

**ECNS School Council Minutes
of the meeting on January 16, 2025 at 7pm**

Julie D., Chair; Tim D., Vice-Chair; Christy H., Secretary

To be approved/reviewed at the next School Council meeting on Monday, February 10th

Members Present: Ashley R., Denise G., Taryn L., Melodie V., Rebecca W., Erin H., Julie V., Carla B., Glen B., Jessica K., Rhonda W., Ademola A., Candice K

Administration: Karla L.W.

Teachers: Dominique D.

ESCE Board Representatives: Chelsea V., Fola O.

1) Call to Order, Scripture Reading, and Prayer

- The chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and opened the meeting by reading 1 Peter 2:17 and Philippians 4:6-7, then offered a prayer.

2) Acknowledgement of Members Present

- The chair acknowledged the parents, admin, teacher, and board representative present.

3) Code of Conduct Reviewed

- Ashley R. read the code of conduct in our school council guidelines.

4) Approval of Meeting Agenda

- The chair called for an approval of the meeting agenda—Melody V. motioned to approve, Erin H. seconded. [Agenda approved.](#)

5) Approval of Previous Minutes

- June 10, 2024—The chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes—Becky W. motioned to approve, Melodie V. seconded. [Minutes approved.](#)
- Sept 23, 2024—The chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes—Rhonda W. motioned approve, Jess K. seconded. [Minutes approved.](#)
- October 21, 2024—The chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes—Rhonda W. motioned to approve, Melodie V. seconded. [Minutes approved.](#)
- November 18, 2024—The chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes—Becky W. motioned to approve, Melodie V. seconded to approve. [Minutes approved.](#)

6) School Admin Report

- The Principal reminded parents that Admin Reports are on SZ, including photos of the exciting events happening around the school. Just a reminder that photos shared on SZ cannot be copied and/or shared.
- One exciting highlight is that volunteer levels in the school continue to increase.

- The main highlight the principal shared from the report is the partnership ECNS has built with the Mosaic Centre/Mustard Seed over 14 years. In December, the Grade 2s made 320 gift packages for the vulnerable and houseless sector at the Mosaic Centre, which is a wonderful example of our Teaching for Transformation curriculum.
- The principal invited Erin H., a parent, to give a brief overview of the Mosaic Centre and the Mustard Seed for parents who might be unfamiliar with their work.
- The chair noted that the report included that the school hopes to hold blanket exercises and asked if the school will make this exercise available to parents and if the experience contains any spiritual components; the principal responded that a blanket exercise differs from a blanket ceremony. A blanket exercise is a hands-on learning experience of colonization and displacement of Indigenous peoples in Canada. This exercise at our school would not contain a spiritual component.

7) Edmonton Society for Christian Education Board Update

- The chair prefaced the ECS board update by informing the attendees that we would not discuss the recent email communications from the board re: the dismissal of the Executive Director
- The board representative also stated that no questions would be answered re: the letting go of the Executive Director due to confidentiality.
- The Society's "Learning Together Series" for families from all three campuses has three events coming up for ECS members to engage in learning and community building: Digital Citizenship and Online Safety event at ECNS on January 20th; a family worship night on January 30th held at the West campus; and registration/pre-enrollment opening on February 3rd.
- Creator's Classroom update: \$360,000 is set aside specifically for the Creator's Classroom, which has taken time to accrue. However, grading alone costs \$600,000, so we must reach this goal before starting the project. The board is requesting that the Spring Auction funds go towards the Creator's Classroom. Another next step would be hiring a consultant and drawing up plans, which will also have a cost in addition to the needed \$600,000.
- The chair asked for feedback/questions on the report. A parent asked if the Creator's Classroom drawings currently up in the school were available for contractors to bid on; the board rep noted that new quotes/drawings would be needed, but that anyone could submit a bid for the project.

8) Unfinished business

A) 2023-2024 Financial Summary (Summary listed on SchoolZone)

- The vice-chair encouraged parents to view the financial summary if they had not already done so.
- Some data from 2023-2024 account spending: School Council spent \$289 from last year's available \$500 grant from the province on providing a workshop; \$5,796 was raised from the spring auction bake sale and other revenue; expenses totalled \$3,558, which included paying for the Grade 6 babysitting course

- The 2023-2024 budget started at \$3,524, with a surplus at the end of the year of \$2,238, and totalling a final balance of \$5,763 at end of the year.
- The vice-chair noted that the 2023-2024 council also authorized future commitments for the school's three divisions (up to \$1200 for each division) in June 2024, in addition to the amounts already spent. \$3,600 of school council funds are pledged for the 2024-2025 budget.
- The principal expressed gratitude to the executive team for going through financials and minutes from previous years.
- A parent asked what the year-end is for the school; the vice-chair responded that it is July 1 through June 30th

B) Childcare Update

- The secretary thanked Candace K. for serving as the babysitting coordinator by organizing the roster, formatting guidelines, and coordinating the sitters on the night of meetings
- **Action item: Parents are encouraged to give feedback about the registration form for signing children up for childcare**
- The secretary noted that we have a large pool of babysitters to draw from.
- A parent asked if any families had taken advantage of using the babysitting service; the secretary noted that three children were enrolled in tonight's meeting.

C) Change of School Council Meeting Dates

- The chair noted that two upcoming school council dates were changed slightly from what was announced in November's meeting—the amended dates are March 10th and April 14th. No members objected to the change of dates.

D) PIPA forms and Call for Volunteers

- The chair asked for parents to double check their info on our PIPA spreadsheet to make sure that their name and correct email is listed. Some emails have bounced, so parents are encouraged to check with the secretary (Christy H.) if they have not received any emails directly from school council.
- A sign-up sheet was passed around for members to volunteer to read Scripture/offer prayer during school council meetings, read the school council code of conduct, or bring snacks to enjoy before meetings. If anyone would like to volunteer for one of these options, email exec at ecns.schoolcouncil@gmail.com.

9) New Business

A) Goal Setting of Areas School Council Will Focus on and Vote (Goals listed on SchoolZone)

- The chair reviewed what these goals are NOT—school council is not here to tell admins and teachers what to do in their classrooms.
- After voting on the proposed goals, the first step will be to discern what is happening already from those making decisions that impact these goals; the second thing is to share the great things that are already happening and how the students and community are impacted; the third step will be getting parent input and feedback on the goals.

- The chair noted that our purpose is to preserve the unity of the school, without having contentious debate—we want to strive for meaningful conversation and offer good suggestions for building the community.
- The chair read through the five possible goals*:
 - Goal 1—Explore and receive parental input on the Christian content within the school
 - Goal 2—Provide parental input and suggestions on extracurricular activities at school
 - Goal 3—Focus on diversity and inclusion within the school
 - Goal 4—Advocate and provide suggestions to build a stronger bridge between the North and West campuses
 - Goal 5—Give input in the Edmonton Christian Society’s AGM planning to enhance transparency and foster trust within the community.

*One parent’s input received after the deadline of December 20th pertained to current safety protocols and processes for visitors coming into the school and drop-off/pickup times
- The chair noted that the school council had announced we would vote tonight and reminded parents to vote with the whole school community in mind. To get more parent engagement, we could put the goals out via a survey/poll; the con with a survey is that it can be hard to keep people from voting multiple times, and some parents tune out interacting with a survey/poll to vote on.
- The chair opened up the floor for discussion on whether to proceed with using anonymous ballots for voting or to open up voting to parents via a poll/survey. A parent appreciated that we would get a chance to learn from those in charge first re: the goals chosen. The parent also asked those in attendance to consider which goals could engage more parent involvement when voting.
- A parent asked the attendees to keep in mind the mandate of school council, which is to enhance student learning and success at our school. Perhaps the AGM should be taken up with the Society and school council’s focus be directed at how our voice impacts our school. The chair also reminded everyone the main purpose of school council is for parent’s to have a voice within the school.
- A parent asked that school council vote on goals tonight, since delaying a vote would delay us getting to work on the goals
- The chair opened up questions to the floor for any additional goals that we should consider—no feedback was given.
- The principal asked if we could change the order of the agenda to share results from the assessment before voting on goals to give additional context. [The council agreed to amend the agenda.](#)
- The chair first called for a vote to proceed on voting tonight by show of hands – 12 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained—[motion passed to vote on goals.](#)

B) School Results Presentation by Principal: Referencing the *Alberta Education Assurance Measures Summary*

- The principal highlighted data gathered from the survey taken last fall.
- Four categories are considered in the report: 1) Measures for student growth and achievement, 2) Teaching and leading, 3) Learning supports, and 4) Governance

- The principal reminded attendees that data can help us tell a story of the bigger picture, but there are also factors to consider in weighing the data. Our school alone has around 650 families—if every parent/guardian responded, it could generate 1000-1300 responses. This gives the survey results some points to consider: 1) The survey had 24-27 parent responses, which is not a "representative sample" of the ECNS parent population; 2) How different people understand the questions impacts the data; 3) we want to know if this data reflects trends over time. The principal noted some factors that make our school unique in interpreting this data:
 - * ECNS continues to grow in neurodiversity representation—a few years ago we would have had approximately 20% of the amount of neurodiverse students that we have now. This could mean that parents feel like our school will welcome them, that parents are more willing to get assessments done, etc.—we don't know conclusively.
 - * ECNS has 19 EAs that work directly in the classrooms where other schools in our catchment have far less. We also have high parental involvement in our school as opposed to others.
- Some areas for celebration from the survey: 1) PAT (Provincial Achievement Tests) are high. Even with COVID and the high stress experienced within our community last year, results continue to be high. Grade 6 PAT results show that our scores are trending up, as are the Grade 9 scores. This shows high resilience and high support for our students. 2) 87% of students in Grade 7-9 say that students help each other when they can, and 100% of teachers agree with this statement. The principal noted that using restorative circles among students and staff are a core part of listening to and mending hurt.
- Areas for growth: 1) Creating welcoming and respectful learning environments. The principal noted that civil discourse has deteriorated in past years and that both parents and students must continue working towards honest, respectful discussion; 2) Parental involvement—52% are satisfied about opportunities for decision making in our school.
- **Action item: The principal asked the school council to consider how to support parent involvement by asking several questions:** 1) Who is at the table? Who is not at the table? Why not? 2) How are we doing at telling our school's story? Do all parents know what is happening at the school? Where do they get their information? What are some ways our students are playing their role in God's story and how is that being shared?
- The principal passed out a handout on information gathering for parent involvement.
- The chair asked for questions/feedback. A parent asked for clarification on why the data graph showed that our school has a low parent involvement compared to province; the principal responded that the parents who completed the survey might not be currently involved with opportunities at the school. The principal reaffirmed the high levels of volunteering within the whole school, noting that data does not always capture the accurate picture.

C) Item A Revisited: Voting on Goals

- The chair called for a vote by secret ballot on the proposed goals and asked for two volunteers to count ballots. Melody V. and Denise G. volunteered.
- While votes were counted, the chair briefly reminded parents of other opportunities presented on the goal sheet for parents to lead volunteer efforts: 1) Collecting unused supplies to bless the community or school; 2) Holding a pancake breakfast, cultural potluck or a shared community meal; and 3) Providing Sportnic Day supplies - hot dogs, popsicles, snacks. The chair asked if any attendees would like to volunteer to lead one of these initiatives—no volunteers.
- **Action item: A communication will go out to all parents to see if others would like to volunteer for any of these opportunities.**
- The secretary read aloud the **voting results** from 13 ballots—the top results were **Goal #2** with 11 votes (Provide parental input and suggestions on extracurricular activities within the school) and **Goal #3** with 8 votes (Focus on diversity and inclusion within the school). Goal #1 received 4 votes, Goal #4 received 2 votes, and Goal #5 received 0 votes.

D) Options Day

- This fun event for Grades 4-6 is on February 10—5 more stations are needed to host a full options day. Those interested would lead the option in the morning and then in the afternoon. They are especially looking for food or craft options. If parents are interested in hosting a table, contact Liz Rachul or Jess Van Doesburg.

E) Snow Removal

- The vice chair noted that several parents have voiced concerns over snow removal near school, and of adjacent sidewalks near school property being hazardous
- The school is responsible for school property, and the city is responsible for sidewalks and the road adjacent to it.
- **Action item: Any parent with a safety concern re: the adjacent sidewalks may call 311 to request snow removal. There is also a 311 app where these requests can be made.**
- **The chair added that during a heavy snowfall, parents could also lend a hand with shoveling. The principal agreed that parents could jump in and help shovel, as Junior High students help out with shoveling.**

F) Traffic Safety

- As with sidewalk concerns, anyone is able to call 311 with a safety concern over parking, reckless driving, etc.
- **Action item: For cars parked in non-parking areas (in front of driveways, in the middle of the street, etc.), parents are encouraged to have a conversation with the driver of the vehicle first, and then if it keeps happening, call 311**

G) 2024-2025 School Council Funds

- The chair brought up a suggestion from a member of school council, who asked if school council could **vote** on whether to use school council funds to buy gift cards for

EAs/Support Staff who are in need of support during the strike, or to let parents continue giving support individually (a parent is collecting gift cards to pass along to admin for them to give out as needed. The chair asked for a show of hands to leave giving to individual parents—9 voted yes; the chair then asked for a show of hands to use school council funds—2 voted yes. [The majority decision was to continue individual giving.](#)

- The chair brought forth another suggestion by a member of school council to allow the executive to use a petty cash fund for supplies, hospitality, etc. A parent asked how the executive would be accountable in using funds; the chair noted that the executive would keep receipts and allocate it on the general ledger. Another parent noted that MaryAnn from the Society office reviews all funds spent. The chair asked for a [vote by show of hands to allow school council exec use of a petty cash funds—9 yes, 1 opposed, 2 abstained—motion passed.](#)
- The chair asked for a suggested petty cash fund amount from parents—one parent suggested \$100 for petty cash fund until it is used up. The chair called for a [vote](#) to use \$100 for petty cash—9 yes, 3 abstained—[motion passed.](#) It was mentioned that this would not be a monthly amount and if additional petty cash is needed after this amount, it would need to be discussed and voted on again.
- Remaining items on the 2024-2025 budget were tabled until February's meeting

10) Meeting Adjourned

- The principal concluded the meeting in prayer, which adjourned at 8:48 p.m.