



## VCCHS Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

6:30 PM

Virtual

### People & Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis Nation. These are the meeting grounds, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Nakota Sioux, Dene, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, and Métis. We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.

**Attendance** – Cheryl Semeniuk, Sabrina Komarniski, Michelle Gladys, Randy Footz, Deniene Zaseybida, Erin Robert, Bryan Butler, Piper Kobbero, Elenita Consunto

**Parents:** Sabrina, Michelle, Deniene, Erin, Bryan, Elenita

**Staff:** Cheryl Semeniuk, Sabrina Komarniski

**Trustee:** Randy Footz

**Others:** Minute taker is Michelle Gladys

#### 1. Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Deniene called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm

#### 2. Review and Approval of the Agenda

Sabrina made a motion to approve the agenda. Erin seconded. All in favor.

#### 3. Approval of the Minutes from last meeting

Sabrina motions to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Seconded by Bryan. All in favour.

#### 4. Student Council Report – Piper Kobbero

- Smile Cookies: We decided to hand out smile cookies to the whole school and talk about cougar council and our role in the school. We got 14 new members on our council this year which makes a total of 22 members, 17 being senior high and 5 being junior high.
- Theme Days: So far for our theme days we have had a Jersey day.
- Halloween: For halloween the council bought and put up different halloween decorations around the school. We also organized a Halloween parade. Students would dress up in their halloween costumes and after lunch the whole school was brought to the gym. Students that were dressed up walked around the gym and were judged by members of cougar council based on a category. We had Best character, Best overall, Best group costume, Most original, Scariest, and Funniest as the categories. The 1st and 2nd prize winners got a candy bag as well as the whole school received a little treat bag. Both of these events really brought up the school morale of both senior and junior high students.
- Food Bank: We are running a food drive in support of the Vegreville food bank this week. Students have been asked to bring in non perishable items for donations. We have advertised

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a most wanted list that was given to us by the Vegreville food bank for specific donations for students to bring in. We are having a friendly competition between the first block classes to try and encourage kids to bring in donations. The class with the most items off of the most wanted list will win a prize in the form of a donut party. Students that do not have a first block class are welcome to drop off their donations in the office for a chance to win as well. Cougar Council decided to do a food drive this week because it is getting closer to Christmas and it can be a more difficult time for some families. We will be dropping off our donations on Tuesday the 29<sup>th</sup> or Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### 5. Trustee Report – Randy Footz

- As of September 29, 2022, enrollment for the division is 17,460 – an increase of 339 students.
- The Board approved the request from Facility Services to apply for funding to be used to:
  - Relocate 2 modular classrooms from Ecole Campbelltown to South Pointe School in Fort Saskatchewan.
  - Add 2 modular classrooms from Alberta Education to South Pointe School in Fort Saskatchewan.
  - Demolish 3 modular classrooms and reclaim the site at Uncas Elementary School.
- The Board approved school year calendars for 2023-24 and 2024-25.
  - Both calendars have the school year begin before Labour Day and both include a week long November Break.
  - Full details will be available on division and school websites.
- The Division ended the 2021-22 school year with an overall operating deficit of \$1.76 million, which was less than budgeted, by \$4.58 million. The primary reasons the deficit was less than budgeted are: lower COVID-19 costs, changes to grant funding, and school and department surpluses. The deficit was offset by operating reserves.
- Since October 22, 22 EIPS schools have reached “Outbreak Status” (10% of the student population are absent because of illness). As of today, only 2 schools remain in that situation.
- In the first week of November, a total of 13,913 students and 591 teachers were absent from Edmonton Public Schools to begin the week. An additional 6,900 students and 238 teachers were away from the Catholic system. On-line learning and event cancellation are being considered along with enhanced protective measures. A growing number of respiratory illness outbreaks in Edmonton-area schools is prompting some parents to suggest schools should take more infection prevention measures – at least for a couple of weeks.
- For the 2022/2023 school year, diploma exams will be weighted more than the 10% of a student’s final grade last year. The goal is to have diploma exams weighted at 30 per cent, but for this school year, diploma exams will be weighted at 20 per cent and will go up to 30 per cent for the 2023/2024 school year.



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- A shortage of bus drivers has been problematic for many districts. As an example, High Prairie School Division does not have enough drivers to transport 265 students who live in Slave Lake and its subdivisions. Divisions cite the high cost of training (MELT Program) and low rate of pay as reasons for the shortage. School divisions are required to transport students who live 2.4 km or further from school - the distance of 2.4 km and less) is a walking distance calculated by the Government of Alberta.”
- The Division ended the 2021-22 school year with an accumulated surplus of \$ \$22.69 million, which includes investment in Board funded tangible capital assets (\$5.97 million); operating reserves (\$15.01 million); and capital reserves (\$1.71 million).
- Highlights from the Fall Budget Report: 2022-23, include: operating budget – \$206.21 million, which includes an \$8.23-million draw from operating reserves student enrolment – 17,460, as of Sept. 29, 2022 employees (full-time equivalent) – 1,351.97, as of Sept. 29, 2022 compensation – 1.75% increase to salaries, as per the certificated settlement, ratified on June 10, 2022 operating reserves – \$4.93 million, as of Aug. 31, 2023. Capital reserves – \$460,000, as of Aug. 31, 2023 instructional spending – 78.4% of the total budget, equating to \$9,560 per student. System administration spending – \$4.59 million, 2.2%, of total expenses.
- System Assurance Reviews were conducted on October 31 and November 1. This is annual occurrence whereby each department within EIPS is given the opportunity to review their department’s contributions over the past year, celebrate their successes and identify areas for future growth.
- The Assurance Reviews for schools will begin on December 5. Ardrossan Jr./Sr, Lamont High School, Strathcona Christian Academy and VHS will undergo their Assurance Review on the morning of December 8.
- Mark Liguori, superintendent of EIPS, will be finishing his career on June 30, 2023, after announcing he is stepping down from the position and retiring at the end of the school year. The process of replacing the superintendent is already underway.

### 6. Principal Report – Cheryl Semeniuk

- Peer Tutoring: Our counsellor has initiated a peer tutoring program. Recruiting for senior high students wishing to tutor has been ongoing since the beginning of November. The VJS Peer Tutoring Program is designed for high school students to work with younger students, helping to build confidence in their reading, writing and math skills. Peer tutors are students who are willing to learn and work independently, as well as take initiative and seek opportunities to help others. To take on this leadership role, helping those in need in our school community, a student must agree to be respectful and responsible role models, and strive to inspire others to be their best. Becoming a peer tutor builds confidence, fosters leadership qualities, offers the personal satisfaction of helping fellow students, and provides a leadership experience to include on a resume. Peer tutoring also benefits our school by providing opportunities for students to work as a team, complete homework, and improve their grades. Tutors would



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meet in a supervised location in the school right after school between 3 and 4 p.m. We have had few applications to date from senior high students willing to tutor. Students wishing to have a tutor also can apply through our counsellor and once we have a match, the counsellor will facilitate the arrangements.

- **Academic Tone:** We are past the halfway point in Semester 1. November break is a great opportunity to rest and refresh and for the next six weeks until Christmas break, our school focus is on setting an academic tone. All staff will be reinforcing and teaching the essential skills, behaviours and habits essential for academic success. Three key areas we are concentrating on to create an academic atmosphere are:  
*Attendance* - School attendance is one of the most important indicators of school success. Students who attend school regularly improve their chances of being academically successful. Any student who is absent from school should be excused by their parents with a phone call, email or through the absence link on the school website. Our school Family School Liaison Worker, Carlin Adams, will be reaching out to students with a large number of unexcused absences and supporting families experiencing challenges with attendance.  
*Protecting Time in Class* - Reduce students in the hallways during instructional time. Students on spares should make use of the time to study and be in the library or off site. Students who have time in their schedule and are taking a course through Next Step, should be working on their course in the Next Step campus classroom or in the library. Teachers will monitor students leaving the room and encourage students to have all their supplies ready and with them upon entering the classroom.  
*Technology*- Responsible use of technology and following EIPS Board Policy 24 and Administrative Procedure 145 on personal communication devices. The goal is to teach responsible use of technology and to limit the distractions created by notifications on personal devices. Personal devices should be left in student lockers. Students are able to use their personal devices on break time. Parents may call the school office should they need to get a message to their student. The bell schedule and break times are available on the school website at [vegcomp.ca](http://vegcomp.ca).
- **School Awards:** Vegreville Composite High School is celebrating the 2021-22 achievement of senior high students on the evening of December 2, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. Junior high academic awards will be distributed during the day on December 4, 2022.
- **Annual Assurance Review** - December 8, 2022 9:00-11:30 a.m.  
Education planning and results reporting is a continuous improvement cycle that all schools formally engage in as part of the Elk Island School Board of Trustee assurance and accountability process. Annually, schools meet in small groups with trustees and senior administration to analyze data from the previous year and to celebrate successes and address challenges. Vegreville Composite High School is joining Ardrossan Jr/Sr, Lamont High, and Strathcona Christian Academy Secondary this year on December 8, 2022.
- **Christmas Lunch/Afternoon Dance:** All students and staff will enjoy a festive traditional holiday meal on Friday, December 16, 2022. That afternoon, the Cougar Council will host a dance in the gym for part of Period 3 and all of Period 4. Students interested in attending the



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dance will need to sign up with their third period teacher. Students not attending the dance will attend their regular class schedule.

- Graduation: Vegreville Composite High School is holding commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 27th at 2:00 p.m. in the school gymnasium. The formal ceremony will be followed by a social hour with refreshments. Graduating students must be on track to achieve their Alberta Education Requirements in order to participate in commencement.
- Graduation Fundraiser: The goal of the school is to ensure that all graduates have the opportunity to participate in the formal commencement ceremony with a reasonable graduation fee. The fee is currently \$60 per graduate covers the cost of a gown, stole, cap, document cover, photography at the event, decor and the social. The school graduating class has three school sponsored fundraisers. All money raised reduces the fees across the board for every graduate. The official school graduation fundraisers include the Vegreville Community discount cards, Boston Pizza receipts, and three legion breakfast events.

### 7. **Teacher/Library Report** – Andrea Lystang (written submission)

The library is an integral part of Vegreville Composite High School. Over the last couple of months, many changes have been made in the library to create a true learning commons – a safe and welcoming environment with access to technology and reading materials. Our space is bright and open with new shelving designed for accessibility and organization, along with multiple configurations for seating.

Some of the highlights of the learning commons include:

- Display of new and current books. The addition of magazines is forthcoming and will provide reading material for students on a break or spare.
- Rich assortment of fiction and non-fiction. We have catalogued many new books, focusing on graphic novels, popular series and new releases. We are weeding the non-fiction materials to ensure information is accurate and timely.
- Access to Chrome Books.
- Multipurpose space used for meetings and lunchtime activities including a book tasting and bingo.
- Organized teacher resource space, adjacent to the library, providing teachers with topical information focused on the curriculum.
- Weekly library periods for junior students with the opportunity to engage reluctant readers in finding a book that piques their interest.
- Literacy program focusing on writing skills. We are piloting a pull-out program with some of the grade 8 students. The program uses high-interest materials and strategies emphasizing voice, word choice, organization and fluency.
- Study space in block 4 with the support of our new FSLW, Carlin Adams. Based primarily out of Next Step, Carlin will assist our shared students and students on spares to complete work and prepare for exams.



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### Future Plans:

- Cataloguing the backlog of books that were purchased last spring.
- Promoting the library through the school newsletter (SMORE) with relevant information for parents and students. This will include strategies for reading comprehension, summaries of new books, staff recommendations, qualities of good readers, along with trivia, statistics and information.
- Purchasing books in subject areas that students are requesting.
- Furthering our literacy goals with small group pull out, assisting reluctant readers and organizing activities in the library space.

### 8. Fundraising Foundation Report – Sabrina Komarniski

*Casino Account: \$292.83 General Account: \$6,977.00*

- On Oct 14 & 15 went to the Camrose Casino. There were 5 volunteers that went. We will know sometime in January what our profit is. We had to pay the advisor fee, hotel fees and mileage for volunteers. I believe Cheryl will be asking staff for a “wish list” of things they might want and will bring that list to the foundation. As of right now, we have no fundraisers planned, at least not before Christmas. Maybe something in the Spring. Last spring we did Widynowski’s Sausage and Little Caesar’s. We will meet after Christmas and decide if we will do something.

Question: when can we expect the money from the casino to go into the account. Answer: sometime in January. Casino’s are divided into quarters and we were part of the Oct-Nov-Dec quarter, so we should know by the end of January.

### 9. COSC Representative Report – Deniene Zaseybida

- 2 COSC meetings were held October 5<sup>th</sup> and November 2<sup>nd</sup>
- November 2<sup>nd</sup> they provided Alberta School Council Update and went over points of interest for COSC members
  - School councils who are ASCA members can sign up to become a part of ASCA’s School Council Engagement Task Force. ASCA will then send the school council a questionnaire. This survey can act as a guide for meetings, encouraging rich discussion and providing valuable feedback to ASCA. Once filled out, the school council sends the survey back to ASCA for their review. Note: School councils must sign up every year—even if they were a part of the task force last year.
  - There are a variety of Workshops that are delivered to school councils in a fee structure aligned with the Alberta School Council Engagement (ASCE) Grant. Funding is up to \$500 and individual councils are responsible to book the training workshops directly with ASCA.
  - More information is on the website, but it does break down the workshops into Foundation or Level 1 workshops and Level 2 or enhancement . These are learning opportunities designed to empower school councils and promote diverse and inclusive parent engagement in public education.
- There was a virtual engagement event held November 19<sup>th</sup> and an online silent auction opened same date—the auction closes November 25<sup>th</sup>



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- We do get updates emailed to us now from the school council
- Alberta Health Services is hosting in November a series of virtual caregiver information sessions focused on ways to support students' mental health in. The sessions are free and geared toward parents, caregivers, teachers and community members who want to learn more about challenges impacting children and adolescents. Session topics include anxiety, ADHD, depression, self-harm, technology, teens and teaching leadership skills, communication, resiliency. I will have the link to learn more.
- As mentioned earlier Alberta Education provides school councils with a \$500 School Council Engagement Grant for the school year. Those school councils interested in accessing funding must meet Grant Criteria, which essentially means opportunities that help build capacity and strengthen engagement. There's been discussion to pool funds again this year. Kendra Roemer as COSC member has stepped up to lead a school council grant committee focused on pooling interested school councils' funds together. If we don't want to pool the money, we can complete and submit a grant request form
- There was a [presentation](#) that outlined EIPS' assurance framework, engagement process, data analysis, Alberta Education assurance measures and included examples from EIPS' assurance review data from the 2020-21 school year. Our review is scheduled and we will discuss as new business.
- The October meeting discussed many of the same items, but also went over the EIPS three year engagement plan—Vegreville is on there with Project 4: Sector 5 Value Scoping Session; EIPS has hired START Architecture to facilitate this discussion
- The value scoping session will focus on the area's two schools—Vegreville Composite High and A.L. Horton Elementary. Currently, operational costs for both facilities are well above the Division average. Both facilities are underutilized. A.L Horton Elementary is 73% utilized and Vegreville Composite High is 38% utilized—as reported in the 2021-22 Area Capacity and Utilization Report. The five-year maintenance costs for A.L. Horton Elementary is \$1.8 million and \$9 million for Vegreville Composite High. The continued operation and maintenance of the two schools under current conditions is not financially sustainable. The session is underway and The final report is scheduled to be presented to the Board of Trustees in December 2022
- October they also spoke about NEW CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS

### 10. Old Business

- Future meeting format – alternate meetings in-person and virtual. Next meeting will be in January and will be in-person.
- Organizational Voting of 22/23 School Council Executive – Chair position remains vacant. If no one steps forward, chair will be Deniene by default, so Deniene will step forward as chair. That makes the Vice Chair position vacant. Call for nominations for Vice Chair. No one in meeting steps forward. We will put it out to the parents for someone to step forward.



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### **11. New Business**

- School results review – review is scheduled for December 8<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to 11:30am at the central office board room in Sherwood Park. Holly & Cheryl will be attending. Are looking for one parent to attend with them. Car pooling is an option. In the past, parents that have attended have found it to be a very positive experience. Hopefully someone will volunteer.

### **12. Next Meeting** – January 24<sup>th</sup> @6:30pm (in person) in school library

### **13. Motion to adjourn meeting:**

Bryan made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Denien.