



BSD/BTA LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, February 16, 2012

4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Conference Room, Administration Office

Present:

Trustees:	Kevan Sumner, Jim Murray, Pat Bowslaugh
Brandon Teachers' Association:	Darren Hardy, Ali Johnson, Eva Eberts, James Copeland
Senior Administration:	Dr. D. Michaels

Regrets:

Trustees:	Jim Murray
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As per Article 28.01 of the Collective Agreement between the Brandon School Division and the Brandon Teachers Association the meeting was convened.

Co-Chair, Daren Hardy called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m.

The following agenda items were discussed:

1) Review of Policy/Procedures #4001 – “Off-Site Activities”

Trustee Sumner advised that the Policy/Procedures are under review by the Policy Review Committee. He encouraged the BTA to provide feedback regarding the matter.

Mr. Hardy provided background to the review at the Board Table regarding key aspects – finances, learning experiences, preparation timelines; commenting on his experiences as a teacher in this area and the requirements for the teachers and the hard work involved. He noted that finances alone should not be the determining factor. Trustee Sumner expressed his concerns regarding financial matters to be balanced with the need for all students to be engaged. He advised that the Board wanted to see better preparation timelines, clearer information on costs/fundraising so that Board decision making can be made in a timelier, less-pressured manner. This was in response to a question by Mrs. Eberts regarding the Board's consideration on the matter. The biggest issue is the cost within the overarching issue of students' equitable access to these learning opportunities. Mr. Sumner asked Mrs. Eberts for her perspective on the voluntary student fee at École New Era School. She advised that it is helping to support students' affordability. Trustee Bowslaugh emphasized the importance of students' equitable access to school field trips, the value and the need to communicate the importance of the field trips. Mr. Hardy advised that it is important for the Board's Policy/Procedures to facilitate the teachers' abilities and work in providing for the field trips. He emphasized the importance of providing clear communication on the requirements. Mrs. Eberts addressed the issue of obtaining volunteers for supervision on the field trips. Ms. Johnson advised that clear guidelines are required for the raising of funds to avoid direct solicitation of funds from individuals. Mr. Copeland emphasized the importance of fundraising frequency and timelines. An example given was the fundraising for playgrounds. Trustee Sumner thanked the BTA participants for their perspectives.

2) Future Policy Preparation on Social Media & Teacher Involvement

Mr. Hardy advised that Bobbi Ethier, MTS Staff Officer, provides an excellent presentation on teacher involvement, decision-making with the social media; stressing the importance of caution. He noted that incoming teachers, new to the profession, must have orientation sessions on this matter. All BSD staff require updated information on the matter. Information from MTS will be distributed at the forthcoming Divisional In-service on February 24, 2012. Mr. Copeland advised that this information was presented by his school's administration. It was very helpful, thoughtful, and cautionary. He emphasized the importance of having clear policy and directions on this matter. Mr. Hardy provided detail as to the necessity for caution, intelligence and common sense on this matter. Trustee Sumner spoke to the importance of caution. Similarly, Mrs. Eberts commented on the necessity of teaching students to use social media wisely. Ms. Johnson indicated that such a policy would be very beneficial to provide very clear directions for BTA members. Mr. Hardy emphasized the importance of professional boundaries between teachers and students. Joint communication on the importance of the policy will be important.

3) Shortage of Substitute Teachers

Mr. Hardy addressed the current issue of substitute teacher shortage citing the recent problem of February 10, 2012. This led to some teachers coming to work sick. This lack of substitutes is compounding the stress on the teachers. He asked the Committee to examine this issue/problem from an oversight perspective. Our over-reliance on retired teachers is problematic. We need to brainstorm ideas as to how to obtain more substitutes in BSD. The following points were raised:

- Arrange for student teachers – to be certified in 2nd year of Education to substitute. Mr. Hardy and Dr. Michaels to discuss further with Dr. S. Badali, Dean, Faculty of Education – Brandon University.
- Arrange for teacher-certified Educational Assistants to substitute in an emergency situation(s).
- Arrange for full-time substitute teachers available to schools.
- Reach out to non-retired substitute teacher applicants who have not been selected on the first round of interview; encouraging them to re-apply.
- Provide for additional full-time teacher pool to serve as substitute teachers on a daily basis.

In closing Trustee Sumner expressed appreciation to meet and talk with teachers new to the Liaison meeting. Mr. Hardy thanked everyone for a great discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

D. Hardy
Co-Chair – Brandon Teachers Association

J. Murray
Co-Chair – Brandon School Division