

**Graminia School Council**  
**6:30pm Wednesday May 10, 2023, in the Graminia School Library**

**Attendees** Angie Gehlert (Chair), Amber Darragh (Vice Chair), Cassandra Graham (Secretary), Treena Neumann (Principal), Erin Chessor (Vice-Principal), Eric Cameron (PSD Trustee), Sheila Avison, Kerri Golka, Kate LaFavor, Rose Leder, Brittany Preece, Melanie Tonhauser, Angayla Waterman, Brandon Weber, Megan Woodman, Stephanie Worrell

**1. Meeting Called to Order and Land Acknowledgement**

- 1.1. Meeting called to order by Angie Gehlert at 6:35pm
- 1.2. Land Acknowledgement read by Angie Gehlert

**2. Adoption of Agenda**

- 2.1. Kerri Golka made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Seconded by Melanie Tonhauser. Carried.

**3. Adoption of April Minutes**

- 3.1. April minutes were reviewed and approved by Melanie Tonhauser. Seconded by Kerri Golka. Carried.

**4. Trustee Report by Eric Cameron**

- 4.1. The Board has put the final touches on the election advocacy plan which focuses on school builds, the provincial funding model, curriculum development and health and wellness cross-ministry supports.
- 4.2. April 6 was an educational planning day hosted by the school board and senior administration and was attended by municipal leaders from Stony Plain, Spruce Grove, and Parkland County as well as community members, teachers, students and administrators. The planning day helps board members put together an education plan for the upcoming school year. The board evaluates what is working well and what is not and generates a blueprint for future educational planning and delivery.
- 4.3. City of Spruce Grove Mayor Jeff Acker, PSD superintendent Shauna Boyce and the board chair met to discuss the future of Horizon Stage now that a replacement Spruce Grove Composite High School is a reality. The school board does not build schools, the government of Alberta does, therefore future plans for Horizon Stage need to be discussed at a provincial level because that is where the funding for Horizon Stage is coming from.
- 4.4. School transportation guidelines and funding are changing with eligible ridership increasing. PSD is investigating to evaluate if school budgets can be managed in 2023 to increase funding. The main problems with ridership increasing are the need for extra buses and drivers. It takes fourteen months to order a school bus and it is very difficult to find drivers. The board is diligently working on it.
- 4.5. Improvements and expansion to school modulars within PSD is being advocated for. Thirty-one modular classrooms have been requested, many of these will be replacements. All modular requests were denied, likely due to funding directed towards the new Spruce Grove Composite High School. Millgrove School is undergoing major renovations and previously approved modulars for Millgrove School will be put in place this summer.
- 4.6. PSD received \$212 000 in learning loss grants specifically targeted for numeracy and literacy help for grade one students.
- 4.7. The name of Stony Plain Central School has been changed to Westview School. The Westview name was voted and chosen upon. Westview School is still on track to open the fall of 2023.
- 4.8. The French Immersion program was explained to the board at its April 11 board meeting by a delegation of students from Ecole Broxton Park, Ecole Meridian Heights and Spruce Grove Composite High School. The students shared their experiences with the French Immersion program and their reasons for pursuing the program.

- 4.9. Budget Assumptions were explained to the board and approved for the 2023-2024 school year. The Budget Assumptions provide guidelines and proactive planning when establishing the budget for the next school year.
- 4.10. The student engagement report was presented which outlined the input received from the March 21 engagement event with high school students. On March 21 a meeting was held with high school students and helped trustees understand how students view their education program and their expectations of teachers, support staff and parents.
- 4.11. Wildfires on the west end of the school division have caused grief. Entwistle School was closed May 1 and 2 due to fires and students returned May 3 only to have it closed again. All HVAC systems in the west end schools were shut down to prevent smoke intake. During the Fort McMurray wildfires smoke damage occurred due to HVAC systems and four schools that had to be rebuilt. PSD will not make the same mistake with their schools. Support staff were sent to Entwistle to assist any students or families in readjusting to the traumatic evacuations that were put in place.
- 4.12. Three MLAs represent the school division. All running candidates met with school board trustees. A great discussion was had with the MLAs about what was wanted by PSD. Five different topics were discussed related to the upcoming election.
  - 4.12.1. Schools builds to address population needs. Specifically the need to press on for funding a replacement Spruce Grove Composite High School.
  - 4.12.2. Provincial funding for long term planning. Most grants are for lending assistance to kids which require personnel, therefore when funding ends it is difficult to know what to do with staff. The reserves in school are now controlled by the minister. PSD would like to move money in they way they identify it is required rather than asking for permission from the minister.
  - 4.12.3. Cross-ministry partnerships. Schools are often responsible for addressing needs such as food insecurity or mental health resources because they are identified within schools. Help and cooperation of government ministries through cross-ministry partnerships are required help schools support the needs of students and families.
  - 4.12.4. Curriculum development. Students require basic literacy and numeracy. The curriculum needs to prepare students for the future and to meet the workforce. The current curriculum will likely be outdated by the time kindergarten students graduate. A new curriculum needs to be developed that will serve students over the long run, including how to navigate change, be life-long learners and critically analyze information.
  - 4.12.5. Stability in learning. There needs to be checks and balances to guarantee a curriculum that reflects the needs and perspectives of all Albertans. Development must consider the best interests of students and the need to provide a solid, long-term framework for educators. We cannot have each successive government overhaul curriculum to their party's favour. The meeting was considered very positive and the campaigning is not interfering with students as per the school trustees.
- 4.13. A parent stakeholder asked a question about the new Spruce Grove Composite High School and where students will attend during the build. The school will be built on the same site as the previous school, just in a different location on the site. The plan is for students to attend in the current building until completion of the new building. Following completion of the new build the previous school will be demolished. Funding has not been approved for the building of a new school yet. School design funding has been approved and the design will take one to one and a half years and the school will be a three to four year build. The building funding has been requested from the government for the past five years as the number one capital request by PSD.
- 4.14. The Graminia School Council congratulated on Eric Cameron on his nomination for the Dick Baker Legacy award.

## **5. ASCA (Alberta School Council Association) Convention - Angie Gehlert and Amber Darragh**

- 5.1. No members from the Graminia School Council were able to attend the ASCA Conference on April 23 to submit our vote on the proposed ASCA resolutions that the school council discussed and voted on in preparation for the ASCA Convention at the April Graminia School Council meeting. A council chair from Spruce Grove Composite High School submitted Graminia School's vote for the ASCA Resolutions on our behalf.
- 5.2. Amber went to a session called "An Essential Life Skill, Why Math Is More Than Just Numbers." The session was essentially a sales pitch for JUMP math.
- 5.3. The keynote speaker topic was "From Schoolcentric to Familycentric, A Gentle Revolution." The keynote discussed the challenges faced by families who are not native to Canada, and enforced that we should welcome immigrant families and honour their expertise. Ideas presented included fostering family literacy by hosting literacy night for the entire family. It was shared that if parents are taught to read so the entire family could read.
- 5.4. Amber also attended a session called "Students as Change Makers for Healthy School Communities: Ever After Schools." The session explored how leadership opportunities could be embedded in school culture for all students and not just those already showing strong leadership qualities. The session discussed enabling students to brainstorm on how they could come together to problem solve and work together.
- 5.5. Amber found the information presented at the session "The Reset Room: A Joint Mental Health Initiative" very valuable. The session described a pilot program to address student mental health and absenteeism. This was a joint mental health initiative between the government of Alberta and the Elk Island Public School District. The reset room provides a space for emotional regulation and to help students catch up on homework. The reset room allows kids to go to focus and continue learning. The environment is less stimulating, lights are dim, it is much more quiet and less crowded than a regular classroom. Fifteen to twenty students can fit in the Sherwood Heights reset room. The reset room also provides a space for students to wait for pick up if they need to leave. The reset room was such a success that Elk Island School Division has gotten grants and approval to add more reset rooms through their school division.
- 5.6. The final session Amber reported on was called, "Digital Citizenship: Help Your Child Thrive in Today's Digital World." The focus was on how to make online experiences safer for kids. For example, turn off autoplay on phones, how to modify phones to make them less stimulating and addictive, and how to stop videos and auto scroll. Multiple resources to help students navigate the use of technology were offered in the workshop.
- 5.7. Angie then discussed her experiences at the ASCA Conference. The first session she attended was "Creating School Community Cohesion and Resilience: How Can School Councils Help?" This session was focused on transitioning from COVID-19, and mostly discussed how COVID-19 has affected educational systems and how those systems can recover. Being part of PSD it seemed to Angie that we have more advantages over other school divisions with relation to mental health resources. Every school in PSD has an individual mental health support worker for its school.
- 5.8. Angie also attended the same workshop as Amber, "Students as Change Makers for Healthy School Communities: Ever After Schools." Angie reported that this workshop was not as exciting or good as she had hoped.
- 5.9. Angie also attended the workshop "Conversations About Assessment: A Parent's Guide." In this session a discussion was had on how to talk about student's grades, talking about student's individual development and meeting kids where they are at. Collaboration between parents and educators regarding how this can be communicated without focusing on the grade itself, rather how the student is doing.

5.10. There will be two spots for attendance at the ASCA Conference next year. The school council would like other members to attend. The conference also includes a trade show.

**6. COSC (Council of School Councils) Meeting May 2 was attended by Angie Gehlert**

6.1. The May 2 meeting was the last COSC meeting for this school year.

6.2. The school board report was presented and the superintendent report was presented, however the superintendent was not there. The associate superintendent Dr. Miskolzie filled in for the superintendent, and a very brief board report was provided.

6.3. The principal of the Entwistle School was there. The Entwistle fires were discussed.

6.4. The Fort Chipewyan school mental health crisis was discussed.

6.5. PSD job postings were discussed.

6.6. Round table was held for principal reports.

6.7. Events for getting the school community together were brainstormed and shared.

Some schools had school dances to get families into the school. School game nights were another event that some schools hosted. An archery competition was a massive event within a few schools.

6.8. Spruce Grove Composite High School is holding its Sponge Bob Musical.

6.9. The chair of school councils gave some ideas for increasing volunteering within the school. Graminia School's ideas were shared with the rest of the COSC meeting attendees.

6.10. The next COSC meeting is October 12, 2023 at 6:30pm.

**7. Principal's Report by Treena Neumann**

7.1. Treena Neumann introduced the school's Indigenous Education Facilitator to the school council members. Her name is Geri Wu from Saddle Lake First Nations. She is a 60s scoop survivor and thriver who has been in the education system for over twenty-one years. Geri's role is to help Alberta Education support schools with regard to Indigenous cultural activities and awareness. Geri connects teachers with Indigenous cultural supports. For example, the Indigenous drumming and dancing presentation at Graminia School by Dallas Arcand on May 4 was arranged by Geri Wu. It is a common belief that understanding, cultural awareness and Indigenous knowledge is up to us to acquire. It is our responsibility to be open to learning. If we are open Indigenous people will invite us in. Geri supports this belief and provides feedback and collaborates by fostering community connections. Geri creates and delivers Indigenous learning during teacher PD days. She directs staff to specific sites, resources, articles and books to deepen their understanding of Indigenous people. Geri also runs an indigenous book study for grade three students and is developing a unit for grade three teachers to use to deepen student's awareness of Indigenous ways of knowing and being. One thing that Geri can offer to the school is Indigenous art including flower beadwork. She can also bring an artist in residence and facilitate wellness art workshops.

7.2. The school totem pole at the front of the school was taken down because it was rotting. To replace the totem pole Graminia School Council needs to consider the idea of bringing in an artist in residence to create a replacement piece of Indigenous art for the school.

7.3. Test runs for all day everyday kindergarten are underway, Families are currently being booked for the kindergarten test run in May.

7.4. A development plan review is underway. There is a link on the school website, please click the link to check it out. Goals for the year are outlined. There is a parent survey. The link will be shared with parents in the principal's email this week. There will be a student survey that will be sent out separately in May. There is a survey about connection and which school staff members are you connected to. Questions that follow are related to what it is that connects people and your perception about your child's connections within Graminia School. Then there are questions related to how students are connected to each other. There are also questions about activities and

how they are connected outside of schools. The survey also includes questions about volunteering and School events for the upcoming school year. The survey also includes question about programs, FitSet Ninja, music, travel, kindergarten, MyPath, and the Skills Canada competition. To summarize, the survey is about how things within the school are working and includes place for parents to share other ideas. It is a very long survey which will enable parents to provide feedback to the school.

- 7.5. Next year's budget has yet to be finalized. Most of the budget is spent on staffing. The current government has changed the funding model three year rolling average, they added a bridge funding grant which was cut this year.
- 7.6. Volunteer application is May 31. The volunteer appreciation will be held in the afternoon and is a meet and greet where donuts and coffee will be provided.
- 7.7. Letters to families with welcome information for the 2023-24 school year will be sent out on June 30. The school staffing has yet to be finalized. The school board has to provide the school with a working budget and then then teaching positions have to be posted. Staffing will take a while because there has been movement within the division.
- 7.8. Athletic updates include information that the track meet for grades seven to nine is on May 12, the track meet for grades four to six is on May 23 and badminton finals will be held on May 8-12.
- 7.9. Provincial Achievement Tests will be on May 15 for grade nine students and May 17 for grade six students.
- 7.10. Band Trip forms and information for parents will be distributed ASAP for a performance in Calgary for band students to attend. This information will likely be distributed on May 25 or May 26.
- 7.11. Music Spring Concert will be June 9 and it will be daytime only. It was decided that students are all busy in the evenings due to extra curricular activities and therefore an evening performance was too difficult to schedule.
- 7.12. Grade 9 Farewell is scheduled for the day before the last day of school which is June 28.
- 7.13. Awards will be on the last day of school which is June 29.
- 7.14. A question was brought for by a parent stakeholder: Do teachers approach parents when their child is going to be put in a spilt class? The answer Mrs. Neumann provided is that teachers are not obligated to approach parents, but parents are able to submit class requests prior to classroom planning days.
- 7.15. Mrs. Neumann encouraged all questions related to school field trips to be submitted in the parent questionnaire which was previously discussed.
- 7.16. Related to another question by a parent stakeholder regarding a grade 8 split class this year: The grade 8 classes will have 31 students which although large is not unheard of within PSD. The explanation provided for this concern is that government gives limited amounts of teaching in separate amounts. Those funds would be better used to support students individually.
- 7.17. Any questions about the Graminia community evening soccer league from parent stakeholders will be directed to Treena as the meeting is running over time.

## **8. New Business**

- 8.1. No new business.

## **9. Adjournment**

- 9.1. Angayla Waterman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:04pm. Amber Darragh seconded. Carried.

Next council meeting date: June 21, 2023 in the Graminia School Library.

If you have questions or thoughts or concerns that you believe should be addressed by the school council please speak to Angie Gehlert, Amber Darragh, or Treena Neumann.