

Division School Council Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2022

6:45 p.m.

Microsoft Teams

1. Land Acknowledgement

- Acknowledge that we are meeting as a Division School Council on Blackfoot land and give recognition to the Blackfoot people past and present.

2. Welcome and Introductions

- 16 Participants

3. Additions to the Agenda

- 11.a Transportation, added (bell times) in brackets
- Added '12. New Business'
- Added '12.1. Technology in Classrooms'
- Changed '12. Roundtables Reports' to '13. Roundtable Reports'
- Changed '13. Next Meeting Format' to '14. Next Meeting Format'
- Changed '14. Adjournment' to '15. Adjournment'

4. Approval of the Agenda – Approved and accepted as presented with additions

- Approved by: C.Y.

5. Approval of the Minutes from March 7, 2022 – Approved and accepted as presented

- Approved by: E.W.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

- ASCA Resolutions – resolution regarding Plant Operations and Maintenance Funding (POM)
 - The ASCA general conference and AGM is April 22nd and 23rd and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is on April 24th. <https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/about/annual-conference>
 - There are 4 resolutions that School Councils are able to vote on. <https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/public/download/files/200959>
 - Every School Council has the ability to send a member as an attendee.
 - Every School Council can carry a vote for the 4 resolutions/
 - You can also carry a proxy vote for other School Councils if they are not attending, there are forms to fill out for that.
 - The deadline for submitting the 2022 AGM Credential Voting Form for yourself is April 15th at 5pm. <https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/public/download/files/199610>
 - The deadline for submitting the 2022 AGM PROXY Voting Form is April 15th at 5pm. <https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/public/download/files/199611>

Question: Do we know of any School Councils that have a rep who can carry votes?

Answer: there is one from Wilson Middle School and possibly one from Winston Churchill

****Action:** an email will be drafted to send out to see if anyone is willing to carry proxy votes with a reminder of the deadlines.

2022 Resolutions – <https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/public/download/files/200959>

- P222-01 Diploma Exam Weighting Change.
- P22-02 Policy Review for Operations and Maintenance Funding
- P22-03 Restoration of Funding for Alberta School Council Association (ASCA)
- A22-01 Revise Advocacy Policy 12-2

Question: There was a question about the Policy Review for Operations and Maintenance Funding, what is that resolution and can someone explain that better?

Answer: It explores how we keep up the maintenance of the school to promote the health and wellbeing of students and staff.

- Operations and Maintenance Funding is the funding that covers electrical, heating, caretaking (ongoing operation of all of the school facilities) and small projects such as painting. It's not for significant restoration which comes out of Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal. (IMR).
- Previous to the current funding model, POM funding was based entirely on student enrollment by school in the Division. The formula changed and is now weighted on area of the school as well as student enrollments. It takes into account the wear and tear of the facility and its size. It is fairer as it accounts for the space and students.
- The resolution states there is an unfair accounting for the funds or insufficient funds. It may be because they are a site based managed School Division, and the school is affected by allocation specific to the school or facility. Lethbridge doesn't use that method; Lethbridge funds are centralized to ensure that all schools have what they need to operate.
- Lethbridge's facilities are well maintained. There is not a long list of deferred maintenance.

Question: Please elaborate on the alternative schools as they are responsible for the funds to take care of the building.

Answer: For the alternative programs that are owned by Societies, Lethbridge Christian School, Immanuel Christian Elementary School, and Immanuel Christian Secondary School are not owned by the Division but do access lease funding that pays operation and maintenance. Every year money is transferred to the Society, as there is funding based on enrollment and square footage. What they don't get funding for is the IMR.

Question: If students moved to a different Division, what would we want for them corporately? Does the Superintendent think that this formula is fair for all the Divisions?

Answer: The lobbying piece of the resolution depends on where it's coming from. For rural Divisions, they may not consider the weighting on square footage enough. From our perspective it is enough. Lethbridge Division believe the current formula is fair and have been able to manage and maintain the budget.

b. School Council – monetary support from the Division

- Some feel that there are tight parameters with the money from the Divisions that they allocate to School Council.
- Lethbridge Division pays for membership to ASCA, that is a fee for which each School Council will never have to worry about.

- The Division pays for one registration to attend the ASCA Conference. If School Councils send more than one person, the School Council would have to look to see if the School Council can afford to pay to support another registration fee.
- There are questions about the \$250 that Division allocates to the School Councils. It was intended to assist with other costs that an individual incurred when they go to the conference, such as hotel, food, gas, etc.
- Historically, there are very few councils that send members to the ASCA Conference, so that \$250 can also be used to support Parent Learning, such as a Speaker, ASCA delivery sessions, or any other form of learning that a School Council wants to endeavor in.
- School Councils can also use the \$250 towards any activity that engages parents, such as BBQ.
- The money is put into the School Decentralized budget every year, it's flagged to be spent for School Council.

Question: Can we use the \$250 from past years if it hasn't been used? And can that be used retroactively so there could be potentially \$750 to \$1000 sitting there that hasn't been spent.

Answer: that \$250 has been sent to schools for the past 3 years, if the previously allocated money hasn't been spent, schools can use that now.

****Action:** an email will be sent to Administrators of schools to remind them of the \$250 that can be used from past years as well.

Question: If a school is having a Parent engagement night and the school is bringing in babysitters come in to encourage Parents to come, can they use the \$250 for a gift card for the babysitters for gratuity?

Answer: Yes, School Councils can use the \$250 for that.

7. Engagement Fund Discussion

- The Engagement Fund is \$500 from Alberta Education
- This amount has tighter parameters, for example, School Councils cannot use it for meals, snacks, fundraising events, etc. Please refer to the December 6, 2021 Division School Council Minutes for the full list under 5.1. <https://www.lethsd.ab.ca/download/375873>
- You have to send it back to Alberta Education if you do not use it. This means that it's invoiced by the end of the year and the speaker or parent learning resources have been paid.
- Alberta Education, in the 2022/2023 budget, have allocated the Engagement fund again, so it will be available next year.
- Partnership for strategic Alliance, with Debbie Pusher, and she does presentation. One parent did sign up and it was enlightening. To book a session with her, it costs about \$2,500, so if School Councils were thinking about combining their funds and it could tailor the session to our schools. <https://www.debbiepushor.ca/>
- Suggestions about how to spend the money:
 - Agnes Davidson if offering French lessons for parents.
 - One School is going to have a presentation on 'How to raise Gen Z' and talk about resiliency.
 - Nicholas Sheran is having a Provisional Psychologist, Dylan Tate, come to talk about children mental health, resources available in the community and conversation starters and how to get kids talking. They will also have an Arabic translator come in order to include more Parents/Guardians. From April 28th, if you would like to go, you can RRSP through the Nicholas Sheran School.

- One School is looking into Parent Book club, using the funds to order books and educate school community with appropriate use of technology in the home and community.
- One School is doing a Numeracy and Literacy night for Parents with take homes for families.

Question: Are we allowed to use the \$500 to pay for books?

Answer: Superintendent stated that you cannot use it for student resources, but you can use it for parent resources and if those resources are being used to engage parents for a shared book study, then it is ok.

Questions: For the Provisional Psychologist for the kids Mental Health, and how much does that cost?

Answer: \$250 for his time and \$50 for a translator.

8. Trustee Report – [Board of Trustees Report](#) – March 22, 2022, Pg. 9

- Please see the link for the Trustee Report
- They did talk about bus times and had good questions and passed some policies.
- The Board is trying to do School / Parent engagement with Community Conversations, there have been 2 so far.
- The next Community Conversation is April 13, 2022, at YMCA from 8:30am to 10am.

Question: At the YMCA, there is a fee for the little kids to play, is that covered by the Division?

Answer: There is not a fee, the Division has arranged the area for kids to play. The goal is to remove barriers for people to attend. This will be in one of the field houses. You can ask at the YMCA which field house and they will direct you. This is a drop in, so you do not have to be there right at 8:30am.

9. Alberta School Councils Association

- This year it is virtual
- You can just go to the Conference only, or to the AGM only or both. There are a tonne of topics that you can pick and choose some courses that are included with the registration.
<https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/about/annual-conference>

10. Reports from Division Committees

- Policy Advisory Committee** - Alison Alma-North and Jamie Walburger (alternate)
 - Policies are emailed to the School Council Chairpersons
 - Any feedback on those policies can be sent back to the contacts
 - The next meeting is Wednesday April 6, 2022
 - Following that meeting, the changes or editing that the committee does is sent out, School Councils can expect to see these by the beginning of next week.
- Poverty Intervention Committee** - Jamie Walburger and Shelley Roest (alternate) March 15, 2022
 - Tabled
- Division Wellness Committee** - Edna Asem and Carrie Boschman (alternate)

- Next meeting is in May.
 - At the last meeting they had someone from AHS speak about Covid.
- d. **Community Engagement Committee** - Shelley Roest, Cynthia Young and Jamie Walburger
March 24, 2022
- Reviewed Town Hall feedback in regards to technology, the themes' that generated areas that are on the Community Engagement Website, it's broken down by different scopes. <https://lethsdcommunityengagement.schoolsites.ca/current-community-engagement-projects/town-hall-2022>
 - You can see the breakdown of the number of people who provided feedback
 - Some areas of focus and budget focus areas the Board uses for planning the upcoming year for the Assurance Plan.
 - The Division has a Communications Plan, a document that was created and reviewed with the new Board coming in this year.
 - You can find this on the Community Engagement website.
 - It's a live document and can change.
 - ICE Scholarship event was reviewed.
 - Community Conversation and the 2 previous and any suggestions.
 - All Parents are welcome to come to the Community Engagement Committee meetings, it's an open meeting.
 - Next Meeting is on Thursday May 12th at 6:30 p.m.

11. Superintendent's Report – Cheryl Gilmore

a. Transportation (Bell Times)

- At the Division Office as well as Trustees have had some questions about the school bell times, that falls under Transportation
- Throughout the course of the current school year and moving to next year, the Division recognizes that there is some parent frustration.
- The current school year has been challenging, due to the transition from the City of Lethbridge to a private provider Southland. We changed some bell times and it became problematic. Not the provider's fault.
- The transition and bell times have not been working and there is frustration expressed by families and schools. There are consistently late buses, students that are missing beginnings of classes and late drop off times.
- This was compounded with the schedule that Southland made, which was overly compressed, so buses were not able to transition without late runs. The issues were compounded again by having difficulty with finding drivers for the buses and it was very common that they were short drivers on a daily basis for a variety of reasons.
- For next year they are looking at establishing more reasonable time spans between runs.
- They were trying to have the elementary schools start earlier and high schools starting later, but that did not work this year and not possible to schedule without additional costs.
- Bell times have been put out early this year to ensure communication to parents provides time for families to make arrangements.
- The Division and the Holy Spirit Catholic Division worked with Southland over the last few months. To stay within budget some schools must start early and some start late.
- Double runs are a complex pattern of transportation and the only pattern that is affordable.
- Moving forward, the times for the 2022/2023 school year, should be consistent for schools.

Question: Were parents or School Councils consulted with the decisions to change the bell times?

Answer: No, they were not. The challenge with the consultation with parents is to get the breadth of parent perspective on the bus schedules and stay within the budget (some funds are already being drawn from reserves). Parent feedback from last year stated that some preferred earlier and some preferred later. Early communication hopefully provides time for parents to connect with programs that can assist with care.

Question: Was there any consideration for the elementary school kids learning ability and mental health with extending the end of the day until almost 4pm? Most kids and parents are going to get up at the same time next year as they do now, and this means that the little kids will be in school longer and as we know, most elementary school kids are done with learning by 2 pm. Also, has there ever been such a late start for elementary schools in Lethbridge before?

Answer: 3:45 pm is the latest that an elementary school has gone before and that was a few years ago. There has to be the operational hours completed among all schools; elementary and middle schools need 950 instructional hours and high school has to have 1000 hours. The mental health and durations were not dismissed. Students are not at school longer. Schools will have to monitor as to what they are doing early in the day and later in the day when they are thinking about classroom strategies in relation to when students are engaged and active. The Division acknowledges the frustration and how it affects family's lives. The only way to accommodate not changing the times is to not have the routes doubled, but that would mean approximately \$600,000 coming out of instruction into transportation budgets.

Question: What is the appeals process for these time changes?

Answer: Superintendent is not sure, deferred to the trustee. This is operational and affects all schools if one is changed. Not instructional or program matter.

****Action:** Trustee will look into their policies to see if there is an appeal process for that and will get a hold of the parent asking the questions.

Question: Was there consideration to push the high schools later rather than making the elementary schools end later? Making the day later for high school kids rather than for the elementary kids makes more sense.

Answer: Its complex beyond pairs of schools and start times. Was tried this year and did not work. They also tried to take a look at feeder schools (middle schools) to the elementary schools. Worked as best as possible for the siblings' piece. Did not always work. The parent can email Superintendent to get more specific details to their schools.

Question: Was there a consideration to offer a bus fee, rather than the Division offset it? Families will now potentially have excess childcare fees and may have choose to pay a bus fee in lieu of the time change.

Answer: That was not looked into, they could look into that for future years. The challenge with fees is who will pay the fees.

Question: The dual working families will have to rely on BLAST, why couldn't they flip the times for High School and Elementary so that the High Schools start and end later and the

Elementary Schools can start earlier. Also a lot of programs start at 4pm. There is concern with the learning of children as they do learn better in the morning. Why could the City do it and Southland is struggling with it? The fees are not ideal but may be worth having as parents would see that it's worth it to have their elementary kids in earlier.

Answer: The fees are a Board conversation. The City of Lethbridge made the decision to move away from providing the service and the Division had to move to a private provider.

Chat Question: Can we return to the City of Lethbridge bussing?

Chat Answer: No, the busses have been sold and we cannot return to the City. This was a decision the City made.

Question: Parents empathize with families with bussing, but for those who live close to the schools that do not require bussing, could there be streamlined communications for families with bussing vs families without bussing, there have been a lot of emails about bussing, could that be streamlined for next year?

Answer: Next year, we are hoping that Southland can communicate by route, as there was a ton of emails to all parents about late or delayed buses and the Division recognizes that. They will do their best to correct that.

Question: Can we have an information session with the Operation Managers and Southland?

Answer: You have to take into consideration there are multiple partners including Holy Spirit Catholic schools. They all worked together to construct the best routes for the allocation of funding.

****Action:** Superintendent will take this away for them to maybe set up an info session or Q&A avenue for parents.

b. Upcoming Events

- Community Conversation – next meeting is April 13th, at YMCA from 8:30am to 10am
- ASCA – April 22nd to 24th
- RAP (Registered Apprenticeship Program) – April 28th
 - 7pm -- Location: Southland Trailer (4400 9th Ave N.)
- Three Year Capital Plan Feedback – April 29th
- ICE Scholarship Applications – Deadline is April 29th

12. New Business

12.1 Technology in Classrooms

- Discussion as to how or when technology is used in Classrooms. As parents we are trying to limit the technology at home, however Covid has allowed technology to creep in and what are parents seeing in their school?

Parent Discussion/Comments:

- In middle school, students are asked to use their phones to access apps like Kahoot. Some students do not have phones and there is nothing at the school for them to use. This is not equitable. If there could be some devices that could be donated so all kids can use Kahoot and use technology that way.

- One parent stated that smart displays are being used at lunch times to put on cartoons at lunch time. This parent is not overly happy about that use as it discourages kid's discussions and connections. Understands that teachers need a break and there is less supervision at lunch breaks.
- One parent has commented that on occasion their child had to use their own data to download apps, and a lot of kids don't have data and have to rely on the Wi-Fi at the school.
- Another parent stated that we do have to have these conversations, there is good and bad issues with technology. There is a lack of availability due to time of school days and teachers having prep time, so kids watch YouTube during lunches and it's one of those areas where it was a challenge that was already there with teachers needing time and supervision being available. In some instances, there would be some parents who would be willing to volunteer. In one of the schools, they had a laptop per student and each kid was equipped and a lot of thought and effort with how that was utilized. We want to use the laptops as tools and not alternatives to other things. As making educated and strategic use of what is available and there are positive and effective ways to do it.
- Devices are harder to learn and navigate when they are older, and having positive opportunities and having support around you while navigating that is a good thing. Maybe a reminder, that technology should be used for positivity.
- A parent stated that one school practices mindful eating time at their school, so no talking, just eating, no devices, do any parents have any comments on that?
 - Another parent commented that they have experienced this, not in a school setting but in another forum and they feel that this is "creepy" as lunch breaks should be a time for conversations, expressions, and connections with their peers and to just be kids.
- One parent commented that there was a proposal to have one screen free lunch per week at their school, but also recognizes that teachers do need that time to breathe and to not get overwhelmed. But they are trying to approach a balance.
- The Trustee commented that as a former teacher, they had recess before lunch. With that it changed the dynamics with the kids because when they came in they were ready to eat and visit with each other. A number of schools in Alberta and Canada have moved to that model of playground first then lunch.

Question: Is there a Division policy for the use of technology in school, for education, lunchtime, for rewards, etc.?

Answer: The Division has an appropriate use of technology policy. This is on the Policies page and starts on Policy 607.4 (<https://www.lethsd.ab.ca/our-district/policies2>). There are two things that the Superintendent is hearing. 1) Accessibility to learning due to lack of technology is not equitable. They have invested funds, upgraded computers and iPads for kids and if that is not sufficient, we need more conversations. 2) Are we taking away from other opportunities with over reliance in supervisory using screen time. That is a conversation that we should have with elementary administrators.

Comment: Over the last 2 years, kids have had more access to technology and the school system can do engagement opportunities and rewards that do not have to be on a device.

- 13. Roundtable Reports** - Reports are included with the agenda: an opportunity to highlight a very significant event or for questions from the representatives about information in a written report.
- None were sent in

14. Next Meeting Format

- Putting in the chat for the preference.

15. Adjournment – 8:49 pm

Future Division School Council 2021-22 Meeting Dates:

May 2, 2022 June 6, 2022

2021-2022 Division School Council

Chair Shelley Roest

Vice Chair Alison Alma-North

Recording Secretary Marlaina Ditrich

Policy Advisory Committee Alison Alma-North and Jamie Walburger (alternate)

Poverty Intervention Committee Jamie Walburger and Shelley Roest (alternate)

Division Wellness Committee Edna Asem and Carrie Boschman (alternate)

Community Engagement Committee Shelley Roest, Cynthia Young and Jamie Walburger

ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

1. Lethbridge School Division Board Community Conversation
YMCA at the ATB Centre 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
[Community Conversations | Community Engagement \(schoolsites.ca\)](#) April 13
2. Alberta School Council Conference and Annual General Meeting
[Annual Conference: Alberta School Councils' Association](#) April 22-24 on-line
3. RAP (Registered Apprenticeship Program)
7:00 pm
Location: Southland Trailer (4400 9th Ave N.)
On Community Engagement website
[Home | Community Engagement \(schoolsites.ca\)](#) April 28
4. Three-Year Capital Plan Feedback
On Community Engagement website
[Three-Year Capital Plan | Community Engagement \(schoolsites.ca\)](#) April 29
5. ICE Scholarship Applications
[Scholarship Applications | Lethbridge School Division \(lethsd.ab.ca\)](#) Deadline April 29