

Parent Advisory Council: Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 23, 2019

Bentley High School Learning Floor

Members in attendance: Lane Moore, Jayson Lovell, Carmen Hrynyk, Leslie Anderson, Darci Cole, Pam Hansen, Stephen Lush, Sheri Green, Shannon Yurystowski, Lindsay Morrison, Lyn Garries, Bobbi Talsma, Erin Schofer, Tammy McDiarmid

Meeting commenced at 7:04 pm.

Agenda:

Welcome

- Welcome to any new families attending tonight's meeting
- Welcome to Wolf Creek School Division's Superintendent, Jayson Lovell

School Trustee Update – Pam Hansen

- Thanks to the hard work of the Playground Committee for their fundraising efforts over the past couple of years. It is so nice to see the children enjoying the new equipment. The sport court opened up this afternoon.
- Pam recently attended a chair meeting. There has been various discussions regarding funding in education. As of right now, for this year's budget, there have been no cuts to education; however this does not take into account higher enrollment numbers and the increased need for student supports.
- In Wolf Creek School Division there are currently 7,438 students enrolled.
- A school resource officer from the County of Lacombe has been assigned to our school and has visited several times already.
- Pam also attended the opening of Rimbey's CTS wing recently.

Admin Update – Lane Moore

- Enrollment last year was 404 students. Currently, this year, we have 398 students.
 - Kindergarten – 26 students
 - Grades 1 to 5 – 190
 - Grades 6 to 8 – 85
 - Grades 9 to 12 – 97
 - Total – 398
- There has been one new teaching hire this year: Shayla Merriam, who is primarily teaching Physical Education classes.
- There has been a recent retirement this year - Merv Leidl. His position has been filled internally, with a combination of Bentley teachers.
- Gideon Bible Distribution: Parent Advisory Council feedback was requested in order to decide whether or not to offer the distribution of Gideon Bibles this year to Grade 5 students. The distribution has now moved towards an opt-in model, where a student will only receive a bible if they request one. As a Parent

Advisory Council we expressed our consent to the opt-in bible distribution at Bentley School (grade 5 only).

- Inclusion Update at Bentley School:
 - Bentley School continues to have a strong reputation of supporting inclusion within our school. Our belief is that an inclusive school environment is best. However, with current funding levels it is becoming more and more of a challenge for our teachers and educational assistants.
 - The number of students requiring support in our school has increased from 17 last year to 22.3 currently. And the number of educational assistants in the building has reduced this year, from 13.4 FTE (full time equivalent) to 11 FTE.
 - This brings various strains and challenges to the classroom, in an attempt to effectively support and meet the needs of all learners.
 - Lane's role has shifted this year, from primarily administration-type work to inclusion-focused work. He recently completed a thorough inventory of our school and the individual needs of students. Once this information was gathered, a team from Head Office came to our school to review the information as well as spend time in classrooms and talk to teachers.
 - Lane recently heard from Head Office that our school has received an additional teaching assignment of 0.4 FTE to help with current classroom configurations and student needs.
- Introduce Wolf Creek Public Schools' Superintendent, Jayson Lovell.

Jayson Lovell

- Unlike years in the past, Head Office was not given a formal budget number this year. They have had to create a budget without knowing how much they have to work with. This has had its challenges. The only secure budget information they have at this point is the provision of a Nutrition Grant.
- Late October an interim budget is expected to be released from the government.
- Major changes are anticipated with the new government that will have a direct impact on our schools and classrooms.
- An overview of inclusion was shared by Jayson. It is defined as a philosophy of embracing *all* students and ensuring they are part of both the classroom and school community.
- Previously (8 years ago), inclusion funding was based on a coding system, where districts would have students identified through a number of assessments. Alberta Education would then determine which students meet the criteria of a code and fund accordingly. This method of coding changed in 2011 to a "block funding allocation model."
- With the new model a formula was created to determine how schools/districts received funding, regardless of individual student needs.

- As a district as well as at the school level, we continue to see significant increases in the number of students requiring additional supports in the classroom.
- Over the past few years, Wolf Creek has been using their Board Operational Reserves to help fund inclusion throughout the division. In the 2017/18 school year, these reserves were depleted.
- Currently, Bentley School has an Educational Assistant assignment of 11.0 FTE. This is the second highest allocation of EAs in all of the division. We also have the roles of Inclusion Coach at 0.7 FTE and School Social Worker at 0.8 FTE. This year, Bentley School received an inclusion budget of \$650,983.
- Moving forward, we are looking at sustainability, in order to maintain a reasonable and equitable level of service. This is a major concern given the increase in complex needs of students and no additional targeted funds for inclusion support.
- Service reduction will require a clustering of supports in an attempt to stretch all available human resources.
- The Wolf Creek board and senior administration have formally lobbied and advocated for additional funding, or at the least, a review of our profile. No changes have been made to funding to date.

Q & A

- Q - Looking forward, what is the best way for parents and the Parent Advisory Council to help with the outlook of decreased funding and increased needs in our classrooms? A – School Councils hold a lot of weight with the government (more than district personnel or school administrators). It is recommended that we write letters to government bodies explaining our child’s school and classroom situation, and requesting help in the form of more funding. The dynamics of our classrooms are making it more and more challenging for teachers and educational assistants to meet the learning needs of all students.
- Our government is currently looking at ways we can spend our education allotments differently and more effectively, not with more money.
- In Bentley, we put a large focus and target of support in the Elementary, so that students are at an advantage when they reach Junior and Senior High.
- The current block funding allocation model addresses funding, not individual school, classroom or student need.

Officers’ Election:

Motion to open nominations for Board Members made by Carmen Hrynyk.

Carmen Hrynyk stepped down as President and nominated Sheri Green for the role of President. This motion was seconded by Shannon Yurystowski. All in favour. Sheri Green assumed duties as President.

Darci Cole nominated Carmen Hrynyk for the position of Vice President. This motion was seconded by Sheri Green. All in favour. Carmen Hrynyk assumed duties as Vice President.

Karen Jaffray, Marci Madden and Maureen Moore all stepped down as Directors. Carmen Hrynyk asked for nominations for directors. Darci Cole nominated Bobbi Talsma as a Director. This motion was seconded by Carmen Hrynyk. All in favour. Bobbi Talsma assumed duties as Director.

Leslie Anderson nominated Shannon Yurystowski. This motion was seconded by Carmen Hrynyk. All in favour. Shannon Yurystowski assumed duties as Director.

Members re-elected to the same positions:

Darci Cole – Secretary

Leslie Anderson – Director

Juanita Bender – Director

Reminders

- Jody Carrington is coming to Bentley (Blindman Valley Ag Centre) on Thursday, September 26. We currently have 217 tickets sold. We are anticipating this to be a very successful event, with Bentley School donating the money raised to the playground fund.
- FOBNSS (Friends of Bentley Nursery School Society) is hosting a casino coming up on November 15 and 16, 2019. We will have both afternoon and evening shifts to fill. Please spread the word to your friends and family to help with covering all volunteer positions. Money raised through FOBNSS goes directly to the Bentley School, supporting various programs and initiatives throughout the school, as well as some scholarship funding.

Next Meeting

- Our next Parent Advisory Council meeting will held on Monday, October 28 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Minutes submitted by Secretary, Darci Cole.