

Minutes for Ecole Elizabeth Barrett School Council

Wednesday, October 18, 2017
School Learning Commons; 6:30 pm

1) Attendance

Leah P,
Jennifer Rennie,
Sara P,
Veronica Hooper,
Susan Parker,
Lisa Preston (acting as
secretary),
Crystal L,

Heather Derksen,
Susan Lowry (Chairing
meeting),
Vanessa V,
Tara H,
Kiltie W,
Candace Z;
Peggy H;

Regrets: Renata L.

2) Called to order 6:35

3) Approval of Agenda Motion made by Leah P, seconded by Sara P.

4) Approval of Minutes from Sept 20, 2017 motion made by Susan Lowery, seconded by Vanessa V

5) Appointments of vacant positions

a) Volunteer Co-ordinator: Heather Dersken accepted position

6) Secretary - table (Renata has indicated she will be secretary, but she was unavailable for tonight's meeting.)

7) Report from Fiona Gilbert (congratulations!), RVS board member (starred items were shared at the brief meeting)

a) *School Board Elections

i) RVS' 2017-2021 Board of Trustees is now set. On Oct. 16, the following trustees were elected:

- (1) Ward 1 – Shali Baziuk
 - (2) Ward 3 – Jim Forrest, Melyssa Bowen, Todd Brand
 - (3) Ward 5 – Judi Hunter
 - ii) These individuals will join Trustees acclaimed in Ward 2 – Patty Sproule, Ward 4 – Norma Lang, and Ward 6 – Fiona Gilbert, to form RVS’ governing body for the next four years. Congratulations to all! The official swearing-in ceremony will take place Oct. 24, with the first regular meeting of the new Board of Trustees scheduled for Nov. 2, 2017.
- b) Capital Plan Revision
- i) Alberta Education will consider revisions of board's 2018-2021 Capital plan priorities if submitted before Oct. 15, 2017. Based on the fact that new school construction funding will be provided to school jurisdictions only if the requirements of accommodation needs and site readiness are met, RVS will submit a revised Capital Plan. In the current Capital Plan, the six new school construction priorities meet only the accommodation need, not the site readiness requirement. At this time, there is only one priority from the first budget year – Langdon Junior/Senior High School – that meets both requirements. At the Oct. 5 Board meeting, Trustees approved a revised Capital Plan submission, moving the Langdon Junior/High School to the #1 priority, with a request for design funding for the next three priorities: #2 – Chestermere K-9; #3 Airdrie K-9 (Kings Heights South); #4 Cochrane K-5 (Heartland). Check out the full report, posted on the RVS website under Board/Policies.
- c) 2018-2019 Modular Unit Requests
- i) For its 2018-2019 modular requests to Alberta Education, the Board approved the submission of a request of 23 modular classrooms as follows: four new units at Windsong Heights; six units at Heloise Lorimer; six at East Lake; four at Langdon; and, three at Rainbow Creek. Requests for funding approvals under the Modular Classroom Program must be submitted by Nov. 1, 2017. It is expected that the Province will inform Boards as to their allocation by February 2018. Last year, only 40 modulares were allocated across the entire province.
- d) *Alberta Education Consultation
- i) With the expectation that the Government of Alberta is going to table some amendments to the School Act sometime during the Fall sitting, Alberta Education hosted an opportunity for trustees, senior staff and parent representatives to provide input into potential areas of changes to the School Act. Greg Luterbach, Darrell Couture, Norma Lang and Fiona Gilbert and a school council parent represented RVS and provided input into topics that included the Ministry's business plans, school fees, student transportation services and fees, age of access, age of entry, education services agreements with First Nations, and joint use/reserve agreements with municipalities. Watch for updates to be reported when available.

8) School Annual Results Report - EB school Administration – Susan Parker/Veronica Hooper

a) School Annual Results Report (SARR) – compiles data from Alberta Learning and RVS and EB. Grade 4 students, parents and staff were polled.

i) Only 12 parents filled out survey that informs SARR last year. Need to strategize to get more parents participating this coming spring.

ii) SARR will be published on EB website after it is submitted at the end of October, where you can read the entire report.

iii) Key findings of the 2016-17 SARR include:

(1) Students feel cared for;

(2) EB is working to make them better citizens;

(3) Students, while they feel safe and cared for at school, many would rather be elsewhere. This may be attributed to increased anxiety in many students of last year's grade 4 class (or other societal factors, ie. video games) affecting the desire to go to school (58%).

(4) IPPs 50% of parents surveyed were unhappy, likely due to confusion and survey design issues.

(5) An interesting observation is that the Grade 4s of 2016-17 scored consistently lower on their responses than previous years.

b) The Rozsa Foundation has honoured David Chandler of Trickster theatre; awarding him for the most impactful theatre work in learning.

- i) EB's Kindergarten students have begun their work of story-telling with Trickster. Trickster work will continue as the year progressed through to other grades.
- 9) Submission of written reports from executive and positions – to be included in minutes – only critical items to be discussed. (* by discussed items).

a) Co-chairs

- i) Alberta Education consultation sessions update from Susan Lowry: Susan Lowry attended the consultation sessions re: transportation and school fees. Full report was not included in our discussion on October 18, but Susan's report is attached (see appendix 1). Amendments to education legislation will take place in the future. Please consider taking part in the consultation process.

(1) Age of Entry (Kindergarten),

(2) Age of Access (High School),

(3) Education Service Agreements with First Nation/Metis/Inuit communities,

(4) Transportation

(5) School Fees

b) Treasurer (Jennifer Rennie)

- i) Jen has taken over the Treasurer role, we have some money, but no changes in the finances since our last meeting since there have been no healthy lunches yet.

c) Secretary (open)

- d) Volunteer Co-ordinator (acting co-ordinator: Leah P). Items that are starred * were discussed at the meeting.
- i) ***Since last meeting 131 volunteers have been entered into the School wide Volunteer master list. Ice baggie volunteer sign-up sheet with ALL 36 spots filled - nearly overnight - with volunteers emailing to advise that they had made baggies in advance but all the spots were already filled! For this reason purchasing of an ice maker approved during the meeting in September was temporarily put on hold. The need to purchase should be revisited in March or at the very latest the end of June to allow time to evaluate the use of the new sign-up sheet, complete with email reminders to volunteers, time to operate and be evaluated. The recycling sign-up sheet has been send out and is 64% full, need to follow up with those that have no yet signed up.**
 - ii) **Literacy Volunteers send to Sasha and Cherie. Friday Lunch Volunteers sent to Kristi.**
 - iii) **A huge thank you to all of the Staff Appreciation Dinner volunteers! A smashing and dedicated group that makes the magic happen! This event has a very tight timeline, as ALL other volunteer role need to be set up within the same timeframe. The new Volunteer.org sign-up sheet help keep things on track as volunteers could see what types of dishes were in need to create a balanced menu. Should check with Admin to see if there might be a date that is better so that ALL staff may participate in the meal? Occurring on the same night, Book Fair Cashier is, undoubtedly, the most challenging volunteer spot to fill with ZERO responses received from Library Assistant and Anywhere/Anytime that were contacted regarding the opportunity. Some brainstorming with Manju took place before and after the event to see how we can better address the underwhelming response for the next Book Fair in the New Year which is a major contributor to new books for the Learning Commons (maybe put the sign-up sheet link in the September School News letter for more visibility, high school students, maybe?). One issue is that it is not included on the School Wide Volunteer sheet, so it has NO visibility until the call for volunteers goes out. Coupled with the fact that it takes place during Student Led Conference. The draft of the electronic School wide Volunteer form will include Book Fair Cashier as a Volunteer opportunity in future.**
 - iv) **Library sign up is set up and spots are filling up but requires more follow-up with volunteers to ensure that they have signed up for the spot(s) that fit their schedule. We do not have enough volunteers to fill 1 Library Assistant for each day of the week so we are doing the best with what we have. Have been speaking with Manju to brainstorm different ways parents might be interested in coming to see the what the Learning**

Commons has to offer, whether that be a specific volunteer shift or not. Manju would love to be able to reach out and speak to more parents about the Learning Commons.

- v) **Putting out the call for Retake Volunteers for November 1st with follow-up for Library Assistants and Recycling Volunteers.**
 - vi) **Huge thank you to Candace Z for taking over the role of Volunteer Coordinator. I know she will find that we have a strong core of dedicated volunteers that are a pleasure to work with. *NOTE: Candace Z: decided she was better volunteering in other capacities, and Heather D took on the role.***
- e) Healthy Lunch Co-ordinator (Kristi W)
- i) Thanks to Kristi for getting the Healthy Lunch program running. The first lunches will be delivered on Friday October 20. Yippee!
- 10) Old Business
- a) Cochrane Area School Council Joint Meeting (SFL): TABLED
 - b) Invitation to Dave Eggen (SFL): Maybe board will invite to joint SC meeting. TABLED
- 11) New Business
- a. Joint School Council Meeting November 16, 2017 – Susan Lowry to attend. Sara P may also attend. If others are interested in attending, please contact Susan Lowry or Lisa Preston
 - b. Facebook page. Susan Lowry will talk with Susan Parker about the RVS regulations re: Facebook account. Twitter may be easier format to use since we don't get responses back but can disseminate info to interested people.
 - c. Logo for EEBS School Council (SFL) TABLED

d. PIPA Policy (Lisa P) TABLED

e. Q re: Canadian Parents for French... An EB parent is willing to participate.

**12) 7:00 (!) Special Presentation by Jeff Couillard:
Intentionally Raising Children in an Age of Distraction and
Stress**

(Fabulous Presentation! Lots of Food for Thought)

13) Next Meeting: 6:30 pm Nov 15, 2017 Learning Commons.

14) Adjournment at: 8:19 pm

15) Announcements:

a) Pumpkin Festival – Co-ordinated by Cochrane High School Council. This event is free to enter this year, and takes place October 27. Entry forms are available on the EEBS Council bulletin board, near the main entry to the school.

b) Friday November 17 at EB: There will be a town sponsored FREE family drop in activity in the gym from 6:30-8:00.

Appendix 1:

Alberta Education Consultation Sessions- As a representative of the parents of Rockyview Schools, I was able to attend the Calgary consultation sessions held by Alberta Education September 21 & 22, along with Trustee Fiona Gilbert & Superintendent Greg Luterbach, along with other Trustees, School Board Administration & Parents. The consultation was held to gather feedback from stakeholders on the changes introduced by the NDP government this past summer. We were asked for feedback on the topics of Age of Entry (Kindergarten) and Age of Access (High School Eligibility), Education Service Agreements with First Nation/ Metis/ Inuit communities, Transportation and finally School Fees. I have included a brief summary of each topic below.

Currently **age of entry (minimum age)** is 4 years 8 months by December 31 of the year starting Kindergarten. *Proposed changes are for children to be 5 years 0 months by December*, meaning kids would need to be 4 years 8 months by the beginning of September that same year (instead of currently 4 years 4 months). There was support for increasing the age as well as standardizing the age of entry as it does vary between districts. The focus of concerns on this topic was that *parents need to be given a lot of notice* if changes are being made as we plan our lives around these decisions. Discussion of scientific research supporting older school starting ages was contrasted with the importance of early intervention as part of the “first 2000 days of life/ success by 6” initiative. The group concluded that decisions on this topic should be a collaborative effort between different government ministries, including Health (a particular focus on Mental Health), Education, Childrens’ Services, Community & Social Services, Advanced Education and Justice, and that there needs to be accountability to each ministry to highlight common goals.

There was also discussion of whether the **age of access (maximum age)** should be increased from under 20 years at December 31 of the final year to under 21 years. In general this was supported by parents, especially if the age of entry is increased, but there was a preference by Boards to allow them to use a case by case assessment, and suggested this issue is different depending on whether the school is Urban or Rural. The discussion centred on the need to have enough time to complete high school, and in more rural schools there are often no alternatives, unlike in larger towns and cities where specified programs are offered to address those issues, either by the local school board or by higher education institutions such as SAIT or Bow Valley College. There was also a funding concern, as reasons for the extension period could range from needs to accommodate learning disabilities to students wanting to upgrade their marks to improve their post secondary applications. Similar discussions of involvement of other ministries ensued, with all of the above mentioned ministries as well as Labour and Economic Development and Trade due to the far-reaching impacts of high school graduation to long term success.

ESAs with First Nations/ Metis/ Inuit communities was discussed in light of the work being done on Truth & Reconciliation at the Federal Government level. I wasn't aware of any specific issues that I could contribute to, so did not attend any of these sessions.

Transportation was a very heated discussion, although some of this was very much focused on the problems with scheduling and bus times specific to the Calgary Board of Education, where bell times were significantly changed, more early dismissals were introduced, etc.

Rockyview Schools-specific concerns related to the *lack of sufficient Transportation funding*. This was a point of sensitivity for the Government as there have been claims of maintaining adequate funding levels that were being questioned because Transportation has been underfunded for so long. Other concerns were expressed over the reasoning behind 2.4 km boundary limits (2.4k = 1.5 miles) and support for transportation to schools with programs of choice (such as FI or Religious programs) rather than *forcing parents to make a decision between paying for bussing (to be able to attend programs of choice) and sending children to their designated schools based on their financial means*. Fees for transportation were discussed in general as part of the School Fees discussion as well.

The **elimination of school fees (for core education)** introduced by the Government was a contentious discussion, as *most parents were more concerned about loss of service than the impact of cost savings*. Alberta Education wanted to know, given the concerns, whether further changes should be made as soon as possible (and if so what those changes should be). While most School Boards (Trustees and Administration) expressed discontent with the changes already made, they also asked that no further changes be made until at least next budget year, as they felt the consultation process for the previous changes were flawed and wanted to wait to measure unintended consequences before making any more changes. Many Boards felt that disparity was introduced by these changes and wanted the government to consider a per student model, which isn't necessarily a good thing for Rockyview, as although this would help recognize our needs due to rapidly increasing enrollment, it does not recognize the higher costs of operating over a wide geographical area such as Rockyview.

Parents expressed concern (full disclosure: this is a major concern of mine) that introduction of better fee forgiveness programs should have been the focus if affordability was the aim. Elective programming, access to which was widely considered to be a fundamental part of the overall education of students and budgeting for field trips were hotly debated topics as the process has been complicated by Government micro-management of Boards and Schools with the *requirement for any fee increases greater than 5% to obtain ministerial approval*, and forcing schools to budget for any possible eventuality as budgets have

become more prescriptive and funding could no longer be moved around as needs change over the year.

Eventually the discussions led to a request for *clarification by the Provincial Government on the definition of public education and what constitutes core vs elective programming*. We received a commitment from them that we would be informed of the results of the consultations (there were meetings all over the province) and that there would be efforts to improve the consultation process for any future changes, primarily not to make them so quickly.

If there are any questions of particular concern I am more than happy to discuss it (at length!) with you. In addition, parents can find more information on this and other advocacy issues on the Alberta School Councils' Association Website: <https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/about/news/post/consultations-on-possible-school-act-changes>

Submitted by

Susan Flynn Lowry

EBSC Co-Chair

October 18, 2017