

## School Advisory Council (SAC) Meeting Minutes

22 February, 2018

Le Marchant St. Thomas classroom, 4:35 – 5:26 pm

### Members Present:

Moira Cavanaugh	Principal
David Jakeman	Chair, Parent
Graeme Gunn	Vice-Chair, Parent
Laura White	Secretary, Parent
Andrew Boyne	Parent
Emily Thompson	Teacher
Karine Babineau	Teacher
Adele Beaton	Teacher
Claire McParland	Community Representative

### Members Absent:

Monica Stoilov	Vice Principal
Nancy Beck	Community Representative

### Participants:

Julie MacLean	Acting Vice-Principal, Teacher
Steve Beyea	Parent
Judy Obersi	SST member, Parent

### 1. Additions to Agenda:

None.

### 2. Review and Approval of 11 January, 2018 Minutes:

Approved, no changes.

### 3. Old Business (DJ):

#### a) SST (School Steering Team):

-SST meeting at 6 pm tonight at LMST

-First of 3 tenders are posted. The due date for completion of the first tender package (foundation) is 25 April, 2018. The second tender will be for the steel framing and the third will be the completion of the entire building. Darrell MacDonald (Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal DTIR) confirmed that the project will be split into three tenders.

-Waye Mason has been supportive of the proposed parking changes that will occur in lieu of a drop off loop. LW commented that WM had a meeting this morning regarding LMST.

-A public info session on the revised school design has not been scheduled yet. LMST SST members will ask about this at the meeting tonight.

-CM requested that the issue of drainage from the school property onto home owners' properties be discussed tonight as well.

-SB commented that a survey of the current state of neighbouring properties was taken for insurance purposes in 2016. This "before" survey should be completed again, as some properties have changed (i.e. new fences etc.).

-The group wondered if we can take Chromebook carts and books over to the new school. JO reminded us that due to air quality concerns older books may not be allowed. MC will follow up.

-Green Space Committee is going to see the new Dartmouth South Academy school grounds (P-9).

-The LMST stained glass will be displayed in the new school in a Plexiglas cabinet that can be viewed from both sides.

-MC thinks that the \$5000 allotted to art for the new school does not include money to pay the artist – will clarify, as JO understood that this money could be used as we see fit including hiring a

professional.

#### **4. New Business (DJ):**

##### a) Government Legislation:

- Select SAC chairs and vice-chairs had a meeting with Zach Churchill (Minister of Education).
- Many more SAC chairs and vice-chairs wanted to participate in this meeting, but meeting invitations were limited.
- GG distributed the Minutes from this meeting which are attached below.
- Attendees expressed a need for more information on what the government is assigning to SACs when school boards are dismantled in March. What are the new roles and responsibilities?
- a Facebook group has been set up for SAC chairs and vice-chairs to discuss the issue.
- MC shared an FAQ and responses list, a Concerns and Facts list and a Student Success information sheet regarding the proposed changes: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/adminreview>

#### **5. Administration Update (MC):**

a) Theme for February is friendship. Being respectful, caring and kind is encouraged. Students who demonstrate these behaviours receive ballots for a draw held on Friday afternoons to see where Lou the lion will go for the following week. Spirit week also coincided with our annual coins for books campaign. Monies raised (\$120.00) will go to the library. The school has spent \$3000.00 on books for lower elementary and the library as well.

b) 41 registrants for Primary so far (all French). As with the past four years, a total of four English classes (P-6) are expected for LMST in 2018-19.

-Out of area requests are accepted the first week in April. These requests are reviewed in June through September.

-Primary French Immersion info session on Feb 6<sup>th</sup> was well attended. A rep from Canadian Parents for French was in attendance.

-Primary orientation will be on 17 May (1:30-2:30 per website) and an info session will be at 6:30 pm on the 17<sup>th</sup>. A SAC and H&S representative are requested to attend.

c) Student Success Plan (SSP) – year one of five.

-Literacy goal: to improve student achievement in reading with a focus on deeper comprehension

-Math goal: to improve students' ability to problem solve and communicate their mathematical understanding

MC is consulting with literacy and math specialist at the HRSB to explore ways for collecting data on the goal.

d) School Travel Planning (STP):

-The committee met on February 8<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome and encouraged to participate at meetings. Next meeting is March 1<sup>st</sup> from 1:45-2:45 pm.

-With university students on break this week, parking infractions are at a minimum. It seems that it is the students that are parking too long, in bus lanes and in the emergency lanes.

e) school logo contest: underway and closes March 8<sup>th</sup>.

f) HRM presentations on Waste Management:

-The presentations were excellent. More time is required so they will be coming back.

-Students learned about the engineered waste cells (for garbage).

-There is now a green bin in each classroom.

-Mme Carol's class has committed to improve upon waste sorting at LMST through educating their peers

-LMST will explore implementing a Litterless Lunch policy.

g) February is African Heritage Month

-announcements made daily on famous African Nova Scotians/Canadians in the form of "who am I?"

-classes have been doing a variety of activities from writing about a famous African Canadian to creating a board game of Africville.

-1/2 McFarlane won a contest where they were one of over 1000 applicants! They accept their award on 6 March.

h) Feb 13: LMST music night at Gorsebrook was well attended

i) Feb 12-16: spirit week went well

j) Feb 20-23: iWalk week. Mme LeBlanc did a walk about with students and students have been encouraged to walk to school.

k) Feb 26-28: drumming workshops for all students through Chris Kennedy in music class

l) Feb 28: Battle of the Books team in quarter finals  
-National Pink shirt day – wear pink/red

m) Heritage Fair is coming up – please come and listen to the students' presentations – they love it.

**6. Items moved to next meeting's agenda:**

None.

**7. Actions:**

a) MC – clarify what we can spend the \$5k allotted for art at the new school on

**8. Next meeting:** 4:30 pm on 24 April

Sean Webb's Notes on SAC Chairs meeting held 13 February 2018:

The meeting was held in the library of Dartmouth High School. Tables were arranged in a large square. There were twenty to thirty people in attendance including Superintendent Elwin LeRoux, Education Minister Zach Churchill, MLA Bill Horne, SAC Chairs, and HRSB / DEECD staff.

Elwin LeRoux began the meeting indicating there were 87 SAC Chairs who wanted to attend. Next he asked us to be considerate and allow everyone an opportunity to speak in the hour we had available. He then introduced Minister Churchill.

Minister Churchill said he wanted to chat about the enhanced roles of SACs. He said government wants to empower decisions at the community school level, there will be new budgets handed over to SACs to use as they see fit for their school communities, and that the Glaze report recommended taking a hard look at the administrative model to unify the system.

The floor was then opened to a free-flowing discussion.

I started with comments and questions related to the future SAC structure and budget. I asked how the structure of SACs at the school, family, and board levels would be much different than the Governing Board plus SACs we currently have. There was additional discussion around this but no concrete answers. I asked what the budget will be for SACs but the Minister responded that amount is not currently known. This led to further discussion about how allocation of SAC budgets could take place, with options such as a flat per-student amount, consideration of rural vs. urban schools, size of school, and other factors.

Minister Churchill was asked what the government plans are for the enhanced role of SACs. He indicated they currently have no set plans nor a set timeline for changes. [Aside: I think it was after the meeting that I asked Minister Churchill about changes in legislation related to SACs. He said government intends changes to be broadly worded vs. restrictive.]

Some questions and discussion came up about training for new roles of SACs. It was highlighted that the Elected Boards had extensive training. What will be done for the SACs going forward? Minister Churchill said they are looking at putting permanent supports in place for SACs.

Concerns were raised about the new roles for SAC Chairs. We signed up under the current SAC obligations and responsibilities, not for whatever this new construct will be. Depending on what changes are made to SACs, some Chairs are not sure they will have the skill set required for the new role.

There were concerns about the speed of implementation/legislation of the recommendations in the Glaze report. A few SAC Chairs expressed concern about the process being rushed. One Chair asked why the implementation of Glaze report recommendations are not subject to the same comprehensive, transparent, structured processes that boards and SACs/SOCs have had to undergo for things like school reviews. Minister Churchill replied saying the speed is because they don't want this to be another report sitting on a shelf.

A question/discussion about the purpose of the meeting. Was it intended to be true consultation, discussion, or something else as each of those have different approaches and purposes.

Minister Churchill was asked why implementing recommendations in this report is taking priority over classroom issues. He answered this by pointing out things that have been done to make improvements in the past year. Superintendent LeRoux mentioned a number of additional teachers were hired this year.

There were concerns voiced about the loss of the elected school boards. One SAC Chair said without the Elected Board accountability and transparency are lost.

A concern was raised about the effect this is having on teachers/staff in the schools. SAC members see the division this is causing in the schools. The question was how will we move forward positively?

A Chair commented that the current system is not working. That Chair had read many reports over the years that were not implemented and was glad some changes are finally happening.

After the meeting concluded Minister Churchill made himself available to chat one-on-one or in small groups.

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#### ACTION ITEMS:

AI-01 (LeRoux/SAC Chairs): Superintendent LeRoux said he will be looking for contributions from SAC Chairs on their thoughts for the future "look" of SACs.

ACTION: Communicate mechanism for SAC Chairs to provide their contributions.

AI-02 (Churchill/SAC Chairs): Before the meeting started I mentioned to Minister Churchill the other HRSB SAC Chairs who could not attend but have input to share. Minister Churchill said he will make a way for the other SAC Chairs to provide feedback.

ACTION: Communicate mechanism for SAC Chairs to provide feedback to Glaze report.

AI-03 (LeRoux): Finally, a direct request to Superintendent Elwin LeRoux - Can you please provide the output of this meeting to the SAC Chairs? I'm not sure if your board staff would have that or someone from the DEECD but I think it would be valuable for the SAC Chairs to see the results of our discussion.

ACTION: Provide meeting outputs (minutes, concerns voiced, ideas on future role of SACs) to SAC Chairs.

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My take on the evening is that there were some SAC Chairs in favour of the recommendations, some opposed, and some who either didn't voice an opinion or who indicated a mix of reactions to different recommendations in the Glaze report. We did have some discussion about the future roles for enhanced SACs, but I would say it was closer to a project "kickoff meeting" than a working meeting. There was a lot of good discussion but we did not have the tools in place to capture it and steer things toward specific decisions/recommendations.

Personally I found it very helpful to gather together in the same room with the minister for an hour and have a discussion. The limited time-frame helped crystallize and prioritize which questions and concerns were most important (for me). I wish everyone on all "sides" of this current situation could have the same opportunity to meet face to face. Between social media, news sound-bites, and other "messaging" methods it is too easy to get caught up in the rhetoric and forget that we are all human beings trying to do the right things for our children and our province.

I will be sharing these notes with my fellow SAC members/school community and I encourage you to tailor this email and do the same. The more we can share about the discussions taking place, the better off we will be. In the absence of information, rumours fill the void.

Finally, I appreciate everyone who came out to the meeting or took the time to respond to my email request for feedback. I hope we all get a chance to meet, talk, and work together again in the near future. The students of this province are counting on us.

Sincerely,

Sean Webb

Chair, Cavalier Drive Elementary, School Advisory Council