

Regular Meeting Minutes
VCS Council
January 7, 2021
10:30am Via Zoom
Meeting ID: 475 290 4212
Chair: Teresa Boucher (780) 814-4827
Vice Chair: Stacie Wright (587) 297-4522

In attendance: T. Boucher; P. Braseth; S. Mumert; S. Wright; T. Braseth; T. Fricke;
K. Strand; S. Miller

Call meeting to order @ 10:32 am

Approval of December 3, 2020 meeting minutes – *S. Wright motioned to approve December 3, 2020 minutes. P. Braseth 2nd AIF*

Principals Report:

- *Kids are learning at home this week.*
- *Message from Alberta Education is the plan is to have kids back in class, Monday the 11th. We have learned kids are doing better in school then they are at home. Speeches are starting soon, and this will be difficult if kids stay at home.*
- *Very appreciative of the work council has been doing with ASCA/Advocacy committee over Christmas Break.*
- *Sanitation is being done by EA's twice a day – noon and afterschool, not cutting into their time in class. EA's also helping teachers with prep work after school.*

Chairs Report

- *We discussed at our last meeting sending out a link for the JH kids to join an online Martial arts class and I forgot to send Steve the link. The link will be sent out if we end up staying home longer then the Christmas break.*

Treasurers Report

- *We do not have totals yet for the Christmas Auction. There are still a few outstanding payments we are waiting on so I will have those next meeting for everyone. The bank totals at the moment are:*

- Healthy Snack: \$4200.97
- Healthy Snack/Hot lunch Program: \$2783.93
- School Council Main Account: \$11843.70
- Total Amount: \$18828.60

Last meeting, we had discussed the cameras purchased for bus but not installed yet. Steve looked into it and said John would install over Christmas. We have a few questions about this;

TOGG donated time for the cameras to be installed but the busses were not delivered to their shop and now are being installed by the Transportation departments mechanic. Who is paying for this extra expense, is the council expected to foot the bill for this and how much is the bill?

Steve to ask John Moutray about install questions.

- At the last meeting we talked about the sound system and Steve had said it was not being used due to COVID-19 -19. School council would like to know if the system still needs updates and if there was a need for more microphones. We could and should update system this year while we have the funds and time while it is not being used to get it ready for when we can use it again.

It was mentioned that the motherboard does not to be changed, rather another module addition would be ideal for more transmitters for more mics. Steve mentioned if council wants to pursue this let him know and he could talk to Wayne who set this system up initially.

Board and TAAPCS Report: *No report available currently.*

Updates on Committees:

Healthy Snack – Stacie Wright

- *Nutrigrains need to be restocked.*
- *Leftover Mac and Cheese is not an easy leftover for lunches so its not being handed out.*
- *More sandwiches need to be made.*

Hot Lunch – Teresa Boucher

- It was posted on Facebook that we are looking for someone to take over organizing our Hot Lunches.

- We also released funds for an extra hot lunch in January and then we missed the first one due to the kids being at home for online learning, should we do 2 or 3 hot lunches in January?

All in agreement that 2 lunches are great. Hard enough finding people as is to volunteer.

❖ January 22, 2021	❖ Will let me know
❖ February 5, 2021	❖ Hot Dog
❖ February 19, 2021	❖
❖ March 12, 2021	❖ Hot Dog
❖ March 26, 2021	❖
❖ April 16, 2021	❖ Hot Dog
❖ April 23, 2021	❖
❖ May 14, 2021	❖ Hot Dog
❖ June 11, 2021	❖
❖ June 25 last day of school	❖

Fundraising – Sarah Miller (780) 545-0523

- Christmas Concert Auction Update –
 - *Auction went great, fantastic donations came in, very successful.*
 - *Roughly \$2000 raised.*
 - *Future idea to do an online bake sale as the baked good donations were the biggest sellers.*
 - *Helped get more people onto the council Facebook page.*
- New fundraiser ideas:
 - For the love of art –
 - *Students do self portraits, submit it and then parents can choose what they want it to be printed on (canvas, mugs, tin etc.) 30-40% goes to school.*
 - H&M -
 - *Has previously raised over \$4000.*
 - *Get it ready and delivered before May long or before other fundraiser groups get there's out.*

Sanitization – Stacie Wright (587) 297-4522

- Follow up on questions asked to the Board, Principal and Superintendent about

Stacie waiting on responses. It was also mentioned the concern about burnout of EA's/ Teachers, so the sign-up page will be reposted to try and alleviate the pressure.

Communications – Micah Fricke

- Micah has asked if there is anyone else who would like to work on this as he is currently working a lot of hours and does not have time.
- Facebook seems to be our only communications source at the moment, should we put it out there that we will give the kids at the school a pizza party if our Facebook page hits 200 members before the end of this school year to try and get our numbers up? We are currently at 131 members after our Christmas Auction.

P. Braseth motioned to approve and release funds for pizza party. S. Miller 2nd. AIF

Class Reps

Kristin did up a letter that will be sent out ASAP asking for one parent rep per grade.

Shadowing of Executives

- Steve mentioned at the last meeting that it might work to make a short video presentation to try and get some parent interest.
Teresa working on a video, if anyone is interested in helping put it together please contact her.

Advocacy Information for helping keep Charter Schools open

See “Albertans for Educational Diversity” handout

- *T. Fricke presented. There was an ASCA meeting in October that resulted in 3 resolutions being passed that are detrimental to Charter Schools. If these get passed our school could potentially be dissolved and kids reabsorbed into the public school system.
The purpose of this Advocacy committee is to arm individuals with necessary information and to get ahead of this before it gets to far, to change the resolutions and advocate what Charters are all about/dispel myths.*
- *Advocacy committee to begin Jan 15th.
T. Fricke motions that Valhalla Community School Council sponsors motion # 1 (see attached) for the advocacy committee. S. Miller 2nd. AIF*

Albertans for Educational Diversity (placeholder name)

ASCA – Alberta School Councils Association

- Valhalla Community School is a member and by default ALL parents of the school are members

SOS – Support our Students

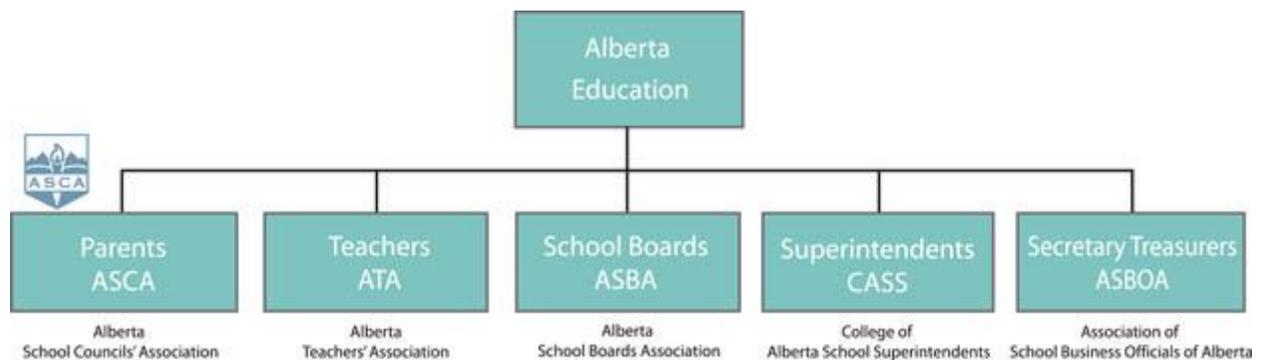
- Grassroots public school advocacy group campaigning strongly against charter schools

Background:

“In 1995, revisions to the **Alberta School Act** included mandated school councils - a forum for parents to advise the principal and school board on education matters.

ASCA's role evolved to promote and support strong school communities with effective school councils as a means to facilitate collaborations among education partners, including parents, to enhance student learning.” (source: <https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/>)

As a parent council for VCS, we are members of the ASCA and the role of the ASCA is to **represent parents on school council to engage with Alberta’s Education Ministry.**



Current Issue:

We have recently joined an advocacy effort, in coordination with other charter school parent councils throughout the province in an **ASCA subcommittee** (tentatively named Albertans for Educational Diversity ABED) to overturn some recent efforts made at a ASCA meeting in the fall.

At the October meeting, THREE motions were put forward by E’cole Sam Livingston School Council and strongly supported by four representatives of Support Our Students.

These resolutions will remove support for public charter schools and as it stands...the ASCA would have to begin advocating for the abolishment of charter schools and their re-absorption in the public system.

Claims Against Charter Schools:

- Boards of directors are not democratically elected by their communities and are not directly accountable to society
- Charters are at an increased risk of mismanagement of public dollars
- Enrolment of only a small portion of Alberta students is evidence that they serve no real purpose
- They charge extra fees and are elitist and exclude and segregate students

What Does This Mean:

Charter schools would be removed from the definition of public education school systems and would be forced to operate and be accountable to locally elected trustees and school boards. This ultimately would threaten our school and likely result in a shut down as we know Peace Wapiti's position on keeping our school open.

What's Next:

The ASCA subcommittee to putting together 3 MOTIONS that simply REWORD the original resolutions and we would like the Valhalla Community School Council to sponsor one Motion 1 called ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL PUBLIC EDUCATION.

Motion 1 – requests the changes to the THREE advocacy resolutions be rescinded or removed and for them to stay as they were.

What Would Be Required of VCSC:

By sponsoring the motion, our name is associated with it and demonstrates our strong support for that particular motion. If there are any other commitments or requirements for sponsorship, we will determine them as we move through the process (e.g. representative at the April voting meeting).

Why should parent councils and parents take this on and not the boards or administration?

Parents have a strong and passionate voice and can present the most compelling argument for our province continuing to provide US with a CHOICE in education.

Council Sign up form

- The council executives will be working on our Council sign up form that goes into the registration package for parents each year and bringing forward the adjusted form to our February meeting. If anyone is interested in helping please contact Teresa or Stacie.

Zoom Coffee

First meeting was a success. Lots of good information about what is working for parents/kids and what's not. Teresa to compile the information and get it into the office.

*Penny reached out to other charter schools with a letter asking for any tips/ tricks/ advice for everyone involved with online learning. No response back yet
Communication apps were mentioned and one in particular (PowerSchool) is being investigated by Jenine through Taapcs that could potentially be a better communication app.*

ASCA Course

- I have still not heard from the ASCA about courses since their funding was cut, will keep this on the Agenda so I can keep everyone updated as I find out information.

Advisement to Principal on schooling for when kids are home:

RE: VCS School Council Advisement of December 3, 2020

This advisement is for Core subjects only and should be in place if 1 or more children are missing from class. The bare minimum should be a video posted in each class of that day's lesson with corresponding assignment. There should never be an entire week of no work being posted for a core class, even if the teacher is only reviewing in class the video should be posted.

- VCS agrees wholeheartedly with the premise that the goal of school and teachers is to provide the best possible learning experience for all students.
- VCS agrees also that adequate instruction and communication is the goal for all Google Classroom experiences.
- VCS agrees that there should never be an entire week of no work being posted for a core class (unless there are no students learning from home or if home-based students have alternate learning methods agreed to by parents and teachers).

That being said:

- We work from the understanding that teachers have students' best interests at heart and have the goal of providing the best learning experience for students possible and that teachers have the training and experience to be reliably diagnose student needs and prescribe effective teaching/learning strategies to meet those needs.
- While VCS deeply values insights and communication from our parents, it remains the responsibility of teachers and administration to implement those practices that they believe are in the best interests of students.
- We must understand that during this unprecedented time, much is being asked of our teachers ... more in fact than is being asked of teachers in other jurisdictions. What they are already doing is an enormous task, and we must be appreciative of that. Were more requests to be piled on, we would run the very real risk of teacher burnout and were one of our teachers forced to take a leave of absence due to burnout, the potential harm for students would be much greater.

In conclusion

VCS will partially adopt this advisement. VCS will continue to work by all means possible to provide the best educational experience possible for all students. Administration will continue to monitor and support teachers' efforts, and will expect teachers to diagnose, monitor and support student learning by the best methods available to them.

- *General discussion was that although this is a great response parents are still frustrated. Parents are hoping for a more cohesive, more engaged response. Parents are hoping council can offer additional advisement as to more of a criteria list to be met; A minimum standard across the board that is feasible for all involved. This will be revisited at next meeting and include the extra information from Zoom coffee meeting.*

Sensory Path

- We have discussed with the initial group who wanted to install the sensory path and even though this is a fantastic thing to have in our school they would rather sell the pathway than continue trying to get it installed. They would like to put it out to the school community to see if anyone else might be interested in taking it over. If anyone is interested, please contact me after the meeting and we can have a conversation about it. Should we also post this on Facebook?

All agree to posting this on Facebook.

Black History in our Classrooms

- No one stepped forward but should we post this on Facebook?

All agree to posting this on Facebook.

❖ Adjournment @ 11:45 am

❖ Reminder the next meeting date is February 4, 2021 at 10:30am via zoom.