

St. Andrew's Regional High School

Local School Council

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2023 – approved April 26, 2023

Present: Angela Grohovac (AG) via Zoom, Victor Araujo (VA), Renee Derksen (RD), Steve Pearse (SP), Katherine Thiessen-Wale (KTW)

Regrets: Father Eduardo Santos, Euan Skinner

Principal: Glen Palahicky (GP)

Guests: Ciaran McLaverty (CM), Manuel Achadinha (ICS board representative)

Quorum achieved.

Call Meeting to Order: AG at 6:35 p.m.

Opening Prayer: GP

Approval of Previous Minutes: Motion by SP, seconded by RD to approve January 2023 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Approval of Agenda: GP requested to add discussion around a second maintenance/landscaping quote for exterior of school; added to New Business. Approved.

New Business:

Exterior Maintenance/Landscaping: GP advised that the current landscaping contractor is charging \$50,000/year (billed in a prorated manner at approx. \$4,000 per month) to do weeding and occasional mowing during the spring months. On top of this monthly expense, additional charges are made for brush and leaf removal and irrigation. While four years ago the contracted rate was \$2,500 per month (matching the rate of the previous landscaper), this was increased after construction concluded, on the basis that there was more lawn to manage. This may not be good value for money as the landscaping requirements are not complex. It was agreed that in keeping with the need to limit school fee increases for families to reasonable amounts, quotes by other companies can be sought, and the current contractor can be asked to re-quote. It is possible that the irrigation maintenance function could be continued with the existing contractor, which knows the location of irrigation lines. GP will request additional quotes from landscaping companies and invites suggestions from LSC members.

Old Business:

PIP hours: Prior to the meeting, AG sent a link to software that would facilitate management of PIP hours, as identified by a parent whose family formerly attended another school that had success with this application. At a high level, the program would allow teachers and administration to report volunteer needs/opportunities via e-mail, with the coordinator posting information to the site; parents would plug in to the software to sign-up and enter the activities for which they are going to volunteer. Once they have completed the volunteering, they sign in and record their hours. The co-ordinator is able to print a report that indicates who has fulfilled their hours and who has to pay the fee in lieu of completion of hours, and the office invoices the families who owe the fee in addition to their tuition. In a situation of financial hardship, the program could be set up so that families requesting assistance be able to sign up as other

families do, but school administrator would, through an override, be able to leave that family out of the program. There is also an option to permit families to decide to simply pay the fee should they choose to do so. With the program, it would be possible for one parent to administer the system, but in the case of the school that employed this software program, the school secretary did the associated administrative work.

Discussion followed re possible options for administration. Given the current demands on office staff, it is not possible for them to take on the extra work associated with invoicing, etc., and so it would be necessary for a parent volunteer or team of volunteers to do this. AG confirmed that tracking of hours would be up to the parents who volunteer their time, with the co-ordinator focusing mostly on posting the volunteer opportunities that arise during the course of the year. The program could operate on the honour system, so validation of the hours recorded is not essential. It is only those parents who commit to volunteering but do not do so by the end of the school year that end up being invoiced. A benefit of having the program is that there is a pool of money received from parents who decide to pay the fee in lieu of volunteering that could be spent to fund things that come up over the course of the year. A policy could be developed to address how funds received could be spent, and there are specific needs that could be identified as priorities for these funds.

AG requested that RD consider a high level plan of how to proceed and outline policies that would need to be implemented to support it. Manuel offered to raise this with the ICS board. AG will look more closely at the software. It was agreed to table this to the next meeting.

Cell phone policy: GP asked if there is wisdom in implementing a new “no phones” policy for Grade 8 students starting next year so that they learn to use their phones responsibly and socialize more healthily. With such a policy, phones are not to be used by students during the school day until they are in Grade 9. A variation on the policy would prohibit cell phone use at the beginning of the school year, and then gradually phase in use at certain times of the day over the course of the Grade 8 year.

Discussion followed, with recognition that there may be advantages to doing this. By Grade 9, students are more comfortable at the school and more social with each other; in general, parents are giving students their phones too early, and they become all-consuming.

CM advised that one of the issues around students’ phone use is that their parents are often texting their students while they are in class, presenting a distraction. GP noted that during focus and free time, it is difficult to not allow students to have their phones, and acknowledged that the current “off and away” policy is not enforced by all teachers equally, given some allow them to be used in class for research purposes. CM noted that “no phone use” policies at other schools have not been successful, and should there be complete ban of all phone use in all grades, it is likely some students will leave. Not all parents feel phones are a problem. GP noted that phasing in phone use by Grade 8’s over the course of the year is probably the best strategy to achieve the objectives without being too strict.

AG asked various parents their thoughts and noted that there are strong feelings both ways. Some wonder why just Grade 8’s would be restricted in this manner; more parents would like to see phones stored in plastic shoe organizers on students’ entry into the classrooms, so they are separated from it during class time.

It was agreed that when interviewing the prospective new students, GP and CM can indicate that there is consideration being given to implementing a policy with some restriction on cell phone use during the first part of the year,

VA moved that LSC should develop a policy to restrict cell phone use among Grade 8 students in September 2023, subject to further review. SP seconded. All in favour - Motion carried.

AG requested that school administration, Manuel (ICS board), and the incoming principal work on the policy. Manuel will ask the ICS Superintendent to raise with the ICS board.

Reports:

Chairperson's Report: AG participated in conducting interviews for the principal position on Monday, and an announcement is expected to be made by the Superintendent in the near future.

PSG Liaison: No report.

Teacher Rep's Report: No report - Michelle Sanders unable to attend.

Principal's Report: GP indicated there are 91 applicants for Grade 8 currently; there would have to be 4 sections of Grade 8's if all were to attend. If there were 10 more enrolled, then would have class sizes of 25 each, and an additional teacher FTE would be required to cover all grade 8 classes.

GP advised that course updating is complete, so course selection will begin soon. The most significant curriculum change is that graduates now need to have 4 credits of a course with First Peoples content in it; English FP 12, English FP 11, and BC FP Socials 12 classes will be offered. Online offerings will also be available. For Grade 11's, the Ministry of Education is making one course mandatory, but SARHS is allowing some flexibility and choice.

Students recently gathered for Ash Wednesday and will also gather for Stations of the Cross during April. Morning prayers in different classrooms and a fast challenge from electronics will also take place.

Tax receipts are printed and can be picked up.

PSG will consider giving an amount for a Chrome book lab that was recently purchased.

Human Resources: No report.

Finance: SP advised that things are in good order. A substantial bill to be paid for international agent fees (commissions for new first year students) is to be tracked down. Bridge was paid for in December, and it has been recorded. The bill for the gym floor is still to come. The overall picture for operating funding is positive.

Policy Report: No report.

International Liaison: VA reported that Mr. Durkan indicated that the second semester students have arrived, and exchange students are getting ready to depart to France on March 11.

Buildings and Grounds: In ES' absence, CM reported that remaining construction deficiencies are being completed. Lockers that were removed by the builders had not been anchored, but now are. Keypad entry stations were delayed for many months but are now installed. The biggest deficiency remaining is the speaker in the bandroom; the PA system works but not the bells. Gym floor refurbishment is being reviewed. Elephant feet (door stoppers) are being replaced. Finally, painters are coming during spring break to retouch the paint where graffiti happened.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Next meeting : April 26, 2023.