

Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

September 8, 2021

7 pm - Zoom Meeting

Present: Susan Fitzky, Annie Casson, Graham Arts, John Stephenson, Sarah Kalnay-Watson, Nawsheen Morgan, Wendy Campeau, Francis Kosko, Bryan Haigh, Wendy Lahey, Jocelyn Apps, Frederic Sonier, Shelley Wiart, Meaghan McLaren, Melissa Bard, Claudia Haas, Rabia Zulfiqar, Lisa McShane, Lorraine Brekke, Kris Brekke

Regrets: Rachel Vanderveen

Action Items

(June)

1. Annie will provide information about the PAC by August 15th to Graham.
2. Graham will look into social media options (such as Facebook) for JHS PAC.
3. Graham will review procedural checklist and add share parent emails to PAC designate.

(September)

1. Annie will send out emails connecting people on various committees (outdoors, plant sale, arts, inclusion).
2. Wendy L will reach out to the new CEPA teacher to offer PAC support.
3. Graham will create a parent feedback survey that will include questions about inclusion and communication.
4. Annie will connect Jocelyn and Shelley about Treats for Teachers.
5. Wendy C will explain the online Subway system to Nawsheen.
6. Nawsheen and Graham will set dates for Subway days.

1. Welcome and approval of agenda and previous minutes (June)

- Minutes approved

2. Quick Standing Updates

a. Principal's/PAC Financial Report

- New superintendent called to another meeting, she will be invited to the October meeting
- New staff member introduction: Frederic Sonier, assistant principal, also teaching phys ed
- Smooth school start in terms of routines and schedules

- Current enrollment is 306, up 12 from end of last year, 23 and 24 in JK classes
- One vacancy, looking for an ELA/Music teacher, currently being covered by a substitute
- Filled CEPA vacancy with Matthew Sinclair - half time at WMS and half time at JHS, flexible schedule
- Wall tent was vandalized over the summer, has been sent out for repairs
- Logs for loose parts playground should be delivered this weekend or next
 - Modules connected to WITS/DIRE being developed to relate to healthy play
 - Supervision zones will be reorganized to incorporate loose parts
 - In the area of health and wellness a staff group will be connecting wellness to CEPA and PBIS supports for loose parts playground
- Trustees have finalized strategic plan, the school staff have met and discussed how to connect school improvement goals with strategic plan
- Monthly assemblies with student presentations about PBIS and WITS, teaching how to make good choices in difficult situations
- Weekly reminders in announcements about these goals
- Rainbow Coalition offered half day workshops on building awareness in staff around diversity and challenges faced by LGBTQ2S+ community, hoping to repeat this topic at future professional development

Question: How will assemblies be handled with Covid?

Answer: Meetings can be conducted over Google Meet, most activities from a regular assembly can be replicated in virtual format. Setting common goals is important for building school culture, especially with the move back to the new school next year.

- Will be establishing a Learning Committee to review assessment data by cohort, identify areas of focus (literacy, numeracy, etc). Will also develop a Staff Learning Plan.
- Reestablishing ILC committee, currently gathering volunteers
- Committees will meet once a month, reports will be made to the PAC via Graham
- School Naming Committee - next meeting Sept 25th, will be meeting at least every 2 weeks. There will be an opportunity for community input, engagement process being finalized.

Question: What is the reason for the school being renamed?

Answer: Whenever a school is rebuilt, it is an opportunity to change the name. Graham was asked to pull together a committee to decide if the name should be changed, and if so, what should it be changed to. No decisions have been made yet. The committee cannot choose the name, it can only make recommendations to the board after consultation. Goal is to have recommendations to the board by the end of November.

Question: What is the school doing to make students more aware of environmental issues?

Answer: There are a number of staff members who are very focused on encouraging socially responsible and environmentally sustainable practices. Classes are able to compost currently, in the new school each class will have a three bin system for waste. This year space is limited in terms of waste bins.

Question: With the spread of Covid in town, will schools be closing? Do you have any insight into that?

Answer: Your guess is as good as mine! We know that there is a relatively high vaccination rate amongst Yellowknife adults. Graham is not allowed to ask teachers if they are vaccinated, however he believes that the rate at JHS is high as well. All students and staff have been following Covid protocols (masks, daily screening, classroom bubbles, etc). Protocols have been reviewed and approved by the OCPHO.

b. Trustee's Report

- New superintendent started in August
- Board meeting next Tuesday, will be virtual
- This is an election year for trustees, this is for a one year term in order to sync up with the city elections every four years starting in 2022
- Nominations are currently open until Sept 22, package can be picked up at YK#1 office
- Tomorrow evening there is a virtual information session for potential candidates or those interested in becoming a trustee
- Glad to see so many people in attendance at the PAC meeting

3. Roles for 2021/2022 School Year

- Roles needing to be filled:
 - Chair - currently Susan and Annie, welcoming others who are interested
 - Taking minutes
 - Communications/survey - Sarah?
 - Plant sale - Rabia, Rachel
 - Subway lunches - Nawsheen
 - Treats for Teachers - Shelley Wiart
 - Outdoors Committee
 - Inclusive Safe School Committee - Sarah, Meaghan, Bryan, Susan
 - Promoting Arts at JHS - Rabia, Sarah
 - Photography - Rabia
 - Ski/snowshoe rental - Lisa, Meaghan

ACTION ITEM: Annie will send out emails connecting people interested in working on the same initiatives.

4. Hot Topics

a. Inclusive Safe School

- Concern - how children are welcomed to the school are welcomed, particularly those with special needs

Question: What policies and procedures are in place to help students, including those with special needs, be welcomed into the school system?

Answer: The school has a responsibility (policies and procedures, territorial directives) to make sure that kids are able to experience school as fully as they are able, enjoying all aspects. When there are concerns observed or issues brought forward, it is hoped they are shared promptly. Parents can also contact Graham. There are dedicated staff for supporting students' needs, and they are always adapting. There are 4 EAs, 2 in JK. It is not just EAs responsible for this, but all staff. The thinking in French immersion has evolved over time, and any student, with proper supports and accommodations, can be successful. Program Support Teachers play a role in ensuring an inclusive environment.

Question: Does Sissons have publicly available guidelines or procedures for inclusivity, for staff, students, and families?

Answer: JHS is guided by advice from ECE, as well as informal discussions in the school district. Specific concerns can be addressed to Graham.

Question: What is the best way to address these concerns - privately with Graham, or at PAC meetings?

Answer: This is both a specific incident and a bigger issue. It is about the way students and families are treated and welcomed into the school.

Question: How can the parents work with the school to establish communication?

Answer: Graham would like to learn more about what has been happening in order to address this important issue.

- Susan has had multiple conversations with parents, there is a reputation that JHS is a bit selective in who is welcomed into the school
- Some families may require more communication in order for their child to feel welcome at the school
- We have a responsibility to create a school culture that is inclusive to all, that families are not left feeling unsure about their kids' safety and welcome to the school
- There is a need for differentiation in school communication
- Communication is more important than ever with restricted access to the school - surface level communication (weekly emails, updated website) is happening, but there are lapses in important, meaningful communication (sensitive issues, educational plans, etc)

Question: Can Graham make clear to staff that this is a concern?

Answer: Yes. Graham has been thinking about putting out a survey to parents seeking feedback on how the school is doing.

- This is also a systemic question for YK#1, the idea that certain schools cater to certain "types" of kids, has been going on for many years
- Need to emphasize - the communication with families overcoming barriers needs to be sensitive from the start, and the message needs to be inclusive from the beginning
- Tone in communication is very important, there needs to be empathy for parents

ACTION ITEM: Graham to create a survey, include option for someone to reach out and discuss issues as well as respond in writing.

b. Outdoors Committee

- Damages to the wall tent
- Loose parts playground is coming within a week or two

ACTION ITEM: Wendy L will reach out to the new CEPA teacher to offer support (tent repair, etc)

- Consider offering funding to families in need of money to buy winter clothing again

c. **Plant Sale and Seed Sale**

- Jocelyn Apps willing to organize seed sale again, would like to step back from plant sale
- Rachel Vanderveen is willing to help organize plant sale
- Rabia interested in helping out

d. **Parent Information Sessions**

- A parent has reached out about wanting to learn more about anti-bullying
- Meet the Teacher online events on Thursday, September 16th at 7:00 pm - teachers will be sending out the info to families
- Perhaps this year Parent Information Sessions could take the form of highlighting activities or programs going on in the school
- Orange Shirt Day - shirts have been purchased for every student and will be distributed by teachers ahead of Sept 30, PAC funds approved in June to cover half the cost of shirts
- Would be nice to have a weekly update from each teacher - Graham will be discussing this with staff at the next meeting

e. **Arts at JHS**

- In the past the PAC has purchased high quality supplies and run sessions for teachers to support them in teaching art
- Could create a mural for the new school opening, perhaps commemorating the time at WMS and Covid times
- Could create a new committee to start preparing for the transition back to new school, maybe incorporate plant sale

Question: Is there a way to improve the traffic and make it safer for drop off/pick up?

Answer: Graham is open to hearing suggestions, sometimes people are not following the posted “lanes”. Overall, the safety is good. People can email Graham if they have ideas or concerns.

f. Treats for Teachers

- Jocelyn Apps would like to step back from organizing
- Shelley will take it over

ACTION ITEM: Annie will connect Jocelyn and Shelley, dates to be set at October meeting.

g. Hot lunches

- Wendy Campeau would like to step back from organizing - she will put together a “how to” manual for using the online system

ACTION ITEM: Wendy will meet with Nawsheen to go over how the online system works.

ACTION ITEM: Nawsheen and Graham will set dates.

5. Other Items

a. JK Pick up time

Question: What is the rationale for the early JK pick up time? What happens when a student cannot be picked up until 3:20? They would end up waiting for a long time when added up over the year.

Answer: Staggered times were part of the reopening plan approved by the OCPHO in order to minimize the number of students out on the playground at one time. Students are never left unsupervised.

Question: Does this put students under the required number of instructional hours per year?

Answer: Will have to check. The school must follow the OCPHO directives in the time of a pandemic. It is hoped that teachers are using this time productively

- The practical experience is that students are sweating in their snowsuits in the hallway for 20 minutes, with 4 classes sharing the hallway at the same time, increases exposure between classroom bubbles

b. JK Bus update

- Email jhspac@gmail.com if this is an issue you are interested in to learn about ways to advocate for a JK bus, which does not currently exist

Question: Will students have access to the library this year?

Answer: No, but teachers work with the librarian to select materials for each class. They are quarantined afterwards.

Question: Is there a more interactive way to do this? Part of the joy of a library is discovering new things through exploration. Melissa is willing to help seek an exemption to allow for this.

Answer: Yes, please touch base with Graham.

c. Loose parts playground update

- See Principal's Report and Outdoors Committee above

d. Plans for this year

- Think about priorities for this year, and the ways we are willing to participate in them, we will discuss at the next meeting

e. WITS/DIRE update

- Weekly messaging over the announcements and virtual assembly routines
- Kids could be creating their own posters about these topics, write and act in plays

Next meeting - October 13th, 7:00 pm