



PLRD #25 BOARD & SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Central Office
Tuesday, November 2, 2009
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Attendees: Duane Roy – Chair
John Neill – Trustee
Sam Vogel (Video Conferencing)
Wes Neumeier – Superintendent
Terri Fryberger – Berry Creek Community School Council Chair (VC)
Barry Riddell – Consort School Council Chair (VC)
Tanya Guenther – Consort Teacher Representative (VC)
Janice Hoover – Delia School Council Chair
Laurie Palmer – Hanna Primary School Council Chair
Charlene Viste – J.C. Charyk Hanna School Council Chair
Chris Eamer – Veteran School Council Chair (VC)
Dianne Nelson – Youngstown School Council Chair

Angie Warwick – Trustee
Ed Brinkman – Trustee
Sharon Orum – Secretary-Treasurer
Bob Smith – Deputy Superintendent

Absent with regrets: Elaine Horner
Marsha Tkach
Vern Thuroo
Altario School Council representative
Morrin School Council representative

1. Opening Comments & Introductions – Duane Roy

D. Roy opened the meeting with introductions.

D. Roy provided a brief background on the development of the common school calendar and advised Councils that we will be working with principals to determine the 2010-2011 calendar in advance of the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

Also of note is that the ASBA, ATA and Alberta School Councils have partnered in a campaign called Help Stop the Cuts. He asked for support with this project.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting November 26, 2008

The minutes of the previous meetings held on November 26, 2008 had been included in an email provided to all participants.

3. Small Schools Preparing Students for Big Futures – Wes Neumeier

Dr. Neumeier spoke to the past “Speak Out” forums in which students provided input about the education system. The phrase of ‘Small schools preparing students for big futures’ mirrors the concept of 21st century learning which centres around the questions relating to topics such as: what does education need to be for students today, how does education prepare today’s child for today’s world, what is today’s child like, are the skill sets the same today as what we

have promoted in the past. He also noted that today's students are multi-taskers, they question many things more than in the past i.e. authority, and children are information rich but we need to help them understand that information. That leads into the question of what skills they need to do that. They need to learn critical literacy skills but we need to develop what those are for all subject areas. Textbooks will become a thing of the past and much more information will be accessible through the internet. Knowledge will be co-constructed, reconstructed as the learning continues. Instruction will need to focus on problem solving, being able to work collaboratively and build a common understanding of what a problem needs and students will need to be engaged collectively.

How is PLRD going to prepare the children for that?; we need to look at the fundamental ingredients in quality learning. Dr. Neumeier took the group through the document prepared that provided an overview of the 7 key items that PLRD feels is important in this regard. Professional development activities have already begun with teachers at the September PD day. The next PD day in November will focus on curriculum mapping with individual professional development opportunities available within the AISI project.

4. New Fiscal Reality – A. Warwick

A. Warwick provided a background of the financial position including information on the reserve claw back of \$358,000 that specifically affected PLRD as well as the reduction in funding from the elimination of \$160,000 fuel initiative.

It was noted that there have been no adjustments to staffing as a result of declining enrolment over the past few years and facts were provided in respect to past enrolment decline versus an increase in certified staffing.

The Ministry has provided indication that there will be a reduction of a 4+% for the 2010-2011 year with an anticipated larger reduction in the following year. PLRD has expressed its concern over the claw back and has strongly stated that the expectation is that these funds will be treated as a loan to the Province and will be returned to the division.

The question of why we have reserves was raised by school councils. D Roy provided background on the development of the reserve through the regionalization of school boards in 1994. PLRD have annually planned to use reserves to fund the overage in staffing but the province has continued to add in-year funding that offset those costs. The operating reserves bring in approx \$300,000 in interest revenue that provide us funds to fund excess staffing over and above our enrolment funding. The Province has clearly indicated that in-year funding as in the past will not continue. Our focus will be on how we use our reserves to position PLRD in order to deliver education in the best possible way in the future.

D. Roy noted that the Board and Senior Administration have already dedicated time looking at how we can live within the funding we anticipate. All staff positions will be reviewed including both central office and schools and all other expenditures will be scrutinized to ensure optimal value for the dollars spent. Education is a people rich system, approx 70% of the budget, and therefore, that will be where the majority of reductions will occur.

5. CTS Programming Options for District Students – S. Vogel

S. Vogel provided a background on what CTS encompasses and took the group through the five CTS major strands. Information was provided relating to the current courses being delivered and the handout provided with the agenda was expanded upon. The acquisition of the mobile trades unit was spoken to as well with reference made to it being located in Morrin for this semester and Delia for the second semester. PLRD will also be proceeding with an enhancement and renovation to the current Consort CTS area.

All high school students require some CTS credits in order to graduate so at the end of grade 12, all students will have taken courses in these areas. A question was raised as to if there is a high enough percentage of students utilizing the CTS mobile unit to make it worthwhile, particularly when we looking at the future fiscal position. Dr. Neumeier spoke to the value of having those types of programs available to students in order for them to be successful after graduation in these fields. D Roy provided information relating to our student and parent surveys that indicated our division lacked course offerings in the options area. The Board feels that the spending of some of the reserve dollars to upgrade the Consort CTS facility is a wise move in the attempt to position the division for the future in a responsible way. Morrin currently has approximately 50% of the school population currently enrolled in CTS courses per J Neill, Trustee. The current cosmetology course is being delivered through video conference from BCCS and is led by a past BCCS student who has been very successful in her cosmetology career in Lethbridge.

6. Role of the School Council – E. Brinkman

E. Brinkman spoke to the fact that school councils are the conduit between the communities and the schools. Information was provided in respect to the areas that school councils could become involved in to succeed in their roles.

Timelines of selected activities were provided to give Councils key dates where they can focus on input to the division. E Brinkman assured school council members that their input is valued and thanked them for their valuable contribution.

C. Eamer suggested that it would be of value for the Board to solicit feedback from the school councils on an ongoing basis as issues/items arise. The school councils would appreciate being involved in that process.

7. Engaging the Community Meetings – J. Neill

J. Neill spoke to the most recent meetings which were held in Consort and Hanna with all other community meetings being held previously. The Board will now be reviewing the feedback received from the meetings. Key themes will be identified by a committee of the Board and that information will be brought back to the entire Board for the development of a go-forward plan. We will be looking at the feedback with respect to our future fiscal challenges and feel it will be of tremendous value in establishing future directions. It is anticipated that this process will continue over the next year to 18 months to establish a clear direction for the jurisdiction.

8. School Council Items

i. Staffing – Youngstown Council

A concern was voiced about the potential staffing reductions and the timing around announcements. Councils were advised that there is some planning currently being done and the Board has asked each school to provide insight into how they can reduce at their own schools. Each school has been provided with a preliminary target and has been asked how they can meet those targets. Planning for reductions will be done with involvement of schools and their school councils and we will need to focus on how we can make this happen together. The Board will provide more detail as they receive input from schools and their Councils.

ii. School Calendar – Youngstown Council

The 2010-2011 calendar will be developed in cooperation with principals and all input will be considered with issues relating to the current calendar being addressed as well. In PLRD we do need to build a common school calendar that facilitates learning in classrooms. A common divisional calendar is essential in delivering programs within the confines of our enrolment and funding. The Board has tried to bring different community needs into one common calendar as part of the process and they will continue to do that. The principals will be asked to involve school councils in the process of the development of the next years' calendar.

9. Other

School Councils are requested to provide feedback on the following three key items:

- a. 21st Century Learning**
- b. Fiscal Realities**
- c. Common School Calendar**

D. Roy expressed thanks to the school council members and reiterated that input from school councils was welcome and very valuable.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.