**Meeting Minutes**

Davidson Creek Elementary School Council

**November 19, 2019 6:00pm**

**Board Members**

Melissa Presse, Chair | Ashley MacInnis, Vice Chair | Karli Butler, Secretary

|Stephanie Peterson, Communications

**Meeting Minutes – IN DRAFT until approved at January 2020’s Meeting**

The Chair welcomed attendees and guests and gave a Treaty 6 Acknowledgment

Attendance:

* Parent Council Executive: Melissa Presse, Chair, Ashley MacInnis, Karli Butler, Secretary, Vice Chair, and Stephanie Peterson, Communications Officer - All present
* Parent Council Members: 9 additional parents attended the meeting
* DCE Staff: Kaye Schindeler, Principal, Murray Howell, Assistant Principal, Marlis Marler, Assistant Principal/Counselor, Amy Rice, Teacher, Shelly Allen, Teacher
* Guests: Annette Hubrick, Elk Island Public School Division Trustee
* The Chair asked if there were any additions or deletions to the meeting agenda. – None were made. Meeting proceeded.

The Chair asked for approval of minutes of October 8th, 2019

* Motion was carried by: Crystal Walds, Parent
* Seconded by: Cloe Forgie, Parent

**Old Business**

**Knick Knack Shack Update, Melissa P**

Melissa let everyone know the website for supporting DCE School teachers with possible classroom items, i.e. arts and crafts materials, is now up and running. Melissa also confirmed there are already a few items listed:

<https://sites.google.com/view/knickknackshack/home?authuser=0>

If anyone, parent or teacher wants something posted or has questions please reach out to Melissa via email. chairdce@gmail.com.

The Helping Hands Parent Volunteer program (later in the meeting re-named Parents as Partners) will also be on the Knick Knack Shack so teachers can ask for parent volunteer support for various school efforts.

After some discussion on how best to communicate the new Knick Knack Shack website out to parents and caregivers Kaye S. volunteered to send a communication to parents in the upcoming newsletters and social media channels, which will also be supported by Stephanie Peterson, Council’s Communication Officer.

Kaye S. also mentioned that teachers need to be made aware of this too, of which she will also send a communication.

Stephanie P. asked that the Knick Knack Shack volunteer page put out a call for parent help with the schools literacy program and preparing the books to go home with the kids.

**Wreath Decorating, Melissa P.**

Wreath Decoration, by classroom, event is moving forward. Teachers will get their wreaths for decorating on Dec 9th. The wreaths must be completed by Dec 17th and the judging will commence on Dec 18th. Winners will be announced to the school on Dec 19th and the prize (a classroom wide snack) will be provided on Dec 20th.

We will need volunteers preferably from the community to judge on Dec 18th. Melissa will be reaching out to possible community members to assist with this. i.e. Local County politicians, our school board trustee, local RCMP representatives, as well as, possible news or radio station personalities.

**Melissa Chair Report**

The chair wanted to acknowledge the changes to the DCE School Council Operating Procedures that were made in September and October are now complete and the document needs to be approved by the board.

* Motion to approve was carried by Stephanie Peterson, Communications Officer
* Seconded by Sara Gruninger, Parent

Melissa P. mentioned there would be a January 8th, Committee of School Councils (COSC) meeting of which she could not attend. She explained it was important to have representation at this meeting and asked for a volunteer to go in her stead. Karli Butler, Secretary, agreed to go on her behalf. Melissa will share the meeting date details with Karli by email.

**Committee Reports**

**Sara/Deanna Wellness Committee:**

Sara Gruninger advised the council that there had been a discussion on how to reach more parents at the most recent Wellness meeting.

The SC meeting participants, based on a comment from Annette Hubick, discussed changing the Parents Volunteer Program name from Helping Hands to Parents as Partners. The meeting participants felt this was a much better choice for a name and decided to move forward with the name. This will largely be seen on our Knick Knack Shack website and discussed on social media channels.

Sara continued with her update noting that discussion at the last Wellness meeting also focused on school and community promotion and how best to do that.

The group discussed the promotion of “the green aspect”. One idea considered was for kids, and staff, was to have them bring their own containers for popcorn and not use paper bags; popcorn would still issued in a measured fashion regardless of container size.

Also discussed was the trash and recycling receptacles around the school. These are confusing - what trash or recycling item goes where. So, the Wellness Committee is looking at ways to communicate to kids about using the receptacles correctly.

Erin W, suggested a short video to promote better waste management in general and to provide information on the receptacles and their use. She had a resource for making the video and would follow up with the Wellness committee with more information.

The Wellness Committee is still reviewing/considering a new t-shirt vendor for pink shirt day in February. While they haven’t confirmed anyone yet the group is working to have a vendor identified in time for February’s event.

Wellness Committee asked the SC if they could use the proceeds from the sale of the pink shirts for another wellness initiative.

The attendees at the School Council meeting discussed the cost of the t-shirts that would be sold online and an option for families re-using their shirts from last year, to donate instead.

SC agreed the Wellness Committee could use the proceeds from Pink Shirt day to fund another initiative. Also the SC agreed that $12.00 would be the price of the shirts sold to kids.

The Wellness Committee would reconvene in January

Sara G. mentioned the Active School Challenge group will meet later this week.

**Moo Club – Nadine**

The moo club only had to donate a couple of crates before the fall break

It was also confirmed the program is running more smoothly this year over last year

Meeting attendees discussed white milk vs chocolate milk as the orders were overwhelming for chocolate milk with very few selecting white milk. Could it be possible for parents to pick on behalf of their kids to help break up the choice a bit more? – Discussion commenced

**New Business**

**Christmas Concert**

Parent volunteers needed to move stuff to and from the concert hall on the morning of and the after the event itself.

One parent will have a flat deck trailer to move larger things, but there are small things that need to move the day of (early morning), as well as, after the event. Melissa may need to post a volunteer support request in the Knick Knack Shack and use social media channels to find Parents as Partners.

Kaye S. will send a reminder parents about silver bells fundraiser in the upcoming newsletter.

**Family Movie Night**

This was briefly discussed. It will be planned for some time in January. The Wellness Committee will take on the organizing of this event as part of their connecting with the community focus. They will meet before Christmas, organize the details and get communication home to parents regarding date and further details.

**Winter Carnival**

Amy Rice, a DCE teacher would like to put together a winter carnival event for the entire school. It would take place in (Late February/early March).

She would plan it with the grade 6’s who will support/volunteer to run the events with some parent help needed.

Some of the events that Amy R. was considering were: A beading station, snowshoeing, snow or ice sculptures, dog sled races (using kids and sleds). Blind folded dressing game, maple candy making station, and a bonhomme de neige dressed up character.

Amy’s basic plan, at this point, would be to have the event go all day with half the school participating in the morning and the other half participating in the afternoon.

Expenses for the event were briefly discussed as a couple of the events would have costs, like the maple candy station. Erin W. offered to follow up and see if the County had any resources to provide a snow cone machine, as well as, some of the other supplies needed. The cost to bring in an outside group to do this event would be very expensive. So, other ideas were appreciated.

Amy R. said she would put together some information and possible costs and send it to SC for review.

Meeting attendees discussed the need to possibly replace the bonhomme de neige costume as well.

Principal Report - Kaye Schindeler

At January’s school council meeting we will be discussing school fee information and how necessary changes to the fee structure will affect parents. It is expected there will be a fair number in attendance

The recent provincial budget announcement/changes will affect EIPS. Annette Hubrick will discussed this later in the meeting and details can be found in her report at the end of the minutes

DCE still struggles with parking etiquette in the drop off zone. School Management is working on and implementing a some strategies in the near future to try and change current practices. Strategies include: Information/communication reinforced to parents about drop off zone. It was also that parents are using the teacher parking lot.

 Meeting attendees discussed ways of better communicated with parents and provide clear information.

Discussion led to possibly a letter being sent home, an email, a large noted blurb at the top newsletter.

The date for the Christmas concert will be the evening of December 5th and the concert times are as follows:

* K – 6:30
* Grades 1-3 – 7:00
* Grades 4-6 – 7:30

Parents that don’t have children participating in the various groups do not have to arrive any earlier than necessary or stay longer that your child’s performance. A communication will go out to parents shortly with more information.

DCE School has hired a few of new staff members. This is not a head count increase, but filling vacancies existing for various reasons: Elizabeth Jones is replacing a maternity leave, Charlie Bornare has also joined them team long with Lindsay Bray, a new EA

We have booked an event for the kids with Alberta Opera, there is an over payment being applied to cover costs and the event will take place in the new year.

Kaye discussed the results from the Accountability Pillar survey given to parents of students in grade 4

“The Alberta government has a system for school authorities to consistently measure success and progress, called the Accountability Pillar. The Accountability Pillar uses 16 measures that show communities how schools and school authorities are performing each year.”

Accountability Pillar Concerns For Davidson Creek Elementary School

1. Percentage of parents who agree that students are taught attitudes and behaviours that will make them successful at work when they finish school.

20 parents surveyed– Response Breakdown

* 1 very satisfied
* 15 satisfied
* 5 dissatisfied
* 0 very dissatisfied
1. High school students demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for learning throughout their lifetime

19 parents surveyed– Response Breakdown

* 0 very satisfied
* 4 satisfied
* 1 dissatisfied
* 1 very dissatisfied
* 13 Don’t Know
1. Your child is taught the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for learning throughout his or her lifetime

21 parents surveyed– Response Breakdown

* 2 very satisfied
* 15 satisfied
* 3 dissatisfied
* 0 very dissatisfied
* 1 Don’t Know
1. To what extent are you involved in decisions about your child's education? Would you say

22 parents surveyed– Response Breakdown

* 1 a lot
* 15 some
* 3 very little
* 2 not at all
* 0 Don’t Know
1. To what extent are you involved in decisions at your child's school? Would you say

22 parents surveyed – Response Breakdown

* 1 a lot
* 1 5 some
* 4 very little
* 1 not at all
* 1 Don’t Know
1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your input into decisions at your child's school is considered

22 parents surveyed– Response Breakdown

* 4 very satisfied
* 10 satisfied
* 3 dissatisfied
* 0 very dissatisfied
* 5 Don’t Know
1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunity to be involved in decisions about your child's education

22 parents surveyed– Response Breakdown

* 2 very satisfied
* 15 satisfied
* 2 dissatisfied
* 1 very dissatisfied
* 2 Don’t Know
1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunity to be involved in decisions at your child's school

21 parents surveyed– Response Breakdown

* 4 very satisfied
* 13 satisfied
* 2 dissatisfied
* 0 very dissatisfied
* 0 Don’t Know
1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your child can access the following services in a timely manner at school when needed: School Library services

22 parents surveyed– Response Breakdown

* 9 very satisfied
* 11 satisfied
* 2 dissatisfied
* 0 very dissatisfied
* 6 Don’t Know

Kaye concluded they will be reaching out to parents of grade 4 students to remind them to participate in the upcoming Accountability Pillar Survey when the time comes.

Kay concluded her report.

**Annette Hubick Trustee Report**

Annette reviewed the Her Board of Trustee School Council Report (see at the very bottom of the minutes). It included information on the changes in the EIPS budget now that the Provincial government confirmed their budget.

Please note, due to the timing of the budget release school board and school goals setting initiative will be moving to the Spring instead of taking place in the Fall.

Also member our Website that can provide information and templates to be able draft letters to your MLA: <https://www.eips.ca/parents>

**Meeting Conclusion – Chair, Melissa Presse**

The Chair thanked Annette for her update.

The Chair confirmed the following SC meeting dates for the rest of the 2019/2020 School year.

Please be aware that December’s meeting, due to busy schedules, was cancelled.

1. November 19
2. ~~December 10~~ - Cancelled
3. January 14
4. ~~February 11~~

It was agreed at November’s meeting that

February’s meeting will be cancelled at the

request of DCE Management Staff due to

a busy, short month, (Teacher’s Convention).

1. March 10
2. April 14
3. May 12 (Final Meeting for Funding Requests)
4. June 9 (AGM)

The **DCE School Council Meeting adjourned at 7:21pm**



**School Council Report**

**Trustee Annette Hubick**

***November 2019***

**2019-2020 Budget**

***Our Spring Assumptions***

As I’ve previously reported, school boards had to build 2019-20 budgets based on assumptions. EIPS chose to budget conservatively.

* Growth would not be funded
* Classroom Improvement Fund would not continue to be funded ($1.9 million)
* There would be no increase to any funding grants, for example the basic grant, transportation, PMO (plant, maintenance and operations)
* The nutrition program would not continue
* The costs associated with the teacher collective agreement that the government negotiated would not be funded.

For extra measures, schools’ staffing was capped at 95% of their budgets to allow for fall adjustments that would least likely impact staffing.

***The insurance sticker shock***

Two weeks prior to the budget being tabled EIPS learned that our insurance premium for our facilities will increase by $1.5M for the 2019/20 school year. This was not factored in when building our spring budget so we were already bracing ourselves for having to make decisions to cover that unanticipated shortfall.

***The 2019-20 Provincial Budget Announcement and Impact on EIPS***

The Budget was tabled October 24, 2019, which revealed that we didn’t anticipate all the changes that would be made.

* Class size funding is suspended. For EIPS that equates to $7.9M.
* The school fee grant is suspended (this grant was brought in by the previous government when it passed legislation that prohibited school boards from collecting division-wide fees to cover supplies.) For EIPS, that equates to $1.22M.

These two grants, along with Classroom Improvement Fund Grant (which we correctly assumed would be suspended) were redirected to fund growth in terms of the Basic Grant and to provide Boards a one-time transition grant for the 2019/20 school year. Note: the Basic Grant has not changed since 2011.

Note: The Transition Grant is $203 for urban boards and $356 for rural boards. “Urban” is defined as a municipality with 30,000+ citizens. The government is not recognizing our unique “R-urban” makeup and is funding all EIPS students at the urban rate. This amounts to a 1.23M difference in funding to EIPS.

Between the budget shortfall and our insurance premium increase, EIPS is looking at a $5.5M mid-year adjustment.

***Context to “Reserves”***

It is often quoted that school boards are sitting on hundreds of millions of reserves and that these should be accessed to offset reductions in funding. As of August 31, 2019, we had a total of $19.7M in reserves. Here is some context as to what constitutes that amount:

* $6.3M in tangible assets, which is the current value of our assets that gets expensed over time. E.G. fleet vehicles, photocopier machines and technology licensing. This isn’t cash money that can be spent.
* $895K in capital reserves.
* This leaves $12.6M in operating reserves.
	+ $1.6M is School Generated Funds, which are also not available for the school division to use. This belongs to the schools and represents the fees that parents have paid, and money generated from vending machines and cafeteria/canteen sales.
	+ $2.7M is what schools and departments were allowed to carry forward to the following school year, which is a maximum of 2% of their operating budgets. Anything over and above that 2% gets returned to the division’s unallocated reserves.

**The remaining $6.2 million in reserves represents truly “discretionary” operating funds.**

**Allocated Reserves** is money that the Board has committed to something specific. Typically, these are one-time investments. We have money set aside for installing mechanical cooling in our portables, leveraging student achievement initiative funds, top up funds for furniture and equipment for our replacement schools, and new curriculum implementation costs, for example. As of August 31, 2019, we had $2.8M in allocated reserves.

**Unallocated Reserves** are funds used to cover unexpected expenses that might arise mid-year like a significant mechanical failure. It is recommended that the Board maintains 2% of its operating budget in unallocated reserves, for EIPS that is $4M. As of August 31, 2019, we had $5.4M in unallocated reserves.

***How EIPS will Adjust for 2019-2020***

The Board met on October 31, 2019 to receive all the details of the provincial budget and determine how to best address the mid-year adjustment that will be required. The Board will move forward with a measured approach to minimize, as much as possible, learning in the classroom for the remainder of this year.

* The Board will be using $3.6M from its unallocated reserves leaving us with only $2.7M—well below our $4M threshold.
* The Board has also reversed some of its commitments from our Allocated Reserves, $800K. This will leave us by year end $90K in allocated reserves.
* The Board is also calling back all central department carry forward (that 2%), including the Governance budget. The only exception is Supports for Students as their work directly affects the classroom, e.g., specialized supports, new curriculum resources, etc.
* The Board practice is to allow schools to carry surpluses up to 2% forward into the next school year. For the 2019/20 school year it will be reduced to maximum of 1%. This will result in a total of $581K being called back from the 43 schools.

This will allow us to cover off the $5.5M shortfall so we can deliver a balanced budget by November 30.

***Going Forward***

Given that the government has indicated that education funding will remain at the 2018/19 level for the next 3 years the board will use this time to examine our programs, services and staffing levels to determine what we will be able to afford over the next 3 years. The Board will not be in the position to draw on any reserves for the next school year.

With the Education Budget being frozen at the 2018/19 level and our student enrolment and costs continuing to grow, our resources will require to be stretched to include more students. One thing we know for certain is that class sizes will increase over the next 3 years, which will mean increased workloads for teachers who may no longer be in a position to take on duties outside of classroom instruction, e.g., coaching, championing programs so there will be a greater need and opportunity for parents and community members to step into those roles.

Unfortunately, neither a replacement school for Sherwood Heights nor a new school to address enrolment pressures in Fort Saskatchewan made it on the province’s list of school infrastructure projects. This will also impact our planning going forward.

**New School Fee Process**

The Board has approved a new school fee process for the 2020-2021 school year. The changes encompass opportunities for school administration to engage with parents in developing and establishing fees. This new process arose at the direction of trustees in response to parent concerns and is one example of the governance work of your locally elected school board.

**Date Activity**

January Board will establish parameters for setting fees

January Principals will hold an initial consultation with parents (2-weeks’ notice requirement)

February Principals will establish proposed fees using specified parameters, principal discretion, parent feedback, and fee calculation tools

March/April Principals will hold a second meeting with parents to share proposed fees and rationale (2-weeks’ notice requirement)

April Principals will submit proposed fee schedules and declarations to Financial Services. School Council Chairs sign a document to confirm the consultation process was followed.

May/June Board will review/approve fee schedules

The board will continue its work in this area. Central administration has been tasked with developing a reporting process that accounts for the fees collected—providing assurance and accountability.

**Lead in water**

With the announcement of the federal government reducing the allowable limit of traces of lead in water, the issue significant media coverage recently. Here is the EIPS context:

Back in 2016, work was being done at a school, which involved testing the water. It was discovered that the amount of lead in the water exceeded the allowable limit. Although not required by law, EIPS decided to have the water supply tested in all its schools and found that 11 exceeded the guidelines 10 parts per billion. Under the new guidelines, 22 schools would have exceeded the limit.

These issues were addressed depending on the situation, e.g., pipes were replaced, water bottle fillers were installed to replace drinking fountains, line flushing protocols were established (because in many cases, it was noted that once lines were flushed, tests results were well below the limit) etc. The cost to the division was approximately $100,000.

Next Meetings

January 14, ~~February 11~~, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9 (AGM)

Adjournment

7:45pm