

Blackie School Council Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, October 17, 2023

Called to order 6:30pm by Scott

In Attendance: Faye Holt, John Evans, Scott Sherman, Lana, Natalie, Cherylanne, Amy, Jerry, Sarah, Angela, Harley

Trustee Report – John

- Bus passes handed out at start of the year
 - o Any issues?
 - Nothing from parents
 - Some issues noted with online registering kids for the bus, especially for mac users, many parents had to call in to register
 - o Important this year with shortage of bus drivers
 - New bus drivers will not know kids, identify with pink tags, be able to better account for all the kids
 - o They are not going to be scanning passes right now but may add that in the future
- Division needs to buy 22 new buses with change (1km boundary) for routes
 - o Need to spend money that would otherwise go to classrooms on buses
 - o Additional funding is something parents can advocate for with MLAs, etc
- Advocacy letters are going to be on FSD website
 - o Can fill out details and send to MLAs, etc
- COSC meeting with RJ Sigurdson coming up
 - o Can bring up insurance and transportation issues
 - o Scott will try to attend depending on schedule
- Summer school enrollment was up this year
 - o Increase in grade 9s taking PE/CALM during summer
 - o Grade 9s taking math 15 (prep for grade 10)
 - Jump from grade 9 to 10 math is significant
- John's presentation on Blackie truth and reconciliation day at board meeting
 - o Rotation of land acknowledgement every meeting

Admin Report – Faye

- School education plan for 2023-2024 on Blackie FSD website
 - o 22 page document with hyperlinks for more information
 - o Parents able to go to website to read through
- School leadership report
 - o Staff is working on building and using color-coded data cards for tracking student's needs/intervention/progress, etc
 - Better tracking of child over time and multiple staff members
 - Working on these during portion of PD days
 - Parent Question: can these be viewed by parents?

- Answer: parents can contact their child's teacher if they would like to see the child's data
 - New K-6 Science curriculum
 - Virtual sessions for teachers during PD days plus full day of learning for each teacher on curriculum
 - Parents can see curriculum details on NewLearnAlberta website
 - Educators aiming to go deeper with learning instead of teaching a wide range of topics at a surface-level
 - Working on building on previous year's learning every year
- Calendar dates (see school emails and website for complete list)
 - Oct 16-20 book fair
 - Oct 19
 - Bottle drive for pioneer ranch camp
 - Gr 6 vaccination catchup
 - Triple ball at St. Francis
 - Book fair parent night 6:30-8:30pm
 - Oct 20 PD day
 - Oct 24 Regional band 6-8
 - Oct 25-26 Triple ball at Blackie
 - Oct 27 Halloween carnival – with costumes
 - Oct 31 Black and Orange Day – no costumes
 - Parent Question: why are kids not wearing costumes on Halloween?
 - Answer: teachers and parents have found that having a full day of Halloween activities on October 31 with school carnival during the day and then trick or treating at night makes November 1st very difficult with kids crashing, etc during the day, hopefully staggering the fun will allow for a smoother day on Nov 1. The school is not moving away from doing Halloween activities with Black and Orange Day as some Calgary schools are

Parent question about inconsistency of school calendar from year to year.

- John and Faye answer
 - FSD changes calendar based on feedback from parents, re: 2 week over Easter last year, adding break in November instead
 - Also somewhat following what larger boards are doing with their schedules in the province
 - Province also tells FSD when provincial exam dates are to be scheduled, division has no say in these
 - Therefore FSD/schools need to make accommodations if province schedules them on a PD day, etc

School Needs/School Council projects

- New chrome book cart needed – about \$1900
 - Will bring to fundraising society

- Last year a student was seriously injured on the exercise equipment north of the school
 - o Therefore any equipment in exercise are with a pinch point has been removed by FSD
 - o Parent question: can this equipment stay in Blackie, maybe at hill park, especially since it was paid for by parent fundraising?
 - Answer: this equipment has gone back to FSD, it is FSD property not school councils, but we can look into it
 - o Parent question: How many teachers have first aid training?
 - Answer: All teachers have first aid training
 - o Parent question: Is there any policy on when school has to inform the parents when their child has been injured?
 - Answer: Not sure, will look into it. Usually only inform parents for very serious injuries that staff think will require further medical attention.

Extracurricular Activities

- Art club at recess for any grade
- Lisa Kavanagh planning on doing coding program
 - o Preparations under way
- Triple ball is the sport the school is doing right now, will be doing basketball after Christmas

Swimming/Skiing/Curling

- Curling booked with Rocks and Rings in March
- May look into going to Vulcan pool with better adult supervision than last year
 - o Okotoks pool is hard to get into for lessons
- High River lessons last year were very expensive with busing for the actual amount of time that was spent in the pool
 - o Parent feedback that the time would be better spent in the classroom, rather than so much time spent on a bus
 - Some parents concerned about the school spending so much time and money on swimming lessons while their child is struggling with literacy
 - Clarification: Parent council/fundraising paid for swimming lessons, not school/classroom budgets
- Skiing not feasible with high insurance costs
- Parent suggestion: snowshoeing at Hill park or in school grounds
 - o Answer: very feasible, can borrow equipment, no bus cost, etc

Parent question: how much time/number of hours do the students spend on a device per day?

- Answer: it depends on the grade
 - o K and grade 1 do not have devices
 - o Grade 2 has tablets
 - o Grade 3 and up have chromebooks, spend more time on devices, learning games, etc
 - o Have a 'no cell phone' policy to try to limit time kids spend on their own personal devices

Parent Question: Have there been any studies done on the amount of time students are spending on these devices and whether it correlates with the struggles in literacy and numeracy been seen in the students?

- Answer: none that she recalls at the moment, struggles with literacy and numeracy are thought to be from catch up from learning interruptions during COVID shutdowns/online learning

Parent suggestion: look into dog tails program, where kids read to dogs

AGM

- Chair, Co-Chair and Secretary position elections, all uncontested
- Chair: Scott Sherman is currently chair, no other candidates came forward, Scott will continue to be chair
 - o He has been chair for many years, but this will be last year, he would like someone else to volunteer to be chair next year, he can show them the ropes this year in preparation
 - Cherylanne said she might be interested
- Co-chair: Lana Poulsen is currently co-chair, no other candidates came forward, Lana will continue to be co-chair
 - o This is her last year/son's last year at the school, will need a new volunteer for next year as well
- Secretary position: Natalie Britton is currently secretary, no other candidates came forward, Natalie will continue to be secretary

New Business

- Christmas hampers
 - o Collect donations for families in need, families can sign up to receive hampers
 - o Magic of Christmas, new unwrapped toys, parents "shop" for gifts
- Lions Quest
 - o Lions Canada have programs to help in schools
 - Webinar on Nov 2
 - Scott to look into this if he has time
- Christmas Concert
 - o Mr. Merkle will work on this with kids after Remembrance Day assembly is done
 - o He is currently planning the details
 - o Tentatively scheduled for Thursday December 21

Next meeting scheduled for November 21 at 6:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:42pm.