District School Council Minutes for October 3, 2016

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Additions to the Agenda:
   2.1. Proposed Islamic Academy at Wilson (under 12, Superintendent’s Report)

3. Approval of Agenda:
   Moved by Hollie Tarasewich, seconded Dayna Tilleman - approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes:
   Moved by Hollie Tarasewich, seconded Dayna Tilleman - approved.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes
   None.

6. Elections for District School Council
   Motion Rob Mitchell/Lyvia Hughes to allow one vote per parent present - approved.
   6.1. Chair An election was held between 3 candidates. Allison Pike was elected.
        Motion to destroy the ballots - moved by Janene Moch - approved.
   6.2. Vice-Chair An election was held between 2 candidates. Brooke Culley was elected.
        Motion to destroy the ballots - moved by Daniel Gosselin - approved.
   6.3. Recording Secretary Joy Morris and Lyvia Hughes will share the position.
   6.4. District Policy Advisory Committee Meetings are 12:15-3, with lunch provided, typically monthly (6 times per year). Joy Morris and Laura Scarpelli volunteered.
   6.5. Poverty Intervention Committee Meetings are afternoons, 3-4 times per year. Trina Tymko, Heather Paul, and Joy Morris volunteered.
   6.6. Healthy Schools Committee held a Health Forum last year with representatives from all schools. Meetings are 1:15-3:30, four times during the year. Janene Moch and Laura Scarpelli volunteered.
   6.7. Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium This group plans and runs Professional Development for teachers, and related sessions for parents. Meetings are on Wednesday mornings, 3-4 times during the year, with lunch afterwards. Our representative holds a position on the Board of the Consortium. The first meeting will be October 27. Hollie Tarasewich volunteered, with Amanda Cross as the alternate.
   6.8. Digital Citizenship Committee and Making Connections Committee have been laid down. The digital citizenship committee has completed its mandate; Making Connections has a new format and the committee is no longer required.
   6.9. Community Engagement Committee meets in the evenings; the next meeting is Thursday, October 6 at 6:30. Heather Paul, Pauline Hall, Hollie Tarasewich, Shelley Roest, and Carlye Lynnes volunteered.
   6.10. Resolution Subcommittee will be discussed later in the agenda.

7. Brainstorm: Topics for Professional Learning, Discussion and Exploration
   Parents filled out a survey on topics for presentations to be held from 6-6:30, before future District School Council meetings. Brooke Culley suggested adding the planning of public forums for next year’s School Trustee elections to the District School Council’s plans for this year.
8. **Trustee Report** - Keith Fowler reported:
   At their September meeting, the Board reviewed the work schedule for the year. They passed their first reading of policy 400.1.1, a policy for staff members on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. They set dates and schools for this year’s monthly “breakfast with the Board” events at various schools and Board-run facilities. They approved $350K for the purchase of literacy resources for grades 1-6 (this money came from carry-over from 2015-16 budget for non-operational expenses). This will allow the purchase of resources that are required to implement a new leveled literacy pedagogy that teachers have been trained in. They were informed that the annual Sock it to ‘Em sock drive will run November 1 - December 14 this year. The budget for 2016-17 will be adjusted and submitted to province based on the final enrolment figures of 10,730.

9. **Alberta School Councils Association (ASCA) Report** – Allison Pike is the President of ASCA. She spoke about some of the work of our provincial organisation, and the benefits of our membership in it.

   9.1. **Resolution Committee Update** – Joy Morris reported. District School Council decided last year to work jointly to prepare and season policy proposals to take to the Annual General Meeting of ASCA in the spring. The policies we proposed last year were all adopted, and we decided to continue this effort this year. Policies must ultimately be moved and seconded by individual school councils, and individual school councils can prepare and propose policies without working through this joint process. An email was circulated to all school councils inviting them to send representatives and proposals to the meeting.

   Four parents attended the meeting. Six issues were brought forward for possible policy proposals: improving bathroom-to-classroom ratios for portables (currently set by Alberta building code for all public buildings); incorporating a mental health component (as distinct from mental wellness) into health curriculum; knowledge and employability classes and their outcomes and standards; inclusion and special education (what’s the difference and when is each needed); endorsing Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action with respect to education; and ensuring that Speech Pathologists’ research on education is known of and used by educators where appropriate. Our next meeting will be Thursday, Oct. 20, 6:45-7:45 p.m., in the District building. Any parent is welcome. That will be the final meeting at which we want to consider new suggestions for policy proposals. We will continue to meet every 2 weeks thereafter to work on research and wording for the policy proposals.

   9.2. **ASCA Parent of Distinction Award.** There haven’t been many applications or nominations from Southern Alberta, for parents or school councils. Deadline is in February. More information is on the ASCA web site, [www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca](http://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca).

   9.3. **School Council Engagement Task Force.** Please ensure that school councils have parents on the task force (the deadline was September 30 but late additions are accepted) to provide information and feedback to ASCA on your school council’s take on issues of importance in Alberta education. Email [tracyk@albertaschoolcouncils.ca](mailto:tracyk@albertaschoolcouncils.ca) with your representative’s name.

   9.4. **ASCA website and workshops.** A full list of Webinar Wednesdays was included in the District School Council agenda, and also appears on the ASCA website. Webinars last one hour, include fun people, and are informative. The School Council Resource Guide is fully digitized and on the ASCA web site, complete with embedded links.
9.5. ASCA had a positive full-morning meeting with the Minister of Education recently.

10. **District School Council Calendar of Events and Shared Opportunities**
There is a calendar on the district web site for school events, [http://www.lethsd.ab.ca/view.php?action=calendar&id=249](http://www.lethsd.ab.ca/view.php?action=calendar&id=249).

On October 11th 1-1:30 the Minister of Education will be meeting with Mike Mountain Horse School Council. He has been accepting invitations to attend school council meetings, so invite him if you have an issue you would like to discuss with him.

Gary Anaka will be giving a presentation on the teenage brain Oct 11 at 7, tentatively at the Education Centre. Register in advance by email to wilson@lethsd.ab.ca, so they can change the venue if demand is high. He will have presented to middle school teachers earlier that day for their professional development.

11. **Superintendent’s Report - Cheryl Gilmore**

11.1. **2017 Excellence in Teaching Nominations** are due in late February or early March.
Consider recognising excellent teachers at your school! One letter each from a member of the public, a teacher, and a principal are required in a nomination.

11.2. **Support for School Councils** The District pays the ASCA membership fee for all of our school councils, and for the cost of one registration (per school council) to the ASCA AGM and conference. It also contributes $200 per school council towards other ASCA AGM expenses (hotel, transportation) or other school council professional development expenses. The $200 is included in each school’s budget. This year, the ASCA AGM and conference will be April 28-30 in Edmonton.

11.3. **Update on Provincial Curriculum Development** A handout from Southern Alberta Professional Consortium will hopefully be coming out later this week. There will be updates over the next 6 years on 6 subjects: Language Arts (English and French), Math, Social Studies, Science, Wellness. This is a broader curriculum change at one time than has been the practice previously, but perhaps not deeper. They want to reduce the number of outcomes, but increase the depth of the learning, and include literacy and numeracy outcomes in all subjects. This may well require significant purchasing of resources (in the millions of dollars for our district) to cover all of the levels and subjects, or perhaps there will be provincial licenses and a province-wide strategy for resource acquisition.

As a first step in their Stakeholder Engagement strategy, the Ministry will hold engagement sessions for community members. The Lethbridge session will take place on Monday October 17, 7-8:30 p.m. at the Chinook branch (west side) of the Lethbridge Public Library. This will include a general description of the process and discussion of some questions that will be included in the online survey. It will prepare people who want to take the online survey but feel uninformed, but is not required in order to complete the online survey. The meeting will include all grade levels, even though implementation for higher grades is longer-term. The online survey will open on Oct 12 or 13. LeeAnne Tedder will send out a link to the online survey to all school council chairs when it’s available. The survey will be open for 6 weeks.

11.4. **Update on funding of Mental Health supported project** (Making Connections) Alberta Health Services have previously funded Making Connections as a project, which was renewed three times. They have now declared it a “sustainable initiative,” with parameters including a
full-time coordinator and other structural changes (it will continue to be reviewed every 3 years). We now need to hire a full-time coordinator instead of the previous structure where this role was shared. The program must become more focused on mental health issues and strategies instead of focusing on social services. This doesn’t mean that the social services will be dropped; just that the focus on connecting families and children to mental health strategies will increase.

11.5. **School Council Membership List** Previously, the consent for schools to share parent contact information with school councils did not include email addresses. District School Council raised this last year as a concern for school councils, particularly around fundraising when there are limitations on what schools are permitted to communicate to parents. Accordingly, a new initiative was implemented this year to follow the practice of Edmonton Public School District by including separate forms with registration forms, for parents to fill out specifically with the information they are willing to share with their school council. This information should be taken and processed by school councils if they wish it. Communications can and should continue to go through school principals in many cases, but this provides an option of direct communication to a more limited group when that is needed.

Parents raised privacy concerns around processing the information. School councils are subject to PIPA in regard to privacy issues, not to FOIP. We should be aware of what’s involved in PIPA regulations for treating the confidential information appropriately. Cheryl will see to distributing information about how to create and use email lists, and about our privacy-related responsibilities under PIPA.

Every school council will be provided with a Lethbridge School District email account; in order to meet district policy, the school principal will have the password and should be cc’d on every message. Having a consistent format for school council contacts across the district will create continuity, consistency, and ease of communication. The new email accounts will be distributed next week. School councils are not required to use them, but transitioning to these standardised addresses over time is suggested.

11.6. **Islamic Academy at Wilson** School District Policy 606.1 guides proposals for alternative school programs. It is based on the School Act’s requirements. We currently have 3 active programs: one is overseen by the Society for Christian Education in Southern Alberta (Immanuel Christian schools), one is overseen by Lethbridge Christian School Society (Lethbridge Christian School) and the other is the Montessori program. The Lethbridge Muslim Association is on Step 1 of the process laid out in the policy, having submitted a proposal to the superintendent. Their proposal meets all of the requirements; the most basic is that it must be based on religious, cultural, language, or pedagogy differences. The next step is for them to put forward a more detailed proposal to the Board of Trustees. Three proposals were received last year; this is the only one that has met the requirements to proceed to Step 2. The detailed proposal has to address projected enrolment and sustainability; the current call for expressions of interest is a pre-registration process to determine interest. Enrolment of about 60 K-6 students would be the target for a successful proposal.

If a program is approved, it is then operated by the School Board (including hiring and supervision of the staff), but the particular alternative component is overseen by the society
that formulated the proposal, who also fundraise for any additional costs required by the program. All Board policies apply to alternative programs. There is no mechanism for broader public objection or input into a new program since the Board is expected and required to provide any programs that meet the requirements laid out in the School Act and are deemed to be sustainable. There are several Islamic Academy programs in various school districts across Alberta. The Fort McMurray superintendent says that there, growing numbers of non-Muslim families are registering in such programs because they want the language, and opt out of the religious component.

There is a wing of Wilson School that was intended to be turned into a health clinic after the modernisation, but the arrangement fell through under the new government. Regular public school enrolment and facility needs take precedence over alternative program needs, so this wing is projected to be available for 3 years. Parents of students at Wilson expressed some concerns around ages and space; the superintendent responded to these.

12. **Roundtable Reports**
   are in the agenda for information.

13. **Adjournment**

14. **Announcements.** The next DSC Meeting will be on November 7.