

Strathcona Christian Academy

Secondary School Council meeting minutes

Wednesday, April 22 at 7pm

Via Google Meet

In attendance:

Aaron Box - Chairman
Krista Scott – Vice Chair
Karla Alton – Secretary
Alissa Ottahal, Council Member
Peter Afaganis - Parent
Carilyn Afaganis - Parent
Jon Elzinga - Principal
Barry Komant —Parent
Jordie Maxwell, parent
Alison Collins - Parent
Wes Merta - Assistant Principal
Symonds Botchey - Teacher
Tracey Komant - Parent
Shawn Loewen - parent
Jose Nieto - Parent
Stephanie Barker - parent
Mary Quintilio - parent
Jeff Hollinshead – parent
Trevor Stuart - parent

1. Welcome/Call to Order - Aaron Box

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

Aaron went over Council's role – mandated by government to be the parent voice in education

Jon's role – administrator to partner with the chair and council so we can collaborate

Any issues with the presentation package can come to Aaron at scsschoolcouncil@gmail.com

Anyone from the Society at the meeting – you are here at the meeting as a parent

2. Opening Prayer – Jordie Maxwell opened in prayer

3. Additions to agenda – No additions to agenda

4. Review and acceptance of minutes from Feb.19, 2020

Motion to accept minutes – Angie Fehr

Seconded – Jordie Maxwell

5. Trustee Report - Trina Boymook

- The Board has held several Caucus meetings to deal with the Government's recent decision to reduce basic education allocation by \$2.3M and student transportation by \$1.25M.
- With a number of upcoming conferences being cancelled, including ASCA, the Board has redirected the funds that it had set aside in its governance budget for ASCA, ASBA Spring General Meeting and Canada School Boards Association Congress towards addressing the reduction of basic education funding announced on March 28.
- The Board is in conversation with the Superintendent to ensure we have a plan in place in the event that classes resume prior to June 30.
- The Board is currently in the middle of its budgeting process. This budgeting period has been challenging with the introduction of a new funding framework and government investment into education being frozen at the 2018-19 level. The Board and Superintendent have been looking closely at our overall operations and have explored a number of measures needed to stabilize learning in the classroom over the next three years. The Board will be approving budget allocations to schools and departments at its April 23 meeting.
- The Board will be setting the 2020-21 administrative and transportation fees. Fees for eligible riders is being recommended to be \$100, while those students who are not eligible riders will be charged \$325. Six-month payment plan will be available for families as a payment option.
- At the April 23 meeting the Board is set to approve school fees.
- All Board meetings will now be held via Zoom while social distancing is required. These meetings will be livestreamed through EIPS YouTube account. Details is on the website under Trustee Agenda and Minutes page.
- April 19-25 is Volunteer Appreciation. On behalf of the Board of Trustees I would like to extend our appreciation for the time you give to your schools through your involvement in school councils.

6. Old Business

- Letters to SPAC Elders regarding key access and SCA Society board directors
- Two letters have been drafted regarding:
 - granting key access for all teachers to the school
 - to allow the Board chairs from SCE and SCS to join the Society board. This letter hasn't gone to elementary council yet for approval but we will see if they want their name attached to the letter.

- Aaron will change the key letter to be addressed to the Board and cc'd to Mark Liguori

Motion to accept letter with above change - Allison Collins

Trevor Stuart seconded

Motion carried

- Letter to SCA society letter – motion to accept by Alison Collins

Angie Fehr seconded

Motion carried

7. New Business

- Information on the Alternative Christian Program and Society fees

Floor was opened for questions

See Appendix A for discussion

8. COSC report - Krista Scott

- The Committee of School Councils is a group comprised of School Council Chairs, EIPS' trustees and EIPS administrators who meet once a month to discuss educational issues and trends, specifically relating to EIPS.
- We met via Zoom for a virtual meeting on April 8th. Trina Boymook, Board Chair, spoke to the challenging budget they have to work with, EIPS temporary layoffs and they will be approving transportation fees for 2020/2021. She also extended a big thank you to all EIPS volunteers for the time we have dedicated to our children's education.
- We were updated about the upcoming ASCA Conference and AGM and approved the new COSC operating procedures. Educational tech consultant, Jonathon Thomas, walked us through Google Classroom from the teacher's perspective, showing different features and how teachers use it to share assignments, homework and videos. They shared a link to review Google Classrooms. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lowi-gmbys>
- We spoke about Parents as Partners in the district, which has never been more hands-on district wide. There is an alternative learning page on the EIPS website for families with information about learning resources, supplemental lessons, mental health and wellness resources, etc. [Alternative Learning During In-School Class Cancellations](#) Sandra Stoddard, associate superintendent, asked that parents reach out to her via email with questions/ideas surrounding the alternative learning method. Sandra.stoddard@eips.ca
- Full meeting minutes are available on the EIPS website. [Full COSC Minutes](#) The next COSC meeting will take place [on Wednesday, May 6th at 7pm](#) via Zoom

9. Calendar/Admin. Report -Jon

- Layoffs - Sue Merta, Allisen Khjavi, Meg Cross, Tracey Fox, Lynette McElheran, Leanne Cross
- Tough for culture of the school losing staff members halfway through the year.
- We have covered off the ROC Rooms and student help that the EAs were doing
- Not as good as having the staff on board, but we have done our best
- A lot of administrative questions
- No handbook, no timetable all questions are new questions,
- Fee Refunds - we had some big events canceled in March - Provincials, Missions, band trips. EIPS is working on fee refunds and a procedure for doing so many fees at once. We will proceed with the refunds as soon as possible. Denise Marshman is ready to issue refunds once EIPS has given us the green light
- Lent out approximately 50 chromebooks and continue to get a few more requests to help with families who don't have enough devices to do online learning
- Vulnerable students list - Campus Pastors and counselor are connecting with those students to make sure they don't fall through the cracks
- Trying to do some fun things to keep culture/community going:
 - Weekly videos with Jordie and I
 - Staff Baby Contest on our Website
 - Hampers by Higgs for some of our families going through tough times - following AHS guidelines for food safety (prepackaged etc.)
 - Next Year
 - Get Budget Numbers on Friday
 - Administration Allocations changing
 - EIPS has reduced the amount of APs that they are funding
 - Society has agreed to pay for one assistant principal allowance to allow for the work that we do as an admin team regarding Christian programming (Bible class, spiritual life PD, missions oversight etc.)
 - School Fees - Aaron signed off on the fees as they were due just as classes were canceled. He stated he felt comfortable doing so as there were no major increases. We chose not to include a noon supervisor fee due to the economic climate that it would not be fair to parents to add this time.

Krista – Regarding transportation – we're not hearing anything about refunds as students have not been accessing busing. Has there been discussion on this?

Trina - Not until the government makes a declaration that the school year is over will they move forward with any refunds. May give parents the option to carry the fees forward to the next year or get paid out.

Krista – New administrative allocation – what is changing about this and how are Society fees allowed to pay for this?

Trina – We are looking at a \$7.5 million shortfall. Looking at ways to save money and reduce costs. One of those pieces is looking at how many administrative positions you

can have in a school based on how many students you have. Looking for ways to save without impacting the classroom.

Jon – Vetted all of this through Mark Liguori. Society puts in a salary of 1.0 FTE to pay for campus pastor. Next year it will also include the AP.

Jon says half of his job is comprised of Christian content that regular principals wouldn't have to do. If we lose an AP some of that will change. A number of other Christian schools have a staff member that oversee things that fall on Jon's plate.

Krista – when can we plan to hear back about the Capital proposals?

Jeremy – Ministry plan document is not quite finalized. It will go through a review process. This should be communicated before the end of the school year.

Parent – With regard to the Society paying for an AP position - concern that we will be perceived that we are a private school. In a time like this to save 1 job when many others have been let go.

Jon – Elk Island hasn't mandated that other schools lose AP's but schools have to find ways to save the money.

- Google classroom overview – Wes Merta did an overview

Next meeting is May 20th 7:00 pm

10. Closing Prayer - Jeremy closed in prayer

11. Motion to adjourn by Devon

Seconded by Krista

Meeting was adjourned by 9:56pm

Appendix A

- Parent - Not willing to give society any more of my money when it appears that the financial statement says the money is not going to the school. Would still like student to go to the school. Would be willing to give the council money instead.
 - Aaron – School council cannot accept money. However, in the agreement your registration and being enrolled at SCA is not dependant on whether you pay your Society fees. Page 11 on document addendum A
- Parent – Has document been reviewed by the Society or the church?
 - Aaron – Not officially but all information, as stated on the addendums, has been gathered from public documents
- Parent – We need to use caution when talking about the surplus to ensure that this is actually the amount that we are making decisions on.
 - Aaron - We are not advocating for parents to do anything. We are just trying to create transparency.
- Parent – My understanding is that the Society is only allowed to touch a certain portion of funds and not operating costs or rentals. Is that handled by SPAC?
 - Parent –Has been Treasurer for the Society in years past. About 20% of the budget she had input into. The church is putting out the numbers and the Society accepts the numbers as they are part of the organization.
- Parent – would love to have a say if we can have input into where money goes
 - Aaron -There are parents on the Society board but are they are to be Society members and do not officially represent parents.
 - Aaron – in response to “are dealing with the right people?” - We have been trying to get answers and we have been very straight forward with our questions. It’s frustrating to try and get simple answers. Aaron has tried to get answers from the church and has not gotten far and have given them ample time to give us answers.
- Parent – Regarding money being used for investments in the future - his kids are in the school now. It appears we have a big surplus and we should be investing in the kids that are there now. If there were previous surpluses where has that gone in years past? We keep getting rhetoric but there’s no accountability. What is the plan for the future and not just a general statement that it’s going to future projects. Do we know if the projects that SCS and SCE put forward have been approved?

- Aaron – Ministry plan and capital projects – we have the endorsements from the Society for the secondary school and those proposals were talked about at the Society meeting on Monday night.
- Stephen – The surplus is not just being stashed away for futures but some of it is supporting the church's operation/ministry. You'd expect to see operating costs and maintenance fees in Propco's account. Figures are showing the entire operating costs and not sure why we are getting charged to use the sanctuary.
- Parent – if the profits are being used every year does the church have an obligation to show where that money goes?
 - Stephen – the document you sign every year showing where your fees are going but it is very general and lacks details.
- Parent – Works on the Society board. It would be great to have new parents on the Society board and you can put your name forward through Jon. Would like to get the full picture and get resolution on issues that are still outstanding.
 - Aaron – we had a meeting previously and we were told that there were 3 positions open at that time. Aaron expressed interest in joining and was told that they felt Aaron was best suited on School Council. Asked what are the parameters to get accepted to Society and did not get an answer.
- Parent – Do you have to be a member of SPAC to be on the Society?
 - Aaron – No
- Parent – Cost of parent fees – that money should be accountable for. It seems to me they could cut our fees and they will still see a profit.
- Parent – curious why any of the Society fees need to go into a building's operations and maintenance and if it's not enough have they approached the province for more money? It should be for our alternative program. Why isn't this a more traditional landlord/tenant relationship?
 - Aaron – Page 8 on the document that refers to operating costs and it appears there is an operating cost surplus.
- Parent - Has heard that Society hasn't been made aware of questions. We have had meetings where we circulated the questions and received answers that were unsatisfactory. They were even sent to the Society in advance. So instead of continuing to do the same thing perhaps we can try something different to get answers. This document is compiled of things that we were told that we were not allowed to see. I.e) shared space. We want to move toward restoration and as parents we should pursue answers to the questions that we have. Main concern is that if our concerns are not even getting to the Directors of the Society are the concerns getting to the Board of Elders? Question for Jeremy – you indicated that the Society needs more Directors – we need to

understand what the process is to join. Also would like to see the School Board chairs to be part of the Society. Where can someone go to find out the process to become a director?

- Jeremy – process is names are brought forward through Society members and principals and sent to nominating committee through Board of Elders. Some must be from SPAC and some not.
- Parent – Parents have already signed documents committing to pay fees. What happens to people who have signed documents but now we are being told we don't have pay?
 - Stephen – if you haven't signed then there is no issue. If you have signed and still do not want to pay then the wisest thing to do would be to seek an opinion from a lawyer as to how binding that document is.
- Parent – It was mentioned earlier that it seemed unfair to some of the participants on Society who weren't given opportunity to respond. All questions were sent to Society before January meeting so there is no obligation for us to go back and ask the same questions again.
- Parent – In order for parents to ensure that the Society board is acting in the best interest of students there would need to be an opportunity for parents to be part of the Society. The membership is of the Board of the Elders and it makes sense for them to have the interest is the church. It's important that the membership represent the people who are paying the money. We would be better served if the parents are members of the Society.
- Parent – Can the Society really say no to Aaron as to whether he can join the Board based on his position?
 - Aaron – it is the wording that allows them to do this
 - Krista – it is not typical wording – “it is contemplated” in this document whereas it is normally worded “must” or “it shall be”
- Parent – To Jeremy – would you be willing to put forth a motion at your next meeting to amend the bylaws to change wording? In the letter we are asking to have the Chairs from SCE and SCS be one of the names on the Board of Directors on the Society?
 - Jeremy – He will make sure this letter goes to the members and we discuss at the next meeting.
- Parent – Going forward knowing what is considered secondary space, are we able to stand firm in terms of “we get gym access” or according to the color coded map?
 - Aaron – these are conversations that need to happen between EIPS and SPAC. The lease agreement is very clear how much space the school has to operate in. The North and South gym are to be used for the school according

to the lease agreement. The school has first right of refusal at all times for when the gym can be used.

- Parent – with the information that we have received publicly and the positive profit, where are we going from here? What action can parents take based on what we know?
 - Stephen – Any trust relationship should be arms length. We need a Society that is independent, accountable and arms length from any one religious organization. It is premature to come up with an answer on the spot.
 - Krista – When it comes to something like gym use it is important to know that this is public information and we as parents can access it. It is not our job to enforce them but it is our job to create accountability. Now that we know this information we can create accountability. We still want to move toward unity.