

Meadow Ridge School Council Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2026

In attendance: Kristi Lundquist (Chair), Chelsea Baker, Lucy Critchley, Austin Roth, Stephanie Bain, Lauren Stout, Jen Pierce-Ager, Shannon Gosse, Haley Wray, Joanna

Please note that other parents joined the meeting after the attendance sheet was passed around and as such their names are not captured on the meeting minutes

Administration: Debbie Payne (Principal), Allison Stewart (VP), Danielle Buschman (VP)

Foothills School District: Chris Fuzessy (Superintendent), Allen Davidson (Assistant Superintendent)

Board of Trustees: Lisa Penzo

Meeting called to order at 6:31PM by Kristi Lundquist

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - Those in attendance introduced themselves
2. Agenda
 - Kristi reviewed the agenda and reminded those presented about being kind and friendly
 - *Crystal adopted the agenda, Shannon seconded*
3. Minutes for previous meeting
 - *Lucy adopted, Kristi seconded*
4. School Council Engagement Grant
 - Kristi explained that there is a \$500 grant and a decision needs to be made on how to spend the grant.
 - Discussion on Dare to Care Bully Prevention and Life Skills Program with Lisa Dixon Wells. Ms. Stewart spoke to the program and how this could be offered in the evening to parents and caregivers.
 - This program would be a good fit to the budget and parent community and fits within the program's restrictions.

- Funds need to be spent by the end of June
- Ms. Payne spoke about what the school is doing for other programs
 - In December they had their firsts Student Matters Meeting. They spoke about inclusivity, “what can I do?” rather than what is being done to me
 - K to 9 Skills and Procedures for the Health Curriculum
 - Kindness Crew runs at the school
- A Parent suggested that it would be nice if there was an opportunity for students to attend as well
- Steve Wy-Burton is coming in March to work with the students of the school
- Ms. Stewart will be looking into getting more information about Dare to Care and we will make a decision about the program at our next meeting at the end of February.

5. Trustee Update

- Lisa Penzo spoke about the FSD website and how consultation for next school years calendar was currently open for feedback (closed January 22nd)
- Calendar changes are based on dates that Alberta Education sets as well (diploma and PATs dates as examples)

6. Superintendent Update

- The Board passed resolution to hold off on rewriting the boundaries for the 27-28 school year (action year). This is due to many reasons, including the water pipeline going into effect in Okotoks in the summer, developments increasing, new high school set to open in September 2029- Okotoks and area will rezone for a new high school at that time and will do boundaries at the same time.
- The board will have to decide if Okotoks will have 2 high schools or one high school, 2 campuses.
- There is a process to attend a school out of boundary- talk to principals at both schools, if declined, it goes to the office of the Superintendent.

- Enrollment trends at Meadow Ridge are dropping the last 4-5 years. The difficulty with this lies in that certain grades have larger cohorts. Al Davidson mentioned that in 2025 there were 691 students enrolled, this year 668 and predicted 651 for 26-27 school year. One of the factors is a declining birth rate in Okotoks and High River. As an example, there are currently 25 students in Kindergarten and 89 in grade 9.
- FSD has submitted their predictions to the province as of January 9th. Meetings with school leaders will be occurring in the future to discuss staffing allocation. As of date of meeting Meadow Ridge is 82 students under the projected number for this school year, but they have not had to claw back any support (teachers, EAs)
- Projections are done one school year at a time. They have until 2029 based on trends, but they do not rely on them. As an example Foothills Comp is 200 fewer than what it was at its peak. What impacts trends in enrollment is census, housing starts, birth rate- there is a lot of data that the district looks at. There is anticipation that the finalization of the water pipeline will further increase the population of Okotoks.
- Grade 7 class: both classes are over 35 students, plus students have moved in. Concerns were also brought forward about grades 4-9 with #s in the 70s and 89 total grade 9s. Al Davidson spoke to how teachers of large class sizes do not love it, but that the team works on configurations to make it work with the funding model. It was reiterated the plan is to be responsive to the numbers in each grade
- Discussion: Issue of funding per teacher and having to live within the budget allocation
- Classroom Complexity Survey: Chris Fuzessy spoke to them and the comparison from year to year. This school year there are 4 less teachers and lower enrollment. He also spoke to the fact that there have been two labour actions in the last 2 school years by 2 employee groups.
- There are no teacher reserve funds this year. A survey was sent at the beginning of the school year to schools asking if they had

more funds where would they spend it. Spoke to the class size numbers and what makes a class considered acceptable-moderate or high in each grouping, examples are below:

- K-3 up to 23 students in acceptable, moderate is 24-29 in Kindergarten
- 7-9 30 students acceptable, 36 high
- High School 30 acceptable, 31-38 moderate, 39 high
- There are high categories in a variety of classes across the district. There are many factors that school administrators have to consider
- From a school division perspective, the best place is for increasing enrollment. They would address higher #s. The division continues to have ongoing conversations and unpacking their budget. It was noted that the initial budget profile comes sometime in February, after the provincial budget has been announced. However, it is more typical to receive this in March or April, and once the division examines it and approval happens, then they begin initial conversations with school leaders. True enrollment is completed for September 30th with final teacher allocation numbers.
- The per student/ geographical scarcity grant had the district losing funds this year, which was unexpected. The Government did provide bridge funding. In 25-26 the Government changed the funding model and rural equity in education conversation ended, which had a significant impact.
- It is difficult to find guest teachers and applicants for job postings is not as high as 10 years ago. Al Davidson also spoke to the availability of teachers within the area as well.
- Ms. Payne noted that the goal is always to have the lowest number of students we can while being fiscally/ financially responsible. Until we are funded differently, this is the reality. It was further noted that Administrators teach (0.4 FTE and 0.6 FTE) with the exception of Ms. Payne
- Discussion on the parameters that make it challenging and public education

- Parents role, parent involvement, writing letters to government and opposition, advocacy
- Grade 7 class: discussion on their gaps in learning, missing the structure, use of agenda, missing foundations (time management, study skills) and the need to go back to basics as there has been a lot of disruption in learning for these students. Kristi (Chair) mentioned that if there are concerns let Administration know or her know.
- Superintendent Fuzessy noted that society and context has changed, but the funding model has not. There is a working group in FSD, 25 people have signed up for 5 working groups. There are 5 goals of the groups: belonging, student support, advocacy, AI and Staffing. They also need parent voice in this and grade 10-12 students. The goal is to weave into budget and community groups to include business leaders, faith leaders, government leaders to build support networks across FSD communities.

7. Principal's Update

- AERR is on the update from November 2025
- Report: reflection on the previous school year, includes the education plan, it is a lengthy document at 60 pages and also includes an analysis for engagement which is the document they look at when planning for next year.
- Calendar/ Division Events: Professional Growth day on January 23rd, Grade 6 and Grade 9 PAT schedule will be shared in the newsletter
- SQS-Q data- Allison will review next month, teachers will look at the data and any concerns and will plan on how to address these
- MRS is responsive to the needs of the students and schools. Ms. Payne does Helping Hands which is a mentorship program pairing Jr High students with littles. However, in Term 2 they will use this time to focus on academics and will be flexible and fluid for the students as it will be run the same way as an option

course. Academic Support will be open but students will not be required to register for it.

Meeting adjourned: 8:20 PM

Next Meeting: February 26, 2026 at 6:30PM