

School Council - Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2018

IN ATTENDANCE:

School Council: Rob Sissons (Chair), Gavin Parker (Vice Chair) and Jeanette Davis (Secretary)

Attendees: Ted Harranty, Sarah Eugene, Lori De La Fontaine Clarke, Roxane Baalim, Jill Bruder, Chelan Citrigno and Janine Johnson

Administration: Judy Lane (Trustee), Chris Smeaton (Superintendent), Tina Delinte (Principal) and Karen Schmidt (Associate Principal)

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEM: Tina will address the use of a Bobcats when kids are being dropped off at the school.

ACTION ITEM: Chris will discuss the possibility of keeping schools open when buses are cancelled at his meeting with Livingston Range.

ACTION ITEM: Chris will look into Lori (St. Mike's Parent) making changes to the school website. He will get back to us to let us know if Lori can work on it.

ACTION ITEM: School Council to develop a list of recommendations for the recruitment of personnel to St. Mike's School.

ACTION ITEM: Chris will pass recruitment recommendations onto Brian so he can consider incorporating them into his recruitment efforts for Holy Spirit Schools.

1. REVIEW MINUTES – Rob Sissons

- Review minutes from last meeting.
- Looks good!

2. TRUSTEE REPORT AND UPDATES – Judy Lane

- ASCA Conference Registration.
- Chairs meeting in Lethbridge next week – SC Chair, Rob Sisson will try to attend.
- Summary sheet of updates provided to attendees by Judy Lane.

3. ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL UPDATES – Tina Delinte and Karen Schmidt

- Ongoing health inspections of our kitchen so it can be approved.
- Grade 12 retreat for students at Beauvais that will include smudging.
- We are allowing parents to temporarily use bus lanes due to issues with snow on sidewalks.
- Mural in the Den is complete!
- St. Mikes has offered support to Canyon due to the tragic loss of Meryn Christensen.
- Our Dragon's Basketball Team is off to play in the zones (March madness is coming)

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4. BOBCAT SAFETY ISSUE AT ST. MIKE'S ENTRANCE - Roxane Baalim

- A Bobcat is being used at the North entrance as children arrive at school.
- The bobcat is reversing while young children are passing by to enter the building.
- This creates a very high risk situation for our students.
- It is just a matter of time before a major incident occurs
- Should a child be run over they would not have a chance due to the size of the equipment being used.

ACTION ITEM: Tina will address the use of Bobcats when kids are being dropped off at school. She will work toward coordinating a situation that is safe for our students.

5. KEEPING ST. MIKE'S OPEN ON SNOW DAYS

Currently St. Michael's closes when the buses are cancelled, even though the school is within walking distance of the entire town. School Council's concerns are that school closures on snow days have the following impacts on the community:

- Lost instructional days (already 8 this year due to construction and snow days).
- Families scrambling on short notice to accommodate unexpected changes.
- Work absences within the community.
- Reduced income for families due to lost work days and daycare costs

Chris – Decisions are linked with Livingston for consistency. When Livingston decides to cancel buses, then all the schools in the region choose to close their doors.

Ted – Buses don't handle very well in snow compared to other types of vehicles. An open school would allow parents to take their kids to school in vehicles that are better equipped to handle road conditions on snowy days.

Jeanette – Keeping schools open when buses are cancelled would put the decision in the hands of the parents, not the transportation coordinator at Livingston Range.

Chris – Schools from different boards in the region should align because it would be problematic if some schools were open and others were closed on snow days.

Jeanette – Our schools are out of alignment with other schools across Alberta, most of which keep schools open on days when buses are cancelled. Suggests a trial year when we keep schools open when buses are cancelled.

Chelan – Wants to know if sport team travel is restricted as road conditions may improve later in the day?

Chris – Yes, teams are restricted on days when schools are closed due to snow.

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Tina – Is concerned that teachers may not be able to make it to school safely..

Gavin – Can we put this to a vote among parents?

Chris - Believes most parents would choose to keep the school open but insists that the decision would have to be made with other school boards so they align. He is concerned with CUPE grievances.

Jeanette – All other public and private employers in our area find ways to operate on snowy days. Some make concessions for employees who live out of town. This businesses demonstrate that it is possible to offer safe options for personnel and keep the school open.

Rob – The schools were open on Friday, February 16th, demonstrating that schools can stay open when buses are cancelled.

ACTION ITEM: Chris will discuss keeping schools open when buses are cancelled at his meeting with Livingston Range.

6. PROMOTING ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

School Council recommends that the board actively promote St. Michaels to increase the number of students attending the school.

Chris – The school currently has a healthy population size and does need see the need for additional promotion. Just “keep doing what you’re doing”, as it is working fine.

A. School Council recommends a much needed upgrade to the school's website.

Chris – Updating the website for schools across the entire division is costly. Changes must be weighed against other priorities, such as hiring personnel.

Rob – The website is linked to other high priority items, such as teacher recruitment and communication with parents. It should be a priority.

Tina and Karen – Emphasize the importance of getting an updated website to help with priority items at the school.

Gavin - What can we do to move changes to the website forward?

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Lori (St. Mike's parent) – Has a strong IT skill set and volunteers to work on the School's website herself. She can do this in her spare time to make improvements to the website within the existing platform.

ACTION: Chris will look into Lori (St. Mike's Parent) making changes to the school website. He will get back to us to let us know if Lori can work on it.

- Advertising using posters and signage
- Developing a brochure and handbook for the school
- Outdoor signage
- Active outreach

B. School Council recommends promoting the school's assets to key touchpoints and new families etc.

Roxane – A major draw for many parents to any school is a language program and academic performance. St. Mikes currently has a great language program but is lagging academically. Bringing up academic standards would draw more students to the school.

Chris – Our identity is tied to our Catholicism. This is how we distinguish ourselves from other schools. As long as I am the superintendent preserving our Catholic identity will be my priority.

Jeanette – While this may be true, we need to be realistic about what actually draws people to the school. In many cases this is the language program and other aspects of the school such as sports and arts. If we can emphasize these qualities then we may have more buy in from new comers and those wishing to switch schools.

School Council – A name change will make it obvious that the school is French emersion and could be a positive draw to the school.

Gavin – What would it take to change the schools name?

Chris – There would need to be some due diligence to determine if the idea supported by the school community. A letter would need to be written to Judy Lane so should could take it to the board for council to consider.

Jill Bruder – St. Michael's has a long history within our community. Many families will likely be opposed to the name change. Changing the school's name could also be quite costly.

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C. School Council – Recommends developing posters, a brochure and handbook to promote the school.

Jeanette - Can the school and council use the division's resources to develop posters and other material to promote the school?

Chris - Yes, you can use divisional resources to help promote St. Mike's. You just need to get approval from the school's administration first.

7. RECRUITMENT PLAN FOR ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

School Council recommends a recruitment plan for St. Michael's because our rural location make it more challenging to find qualified people to fill positions. We are already experiencing a shortages of supply teachers, specifically those who speak French.

Chris – We make real efforts to find qualified teachers. Often teachers will choose positions in Lethbridge or Calgary over a rural positions, making it more challenging to fill these roles.

Gavin - What active strategies are being used for recruitment in rural communities?

Chris – Advertise nationally, job fairs, websites and others. When teachers decide to retire we begin advertising positions soon after so they can be filled.

Karen and Tina – Teaching students are working at the school. We have PS3 student teachers at St. Mikes this year.

Jeanette – Leveraging the network of parents may be a useful way to recruit.

Gavin – Suggests that we actively support the new teachers to make it easier for them to stay in the area. Encourages the administration to provide them with his contact info so the parents at the school can help support them.

Lori – Knows of a university in Winnipeg, Manitoba where many French speaking teachers graduate. Can we reach out to this school?

Chris - Is open to ideas. If we send these recommendations to him then he will pass them onto Brian McCaully (Recruitment, Holy Spirit Division).

ACTION ITEM: School Council to come up with recommendations to improve recruitment to St. Mike's.

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ACTION ITEM: Chris will pass this information onto Brian so he can incorporate our recommendations into his recruitment efforts for Holy Spirit Schools.

8. NEXT SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

- Monday, March 19th @ 7:00 p.m.
- St. Michael's School
- All are welcome to attend!

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March 19th, 2018

IN ATTENDANCE:

School Council: Rob Sissons (Chair), Gavin Parker (Vice Chair) and Jeanette Davis (Secretary)

Attendees: Kelly Cooley, Sarah Cyr and Lori De La Fontaine

Administration: Judy Lane (Trustee) and Tina Delinte (Principal)

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEM: School Council to develop a list of recommendations for the recruitment of personnel to St. Mike's School.

ACTION ITEM: Chris will pass recruitment recommendations onto Brian so he can consider incorporating them into his recruitment efforts for Holy Spirit Schools.

ACTION: Kelly will provide us with notes from FOSM's last meeting (February 2018)

ACTION ITEM: Kelly to add Rob to his FOSM email list so we are aware of their meetings.

ACTION ITEMS: Rob to attend the next FOSM meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Jeanette will add Kelly to the SC's email list so FOSM is aware of our meeting dates and times.

ACTION ITEM: Jeanette and Rob to draft a letter to Chris Smeaton as a follow-up to our meeting with him in February.

1. REVIEW MINUTES – Rob Sissons

- Review minutes from last meeting
- All is well!

2. TRUSTEE REPORT AND UPDATES – Judy Lane

- Budget is coming out on Thursday.
- Minister of Education with board on conference call before it comes out.
- A lot of input from the board chairs on activities.
- Plans to distribute follow-up info.
- Chris Smeaton mentioned us at the board meeting and indicated the website is underway and possibly pamphlets for each school.
- Chris Smeaton enjoyed his visit and would like to come again.
- Gavin Parker - thanks Judy for attending our meetings and advocating for our school at the board meetings.
- Gavin Parker – What is Chris Smeaton's contract cycle?
- Chris just signed a five year contract with the board.

3. ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL UPDATES – Tina Delinte and Karen Schmidt

- Karen sends her regrets: involved with choir in preparation for Easter.

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- Many of the items we discussed at the last SC meeting were brought up with the Learning Leadership Team (Principals and Senior Admin).

Website Updates

- General frustration with existing server.
- We have been signed on with this webserver since 1999.
- A lot has changed since that time.
- Webpage – began negotiating two years ago and then its progress was stalled.
- The board's internet person does not have enough time to work on updating the web.
- The board is now considering a new web server with an independent contractor to manage it.

Social Media

- The school is also using the following types of social media to communicate: Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat. Social media is “broad sweep” of the school.
- Kelly Cooley – Is pleased to see the school reaching out with Social Media. He feels it is a positive method of communicating with the school community.
- Tina Delinte - Social media came from within the school. There is a very solid team who takes on the lions share. She would like more people involved in contributing.
- Rob Sisson – Suggests School Council get on Twitter.

St. Michael's Brochure

- Tina shows us brochures printed in 2013. They are very dated but a new brochure may be on the horizon.

Truth & Reconciliation

- PD Day - Truth and reconciliation theme: Worked through “The Walking Together Literature”, learned about the impact of residential schools.
- Resources available for teachers.

School Kitchen

- Still trying to approve.
- Health and Safety Inspector will not sign on for a number of reasons including, 2/3 of window is covered by a steam bar, hot station is immediately adjacent to a cold station, issue with the sink (if you try to wash something the water will end up on your lap).
- The kitchen is in the divisions hands at this point.
- Judy Lane – Things have been going around in circles since we opened the school.
- The lack of kitchen is a problem because we are not able to get a contractor to provide hot lunches for students.
- Tina – send letters to Chris Smeaton with copy Michael Horroff and Lisa Palmerine.
- Ward Bros – deflect to Ferrari West Wood, who intern defers to the kitchen designer, who claims the design was signed off on.

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Education

- Six student teachers at St. Michaels at this time, including 5 PS2 and 1 PS3.
- Great to see students from University of Lethbridge (UofL) at our school.
- UofL will be sending councilors to the school shortly.
- John Taylor has invited students to come along for those interested in health care.
- The program will allow St. Mike's, Pikkani and Mathew Halton to visit the hospital, police station and fire station.
- Six tickets available to attend "Greatness in Leadership" – Grade 12 students are able to attend.

Addressing Attendance Issues

- Dr. Manyfingers will be hosting an event for parents to address the importance of children attending school.

High School Graduation

- Graduation has been scheduled for the Mother's Day Weekend.

4. DISCUSSION WITH KELLY COOLEY – CHAIR OF FRIENDS OF ST. MICHAELS (FOSM)

Communication

- Kelly suggests that there is be a liaison who sits on both FOSM and SC boards so there is communication between them. Or a rotating liaison from each group who attends both meetings and reports back to their respective group.
- Over the last few years, FOSM may have been overstepping its bounds as a group with the sincere desire to help.
- Going forward, if an issue comes to us that is more appropriate for School Council then we will direct them to School Council.
- FOSM supports the school through fundraising efforts and places funding where they feel it will serve the students best.
- Areas we have supported include athletics, science in the classroom. We bring funds in, take donation requests, and maximize our fundraising capacity.
- Rob – Role of St. Mikes is to be a liaison between parents and school. We facilitate communication and provide input to the administration.
- Kelly - The groups were split for the purposes of having money handled by a separate group.
- Gavin – School Council seeks to address global issues that affect the entire school, as opposed to individual issues that are voiced directly to administration.
- Kelly – Example - LED sign that is going up outside. FOSM facilitated the research and got the permits through the town. FOSM's treasurer has done a lot of the work. 99% done. \$26,000 is the cost. The majority of the funds are coming from a private donor.

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Transportation for Sports Teams

- Kelly – Another example that has not yet been solved. Frustration with the transportation of sports teams.
- Costs for volunteers that transport kids. Liabilities are an increasing concern.
- FOSM has a role in funding for transportation but purchasing a bus is not advisable from the boards perspective, due to liabilities.
- Kelly - Sports are vital to the student population and school.
- Transportation is a major issue facing schools at this time.
- One day St. Mike's is not going to have any busses and this will be very problematic for teams who need to attend events.
- If buses can't be driven by volunteer parents, then all parents will need to be on the road.

ACTION: Kelly will provide us with notes from FOSM's last meeting (February 2018)

Basketball Court

- Proposing a basketball court in the Northwest corner of school. Kelly will leave us what he has today. Flexcourt Canada - approximately \$18,000 for one of these models.
- Make sure foundation is done professionally.
- FOSM thinks a basketball is a good idea, as does Tina.
- We need to find a champion to spearhead it.
- An idea is to develop a subgroup to spearhead the cause.
- Kelly suggests we approach the sports teams and ask them if they would be interested in an outdoor basketball court.

Exterior Lighting Issue

- We are currently doing some exploratory work on lighting.
- Encourages RCMP to come to meeting.
- Mike Horroff to talk with other communities about what they have done with lighting. Recommends high mounted solar power motion activated lighting to save power and to keep down on glare in the neighbourhood.
- Mike may be available. Lighting may help alleviate concerns.
- Rob - Wants the basketball court and lighting to be part of a bigger picture on landscaping and a long term plan for the area surrounding St. Mikes.
- Tina – Mike says it needs to be part of a long term plan (at least 25 years).

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Going Forward

ACTION ITEM: Kelly to add Rob Sissons to his FOSM email list so we are aware of their meetings.

ACTION ITEMS: Rob Sissons to attend the next FOSM meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Jeanette will add Kelly to School Council's email list so FOSM is aware of our meeting dates and times.

Kelly – Suggests that both School Council and FOSM groups attend more school events and use the opportunity to speak to the assembly. At these times you have a lot of parents in the room.

5. FOLLOW-UP TO MEETING WITH CHRIS SMEATON

ACTION ITEM: Jeanette and Rob to draft a letter to Chris Smeaton as a follow-up to our meeting with him in February.

Lori – Suggests we invite Chris back to a School Council meeting prior to the end of the year.

6. NEXT SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

- Monday, April 16th @ 7:00 p.m.
- St. Michael's School
- All are welcome to attend!