

# School Council Meeting Minutes

November 3, 2009 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

[schoolcouncil@hcacalgary.com](mailto:schoolcouncil@hcacalgary.com)

## In attendance:

Scott Jackson – **Chair / Secretary**

Brenda Blair – **Vice Chair**

LaVerne Pue – **Principal**

Renee Ma-Poy – **Teacher Representative**

Ashly Surkon – **Student Representative**

Heather Schmidt

Ron Smith

Wendy Brunning

Becki Schickerowski

Regina Obancle

Sheri Surkon

Michael Taburada

Jessica Taburada

Joanne Deda

Tania MacCormack

## Words of welcome and prayer – Scott Jackson

### Student Representative Update

One potential Leadership Class project was presented “Shack-a-thon”. The event is proposed for the April time frame. There are two primary goals: educate people on what the homeless go through on a daily basis and to raise money for Habitat for Humanity. Only grades 10 through 12 will be able to participate. The objective is to build a “shack” out of cardboard and spend 12 hours living in it. The event is proposed for the main parking lot at the school. It still needs to get approval from the HCA staff and administration. The question about the name “shack” was brought up. It was felt there may be a negative connotation associated with “shacking up”. The suggestion was made to pursue a different name like “shanty”.

### Principal’s Update

Mrs. Pue reviewed the 3 issues brought forth at the November Hot Coffee – Hot Topics.

1. Can student’s homework be sent to office to be picked up by parent when the student is sick? There are too many logistics and not enough room to accommodate this idea. ATA doesn’t recommend sending work home. Rather, the child should be allowed to recuperate. We don’t have a scanner and it is too time consuming. Mrs. Pue will remind the staff to update the school’s web site. All announcements are also put on the parent board. Mrs. Pue will also be looking into putting announcements on the web site as well. Specifically, those announcements that have to do with a change to dress code not previously mentioned in a Hallmark (i.e. so that if a student has been away sick and not heard an announcement they won’t miss out on showing school spirit on Pep Rally days etc.).
2. One parent commented about the trucks parked on the west side of 21<sup>st</sup> Street. They have put a call into the City of Calgary to see if something can be done about this and will report back to Mrs. Pue once informed.
3. H1N1 concerns were raised. Specifically, parent’s questioned the policy for sick teachers. Mrs. Pue indicated that each case is investigated and only those teachers that have seen a doctor and are given the okay to be in the classroom are able to come to work.

Mrs. Pue shared a communication regarding Proposed Changes to the School Act.

The Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) has submitted a recommendation to Alberta Education to make changes to the School Act. ASBA is strongly recommending that Alberta Education only provide funding to public schools, Catholic schools, and Francophone schools. ASBA is adamantly opposed to the funding of private schools. This is a very big concern to HCA in that there is no guarantee our relationship with Palliser School District will remain in place and we would need to be prepared if we were ever forced to go back to being a fully private school. It was decided HCA should draft an ASCA general resolution indicating our thought that all schools receive funding from the government. Further, it was suggested everyone could/should also send a note to their respective MLA's to let their feelings on this matter be heard. Joanne and Ron agreed to prepare a form letter that could be signed and sent to our MLA's indicating limiting funding to a specific group is the wrong direction to go.

**Action:** Scott to draft an ASCA general resolution and circulate to meeting attendees for feedback prior to submitting. Joanne and Ron are to prepare a form letter.

**Follow Up:** prior to November 30.

Mrs. Pue shared about recent Funding Issues.

Alberta Education (AB Ed) is currently predicting 3-5 years of cutbacks and this is causing a financial crisis within Palliser School District. The crisis stems from AB Ed clawing back \$137K from Palliser. In turn, Palliser is now short in their budget and they are making a number of financial cuts to balance their budget. The situation is further compounded by the fact the Palliser financial officer resigned unexpectedly and there is a new financial officer trying to get up to speed as quickly as possible. The Palliser Administration group decided to make a number of changes without consulting HCA administration. First, ESL was going to be disbanded and the ESL teacher was to be let go by the end of October. Further, it was not envisioned ESL would be offered next year. Second, all Learning Assistance (LA's) were to take a 50 hour cut to their schedule for the rest of the year. After prayerful consideration, the HCA staff stepped up to accept financial responsibility to keep all LA's hours and the ESL teacher until the end of the 2009-2010 school year. The cost of this is approximately \$35K. Other cuts made by Palliser Administration without consulting with HCA administration included reducing the number of hours our technology person could come in each week by half. He is now only able to come in 5 hours per week. This will be devastating in trying to keep our technology running properly. Finally, the Career and Academic counselor was discontinued on Friday, October 30 and again HCA administration was not consulted. This decision was also not communicated by Palliser. The counselor broke the news to Mrs. Pue. The counselor has put forth a proposal to Palliser and awaits a response. We are certain other cuts will be coming. This has the HCA support staff very concerned. Finally, three middle management positions at Palliser were demoted and all child and youth care workers in the south schools were let go (HCA didn't have any of these positions). There will be very challenging weeks ahead of us.

Mrs. Pue shared a request from Palliser.

Palliser has indicated it would like School Council's to be consulted on how cold the temperature should get before the school gets closed (-40°C has been the past policy)? Questions were asked regarding is this with or without wind chill, should snow fall be included, should local road conditions be included, etc? It was reiterated that parents always retain the right to keep children home.

**Action:** This will be added to the February agenda.

**Follow Up:** February meeting.

## **Advancement Update**

Ron has spent most of his time this past 6 months in the school. Going forward, he will be spending less time in the school and more time out of the school in his efforts to solicit donations for the school. To allow for this, Ron has brought on a support person to help with administrative issues. Ron's has two current requests: (1) we need to open dialogue with everyone who could help with donations to the school. We don't want to further burden the parents. As such, Ron may speak with individuals one on one to help get contacts. (2) Ron needs four individuals immediately to form an organizing committee for the Spring Gala (Apr 17, 2010). The initial commitment is to meet once a month for about an hour.

**Action:** Ron to action as appropriate.

**Follow Up:** Ron to follow up as appropriate.

## **Food on Campus Committee**

Deloris and Becki are currently reviewing the food guide manual provided by Alberta Education. They have also engaged Leroy Brown to sit on this committee.

**Action:** Deloris and/or Becki to provide updates.

**Follow Up:** February meeting.

## **Legal Wording on Field Trip Forms**

Based on all that is currently happening within Palliser (funding cuts), this is a very low priority item. We will leave this on the agenda and look for future updates.

**Action:** Mrs. Pue to follow up with Dale Backlin

**Follow Up:** February meeting.

## **Group Security Checks**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Calgary Police Services (CPS), Glenmore Christian Academy (GCA) and HCA has been signed. It requires GCA and HCA to submit a combined minimum of 100 applications this school year. It is felt this is easily achievable. We can now gather the required information from parents at the school so they don't need to go downtown. The first opportunity for filling out the forms will be at the parent teacher meetings later this month. Mrs. Pue will arrange the logistics around this.

**Action:** Closed

## **Family Fun Night**

It was felt this event should be held sometime in the new year. Further discussion and planning will occur then.

**Action:** Begin thinking about the date for such an event.

**Follow Up:** February meeting.

## **Open House**

There will be two open houses this year. They are currently scheduled for February 2, 2010 and April 13, 2010. Further discussion must take place as to the involvement from School Council.

**Action:** Scott to work with Ron and then communicate to School Council attendees plus the broader population.

**Follow Up:** Prior to February.

## **HCA Shepard's Guide**

There were no updates on this item this month. Based on all of the issues brought forth this month, we will move this item into the new year.

**Action:** Ron and Paul to provide an update in the March timeframe.

**Follow Up:** March meeting.

## **ASCA Workshop**

Confirmation has been received that ASCA will be sending Mary Troicuk to deliver the "Recruiting & Retaining School Council Members" workshop on December 1, 2009. The time will be 7:00PM – 9:30PM. Invitations have been sent to the Society Board for anyone interested in participating.

**Action:** Closed.

## **20 Min. Lunch Break on Friday**

Mrs. Pue and the staff have been monitoring the situation for the past several weeks and have been helping to "move the line along". From the staff point of view, it appears the 20 min. break is working. Administration observes over half the kids are done eating in 10 minutes and those that don't get finished are usually caught up in conversations with others. Student and parent comments indicate there is still a problem, especially for middle and high school. It was further suggested there has been an increase in vending machine sales doesn't seem to be enough time to eat. This will be discussed further at the town hall in January.

**Action:** Further discussion to be had to make firm plans for a 2010 event.

**Follow Up:** December time frame.

## **Posting Minutes and Agendas on HCA Web Site**

A School Council page has been created on the HCA web site. It currently has the mandate of the School Council on it. Teresa will be working on getting the agenda and meeting minutes onto the web site in short order. All in attendance agreed in principle that names can be posted on the minutes on the web site. No one believed there were any FOIP issues with this. It was suggested an email be sent to the general public letting them know once the minutes have been posted.

**Action:** Closed.

## **ASCA General Resolution Submissions**

The Society Board was asked if they had any issues to bring forth. No issues were brought forth. The Music Parents Association (MPA) has indicated they want to bring forth a resolution about a proposed change by Alberta Education with respect to the Arts Education. Changes include moving from a full-year program to a series of short learning modules. With music as an example, there was no indication that performance would be included. If true, this could have implications to our band program. Unfortunately, there were no MPA representatives available to come to the meeting tonight. They have been given last year's resolution examples and asked to draft their resolution.

**Action:** MPA to draft resolution.

**Follow Up:** November 3, 2009

## **Town Hall Meeting**

The Town Hall meeting will be held in place of the January School Council meeting. The meeting will be going over the current funding situation, the schools daily timetable (early dismissal), and the 20 minute lunch on Fridays. It was felt a survey would be appropriate to send out regarding the early dismissal. It was also felt information should be put out to all stakeholders prior to the meeting.

**Action:** Brenda to draft the survey and circulate for comments.

**Follow Up:** Sometime in late November or early December.

## **New Issues**

1. Is it possible to lobby Palliser about cut backs? Perhaps an email should be sent to the general population of the school with 2 or 3 areas of concern we may wish to lobby Palliser on.  
**Action:** Add to the February Agenda.  
**Follow Up:** February meeting
2. Could there be prayer points in our minutes? It was asked whether we should include 4 – 6 prayer items within our minutes as it is important to pray for and not just discuss issues. Extend out to general public.  
**Action:** Add to the February agenda.  
**Follow Up:** February meeting

**Closing Prayer-** Mrs. Pue

**Date for the next meeting:** Tuesday December 1, 2009.