
Parent /Guardian/ Division Advisory Committee

Wednesday, November 16, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.
Board Room, Administration Office



Present:

Trustees Kevan Sumner, Pat Bowslaugh, Jim Murray, and Glen Kruck;
Dr. Donna Michaels, Superintendent; Gerald Barnes, Secretary-Treasurer;
Kevin Zabowski, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer; Barb Miller, Principal
Representative, Alexander School;

Lori Nickel, Betty Gibson School Parent; Cheryl Peterssen, New Era School
Parent; Wanda Brine, Earl Oxford School Parent; Jo-Ann Pasklivich-Holder,
St. Augustine School Parent; Karen Slawinsky, École Harrison Parent;
Nancy Kolesar, Linden Lanes Parent; Mel Tallant-Townsend, Green Acres
Parent; Shauna Hewitt-Michta, Waverly Park Parent; Sandra Koch-
Gensiorek, Crocus Plains Parent; Candace Hildebrand, Meadows Parent;
Robert Pilloud, Kirkcaldy Heights Parent

Regrets:

Sandra Couling; Alexander School Parent

1. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA AND OPENING REMARKS

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Trustee Sumner. Dr. Michaels updated the Committee on dress code. Mel Townsend added the following agenda items: Policy 4044; Parent/Student Conferences; Bud, Spud, and Steak fundraiser; and playground report. Trustee Kruck added Nutritional Policy under Business Arising.

2. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 19, 2011

The Committee minutes of October 19, 2011 were reviewed. Trustee Kruck suggested that more detail and action items be included in the minutes.

Agreed:

It was agreed that more detail of the meeting will be included in the minutes.

3. OFF SITE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Trustee Sumner spoke to continual review and work being done on Policy and Procedures 4001 "Off Site School Activities". Trustee Sumner requested feedback from Committee members.

Funding Support – funding for such activities was raised by the parent group. Trustee Kruck noted the extra curricular and co-curricular budget of \$10,000 allocated amongst the three high schools to support students who are not able to afford off site activities. Mr. Barnes added that K-8 schools are allocated budget for school field trips to help offset fees for students attending off site activities. Dr. Michaels noted that the Division received an Experiential Learning grant of \$21,000. This fund can be accessed by the school principal by contacting Dr. Michaels.

Discussions were also had on the difficulties Trustees face when approached to approve off site activities that are out of country when a similar trip could be arranged closer to home.

The parent group noted that it would be helpful to know the ongoing costs of programs before signing their children up for the activity so as to have better information to base their decisions upon. Trustees responded that although the availability of funding support needs to be better communicated, it needs to remain confidential for individual students so that they are protected.

Division Policy on Transporting Students for Off Site Activities – the parent group asked for clarification on Division policy on transporting students for off site activities and if all trips have to be made using Division school buses. Mr. Barnes responded that the Manitoba Transportation Board provides a list of authorized carriers the Division can use and that it is acceptable for parents to drive the students using their own vehicles provided that:

- the principals maintain a list of each passenger for each vehicle;
- the volunteer driver has a valid license and the vehicle is registered;
- the volunteer has had a current child abuse registry check and criminal record check; and
- the vehicle is equipped so that all passengers wear seat belts.

Mrs. Miller noted that because of the new criminal record check and child abuse registry check process, it could take upwards of eight weeks before proper verification can be made, so planning is important for parents.

Mr. Barnes also noted that bus driver time and cost per kilometer are charged to the school's field trip budget allocation.

4. PARENT HANDBOOK

Sandra Koch-Gensiorek requested that the Division's Parent Handbook be updated.

It was suggested that a Sub-Committee of the Parent/Guardian/Division Advisory Committee be established to review the handbook to update contents including translating it into the various languages the community has.

Dr. Michaels noted that the Division is currently working with a translation company to translate the Division's documents into multiple languages.

Volunteers for the Sub-Committee include: Lori Nickel, Trustee Bowslaugh, Trustee Kruck, Sandra Koch-Gensiorek, and principal (to be assigned by Dr. Michaels).

It was suggested that all parent councils evaluate the Parent Handbook and provide comments to Juanita Szteina, Executive Secretary at szteina.juanita@brandonsd.mb.ca.

5. SCHOOL UNIFORM – DRESS CODE

Dr. Michaels noted she had discussed the Parent/Guardian/Division Advisory Committee's concerns about the girls' volleyball team shorts with the senior high school principals. The Principals responded that Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association (MHSAA) regulates the type of uniform throughout Manitoba and that it is out of the Division's jurisdiction. Dr. Michaels noted that the MHSAA is its own body and has its own constitution funded by registration fees paid by Manitoba School Divisions. The Principals recommended that the Parent/Guardian/Division Advisory Committee approach the Brandon School Division's Board of Trustees to write a letter to the MHSAA Board of Directors addressing the concerns of clothing and how the short shorts violate the School Division's code of conduct.

Jo-Ann Pasklivich-Holder noted that the MHSAA suggests the type of material but length is not stipulated.

Trustee Kruck requested a copy of the MHSAA protocol/constitution regarding uniforms. Dr. Michaels said she would obtain copies for the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Barnes suggested that the School Division contact the MHSAA Executive after reviewing their protocol/constitution at the next meeting.

6. POLICY 4044

Mel Tallant-Townsend asked for a hard copy of Policy 4044. Dr. Michaels said she would provide copies to all parent councils. Trustee Sumner noted how parents could also obtain an electronic copy by going to the Division's website.

7. PARENT, TEACHER, STUDENT CONFERENCES

Mel Tallant-Townsend questioned why teachers are allowed two days for parent/teacher interviews. She also noted that she was not able to schedule time with a teacher on a Friday afternoon to accommodate her work schedule.

Dr. Michaels advised that she would discuss the matter with the principals.

Further questions were raised regarding support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) students during parent/teacher interviews. Dr. Michaels noted that translation services are in place for these situations.

8. BUD, SPUD AND STEAK FUNDRAISER

Mel Tallant-Townsend raised a question regarding a recent Bud, Spud and Steak Fundraiser activity for one of the high school hockey teams, since this type of activity is not supported by the Division.

Dr. Michaels confirmed that any event where alcohol is/could be involved is not authorized by the Division and that she would speak with the school principals and that they would have to relay information to the coaches of these activities.

Mr. Barnes requested feedback from the parents because it is not the Division's wish to take fundraising activity initiatives away from the parent councils.

Further discussion ensued regarding such activities in that if the fundraisers did not attach the school name to the activity, the Division would not have any problem with the activity happening.

Mrs. Miller expressed her feelings that this could put Principals in a difficult position.

Discussions were had in using the Friends of Education Fund to help fundraising initiatives.

9. PLAYGROUND REPORT

Trustee Bowslaugh discussed the progress being made on the Joint Use Agreement between the City of Brandon and the Brandon School Division and the hard work Mr. Barnes and Perry Roque have put into the draft.

It was noted that the agreement calls for the Division to make a provision in its budget for \$30,000 to help offset the costs of a playground each year and that the City would make a similar provision in its budget for \$30,000. Further, a minimum of \$30,000 would come from the parent councils themselves. This will be discussed during budget time.

Trustees Bowslaugh and Kruck suggested that Parent Councils contact Perry Roque as a resource when considering their playground developments as he has a lot of experience in the field.

Trustee Sumner reiterated that the Division will be setting its priority for allocating the budget for the playgrounds based on need, parent council readiness, and the report from Keith Thomas.

10. BUSINESS ARISING – NUTRITION POLICY

Trustee Kruck raised a concern about the consistency of adherence to the nutrition policy by the schools.

Dr. Michaels discussed the concern with the Principals where she was advised that the schools no longer offer sugary drinks.

It was asked to put this topic on the next meeting agenda for further discussion.

Dr. Michaels handed out Policy and Procedures 4047 “Nutrition Policy” to each member and asked that any variations at each school be brought back to the next Committee meeting for discussion.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Sumner closed the meeting by thanking the Committee for its input into the matters discussed.

The Committee as a whole thanked Mr. Barnes for his contribution to the Committee and wished him the best on his upcoming retirement.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

12. NEXT REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING – 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 15, 2012, Board Room, Administration Office.

Respectfully submitted,

K. Sumner

P. Bowslaugh