


**Medicine Hat Public School Division**

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**COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Members:**

|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Doug Ashmore           | Val Browne       |
| Lyle Cunningham        | Mark Davidson    |
| Carolyn Freeman        | Boris Grisonich  |
| Tracy Hensel           | Jerry Labossiere |
| Jason Peters           | Jan Petersen     |
| Corey Sadlemyer absent | Cheryl Scholly   |
| Courtney Scott         | Sharon Stolz     |
| Richelle Thomas        |                  |

**Date and Time:** Monday, January 25, 2021 @ 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting

**AGENDA ITEMS**

1. **Call to Order** (M. Davidson) 1:00 p.m.

2. **Adoption of Minutes**

Presentation and adoption of the minutes of the Coordinating Committee meeting held on November 30, 2020.

Minutes of the November 30, 2020 meeting adopted as presented.

3. **Treaty Land Acknowledgement** (M. Davidson)

We acknowledge that we are on Treaty 7 territory, the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Nations, including Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai, the Tsuut'ina Nation and Stoney Nakoda First Nations. We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.<sup>1</sup>

4. **Presentation: Action Plan on Literacy** (J. Peters and S. Miner)

The concern has risen from Teachers' Voice Committee and other staff regarding students falling behind in literacy. The pandemic has had an impact, however, there was some gap in literacy prior to COVID-19. A current statistic was shared that school shutdowns have left young students up to 8 months behind in reading.

Stacey Miner provided a presentation on some of the research, techniques, goals and challenges; Leveraging Collaborative Response for Literacy Gaps.

The goal is to build the science of reading Division-wide by expanding the Early Literacy Framework (ELF) focus above Div I (K to grade 2) upwards to expand to Div II, Div III and IV (K to grade 12). A challenge is that teachers have not been taught how to teach literacy.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/about/indigenous-awareness/treaty-land-acknowledgement>

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Teachers, especially in Div II, are asking for tools to support students at this level that are not able to read.

S. Miner also shared data on the history and research outcomes. The history and research brought the realization that exposure, experience and explicit instruction are required. She provided a review of the 5 pillars of Early Literacy.

The Division will build an action plan to address challenges in literacy (how do we fill the gap?) and to support teachers with a common understanding, sound strategies and resources. The Division plans to maintain this focus on literacy. Students who read and write well have better social and academic outcomes overall.

There are no official timelines, however, conversations on this process have begun in schools. We are also taking into consideration the additional stresses this year.

Several schools continue to have literacy as a school goal. Division wide collaborative response will be key in the implementation.

There were several comments about the appreciation and the importance of moving ahead with this focus on literacy and working to provide our teachers a background on the methods and foundations.

**5. Items for Information (V. Browne)**

**Possible PD Opportunity: Mental First Aid**

Nathan Gale and Allan Thompson want to introduce Mental First Aid as a professional development opportunity for three consecutive Wednesdays in March. The sessions will be held online and will likely be offered as a site-based PD opportunity.

These sessions will assist teachers to decipher what support they can provide and what point students should be referred on to other professional.

The Division is not actively seeking out other mental health related courses, but we are continuing to build our internal focus on mental health.

**6. Items for Discussion**

**Division Calendar 2021-2022 (L. Cunningham)**

The committee reviewed the drafted School Division calendar for 2021-2022. This draft calendar is being shared with schools, administrators, and school councils for comments and feedback before going to the Board for final approval.

L. Cunningham has worked with both the Prairie Rose School Division and the Medicine Hat Catholic School Division in attempt to coordinate professional development days, breaks, as well as school start and end dates. MHCBE has not yet provided a draft, however, PRSD has a draft that is currently being reviewed that is in alignment with ours.

The October PD day is on the 18<sup>th</sup> due to the Civic Election as schools are being made available for voting. This process provides good exposure for students typically, however, with the uncertainty of COVID-19 we aim to keep interaction minimal.

There is a planned November break again on November 10, 11, 12, 2021.

B. Grisonich commented that MHHS is going to try to not schedule Math 30 in Q2 due to there being less instructional days in that quarter; Q1 has 44 instructional days and Q2 has 37 instructional days. MHHS will also have a different PD day in January as science diploma exams are scheduled on that day.

L. Cunningham asked that any comments or suggestions be emailed to him.

## **7. Review of Policy, Procedures and Guidelines**

The process of policy development was reviewed. As per [Policy 222 – Policy on Policy Development and Review](#) any stakeholder can make a request for the Board to consider. The Board can direct administration to draft or revise a policy (i.e. Technology is a policy that shifts considerably due to constant change and the idea for a new policy, Team Names, Logos, Colours and Mascots, originated from Principal Grisonich at Medicine Hat High School.)

The committee also reviewed the differences between a policy, administrative procedures and guidelines. The following definitions were shared:

Policy: Set by the governance body of an organization, policy is intended to communicate the organization's culture, values and philosophy. They articulate what all stakeholders might expect from the organization and range from the specific and directive to the global. Where required by principles or direction from higher government, policies may direct specific actions and conditions. More often, however, policies direct expectations regarding principled action, leaving detailed direction to procedures developed at the operational level.

Administrative Procedure: Usually, but not always, connected to policy, administrative procedures are written and implemented by system and site administration. Where a coordinate policy exists, administrative procedures provide more detailed and specific direction regarding the expected actions of stakeholders. In Medicine Hat Public School Division, administrative procedures are reviewed by the Board so that they might be assured that they have been developed in alignment with Board Policy. Where policy does not exist, administrative procedures are presented to the Board to ensure that they have been written in a manner that agrees with the principles and vision of the organization.

Guidelines/Directives: Guidelines and directives (the latter more akin to an edict than the former) occur when it is felt by administration that stakeholders (individual, group or whole organization) require advice or instruction relative to a specific issue or circumstance. These tools may be used when a new/unique situation arises (i.e. pandemic). Should the situation be determined to be one that is bound to repeat or remain a permanent part of the organization's context, the Board and Executive may consider the development of policy or administrative procedures.

## **8. Policy & Procedure Updates**

Administrative procedures [522 P 001 Honoured Educator Award](#) and [902 P 001 Friends of Education Award](#) have both been updated to be current with our advertising practices.

This change will allow us to advertise using various methods and in a more cost-effective manner.

J. Labossiere went over changes to the administrative procedure 420 P 001 Short-Term Investment Guidelines. Changes reflect the new investment regulation in the Education Act. Some limitations on investing have been reduced.

Policy 530: Technology and Social Media Use had a small change to the policy statement. The addition of three items under guidelines already exist as procedures and were added for reference and clarity.

## **9. Teachers' Voice Update**

### **Communication Policy and/or Administrative Procedure**

M. Davidson requested a discussion on the development of a document to provide some level of guideline regarding communication etiquette.

The consensus of both this committee, and that of the Board, was that such document(s) should provide guidance more than directed communication protocols.

C. Freeman noted that we need to be cognizant that communication can have a sense of urgency and that there is a lot of room for miscommunication and error when texting and emailing.

M. Davidson added that texting has become less personal. Our staff ranges in age and perspective on use of technology.

It was decided that a sub-committee be formed to further discuss, research and draft documents to provide guidance and to support teachers and families on communication. Volunteers for the sub-committee were asked to email M. Davidson if interested.

### **Enrolment & Attendance Update**

The enrolment as at September 30, 2020 was provided at November 30, 2021 meeting.

Since September 30, 2020 our Division has had an increase of approximately 50 students. Unfortunately, we are not funded by the government for these students.

In Alberta approximately 30,000 students were simply not enrolled. The hope is that the government will provide some relief from the current funding model. J. Labossiere indicated that this year alone the Division will lose \$2.1 million in funding (over 3 years 50% funding first year, 30% the second and 20% the third year).

Alberta Education has also decided that families choosing to homeschool do not have to register with a school Division to do so.

We hope our school Division will recover enrolment, however, with Alberta's suffering economy we cannot be certain how many students will return. The main challenge is that we are unsure what government has planned for funding at this point.

Our student attendance was better than 90% for at home learning around the Christmas break which was 5 weeks for secondary students and 1 week for elementary.

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### **Coordinating Committee Minutes**

M. Davidson shared that in our Teachers' Voice Committee there was a request for a High School Hub. Our Division has already started conversations with Prairie Rose School Division and Coulee Collegiate. Information on this will be brought forward to high school administrators to share with teachers for feedback.

#### **Budget and Enrolment Projections**

##### **COVID Expenditure Summary**

A breakdown from the Fall budget was shared. In our budget consultation process with students, staff and families some of the focus was for direct supports to students and reduced class sizes. We received \$2.6 million in COVID expenditure funding that allowed us to employ more staff in support of these goals. We are not sure we will receive any type of funding in the upcoming year.

J. Labossiere stated concerns for the budget in the coming year with drop in enrolment, questionable federal funding, and continued expense related to offering Hub School.

#### **10. Motion to Adjourn 2:20 p.m.**

Future Meeting Dates: March 22, 2021 and May 17, 2021.