

New Horizons School Council

Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2023
Meeting Called to Order: 7:01PM
Meeting Adjourned: 8:41PM
Hybrid In-Person (New Horizons School) / Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Sarah-Jane Lovgren, Anita Sanderson, Rebecca Koziak, Ellen Hanna, Chelsee Ladouceur, Sarah Litvinchuk, Erin Thomas, Lori Vigfusson, Marisa Araujo, Sarah Fairfull, Anika Kooger, Dean Lindquist, Brianne Davio, Laurel Cleall, Trevor Cleall, Jaycee Commance-Arbour, Liam Kelly, Shannon Kurie, Sarah MacDonald, Raena Schindel

1. Meeting Called to Order: 7:01PM.

In the absence of School Council Chair and Co-Chair, Ellen Hanna (Communications Officer) & Rebeca Koziak (Secretary) Co-Chair this meeting. Three members of School Council Executive are in attendance; therefore, quorum is met.

2. Statement of Territorial Acknowledgement

The School Council of the New Horizons Charter School respectfully acknowledges that the land on which we meet is Treaty 6 territory, a traditional home, gathering place, and a travelling route for diverse Indigenous Peoples, including Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Nakota, Sioux, as well as the homeland of the Metis Nation. We recognize our responsibility as Treaty members and honour the heritage and gifts of the First Peoples of this land.

3. Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: Chelsee Ladouceur moved to adopt the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Anita Sanderson. Motion Carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

January 4, 2022

MOTION: Anita Sanderson moved to adopt the Minutes as presented. Seconded by Chelsee Ladouceur. Motion Carried.

5. Reports

5.1 Chair/Vice-Chair Report

Nothing to report.

5.2 Principal's Report

The Statement of Territorial Acknowledgement is spoken at the beginning of each staff meeting followed by a personal comment on a staff member's personal relationship to the land. This addition to the acknowledgement recognizes our connection to the land and its significance.

Grades 1 & 2 remain in their temporary classrooms in the portables and learning commons while construction continues in the affected classrooms. Children have adjusted to their new routines. Drying was completed last week, microbial testing this week. We should have results within the week. As far as a timeline goes, we are unsure of what to anticipate. If the drying process was successful and there's no mould, children could return to their regular classrooms as soon as 6 weeks.

A key element of the NHS Education Plan that was missing over the pandemic was our "Buddy" program. We have welcomed "buddies" back into our school's culture with weekly leadership and community helper opportunities for our Jr. High students to engage with the students in lower grades. This time provides community building opportunities within our school's population, as well as allows staff to engage in in-school professional development. "House" activities are also being re-introduced with a variety of STEM activities.

Info Night on January 11, 2023 was successful. We saw an increase in attendance — about 125 more people than our last pre-pandemic session.

We have a number of teachers who are working on their Masters and many who are interested in taking on active leadership roles. Ms. Watson has started a book club as a community building and professional development initiative amongst staff.

As a part of our social emotional learning framework and vested interest in mental health and psychology, we are introducing the Open Parachute Program. This K-12 resource has a variety of lessons that can be shared with families to give students skills to support their Mental Health. Topics include relationships and healthy boundaries and offer examples and strategies using peer voices with video-based lessons created by Clinical Psychologists. More information can be found [here](#).

ECSS Psychological Services is providing their third round of group counselling sessions. There is now additional communication with families so they know what's taking place during sessions. Grades 6 and 9 will have Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) this year, so ECSS will be working with these groups to provide assistance with test anxiety and studying strategies.

Outsourced SLP and OT support has a more consistent schedule and are now seeing students on Fridays.

Today's e-mail regarding hand-foot-and-mouth disease in our school included information from Alberta Health Services. We will monitor affected classrooms and encourage students to complete frequent hand washing, especially before eating.

While discussing this, Ms. Kooger shared that all classrooms have a selection of hand sanitizer and hand sanitizing wipes that have been approved by AHS for moments where soap and water is not easily accessible.

5.3 Financial Officer's Report

We are awaiting confirmation as to whether AGLC Casino funds can be utilized for the Artist in Residence Program — if not, funds will be redistributed as required. This will be revisited in March.

5.4 FANHS Report

January's Bottle Drive saw a profit of \$477.50 for FANHS. The Hot Lunch Program is a great success. Sales for Cycles 1 & 2 have gone well and families are enjoying the variety of options. Sales for Cycle 3 will open in the coming weeks for food service in March and April.

5.5 Communication Officer's Report

Social media engagement is still improving. Having streamlined communications, with School Council and FANHS working in collaboration, is proving to be successful.

6. Motion to Accept Reports

MOTION: Erin Thomas moved to accept reports as presented. Seconded by Anita Sanderson. Motion Carried.

SC failed to motion January's reports in January — reports as per SC Meeting Minutes | January 2023 were referred to for a Motion to Accept Reports.

MOTION: Anita Sanderson moved to accept reports from January 2023. Seconded by Ellen Hanna. Motion Carried.

7. New Business

7.1 Artist in Residence

7.1 (A) Rhythm Rhythm Rhythm

Report shared by Ms. Kooger.

The Artist in Residence programming with Rhythm Rhythm Rhythm is coming to a close. Thank you to School Council for financial assistance with this year's programming. NHS has received great feedback from kids and staff. A community drum circle finale will take place on Friday, February 3, 2023.

7.1 (B) 2023/2024 Artist in Residence Programming

As per January's meeting, some of the staff are familiar with Kit Dohaylo from Dance Fusion and have expressed interest in this artist for the 2023/2024 school year. The financial commitment is low; therefore, depending on budget and timing, there may be an opportunity to welcome more than one Artist in Residence for 2023/2024. Ms. Araujo has offered to be the staff liaison for programming with Kit Dohaylo for the 2023/2024 school year.

MOTION: Ellen Hanna moved to accept the proposal for Artist in Residence programming with Kit Dohaylo for the 2023/2024 school year with Ms. Araujo as the staff liaison. Seconded by Erin Thomas. Motion Carried.

7.2 2023/2024 School Calendar

Find attached School Council's Recommendations for Proposed 2023/24 School Calendar as sent to Superintendent Lindquist — all details noted as communicated and agreed upon during the School Council Meeting on February 1, 2023.

7.3 Alberta School Council AGM and Conference

"The Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) is the provincial association representing parents on school council. Recognized as the voice of parents in public education, ASCA presents the parent perspective to government and education organizations in Alberta and provides resources, supports, services and learning opportunities to enhance parent engagement and school council effectiveness."

Prior to the pandemic, registration for one representative of SC was paid for by NHS for the Alberta School Council AGM and Conference. Proposed advocacy resolutions are not yet posted. NHS engagement in the AGM depends largely on the proposed resolutions. This will be revisited in March.

7.4 Staff Funding Requests

Jr. High Fun Day celebrates the end of the school year. Ms. Araujo and Ms. Fairfull made a request of up to \$200 for snacks for students in Grades 7/8/9.

MOTION: Rebecca Koziak moved to accept the request as presented. Seconded by Sarah-Jane Lovgren. Motion Carried.

7.5 Future School Event Planning and SC Outreach

7.5 (A) Spring Carnival

The Spring Carnival event will take place on May 27, 2023. This event cannot run without volunteers. As such, an entrance fee has been discussed — the amount will be determined at the School Council meeting on March 1, 2023. If a

parent commits to a volunteer shift, the entrance fee will be waived for their family. Families who do not wish to volunteer will be charged a fee per family. One of the reasons for an entrance fee is to ensure commitment, gauge attendance, and aide with planning. For example, NHS has 280 families — 35% RSVP'd to attend the Halloween Dance. As was the case with the Halloween Dance, families who wish to participate but do not have it within their budget to pay the entrance fee are welcome to advise Ms. Vigfusson to have the fee waived. It is important to SC that all families feel welcome at our community building events.

There was discussion between DIY food concessions or outsourced food truck vendors — there are pros and cons to both options. While the DIY option could be a fundraiser for FANHHS, it would also require a greater number of volunteers and appropriate food quantity estimates in order to be mindful of expenses and limit food waste. Hiring food trucks may be favourable as there would be no cost directly to SC and no requirement of additional volunteers. This would come at a higher cost to families. Planning outside the windows of typical meal times may aide in limited food and beverage requirements i.e. within the range of 1:00PM and 5:00PM, offering a later lunch/early dinner option. Exact timeframe and number of hours will be determined based on rentals of entertainment. This will be revisited in March.

7.5 (B) Grade 9 Farewell

Report shared by Ms. Fairfull.

Grade 9 students have expressed interest in having an evening dance. All students in Grades 7-9 are welcome. Grade 9 students will get in for free and may be welcome to bring one guest. There may be a small ticket fee for students in Grades 7 & 8. The logistics of the event are to be determined. Grade 9 students will be a part of the decision making process and will take leadership of bringing their event to life. With regard to budgeting, there may be interest in hiring a DJ and having a photo booth like the Halloween Dance — additional expenses will be considered this month. This will be revisited in March.

7.5 (C) National Indigenous Day — June 21, 2023

Report shared by Ms. Araujo.

National Indigenous Day is June 21, 2023. In previous years, this has been celebrated with various lessons and sharing Bannock with the Jr. High students (125 students). Budget requests for this event will be determined and presented in March.

Ms. Vigfusson expressed interest in budgeting for the whole school population to participate. Rebecca Koziak has offered to review Grant opportunities to support this celebration.

7.6 Emergent Business

7.6 (A) The Role of School Council

According to the School Council Resource Guide as presented by Alberta School Councils' Association, "School councils are structured groups of parents, principals, teachers, secondary students and community representatives who work together to effectively support and enhance student learning. They provide a means for members of the school community to consult with and provide advice to the principal and the school board." The same is shared on the Alberta Government's website.

7.6 (B) School Council as a Liaison Between families, Administration, and the School Board

The Board of Directors invited families and staff members to participate in the 2023 Stakeholder Forum on January 23, 2023. Topics for discussion included Civil Discourse and Diverse Student Needs. Following the Forum, SC received feedback from a number of parents who have expressed concerns regarding advocacy, NHS meeting the needs of gifted students according to the mandate as set forth in the Charter, the perceived lack of extra curricular activities, and ineffective communication. As such, Superintendent Lindquist was invited to participate in this meeting as we consider the role of School Council in working together to support and enhance the culture and climate of NHS to positively impact student learning.

7.6 (C) The New Horizons School Charter

The New Horizons School Charter has not been reviewed since 2012. As such, there are questions regarding its validity and time for review. Superintendent Lindquist shared that the Charter, values, and admissions process are due for review by the Board in the new year.

Vision

"New Horizons School will enable gifted students to strive for excellence in a positive academic learning environment that fosters social and emotional support for each student." Some parents questioned whether enrichment needs are being met and if all children are being equally supported.

School Mission Statement

"The mission of New Horizons Charter School is to meet the special academic needs of gifted learners in a congregated setting in an environment that is low-anxiety, positive, and supportive of the individual. Gifted students need opportunities to be challenged, to think alternatively, and to pursue learning according to their own learning styles."

7.6 (D) Concerns with Extraordinary Behavioural Issues

Superintendent Lindquist shared that all students who qualify based on the

mandate as set forth in the School's Charter, are welcome (permitting there's a seat available); however, the concern expressed by many parents, specifically pertaining to children who are Twice-exceptional (2E) is behavioural dysregulation and its effect on other students and staff. The extraordinary behavioural consequences of some students are affecting the overall social, emotional, and academic learning and experiences of other students.

Does NHS have appropriate funding and services available to provide the resources required to support these children? While reallocation of educational assistants may be a temporary consideration, what is the longterm response? Will the Board prioritize fund allocation towards additional resources such as educational assistants, behavioural therapists, or other resources as suggested by Administration? If there are many children who require additional support due to extraordinary behavioural issues, it is not a question of if the Board can allocate funding to appropriate additional resources (educational assistants or otherwise), but when. NHS and the Board needs to take responsibility in order to protect the overall safety of the other students and staff since behaviours can be unpredictable.

Families who have shared their concerns with SC are less concerned about screening for behavioural issues than they are about supporting all children's needs equally, as well as the overall safety of students and staff. While NHS is supporting some students exclusively in aiding in regulating behavioural issues, other children's needs are not being fulfilled i.e. those who require one on one reading support, high level mathematics opportunities etc. — this is when NHS is not supporting all children equally.

7.6 (E) Effective Communication

Since the onset of the 2022/2023 school year, the SC & FANHS Communications team has worked to develop effective communication and engagement with families. SC works towards advising and advocating on behalf of all NHS families and understands that effective communication in a variety of forms i.e. social media, direct e-mail, and in person are equally important. Families want to know what is happening within the NHS community i.e. direct communication regarding the extra curricular activities that are offered as opposed to relying on children to convey the message of the bigger picture of the school.

- When issues are presented regarding specific children and/or scenarios that are beyond the scope of SC's role, SC can advise families of correct methods of communication with solution based discussions as the focus.

Classroom specific issues:

1. Speak with teacher.
2. Speak with Administration.
3. Speak with the Board.

4. Speak with the Superintendent.

- Is the understanding of giftedness being presented to families appropriately? Superintendent Lindquist, Ms. Vigfusson, and SC will request that the Board revisit effective communication.

8. Future Business

- Focus group to discuss NHS website (Admin lead).
- Addition of a 'student groups' page on NHS website (Admin lead).

9. Correspondence

- KJ Street Consulting Grant Listings, Grant ideas from Ms. Kooger. Tabled to March.

10. Future Meeting Dates:

- March 1, 2023
- April 5, 2023
- May 3, 2023
- June TBD (must include AGM)

11. Meeting Adjourned: 8:41PM.

February 7, 2023

Re: School Council's Recommendations for Proposed 2023/24 School Calendar

Dear Superintendent Lindquist,

In reviewing the proposed 2023/24 School Calendar (Approved Date: Approved in Principle — 2023-01-18), School Council has the following recommendations:

1. School Council is in favour of families receiving IPPS earlier in the school year than the proposed IPP Writing Date of October 19, 2023 would result in. Historically, IPP Writing Day is earlier, which allows for a collaborative team effort involving the student, parents and/or guardians, and NHS to support the student's learning experiences; therefore, being a beneficial way for all parties to start a new school year. If IPPS are not received until late October/early November, it is hard for students, educators, and families to set appropriate goals and expectations for the year ahead.

School Council proposes eliminating the PD Day on November 13, 2023 and moving it to Friday, October 6, 2023 for IPP Writing Day — this PD Day is in line with the EIPS Division Calendar 2023-24 and is consistent with the school's usual IPP Writing Day.

2. School Council is in favour of maintaining the proposed PD Days of October 19 & 20, 2023 and acknowledge and appreciate the impetus behind the selected dates. It is our understanding that these dates would be utilized for professional development as well as travel to Calgary, AB for attendance at a Charter School conference taking place on the 20th. While this biennial conference affects instructional days, School Council is in favour of maintaining October 19, 2023 as a PD Day with appropriate professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their professional growth and, therefore, support student learning. October 19, 2023 also allows for group travel to Calgary as proposed by yourself — Superintendent Lindquist — and Ms. Vigfusson. With the understanding that all staff would participate in professional development prior to travel, and that the impetus behind traveling the day prior to the conference is due to travel safety and budgeting, School Council is in favour of maintaining the proposed PD Days of October 19 & 20, 2023.

School Council believes that staff and students would equally benefit from additional professional development opportunities for the staff at NHS. A consideration for the Board: Are staff offered professional development that includes appropriate enrichment opportunities for our students?

School Council understands that this biennial conference will affect the instructional days of alternating years; therefore, while the 2023/24 school year sees 2 fewer instructional days, we recognize that the 2024/25 school year will see 2 additional instructional days.

3. As per the proposed calendar, School Council is in favour of ensuring that EIPS bus transportation is available for all student instructional days.

4. School Council recognizes that some parents are concerned with falling below 180 instructional days (the proposed calendar provides 179 instructional days) which doesn't allow room for surprises such as illness or the 2022/23 flood and how these events impact a student's learning.

Ms. Vigfusson shared that since pandemic restrictions have eased, NHS has the opportunity to reintroduce strategies within the school day to allow for professional development in shorter periods of time — as well as more consistently. For example, “Buddy” activities allow staff to engage in in-school professional development while Div. 3 students provide leadership in a mentorship role. School Council is in favour of maintaining balance between instructional days and PD Days mirroring those established by EIPS, so that staff and students are equally supported in their education journey at NHS. School Council is happy to support Ms. Vigfusson in the professional development strategies that she would like to implement within school hours, since it engages students in unique ways and creates community within NHS while also offering opportunities for teachers to enhance their professional growth and, therefore, support student learning.

Kindly,
New Horizons School Council

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Rebecca Koziak
School Council Secretary

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