



School Council

Minutes of the ÉEVE School Council Meeting Sept 12, 2023 1:00pm

SC Executive:

Caley Remington, Chair - present
Chelsey Conrad, Co-Chair - present
Judi Hunter, School Board Trustee - present
Jennifer Tanguay, Secretary - present
Sharelle Stitt, Treasurer - present

School Administration Members:

Denise Weaver, Principal - regrets
Alanna Berger, Assistant Principal - present

Attendees:

Logan Martin, Stephanie Rosenbaum, Janelle Wimperis, Robin Somji

1. Call to Order

Caley called the meeting to order at 1:08pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Caley motioned to accept the agenda and minutes as circulated; no objections; motion carried.

3. Co-Chair's Report

Welcome all, unfortunately Denise off sick, wishing her a speedy recovery. Excited for council to grow, with less pauses this year. Today we will be laying out plan for the year, what do we want to accomplish. Excited to meet new people, get people more involved - want to, how do we connect. Feedback, how do we improve, encourage attendance at meetings, implement action items and have a fun, great year. Reminder email 4pm day before meetings, update school calendar with future meeting dates/times, update website with minutes and Zoom link.

Caley motioned to keep meetings alternating 2pm/7pm on 2nd Tuesday each month; seconded by Stephanie; no objections; all in favour; motion carried.

Volunteer Orientation coming up Monday Sept 18th at 2:00pm in the Makerspace. Go through opportunities available with council, separate from the classroom, which will be divided into committees: Dance, Teacher Appreciation Week, Yearbook, Library (Alanna will follow-up on if this is needed), Literacy/Numeracy Week. Need to streamline communication from SC to parents via Volunteer Coordinator, to Classroom Reps, to parents.

Teacher Appreciation Week historically week of Valentine's Day. Proposal to change the date made at last meeting as flowers are most expensive at this time of year, parents/kids busy making Valentine's, adding on the daily notes/activities is a lot. Alanna discussed door decorating concerns, will need to be clear, strict guidelines if that continues. Discussed potential dates, looking at school calendar, the week selected has a PD day, which can be the day SC hosts a catered lunch as it can be delivered.

Logan motioned to move Teacher Appreciation Week to April 29-May 3, 2024; no objections; all in favour; motion carried.

School Dance historically before Easter, past 2 years before May Long because of COVID.

Chelsey motioned to have the School Dance on March 28, 2024; no objections; all in favour; motion carried.

Literacy/Numeracy Week coincided with Family Literacy Day last year. This years date TBD, committee will work out details.

Goal this year is for committees, not council, to organize events.

MusicFest will be held on May 8, 2024. No committee needed.

4. Assistant Principal's Report

Denise ill, sends her regrets. Start-up of school year went nicely, no staggered entry - first time in 3 years. Parking an issue, will manage next year, possibly utilize Westlife parking lot. No parent complaints except one re: parking. It's one day, not the norm. Some tickets issued for parking on highway. Chelsey: pedestrians, county-issue with big trucks and speed changes in between schools, would be nice to keep school zone the whole way. Judi: Don Kochan our RVS councillor dkochan@rockyview.ab.ca Caley: perhaps council could draft a letter. Welcome Back BBQ held on Thursday, SMS provided dessert and music, was open to meet the teacher. Welcome Back Assembly held on Friday, Sorting Assembly on Thursday. Really fun events. 40 new students this year, in addition to Kindergarten.

5. School Trustee Report

Highlights of reports below: Microsoft Word Speech to Text a great tool for students requiring accommodation. Education becoming more political. Some banning of cellphones - middle/high school has. Concerns about videos, posting things taken out of context. Boundaries to protect staff and students. Opting in/out of sex education, pronouns: who gets to choose? Need to gain perspective, no common values. LGBT topic: 1 school had parents leave. Recruitment and retention of staff, demands phenomenal. Administration needs more power to deal with issues. Learning assessments, how is it done, are diploma exams necessary. Some provinces doing away with them, moving to pathways (university, trades, workforce). Only 40% of high school graduates go to University, why focus on PAT's? Achievement acknowledgement changes, some schools no longer have Honour Roll. Indigenous rights playing out in society, demanding language be taught, funding/student (status/Métis), board would deploy but they want control. Special Needs Education: inclusion, every kid in same classroom, some parents want separate classes/no inclusion. Issues include violence/chaos, tolerance, resources (1:1 in classroom vs school), history of coding - which gives schools money, school then decides how to spend it. Not tenable, kids have been over-coded. Diagnosis via psycho-ed, referral from pediatrician. Behaviours: positive behaviour interventions (PBIS), when it's outside the norm, what's the consequence? No long-term solution, not a lot of intervention for elementary kids outside of school. Suspension rewards negative behaviour, creates a cycle. Under 12 have to go to school. Increase of behaviour issues in school. Goal: majority of kids need to be able to learn. Alanna: behaviour is communication, kids not innately bad.

Aggressive/abusive conduct towards staff: no official cell phone policy, no electronic issues brought forward to the school. Should we be proactive? Council there to be a voice/support on issues should sweeping policy change need to take place.

August Newsletter, 2023 Trustee Hunter



Our wonderful summer will soon be only a memory. Soon our youth will be returning to school and a year of activities and commitments begin again. I hope that each you have enjoyed some family time and the opportunity to rejuvenate in preparation for another busy school year.

The Government of Alberta is moving to a digital assessment platform. With this, students will see more multimedia-rich, interactive content and will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in different ways. The new platform will offer a wider range of built-in learning supports and accommodations, resulting in an improved, more inclusive test-taking experience for students. The new platform will also streamline the process schools use to administer provincial assessments. The province is phasing in this approach. For the 2023/24 school year, school authorities can participate in a variety of optional implementation activities.

The 2023-2024 will not be without its challenges for the Board and our families. Each September, RVS welcomes between 750 and 1,000 new students. Many of our schools are already over capacity, and our students and teachers are being negatively impacted as a result. RVS continues to be creative in how we use our existing space, but the situation is rapidly becoming untenable.

Our students come from rural and urban communities, some of which have been experiencing exploding population growth for several years. For instance, Airdrie's population grew by 14.29 per cent from 2019 to 2023.

With population growth comes increased school enrolment. During the 2022/23 school year, the utilization rate for all RVS schools was 91 per cent up from 87 per cent in 2021/22. The result is crowded classrooms and the need to repurpose non-instructional spaces into classrooms.

RVS is urging the Government to move all four projects approved in the Budget 2023 from the design, planning or pre-planning stage to construction in Budget 2024. The last K-8 school to open in Airdrie was Northcott Prairie School in 2019. W.H. Croxford High School, which opened in 2014, was the most recent high school to be opened in Airdrie. By the academic year 2022/23, it had reached a utilization rate of 109 percent. With an additional 833 students expected in Airdrie in September 2023, the Board will have to look at adjusting grade levels and attendance areas across the city to help address the space crunch. These changes will impact thousands of our families.

Another issue impacting RVS, and its students, families and staff is how funding for public education is determined in Alberta. In 2019, a weighted moving average (WMA) funding model was introduced. For a rapidly growing division such as RVS, the WMA model, with its three-year average system, leaves the division with a significant shortfall in instructional funding.

The WMA model means a total of 802 RVS students will not be funded by the provincial government for the upcoming 2023/24 school year, resulting in a loss of \$5,625,163 for RVS. The Board approved allocating \$1 million from reserves to help offset this shortfall but is unable to do more without depleting already stretched reserves. The result of WMA is even more crowded classrooms due to a lack of funding to hire new teachers to teach those 802 additional students. In what could be described as a “perfect storm,” we are also challenged to find space for these students because we have not had sufficient new schools approved for the division. RVS is working with government to address this concern.

Despite ongoing funding and space issues, each year our staff welcomes our young people and strives to provide the best learning opportunities for them. Each year, our parents work to support the efforts of our schools and each year our young people show up ready to take on another year. Educating our next generation of citizens takes the efforts of all of us. I am honored to be part of this process.

September Newsletter Trustee Judi Hunter Ward 5

The 2023-2024 school year is underway. We welcome Denise Weaver – new principal of Elbow Valley School. Brendan Trinca has moved as new principal of Heron’s Crossing. We welcome Richard Dupre as new assistant principal Springbank High School. Kara Bonikowsky has moved as new assistant principal of Community Learning Centre.

This year promises to be challenging on many fronts but especially in the communities of Airdrie and Cochrane where enrolment pressures are mounting. Despite the Board’s and parent’s advocacy for new schools or significant portable allocation, no new school builds are in our near future. In both the communities of Airdrie and Cochrane that will mean a reorganization of the existing space to accommodate growth for the next few years. It is a situation that no parent wishes to see. The Board and administration are considering options.

For children who struggle with writing or require accommodations Microsoft Word’s speech to text is a wonderful tool. Here is the link <https://www.techradar.com/how-to/use-speech-microsoft-word>
Quick overview

You must have a Microsoft 365 subscription to use and stable internet. Schools have these.

Open word. Choose dictate. (Word supports multiple language so it is also great for our language learners who can dictate in their native language and use google translate to English). Allow Word to access your microphone. Start voice typing. Punctuation is adding by simply saying the word eg. Comma. A comma will be inserted.

New security rules are in place to support safety during the school day. Schools will announce measure in their newsletters

.

Educational politics

In my experience, education was never a top political topic. Certainly, there were political debates around education, but in today's climate, educational politics has become almost combative.

Here are a few of the issues to keep an eye on:

Cell phones in the classroom – some provinces will ban

Sex education – what say do parents have in opting out and what is taught

Pronouns and who gets to choose

Use of Chat Gpt and other evolving technologies in learning

Teacher shortages – recruitment and retention

School builds

Public versus private schools and funding

Assessment – how is learning assessed – are diploma exams necessary

Achievement acknowledgement

Indigenous rights

Special needs education

Aggressive and abusive conduct towards staff

The Canadian Parents for French is hosting some activities for French Immersion students at Elbow Valley

-Halloween activity type activity day October 27 2:15 - 4:00 pm for grade 3 and 4 students

-Christmas Craft day Dec 18 2-4:30 pm for Grades 1 and 2 students.

Springbank Middle School

French homework help September 27, October 4, 11, 18 3:15 - 4:15 (Wednesdays)

French Tutoring

Paulina Anab is available for private French tutoring please text her at 587-894-1691 to arrange.

Community News

The Springbank Fall Fair and Community Dance is September 9. The community dance is a lot of fun. Tickets are \$5.00 at the door, or you can prebuy online at springbankcommunity.com

Lego Club is back – fall dates will be published on the Springbank facebook site.

Springbank Community High School will be holding a community raffle to raise money for sports equipment, more to follow.

6. Healthy Hunger Report

Kim and Nikki send regrets. Program up and running, no extra help needed at this time.

7. Yearbook Committee Report

Robin will give report next month, thanks to Manhaar and Alanna for your help over the summer.

8. Treasurer Report

Sharelle: Financials reviewed with Rhonda, discovered we have a discount code for Mabel's Labels which is a great fundraising opportunity. Would be great to spread the word. Alanna: will put in OWL outlook.

9. Canadian Parents for French (CPF)

Stephanie: Chair of Springbank CPF chapter, should have 3 reps (1 for each school), managing all 3 at the moment with Judi's help. Elementary after school program went well, plan for 2 events this fall, for French Immersion students only: Oct 27 2:15-4:00 (for Grade 3 and 4), Dec 18 2:00-4:00 (Grade 1 and 2). Middle School will be having after school homework help from high school students (for French Immersion students) on Wednesday's. High School will be doing a tourtière dinner for Grade 8 students. Cheese fundraiser TBD. Would be great for parents to join the chapter to increase funds. Can volunteer on CPF AB website, need to be registered via website for after school programs to be insured. Future ideas: hiking, camping trip for Grade 4. Oct 20-22 "Falling Into French" weekend family trip in Canmore.

10. FEEVES Report

No report.

11. Open Floor

Caley: SC executive and coordinators - please email reports week before meeting so Agenda can be created and circulated along with Minutes prior to the meeting.

12. Future SC Meetings

October 10, 2023 at 7:00pm

13. Adjournment

Caley adjourned the meeting at 2:56pm.