

Meeting Minutes for
Tuesday, March 9, 2021
Via Video Conference

1. Call to Order at 6:31 pm
 - a. Welcome/Introductions/Attendance – Shannon Little, Jason Prebushewski, Josh Martens, Sharon Rutledge, Brett Clifton, Debbie Laturnus, Carley Campbell, Tanya Johnson, Natasha Richards, Amanda Allen, Amy Kerr, Amy Morice, Bonnie Dyck, Brady Hornung, C&J Horne, Chenairy Stalwick, David Knoblich, Emma Huff, Glenda Kurtz, Crystal Smith, Jacob Froese, Jeff Smith, Jess Smelt, Jessica Gamez, Julie Landry-Deboer, Kindra Bliss, Megan Curtis, Megan Kallen, Michelle Smart, Paul Zasadny, Shawn Hass, Suzanna Neufeld, Tanya Conrad, Tanya J, Tara Vucurevich, Tom Hamer, Tyler Pitcher, Henry Sawatsky, Jessica Gamez, Krystle Sawatsky, Nena V, Sem Haan, Taomn, Kendra & Kevin Israelson, Kristen Borland, Nick Wiedemann, Mark Wojszel, Helena Fehr, Gayle Petker, and Shauna Pauls.
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. Motion to approve as presented – Shannon Little.
 - b. 2nd by – Tanya Johnson
3. Approval of Minutes from January 12, 2021
 - a. Motion to approve with date changed from January 21st to January 12th – Shannon Little.
 - b. 2nd – Carley Campbell
4. Reports
 - a. Trustee Reports
 - i. Sharon Rutledge
 1. See attached.
 - ii. Debbie Laturnus
 1. See attached.
 - b. Chairperson Report
 - i. Shannon Little
 1. See attached.
 - c. Principal's Report
 - i. Jason Prebushewski
 1. Bear Care – 2 days was a huge success, staff and students focused on wellness. Great feedback was received.
 2. Parent teacher interviews are virtual again. March 16th & 17th from 4:30 to 7:30.
 3. Numbers are going down regarding COVID so this should mean some loosening of restrictions which means that some of the clubs and activities can begin. Ex. Badminton club & art club that have already started at the school. Sports competitions will likely not happen this school year.

4. School goals – gone over at the beginning of the year with staff and then with the school council. Last year was the first time that they were able to survey the entire school body for the accountability pillar.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

a. Meal in lieu of Turkey dinner

- i. Possibility of a spring dinner when restrictions loosen. Staff have put forth suggestions which include events like a dinner and movie night, spaghetti night, and a lunch or brunch. The school needs to make sure that everyone is kept safe with regards to COVID. Jason requests that parents email him with any suggestions they have for the event. A meeting with Shannon Little to start planning the event was discussed with the intention to pull other volunteers into the planning later.

b. Band program update

- i. The Band program was taken out of the timetable in January in order to facilitate the new dyad class plan. There has been concerns from both parents and students regarding this and many parents have written or called into the school about the change. Restrictions have not changed enough to bring band back into the regular school day; however, other schools are providing a program either during lunch or after school. R.I. Baker currently does not have a person to lead the music program, as the current music teacher is on leave with no set return date, so someone would need to come forward to coordinate and lead a program that was run during these times. If that could be arranged, then the band program could resume. However, anyone who took this on would need to align their program with what the previous band leaders have done.

6. New Business

- a. Safe & Inclusive School Environment – Mr. Prebushewski presented a slide show to address this which showed the configuration of the bathrooms at R.I. Baker and discussed how the washroom configuration could easily be converted to support the gender-neutral setup that was being proposed to address the concern that not all students had a washroom in the building that they felt comfortable using.

- i. Mr. Prebushewski indicated in his presentation that he had been asked if opening the private bathrooms on each floor would address the concern and he indicated that it would.
- ii. Mr. Prebushewski also indicated that he had contacted a school in Lethbridge that was already utilizing gender neutral bathrooms to get some feedback on how it had been received and how effective it was. The school that was contacted was Senator Joyce Fairbairn Middle School, which is the school that Mr. Prebushewski's son attends. He spoke with the administration, staff, and students and indicated that the school has the same setup as R.I. Baker and that they have had gender neutral bathrooms for two years. His son found it weird to begin with as he was not used to encountering girls when he used the facilities but is now comfortable with the setup. The principal noted that, unlike R.I. Baker, Senator Fairbairn opened with gender neutral bathrooms, so it was not something that was introduced to the students and parents later. The school does have both gender neutral and gender specific bathrooms throughout.
- iii. It is legislated that schools must have one gender neutral bathroom in the building. But is having only one the best way to address this and is it promoting inclusivity within the school?
- iv. Mr. Prebushewski shared that he had received 41 emails from the student population and 15 to 20 of those were supportive of the move and the remainder expressed some concern and/or questions.
- v. Discussion among the group ensued after the presentation. Feedback received from parents and teachers included the following:
 1. Gender politics do not belong in a middle school.
 2. The change will make it uncomfortable for all students.
 3. Concerns were raised regarding how students who were already anxious about using the gender specific bathrooms would handle being required to use a gender neutral one.
 4. Making this change during a pandemic is ill timed and adding stress to students.
 5. Gender politics do need to be brought into the middle school because there are transgender people within the school who have rights and who require that their needs be met.

6. While it is stressful to address this issue at this time it is also stressful for transgender students to attend school and not have a bathroom available to them so it cannot be put off.
7. Transparency is required.
8. Concerns that this age group is too vulnerable to handle the change and the gender mixing in the bathrooms.
9. Concerns that R.I. Baker is the only school in Coaldale making this change.
10. Concerns that by recognizing and facilitating transgender rights that rights are being taken away from other students.
11. Concerns about the possibility of sexual abuse occurring because the students are using gender neutral facilities.
12. Expression of pride that R.I. Baker is the first one to start these conversations and to explore supporting the students and working to make them feel safe and included.
13. Request that school provide both gender neutral and gender specific washrooms on each floor instead of converting all the washrooms to gender neutral.
14. Expression of beliefs that gender politics are not the domain of the school or Palliser and that those types of discussions should be left to the parents.
15. Concerns that using gender neutral bathrooms will create confusion for the students particularly away from the school.
16. Concern that this is a dangerous area to teach inclusivity and that there are other areas where this can be taught and modeled. Worried that this will teach students to disregard their feelings regarding their safety which could potentially put them in situations that are unsafe.
17. Worries that we are catering to a small group at the expense of a larger group.
18. Expression that students who are currently uncomfortable with the gender specific bathrooms be given access to the staff washrooms.
19. It was indicated that the teachers at the school endeavor to teach and encourage critical thinking among the students; as well as

teaching them to recognize different perspectives and to be inclusive.

vi. Mr. Prebushewski addressed some of the comments and feedback in the following:

1. Regarding R.I. Baker being the only school in Coaldale proposing this change he indicated that neither Jennie Emery or Kate Andrews were built to accommodate this type of change without a significant remodel or rebuild. He also indicated that he does not base the decisions for R.I. Baker on what other schools are doing but on what is best for the students.
2. Regarding the risk of sexual assault occurring because of the students sharing a gender-neutral bathroom he stated that he does not believe that gender specific signage prevents sexual assault if someone is determined to commit one.

vii. Next step is to form a committee to delve further into this as no decisions have been made. They will endeavor to plan and develop a plan that supports all students, addresses all concerns brought forward, and makes everyone feel safe.

viii. Expression of thanks for the feedback. All the feedback that was received is important and is gratefully accepted and appreciated.

7. Bouquets

- a. Shannon Little for Megan Leusink for organizing the Bear Care Symposium.
- b. Carly Campbell for Megan Leusink for organizing the afterschool badminton program.
- c. Nick Wiederman for Emma Huff for helping with his daughter and going out of her way to make her feel comfortable.

8. Next Meeting

- a. May 11, 2021 at 6:30 pm via Video Conference

9. Adjournment at 8:02 pm.

- a. Motion to adjourn – Shannon Little.
- b. 2nd – Carley Campbell

**RIBMS Parent Council Meeting
Trustee Rutledge Report
March 09, 2021**

Highlights: January 2021 Board Meeting

- 1) COVID-19 Update
There has been a reduction of confirmed cases since AHS has changed their process for assessment whether staff are close contacts on a case-by-case basis. Definitions have changed and the term 'watch' will no longer be used, but Alert (1-4 cases) and an Outbreak (5 or more cases) to make communication for parents, staff and community easier to understand.
- 2) Transportation Report
Dave Shaw reported that Palliser operates 57 daily routes, transports 1,850 students every day, and travels over 1.9 million kilometers every year. Palliser has installed 51 out of 57 buses with cameras and outfitted all buses with GPS and tablets with software that handles logbooks, daily inspections and fuel tracking.
- 3) Occupational Health and Safety Report
Provincial inspectors were sent to 7 schools for random inspections to ensure that safety requirements are being met. All received excellent reports. Palliser has adopted a Working Alone Procedure in order that individuals working alone in schools and properties can do so safely.
- 4) October 2021 Elections
Trustees are elected every four years. The next General Election will be held on October 18, 2021. Election packages are available for pick-up at the Palliser Education Centre.
- 5) Trustee PD Opportunities
The Board has committed to monthly professional learning sessions and will be hearing a presentation from Kristen Krien, Palliser's Indigenous Success Coordinator at the next Board Meeting.

Debbie Laturus

February Board Meeting

Community and Staff Engagement

The Assurance Framework from Alberta Education places an emphasis on stakeholder engagement to establish locally developed priorities and to share progress and results related to those policies. The Division's Education Plan reflects these priorities and shares the progress toward achieving those priorities. The Education Act requires the engagement of parents, students, staff and other key stakeholders around planning. To this end the Division is creating survey tools to gain perspective from all the stakeholders. Please watch for these opportunities to share your thoughts and ideas.

2020/21 Satisfaction with Education in Alberta Telephone/Online Surveys

The Ministry of Education will conduct its annual satisfaction telephone/online surveys to collect public and participant perceptions of Alberta's education system. The surveys gather responses from a random sample of parents, the general public, high school students, teachers (telephone and online), principals (online) and school board trustees, as well as employers of recent high school graduates. The total number of completed surveys will be over 6,000, ensuring that survey results for each of the 10 respondent groups are statistically representative. The survey responses are completely confidential, and no individual responses will be reported. Your participation is important, as it provides valuable information to help the ministry identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement, thus helping to provide a more effective and accountable education system.

Technology Department Annual Report

The Palliser School Division Technology Services Department is focused on providing students and staff with the tools needed to ensure high-quality learning environments. There is an ongoing focus on utilizing tools that promote efficiencies and improve the engagement of all stakeholders. The Technology Services Department continues to respond to the COVID-19 safety measures to ensure the continuity of learning and operations. Through the current year we have seen an increase in the number of Google Classrooms grow from just over 2,850 to just under 4,200. What is more astonishing is the amount of live online instruction that has occurred through Google meets with an average of close to 1,000 daily users through the year.

Indigenous Student Supports

Kristin Krein is the Division's Indigenous Success Coordinator. She is a resource for students and staff and will facilitate Elder requests, answer questions, will provide site-based professional development, or First Nations, Metis, and Inuit student cultural activities. Please contact Kristin if you are interested in having her come out and share.

<mailto:Kristin.krein@pallisersd.ab.ca>

RI BAKER SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR REPORT for March 9, 2021

For those that may be interested, there are 3 webinar sessions remaining in the Parent Support Series offered by the Central Alberta Regional Consortium (CARC). Each session is 45 minutes in length and costs \$10. For information on each topic and the specific date that it will be offered, please visit the CARC website at carcpd.ab.ca click on Learning Opportunities, and then select "Parents" from the FOCUS drop down menu.

Please be reminded that the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) will be holding The School Councils Conference and Annual General Meeting virtually from April 23 - 25, 2021. In addition to the Keynote Presentations and over 40 breakout sessions, there are also Sponsorship opportunities through the Virtual Trade Show and prizes available to be won. For further details, visit the ASCA website at www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca.

Submitted by Shannon Little - RI Baker School Council Chair