

ELIJAH SMITH SCHOOL COUNCIL
Minutes of Special Meeting
September 21, 2021
School Library

“School Council would like to acknowledge that we are on the lands of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation people and Ta’an Kwach’an Council and thank them for allowing us to live and work on their traditional land.”

Present: **Council Members:**
Sean Smith: Chair
Jeff Hunston: Vice Chair
Rosemary Waugh-Wilson
Jessie Dawson
Jerry Zahora: Secretary Treasurer

Regrets: Megan Cromarty: Council Member
Amanda Leas: Council Member
Rachel Sutherland: Council Member

Guests: Honourable Minister of Education: Jeanie McLean
Deputy Minister of Education: Nicole Morgan
ADM: Student Support Services: Ryan Sikkes

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 6:40PM.

2. **Adoption of Agenda:** Moved by Jeff, second by Rosemary THAT the agenda be adopted. CARRIED

3. **Welcome Guests:**
Council welcomed guests to the meeting. There were roundtable introductions.

4. **Catchment areas discussions:**
Minister McLean thanked council for the meeting. At this time she is holding 2 hats One as the Minister of Education, the other as the MLA for the area.

She discussed the finalizing of the catchment attendance area plan, which includes, transportation, capital planning.

The enrolment at ES is increasing. She is realizing the concerns of ES such as EA’s, resources, etc. She spoke of the review of Inclusion of Special Education. As well, the allocation process. The outcomes of students at ES.

Rosemary thanked the visitors for attending to discuss this important issue. School Council has a lot of concerns; and wants to provide the supports to our students that they need.

Nicole Morgan: Discussed the reason for doing this; it is related to the Whistle Bend project; which includes new roadways; etc. A full review is being done. Takhini is now part of ES. The last time a review was done was in 2009.

With the building of the school in Whistle Bend, this will have an impact on attendance at the schools. Takhini School and Jack Hulland schools will be impacted. The current attendance areas have been in place since 2008-09, however as the communities change due to the development, student enrolment and a review of attendance is necessary as well.

In 2019, a geomatics firm was contracted to compile information of Whitehorse attendance areas.

The Dept. of Ed. recommended that neighbourhoods be moved, along the Alaska Highway, south of Robert Service way to the Golden Horn Elementary School attendance area. At this time it appears, there are NO students from these areas that attend ES.

These neighbourhoods include:

- Canyon Crescent
- McRae
- McLean Lake
- Paddlewheel Village
- Mt. Sima

Ryan Sikkes advised, that there are 4 neighbourhoods attached to ES, and as of February, there were 0 students attending ES.

Jeff H. discussed the change in attendance when catchment area was changed.

It was a loss of almost 100 students when this was done. It is felt that the wording was different and council feels it needs the language used by the department needs to be more consistent so that parents can understand.

Takhini School was the overflow school for ES. Hillcrest and Valleyview are added to ES attendance area on a Ministerial Order.

The Dept. is and has advised families that students need to attend schools in their catchment areas whenever possible.

Parents have to formally apply to have their children attend out of attendance area. This helps with busing and resources at the schools; these are also targeted changes to help with new residential areas.

Council discussed the staffing formula. It is felt it is not fair or accountable to the students. School has students that have special needs and the staffing resources at the school need to reflect that. The allocation formula is not doing that funding mechanism at the school for ALL students. A solution needs to be found to change the funding formula. The Truth and Reconciliation needs to be brought into this as well. The students, parents and community needs to be listened to.

In the past the students at ES were embarrassed to attend ES due to the look of the school on the outside. The school has been told it would get new siding, for the last 3 years and again, it is now on hold until 2022. It did get a “refreshing coat of paint” over the summer, which did make a big difference in the appearance of the school.

Rosemary also discussed some of the things that ES has been trying to get for quite a while, such as: PA System has not been working for a number of years.

Sean discussed the resources for the students. How to fund schools better? It is important for our students.

Nicole discussed, to keep the students at the centre of quality education; health and provide a high education. One reason to separate the attendance areas; to make sure students are attending their schools. This will help with busing, resources, etc.

The rural schools are feeling the same way. Make sure schools are big enough for the enrolment. All resources are provided.

The Dept. projection model is not that far off! They have to predict who moves in and where.

Nicole also spoke about the Review of Inclusive and Special Education, which has helped. As well, the Attendance Review was used. It showed that students stopped attending as they were not getting the support education they needed or the inclusiveness.

There were roundtable discussions on how to succeed and to make sure our students are successful.

The discussions on the Staffing allocation formula took place. The EA allocation Formula as well. November summit to have groups working to look at this is in the works by the Dept.

Minister McLean concurred this as well, and did advise, that “it has to be ALL OF US” not just them or us, but ALL OF US!!!

Sean: the level of trust needs to be worked on. He is very passionate about this as is rest of council. This is in the best interest of the students!!! This is reflected in the graduation rates of the students, the success of the students; and only certain amount of students make it.

We all have to make sure we have the resources; supports; opportunities for their success!!!

HPW (Highways and Public Works) will follow up on the PA system issues.

The Egress was also discussed. This would alleviate the congestion on Hamilton Blvd. by the traffic circle, at the entrance to the school, whenever there are any functions going on at the school. This is a safety issue which has also been discussed for many years.

Council thanked Minister McLean, Deputy Minister Morgan and ADM Sikkes for attending meeting.

5. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 7:55PM
Next Regular Meeting, October 5, 2021

Sean Smith:
Chair

Jerry Zahora:
Secretary Treasurer