

Sherwood Heights School Council Meeting

Tuesday January 28, 2020

7:00 PM

In attendance:

Parents: Melanie Ryzuk, Wendy Malboeuf, James Gieringer, Tanya Penner, Darryl Penner, Jackie Caldwell, Lisa McDonnell, Krista Bailey, Kari Albrecht, Jacquie Surgenor, Kaila Tipton, Sheena Singleton, Heidi Gehmlich, Krystal Gibson, Georgina Traxel, Ashely Frayn, Colleen Belohorec, Dean Johnson, Nasreen Banman, Crystal Bradley, Wendy Bouwman Oake

Staff: Amanda Fayed, Katharina Staub, Katie Oszip, Kris Reid, Paul Pallister, Sherri Johnston

Trustee: Trina Boymook (Board Chair)

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** 7:05 PM

2. **Approval of Agenda and Review of November Minutes:** Ashley Frayn 7:10 PM

Motion to approve the Agenda – Moved by Krystal Gibson, seconded by Jacquie Surgenor. Carried.

Motion to approve the Minutes of November 19, 2019. Moved by Kaila Tipton, seconded by Nasreen Banman and Melanie Ryzuk. Carried.

3. **New Business: School Fees and Options: Paul Pallister and Parents**

- a. Activities related to core and options classes, and related to extra-curricular activities, are being reviewed in anticipation of the 2020-2021 course offerings. Costs associated with some courses and activities can create barriers for some students participating. Some families struggle to pay current fees; school budget used to be able to cover fees when there was financial hardship. The new budget situation will not provide this flexibility, and there are more strict rules around collection and use of fees. Parents seeking fee waivers must submit income information to seek waivers of lunchtime supervision and student council fees (add up to \$30 per student per year) but the school is not in a position to waive other fees. Sherwood Heights has 4% of families seeking waivers, which is the highest in the Sherwood Park area.

The school is looking for suggestions from parents about how to manage the fee situations to ensure money doesn't have to be pulled from the school's budget to cover uncollected fees. Families in Sherwood Heights have paid 79% of fees year to date - \$400,000 in fees are assessed, which means we are approx. \$80,000 short for fee collections this year. Team sport fees get paid in full because you cannot play a team sport if you do not pay the fees – the shortfall is with respect to field trips and 'consumable' course fees. With some fees (like band trip fees), a child's participation is dependent on fees being paid, but with some other costs (like art class fees), it is not feasible to limit participation based on whether fees

have been paid. School can choose not to make further efforts to collect a student's fees at the end of the year and cover them out of the school budget, or they can be sent to a collection agent. Difficult for school to make decisions about not allowing a student to register in an activity because of past difficulties paying fees, though it is sometimes taken into consideration when placing kids in options.

Suggestions discussed:

- Companies or individuals can make donations to Elk Island Public Schools and ask that it be earmarked to ensure access to all students for certain activities.
- Some companies have programs to donate items to school; the school could apply for such programs. The school does take advantage of such opportunities when they come up and will follow up on other suggestions.
- Freer or low-cost options for "Options" courses could be added to the course offerings.
- Rec Fit options could be reduced or pared down as the costs are quite high – however, some families value having these opportunities available to kids.
- Need to be mindful that other schools in Sherwood Park are offering similar options, and some parents want to ensure our students have these options too. As well, for some students, school engagement is increased because of options.
- Parents can have open conversations with their children about the budget they have available for school fees, and help kids make course decisions within that budget.
- Fundraising activities could be used to offset fees. For example, hot lunch is not being done by the Band Parents Association so far this year, and perhaps another group will want to take on hot lunch. (any group interested can meet with the Principal to discuss this option)
- Sports fees all get paid, and we get turnouts for tryouts. Our gym does not allow us to host tournaments, which affects our ability to recoup costs. Parents feel sport activity fees are reasonable.
- School is likely to look at reducing costs vs. reducing the number of options.
- Parents are ok with a deadline for fee payment that limits participation, knowing activities/trips will be canceled if not enough people pay the fee before the deadline.

Information from tonight will be discussed with staff, a fee list will be generated for review at Parent Council, and then it goes to Board and Finance for approval. Registration guide will have tentative fees because fees will not be approved yet by the time the guide goes out to students.

4. Information Reports

a) COSC: Jacquie Surgenor

- January meeting was canceled due to weather

b) Band Parents Report: no report

c) Logos Report: Melanie Ryzuk

- Grade 6s visiting for Chapel on February 4th from 1:00 - 3:00 PM
- Thursday's at lunch is Crossroads Club – all students welcome to attend
- Spring fundraiser – details to come at a later date
- Did baking for staff on January 24th, and planning a chocolate fondue for staff in February
- Students are going to the Mustard Seed to serve on February 11th

d) French Immersion Report: no parent report

- Katharina Staub reported that Grade 8 and 9 students went to see a play, and Grade 7s are going to Flying Canoe Festival this weekend

e) Principals Report: Paul Pallister

- Staff Appreciation – Staff have really appreciated coffee and treats being brought in by families, so thanks to all involved
- School Goals: Open Discussion
Question to parents: As the School begins planning for next year, what should be prioritize as strategies from our three schools Goals?

School Goals

1. Developing students who are engaged, active and positive citizens who exemplify Cougar Pride
2. Assist students in developing proactive social, emotional and personal health skills
3. Emphasize literacy and numeracy skills in all aspect of school life to support overall academic achievement.

Parents are encouraged to give input to Paul on school strategies.

- Some Elk Island Principals are exploring options for Information sharing for families regarding well-being topics (such as vaping)
- Template from ATA shared with parents who may be interested in writing to their MLA about 'crowded and complex classrooms'

f) Trustee's Report

- School busing fees – fees to families can only cover actual costs – no fees increased for 2019-20 in Elk Island Public but Board requested review and analysis of fee structure, with goal of looking for more equitable solutions for families – increase in carbon levy, insurance costs and training for drivers all impacting bussing costs – Provincial funding is insufficient to cover costs – expecting Board decision on Feb 20th on fee structure, which will include fees for eligible students – our Board provides extensive 'enhanced' services (such as transport from daycare instead of home, students living less than 2.4 km from school, etc.) but even without those, the bussing system would still be running at a deficit – actual fees will be set at a later date once the Board has budget information
- Approved School Fee parameters at January Board meeting – increases will only be approved under extraordinary circumstances, being mindful of fiscal realities for families
- Have been advised by Minister that there will be no details on funding formula in advance of budget, but have been warned it will be a 'bitter pill to swallow' – need to stay within \$8.2 billion annually for total school spending in Alberta (including private schools etc.) – Trustees are focused on meeting the needs of students despite budget restraints

- Parents wanting more information can review the Trustee's meeting package on the Board's website

School Council has started a Facebook page called "Sherwood Heights Junior High Parents Connect". The aim is to provide a venue for information sharing regarding the school and for parent connections. There are three questions that must be answered and agreed to prior to being approved. All parents of students are welcome to join.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 PM

Next Meetings: February 25, March 24, April 29, May 19