Robert Service School Council Meeting

Wednesday, Sept 16, 2020

START TIME – 6:02pm

Meeting VIA Zoom  
Present: Carrie B, Lisa F., Brian L., Helen M., Allie W., Suzanne C.

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| 1. **Call to Order** | CB 6:40pm |
| 1. **Acceptance of Agenda** | 1st Lisa, Allie 2nd |
| 1. **Correspondence: Letter from Mayo School Council** | The Mayo school has 3 positions that have not been filled yet, and they’re looking at issues related to that- re: temporary positions, housing availability. Requested whether or not the RSS council would support their letter, or if the council could write their own letter in support of their letter.  After discussion of past experiences in Dawson re: loss of best candidate because of housing, etc. council decided to write a short addition in support of the Mayo letter- emphasizing housing and temporary positions as similar situations here in Dawson.  **Action Item: CB: will contact the Mayo Council and sort out content of letter by email.** |
| 1. **Delegations/Presentations** | None. |
| 1. **Review and Acceptance of Minutes** |  |
| 5.1 March 11, 2020 | Allie W. Moved to approve, Lisa 2nd. |
| 1. **Business arising from minutes** |  |
| 6.1 IEPs | Looking for an update to ensure that IEPs are reviewed with students and parents at the beginning of the school year. **BL**: from k-7: it needs to be a reminder, the IEP from last year always carries forward and is then reviewed before finalising. IEPS come up in transition meetings to help prepare a teacher for incoming students. Adjustments will be made early in the school year. The IEPs are still in place but once in October they are more formally set for the school year. But there was a lack of awareness with parents that the IEP moves with the child into the new school year.  **SC:** Issue before that parents felt out of the loop with regards to IEPs. And there had been planned meetings at the beginning of the school year. Maybe there is another option for the school to communicate that the IEP from last year has been moved forward and that there will be a meeting in a month or two to review, clear specific timelines and an avenue if they have something that needs to be addressed earlier.  **BL:** in full agreement with that. And I’ll follow up, because I think the question is has that kind of communication occurred this year, and if it has, is it consistent. And has it occurred in all cases. I’ll commit to following up on that for the next meeting (mid Oct.)  **Action Item: BL will follow up on the communication suggested next meeting.** |
| 1. **School Concerns** | **BL**: There’s a document that’s circulating among us staff, and it identifies concerns in 5 areas- 1. The physical matters, the state of our school physically, 2. Staff concerns, equity staffing allowance, and then two of these relate to the start of the year relating to the school health and safety operational plan and its roll out with YG Ed.  Section D: ongoing Covid 19 matters, and E: concerns coming from our admin assistants who are operating under another union. We have two major concerns with this facility and lack of attention to it, and the staffing issues and lack of equity allowance. We submitted these last fall and there has been a neglect of this situation. Will circulate the document, and then the council can decide if they will support our politicising of these two primary issues.  **CB:** As council do you want to read through Brian’s letter and decide at the next meeting whether to support, or over email before the next meeting, or would you prefer to pass a motion tonight?  **Action Item:** Council will review the document and work out a response over email- this is time sensitive. If not addressed before the next meeting will be addressed at the meeting. |
| * 1. COVID-19 Measures | **SC:** Questions about masks and mask use in school- minister of health has made a recommendation that when physical distancing cannot be maintained that mask use should be used for ages 10+. At that point RSS had already put their plan in place- and it didn’t seem that the plan changed with that recommendation. Question: in our school space 6’ distancing is not always possible. When physical distancing is not possible, why has the school decided to not institute mask use for ages ten and up? **BL:** The communication coming from those I surveyed (40-50 ppl) made it clear that if we used that language higher interaction at the grade level, moderate interaction with the cohort and then eliminate/minimal interaction at a whole school level- guiding principles of what we’ve tried to do. (Discussion of guidance in a plan that supports this.) When masks are worn, the K-3 teachers are pleased with the way masks are worn (in mixed areas- so going to the music room), There’s always masks being worn in some classrooms. **SC:** I’m just reading off the YG website (planning for the 2020 school year) what it says is that masks are recommended for students 10+ when physical distancing is not possible. This was recommended after the school plan was put in place and the school plan wasn’t changed. What we do know now is that the spread of the virus from surfaces is much less than the spread by respiratory droplets. Highest risk is in indoor spaces for prolonged periods when the distance is less than 6’ and even more when you increase the number of people. We also know that people can spread the virus when they are asymptomatic and that kids can carry a high virus load. So the recommendations now are generally that if you’re in an indoor space for a prolonged period of time and cannot maintain 6 feet you would be wise to wear a mask to prevent the spread of the virus. If the distancing isn’t possible, why aren’t we introducing this extra measure of protection? And with our current situation, we may feel extra measures are overkill. But in our community where we share many places, and even though I think it’s great what the school has instituted, there is always going to be crossover because we have siblings in other grades, the teachers have families, I think we get away with the plan because we have no active cases in the Yukon. But if we want to take that motto of caring for our community we would want to be proactive. We also have students who work at the grocery store for example. The potential for spread even with the current RSS measures is really high because we can’t always physically distance. Has the school given thought to following that recommendation?  **BL:** When I look at the school guidelines and the YG ones you’re referencing, it’s my belief that at the school level what we’re enacting that as a principal I’m really pleased with. There’s an indication that we can’t let things slip. There are students who are choosing to wear masks because of immunocompromising.  **HM:** I think there are those who would like to see more mask use, I think the use is strong within the staff and within students, I don’t want to throw anyone under the bus, but if you didn’t see masks on people, I think at times you wouldn’t notice the difference from this year to last year. But in classrooms I think that teachers have done their best to use the space that is there. Whether there is compliance from students to not move around, that’s not always happening.  **SC:** To me it’s not a case of what do people want to do- what do we do with the best research there is – from the CMO. And if the recommendation is you should wear a mask then I don’t understand why the school would not consider adopting that recommendation.  **BL:**  looking at that document from the CMO though- it’s not so black and white- based on those guidelines the classrooms are adhering to that- but this recommendation is not in line with those guidelines.  **SC:** I think the question is what information is newest- and if it’s the case- why is the YG Dept. of Ed not following the CMO’s recommendations.  **BL:** We’ve been told by student support services that what we’re enacting is at the high level of operation of Yukon Schools. The k-4 staff do not see high school students in that wing of the school- and the respect for those zones is really high. Because of these zones we don’t use masks everywhere. Our zones aren’t blended like they are in larger schools. We will look into it- but I think what we’re going to find is that some things we’re doing are out of the ordinary in a good way. I’d like to seek some advice on that.  **SC:** The risk is so high to having to shut down the school, return to online learning, is so significant compared to the inconvenience of mask wearing in the school.  **BL:** we have an administrator meeting, and our plan, though received well, is that what is happening in schools is so variable. And I think what we’re doing with mask use is to be commended, but if modelling has 1 student affecting 42-72% of the school our plan is minimal. And maybe we need something more stringent. I’m sure this will be a topic at our administrator’s conference. And we don’t want to get to a point where it’s punitive, but I’ve been speaking with students to talk about why we’re encouraging mask use.  **SC:** if council agrees I would offer to have a conversation with the CMO or his department to ask some of these questions re disconnect between Dept. of Ed and these recommendations.  BL & HM: frustrations as a teacher, everything we have is because we’ve bought it and planned it (masks, signs, hand sanitizers etc.)  **Action item: Suzanne- follow up with CMO re: mask use and conflicting recommendations.** |
| * 1. Communicating to Families | **BL**: Review and presentation of document “Communication of student learning”  -Weekly and topic communication, emphasis on front loading communication vs only communicating misbehaviour. -Unsure what conferences may look like- in person vs zoom, vs written and invitation to connect with teachers if necessary- but at least we have a timeline now.  **CB:**  comment from K parent- important to communicate with visuals/videos what the classroom and day looks like. Especially in the early years. |
| * 1. School Facilities | Already touched on the document that will be forwarded (7.1. School concerns) and maybe we can table that for now.  -School repainting. Conversation around school colours, doing something dramatic with the exterior of the school. A Ted Harrison Painting. |
| * 1. Outdoor Classroom | **AW:**  This is the perfect time to use the outdoor classroom, shift in Yukon & Canada to move outdoors, wondering where the wall tent is, if it’s being used, and if that’s a focus at RSS to have more outdoor learning. With the knowledge that outdoor education is a particular skill/type of education.  **BL:** We focus on experiential education in our PD days but there are committees that deal with cultural and experiential education and are priorities. But in terms of the facilities  **HM:** We’ll be getting some funding from two organisations and we're looking at putting that money into a building an open sided covered like a farmers market shelter/space. In the outdoor classroom area. Re: tent ground is wet. Many of the benches/tent that were there were vandalised. No seating around the fire pit, people burned it. So we’re looking into it. We have a lot of classes going out and doing things outside using the lawn and the benches, going for walks, using the farmers market on front street (older grades), it is important and we were to get some picnic tables from the city, and that never happened, an especially good opportunity to eat outside- but we need to work on outdoor seating.  **AW:** could we as council help get picnic tables from the city?  **ACTION ITEM: Allie will follow up re: picnic tables from the city.** |
| 1. **Reports** |  |
| * 1. Principal’s Report | **BL:** There’s usually a thorough report from the office, trying to make sure that the monthly newsletter and sourdough comes out before the monthly council meeting. I thought last year for my first year was really positive, a year of two stories, pre and post covid- but this year is just a lot more settled. We’re used to our documenting system for student behaviour.  There are some students for whom the 6 months of school suspension has made the settling into the new year difficult. With the interagency youth council we’ve become aware of the increased use and access of narcotics by youth. It’s become an area of concern, and we’re identifying actions and supports, this is a community concern. We have three youth on this council and they are all stating that they’re concerned about the increased access to narcotics, the diversity of narcotics and exposure of people to narcotics at a young age. As a school, we see the best behaviour of students often, but we have a heightened awareness of these concerns, this is a heightened priority. How are we dealing with youth of concern, also what are those proactive things we can do in more of an educational community sense. I’ve contacted TH and the police saying this needs to be a community action.  **SC:**  maybe at some further meeting it would be great to know what steps are being taken to help mitigate this- maybe after the interagency group has moved forward more.  **HM:** working to manage “waste” or unwanted/extra food from the food program. Have figured it out with fridges etc. |
| * 1. TH Report | No one present to report. |
| * 1. Chair’s Report | **CB:** working on nomination submissions for council, feel there’s been good communication for that. Spread the word. Neither Simon nor Cecile will be returning, there will be two new TH reps, and I am also not returning this year. |
| 1. **Community Concerns** | None. |
| 1. **Financial Report** | No report. But CB is working on the year end report and will be ready for the next meeting, wed Oct. 14th with the new council. |
| 1. **Roundtable** |  |
| 1. **Next meeting Date** |  |
| 1. **Adjournment** |  |