

Coalbanks Elementary School
School Council Meeting

Agenda – January 20, 2020
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

* indicates written report/attachment provided

Attendance: Kathi Burnett, Kara Carriere, Chelsey Kurtz, Kelly Buck-Chasse, Carley Wewiora, David Wewiora, Lindsay O'Brien, Sarah Janke, Julie Van Dyk, Michelle Harding, Karla Wright, Paul Coutts, Whitney Dunkin, John Power, Steven Dunkin, Stephanie Beekman, Suketu Shah, Mackenzie Penner, Kendra Yoshida, Angela Roman, Maya Johnson, Skye Curtis, Kaylee Low, Allie Borgstrom, Yuteng Zhong, Jacquie Van Dyk, Dina Mustedanagic, Laurie Chinn, Christina Eileen, Jessica Russel, Erin Beekman, Erynn Gordon, Ainsley Croil (Vice-Principal), Joey Gentile (Principal), Moraq Asquith (Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services)

Celeste Burdinsky – ASCA Representative via Conference Call

1. **Call to order**
 - Mr. Gentile called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.
 - Celeste Burdinsky from ASCA joining the meeting via webcam.
2. **Review of the Agenda (Explain recommendation Alberta School Councils)***

See Appendix A.

 - Celeste provided introduction to ASCA and their role.
 - Celeste recommends that we move from approving the agenda to a review of the agenda. First, because the chair and principal have worked together to make the agenda being conscious of time limits. (Other ways to have parent voices added to the agenda. Including e-mailing the principal/chair, parking lot (white board) set-up at meeting as possible items to address arise, etc.) Second, if a vote is required to approve the agenda and parents don't pass it, the meeting can't continue.

Question: Will the council have a practice in place to table additional items that come up during meetings? Suggestions for a way for items that come up in a meeting to be considered as agenda items for future meetings.
3. **Approval of the Minutes, as presented (OR as amended)** 5 min
 - Celeste - Recommendation – Send out meeting agenda 7-10 days prior to meeting, and include the draft minutes
 - Kaylee Low approves minutes; Karla Wright seconded; Carried.
4. **Parental Request*** 10 min

Karla Wright requested to address council regarding the November Council Meeting

 - See document attached.
5. **Financial Report*: Treasurer – Dina Mustedanagic** 10 min

Financial Transactions / Status to date:

 - \$26,052.06 – the only transactions that went through the account was the December hot lunch of \$1667.04 and the monthly account fee of \$3, making the balance in the account of \$26,052.06.
6. **Provincial Perspective** 10 min
 - nothing to report
7. **Committee Reports** 15 min

Hot Lunch Update

 - December hot lunch went well
8. **Principal's Report: Principal – Joey Gentile** 30 min
 - a. Amendments to our operating procedures – see recommendations from Alberta School Councils

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-Celeste went through our bylaws/operating procedures and made recommendations accordingly; see attached below, with notes from the conference call with Celeste included below (*italicized*)

-Parent Question – Fundraising Question: Given the three separate fundraisers run in the recent past, why would parents donate to specific fundraisers if they don't have a say in where the money is going? Mr. Gentile provided an explanation as to why the three separate fundraisers were run. Celeste reiterated that fundraising is not a legislated part of a school council purpose.

-Kathi Burnett makes a motion to pass the new operating procedures as proposed tonight. Kendra Yoshida seconded. Motion carried.

- b. Communication Flowchart – process and procedures; Tabled until February meeting
- c. Nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair – any interested candidates will submit their names to Mr. Gentile prior to the February council meeting. If multiple names are submitted their will be an election at the February meeting, February 24th. If only one name for a position is collected then that individual is in by acclamation.
- d. Share that we have a group that has applied for our Society Status for Coalbanks. It is called 'Friends of Coalbanks'. The Society will be responsible for all fundraising moving forward.
- e. Proposed student event – Motivational Magic (Steve Harmer) – Share list of potential programs. If supported, Mr. Gentile will work with the staff to decide on the actual program delivered by Mr. Harmer. The cost of the program is \$749 +GST.
-Dina Mustedanagic motions to spend up to \$800 to bring Mr. Harmer in. Kathi Burnett seconded. Motion carried.
- f. Mr. Gentile will share purpose of School Council – work done with Alberta School Councils

- 9. **Old Business** 15 min
Motion on the floor from the November meeting
-Angela Roman motioned that we spend \$5000 to buy books for the learning commons and earmark \$5000 for the traversing wall to be built when the remaining funds are raised.
-Steven Dunkin recommends an amendment to the motion that we spend \$4000 to buy books for the learning commons and earmark \$6000 for the traversing wall. Michelle Harding seconded. Motion carried.
-\$5700 raised for the Learning Commons from the Book Fair; Indigo Fundraiser from last year was \$1500; \$1600 was received in donations;
-Does the money currently in the school council account stay as school council dollars or does it get transferred to the society? Recommendation is that the funds are transferred to the School Generated Funds Account. No official decision made/communicated.
- 10. **Trustee's Report: Trustee – Jan Foster** 10 min
-no trustee report
- 11. **New Business** 10 min
- 12. **Next Meeting(s)** 5 min
February 24th from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm.
- 13. **Adjourn**
-meeting adjourned at 7:59pm

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Appendix A.

AMENDMENTS:

1. Under 1.K. – this should now state the Education Act (not School Act).
2. Under 2. AUTHORITY – should state Section 55 of the Alberta Education Act and the School Councils’ Regulation.
3. Under 5.A.iv. – I am concerned that persons from the school community (I’m guessing support staff) are referred to as General Members. A more commonly used term is ‘Community Members’ and includes members from the community as well. Community Members are typically approved by the School Council (so they can’t automatically become members – they are accepted as members or denied membership).
-membership of school council is dictated by the Education Act; majority must also be parents with students in the school; other potential members – police officer, social worker, religious leader/elder;
4. Under 5.B.ii. and iii. – The principal is the final decision maker in the school. Period. This means he/she has the ‘power of veto’. Typically, principals and staff do not vote at School Council Meetings because they don’t want to sway the decision/vote of the parents. I would suggest removing them as Voting Members. The School Council is only an advisory body, so any decisions or votes they make are only provided as advice to the school principal.
5. Under 5.D. – This clause concerns me. This deals with removing members from meetings and from membership. Proven practice is that any member (doesn’t have to be the principal or an executive member) is able to call a ‘Point of Order’ and call out a member who is breaching the Rules of Order of the Code of Ethics. The Chair has the authority to ask a member to leave a meeting, as does the principal. I suggest looking at the definitions of a Voting Member and a Community Member (instead of a General Member).
 - **Voting Member: “means parent, guardian or primary caregiver of any child enrolled in an educational program at the school”**
 - **“Community Member: “means persons other than parents (as defined in 1C above) who have, in the opinion of the majority of the Members of the School Council, an interest in the well-being of the students and the School”***-membership of school council is dictated by the Education Act; majority must also be parents with students in the school; other potential members – police officer, social worker, religious leader/elder;*
6. Under 6. DECISION MAKING – Typically, School Councils don’t vote that much. They try to arrive at agreement through consensus. A vote is only held if required (ie. elections).
-typically a chair will try to get a read for the room and make decision through consensus, only using a vote when necessary.
-Parent Question – Is the ASCA document about making motions still a helpful guide? Motions are saved for anytime you’re doing an approval of something. Anything to do with money needs to have a motion and a vote.
7. Under 9.A.x. – ASCA advises School Councils not to have a bank account due to legal liability on the account. If they do have an account, the Principal and Vice Principal and staff should not have signing authority. They are not covered by school board insurance to be signing authorities on bank accounts. This leaves them open and vulnerable to law suits. However, due to the unique situation it would recommend that the School Principal remain as a signatory on the account until the account is closed or a new chair is in place (Society Status).
-principal and vice-principal are not covered to have signing authority on a bank account

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-fundraising is not intended to be a fundamental part of school council; only non-gaming fundraising is allowed; recommendation is a separate fundraising society; spending requests go through school council and are then passed on to the fundraising society; Celeste reiterated that the purpose of a school council is to be an advisory body

8. Under 9.A.xi. – The Annual Report is required in legislation (the Regulation) and should be noted here.
9. Under 13.A. – last line – The Chair actually does not have the final say respecting all agenda items. The principal is the final decision-maker in the school and has the authority to veto agenda items. Remove “if necessary”, The Chair will consult with the Administration as to the appropriateness of the proposed item. In cases of a dispute, the Principal and/or designate shall have the final say respecting all agenda items.
10. Anywhere in our procedures it mentions General Member, it will be changed to Community Member.
11. Throughout the operating procedures, anywhere it makes reference to bylaws, change it to operating procedures.

Regarding amending the bylaws/OPs, refer to clause 21. REVIEWS and AMENDMENTS C. and D. It clearly states that the bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the Voting Members present at any scheduled meeting of the School Council. Notice of proposed amendments to the OPs will be provided to the School Community no less than 5 days before a meeting.

I could not find any clause to suspend or expel members, other than clause 5.D., which has some problems. I would recommend amending the OPs at your next regular meeting. List it as an agenda item and discuss adding a clause regarding Suspension and Expulsion of Members, and any other changes that should be made. I sent our School Council Operating Procedures template to Christina, and you will find a clause in there you may want to use.

If the School Council Chair resigns, then the Vice-Chair does assume the role of Chair (clause 9.B.i). The wording of this actually means that the Vice-Chair becomes the Chair, and the Vice-Chair position would become vacant. Often, the bylaws will state that the Vice-Chair will assume the duties of the Chair which means they are still the Vice-Chair, but fulfilling the Chair duties until a new Chair is elected. So in your case, your Vice-Chair would become the Chair. You could then list the Vice-Chair position as an agenda item and advertise it accordingly to find a new Vice-Chair.

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Karla Wright's Speech (Included with Permission):

In November there were things said that made me feel like there is a lack of understanding of what a day at school is like for special needs kids. As a mom of a special needs child, I feel it is my duty to educate and advocate for my son whenever possible. That is why I asked to speak tonight. I think perhaps an identity needs to be given to special needs to have a better understanding.

My son Carson is 6 yrs old and is in Grade 1. He has autism spectrum disorder. Most people who meet him say, "He doesn't seem that bad" or "He must be high-functioning" But for me these comments drastically minimize our day to day struggles.

I am assuming for most of you, you bring your kids here at 8:20am and pick them up at 3:30pm and don't really think twice about it. For me that is definitely not the case. Every day I have no idea when we will get to school. Some days we get here on time, but most days we are late. It varies from 5 mins to an hour and half late. I always try to bring him to school in a regulated state so he is ready to learn. This means I can't rush him through the morning routine or skip parts. Since there are so many factors that can affect his level of regulation and they can change from day to day, every morning is a surprise as to how it will go.

A full day of school is still too much for him, so currently I am picking him up at 2pm every day. When he is at school, I worry that Carson will get so dysregulated that they will need to call me. So I keep my phone very close all day. I am guessing this is not the case for parents of typical children.

Carson's day at school. He technically doesn't have a one to one EA. There is a classroom EA. But she spends pretty much most of her time with Carson. Carson needs regular sensory breaks built into his day. I am not sure how you imagine the kids using the sensory room, but it isn't when they are totally dysregulated and getting out of control. It is used proactively. For Carson, he needs some sort of sensory break every 45 mins. So whether or not he seems dysregulated, he goes and does something. This could be going to the sensory room, taking a 'note' to the office, doing jobs like collecting late slips from classrooms or returning books to the library. For most of the special needs kids, the biggest bang for your buck when it comes to regulating is heavy work. There are only so many books that can be returned or carts pushed to the library. The traversing wall provides heavy work and joint impact that these kids need. This will help regulate them better in conjunction with all the strategies currently used.

On top of those regular breaks, if Carson seems to be starting to get agitated or dysregulated they will also do a sensory break at that point. The staff at Coalbanks are amazing with these sensory breaks. It isn't just the EA, Connie, doing it. Joey, Ainsley, Erin, his teacher Kristyn, and others I probably don't even know about help to keep Carson regulated and learning. A comment was made in November that even if we have the traversing wall, with a shortage of EAs who is going to take the kids to the wall? It is a team of people helping these kids and if a kids needs a sensory break at the wall, someone will take them to the wall.

Another big concern in November was that only the special needs kids will use the traversing wall and your kids will never get to. Yes, the special needs kids have the ability to use it every day and your kids probably won't. But that doesn't mean your kids won't use it at all. I am sure they will be given different opportunities throughout the year to be on it. I am sure last week with indoor recess, the teachers were wishing they had a traversing wall to burn off some of the kids energy.

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I got the impression in November that the parents weren't grasping how keeping these kids regulated doesn't just affect their own learning, but the learning of your kids as well. The teachers told about a child so dysregulated that for the safety of the other students they were removed from the classroom and lost instruction time. I got the feeling that the parents in attendance either didn't believe that actually happens or felt that their kids aren't often affected by other kids' dysregulation. I promise your children's learning is affected by my son's level of regulation.

When Carson is dysregulated, he screams, hits, kicks, throws stuff, and runs around uncontrollably wanting to destroy something. There was one day Carson became dysregulated and was screaming. With him it isn't mild screaming, it's ear splitting, ringing in your ears for hours after screaming. They were able to get him into the hallway, but he would go no further. The team did all they could but he wasn't calming and so they called me to come get him. I would always rather I get him if he is at that point rather than have him affect the learning of his peers. But not all parents can do that due to work and other personal circumstances. When I got here all the doors down that hall were closed as well as these doors here. I have always worried and hoped that Carson's level of regulation wouldn't affect his peers too often, but in that moment I realized it can go beyond that. There were 6 classrooms down that hallway that had to try and teach while Carson was screaming. I can confidently say there was not optimal learning happening for those kids at that time. With 6 classrooms and let's say roughly 20 kids per class, that is 120 students affected. And imagine if I wasn't in a position to come get him. That period of time of him disrupting would have lasted much longer. So yes, your kids won't use the wall every day, but I promise you they will benefit from it every day.

I know many of you don't want the traversing wall. I honestly can say I understand why, I know it can be hard to see that amount of money going to something you don't see your kids having any benefit from. Eventually though, we are going to get a traversing wall. With all the anger in November towards the wall, I wanted an opportunity to help you understand how it would play into these kids day and potentially benefit more kids than you realize.