They can create a new document each time.

Q: What does the “student view” look like?

A: The student view looks similar to the teacher view. For younger students, who are not used to this format, there will likely be more detail. Also, there's no “grading” tab at the top or editing functions.

Q: I have an elementary, junior high and high school student. I am challenged by the lack of communication with the parents. I understand the safety piece of the EIPS emails, for instance, accessing the classrooms. But, I have set it up on my device, and I have to push to my device. Otherwise, I am relying on my child to know what their teachers are sending to them. If I hadn't done that, my children would have to collect and relay email information to me.

A: It's a new system for all of us, and we are all on a steep learning curve. There is an option for a teacher to turn on “guardian summaries.” The parents will receive the updates through email. It gives a good summary of what is going on. Communicate to the teachers to turn on “guardian summaries,” so the parents are getting all the information. There is a concern when you have more parents or people in the classroom it leads to comments and issues in the classroom. The guardian summaries is the optimal way to include families.

Q: Has the expectation that the summaries go to parents been pushed out to school-based leadership?

A: Thank you for asking the question. It's important, and the summaries are critical. EIPS will have a conversation with elementary and secondary administrators to include the summaries in their classrooms. The Division is doing its best, and everyone is on a learning curve as well.

Comment: The summaries always seem to come at the end of the week, like: “this is what we did this week.” It's helpful for high school or more independent students, but it would be more helpful for the younger students throughout the week or perhaps daily so we can continue the information.

C: Students can print off the “To Do” list from teachers and have that on the fridge or something.

C: For elementary students, the daily or weekly summaries are maybe not good enough. The students in elementary receiving information from Gmail is not good enough. They aren't equipped to manage email and move information to parents.

A: Elementary is the toughest. Those students don't really use Google or online platforms. We first focused on diploma examinations as those are critical situations. We're now working on elementary. There is more information on the EIPS website about literacy; numeracy; First Nations, Métis and Inuit; and physical education. It will never compare to face-to-face, but we are doing our best. Email the Division with feedback, as everyone is learning on the fly and trying to do their best. Feedback from parents is valuable.

Q: Do you have a way to update the FAQ on the EIPS website?

A: We can have a conversation about how we can focus on the alternative learning website. We can keep all the resources in one place. There are links on the EIPS website about expectations, resources, consultant and counsellor information. EIPS is contacting at-risk students and vulnerable students and checking in on them. There must be contact and ongoing dialogue as well.

Q: Does the elementary classroom look similar?

A: Yes, the same format.

Q: What are the expectations for curriculum for the rest of the year? What do we feel is successful?

A: The Division started with elementary grades, looking at the curriculum, essential outcomes and what teachers have covered. In the lower grades the focus is on literacy and numeracy. For grades 4-6 it's on literacy, numeracy, social studies and science. For junior high, we're reviewing the essential learning outcomes. We're also focused on high school, those who are working with diploma examinations. And, we're working hard at assessments to understand how assessment in the classroom looks different than online assessments.

Q: Google Meet, when it's updated it doesn't get pushed to the students. Why?

A: Notifications come based on user settings, which parents can help their students figure out.

C: The standardized time for, say, all grade 9 math is helpful, thanks.

C: Thank you so much, Jon, for spending your time with us to help with Google Classroom.

c) COVID-19 Parents as Partners – presented by Sandra Stoddard, Associate Superintendent, EIPS

- EIPS is intentional about parents as partners. The Alternative Learning website is aimed to help families.
- We understand this is a stressful time and understand that we are all in this together. We are here to help, and we are looking for your feedback and ideas.
- EIPS is providing snippets that members can put on their Facebook pages. There are also resources for students who finish their work early who want to do extra work. We need that back-and-forth commentary. The initial plan was to go through the Principal, who can then talk to consultants.

Questions and Comments:

C: There's a need for a variety of resources. At my home, we are both working remotely. There are a lot of resources. But, it isn't working into our workflow at home. That's tough to manage and work into our lives. Maybe some parents have more capacity to work on this with their kids. The more resources, the merrier.

C: We need an approach for different learning styles. My kids each learn differently. I have the benefit of an education background. It's important for parents to know learning looks differently to each child. The Superintendents' messages have been supported and it would be great to hear that from school leadership. The communication has been great. But we need to be mindful about the counter information we hear in the news and from our other information sources.

A: We understand how much positive messaging is needed and will work on schools doing that too.

C: Some of us come from education backgrounds. For those who don't have that same background, it can be intimidating. We need to say to parents it will be OK, teachers are here for you now and know you're doing your best. And, despite all the other struggles we are facing, we need to let parents know EIPS will be there to hold students' hands in September.

COSC Sharing

a) School Councils: Staying active in a time of uncertainty – presented by Jacquie Surgenor, COSC Chair

- In terms of governance—bylaws and operating procedures—look at what your obligations are between now and the end of the year.
- School councils should stay connected and reach out to trustees about the Board Highlights and the Board packages. We're a big part of the school. In the fall, we will have to be actively involved and we need to continue that structure to ensure that continues in the fall.
- What can we do, and how can we do it?
- Ask the Division: Can you help us configure a method for a virtual meeting as a school community?
- Is there a way to facilitate that?
- There are a lot of changes in education and there are a lot of opportunities for trustees to talk about how the Division is working to support our students. Parents are huge supports to their kiddos and that is more important now than ever.
- Just because we are not in school, does not mean we do not need school councils. Schools need to talk to parents. The new budgets will impact school education plans and administrators will need to move that information out to families.
- We have transitioned into the Google Classroom. Can we go ahead in Google Classroom or another platform? Should school council sharing go on during the day or in the evening? The routine shouldn't change because of our situational changes.
- The face-to-face meeting being cancelled might turn out to create more engagement. Parents may come when there is a giant problem, they are invested in. That is the kind of situation we find ourselves in. Perhaps they will continue to join us beyond because they see the kind of work that we do.
- We have to be innovative in the ways we reach out.
- We can provide a forum to meet as a group and none of us have ever been through this either, we are here to support each other.
- We miss having face-to-face meetings. At this COSC meeting, we have six trustees, several system leaders and staff, 14 parents, a principal and Jon. So, virtual meetings hold great opportunities for us.
- We will try again in May and hope that we have a rosier outlook.
- Thank you for coming, and thank you for your participation.

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

The next COSC meeting:

Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Time: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Location: Virtual meeting through the Zoom platform