

## **ESSMY School Council Meeting Minutes - November 5, 2019**

**Attendance:** Sabrina Lalonde, Jeaner Moore, Colin Mackenzie, Lulce Nguyen, Lori Beerwart, Jenny Benke, Ed Beerwart, Kennedy Prodahl, Shae Lupaschuk, Joan Crockett, Greg Schell, Joe Becigneul, Francine Savinkoff, Cathy Giesbrecht, Monique Aultman, Gillian Brinston-Kurschat, Celeste Burdinsky, Chantal St. Jean, Helen Jamieson, Lisa Pasichnyk, Caren Heyza, Genevieve Gray, Stacey Jost, Sarah Inglis Mary Addison, Wendy Pillott, Don Pillot, Anita Rivero

1. Call to Order: 6:39PM
2. Acknowledgement of Territories: Mme Aultman  
ESSMY acknowledges that it is gathering on the original lands of the Cree, those of Treaty 6, and on the homeland of the Metis Nation.

Opening Prayer: Prayer led by Mme. Aultman

3. Review of Agenda - Celeste Burdinsky
4. Approval of the Minutes, as presented (OR as amended)
  - a. June 2019 - motion to approve minutes by Genevieve Grey, seconded by Helen Jamieson.
  - b. Sept 2018 (carried over; missing from Sept 10, 2019 meeting) - Cathy Giesbrecht - not sure where Sept 2018 minutes are. Anita was not secretary at the time and does not have the Sept 2018 minutes. States in the October 2018 minutes that the Sept 2018 minutes were approved.
5. Administrator Report - Principal: Cathy Giesbrecht
  - Healthy Hunger orders are increasing. Ordering and delivery of food going smoothly. School receives cheques monthly from Healthy Hunger, which helps out ESSMY. Any issues with Healthy Hunger, please let Cathy know.
  - A small cafe has been set up with items such as frozen dinners, cup of soup, cinnamon buns, etc. All items cost a few dollars. Run by grade 9 students. Profits from this cafe will be used to purchase water fountains for ESSMY.
  - Every class will have a chance to attend mass in the ESSMY chapel with Father Joseph
  - Business and entrepreneur week - items will be made and sold by students. Cafe will not be open during this week.
  - Grade 9-12 received visits from the Federal Candidates.
  - Side Kicks Mentorship program - a volunteer program for grades 9-12. ESSMY has a relationship with EMP.
  - Nov 6, 2019 - take your kid to work day for grade 9 students. This is not a school initiative, but a province wide initiative. Please mark child as an excused absence. Students who remain at school will have regular classes.

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- Nov 6, 2019 - Parent teacher interviews - a chance to talk about your child's progress. Hope to see everyone there.
  - Parent teacher interviews will occur three times this school year. Arena style each time. If you are concerned that you may not have enough time with your child's teacher or need to speak to them about certain issues, please email the teacher to set up an appointment for another time.
  - Report Cards will come out on Powerschool soon
  - Nov 22, 2019 - Health Symposium - no longer full days this year. Trying to do more of them. Full days were hard to fill up and keep students engaged.
6. Chairperson Report - Chair: Michelle Mackay - unable to attend meeting tonight due to death in her family. Our condolences go out to Michelle.
- a. Introduction of Celeste Burdinsky as Designated Chair for Agenda Item 7. Celeste is from Alberta School Council Association. Welcome Celeste, and thank you for agreeing to run tonight's meeting.
7. Trustees Report
- a. Overview of Discussion: Designated Chair: Celeste Burdinsky
    - i. Thank you to the three trustees; Joan Crockett, Greg Schell, Joe Becigneul for attending our meeting tonight
    - ii. Tonight's meeting will have a few basic rules in order to run smoothly. I will not use Robert's Rules of order but everyone will abide by the following: have good intentions, wait to speak, discuss only ideas, speak to chair, avoid using names, don't repeat questions, there will be a time limit and everyone who wants to speak will have a chance to speak.
  - b. Trustee's Monthly Report: Greg Schell
    - i. Celebrated Murals on Sept 17, 2019
    - ii. New school in Morinville opening in 2020
    - iii. Father Jan raised \$1200 at opening BBQ
    - iv. EMP raised money through nerf wars for kids with cancer
    - v. Board approved 10 year plan
    - vi. Submitted and launched proposal for faith in our future; had thought exchange, open house, and meetings with school councils.
  - c. Faith in Our Future Proposal Overview: Joe Becigneul, Joan Crockett, Greg Schell
    - i. (Joe) April 2019 - Annual board retreat, set goal to achieve drivers
    - ii. Need new school for Father Jan. The school is 63 years old and needs extensive renovations. It would cost more to renovate than to build a new school.
    - iii. Need to increase overall usage of all our schools; proposal to make ESSMY K-9, ESSMY high school students go to St Albert Catholic High School, which offers dual track French Immersion program. EMP kids will move over to ESSMY. MP outreach and district office will move into EMP.

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- iv. In five years, a new school (K-9 dual track), with 900 student capacity, is proposed to be built in Riverside. The growth of Riverside is estimated to be around 13K in 25 years. Need to build schools in areas where there is growth.
- v. Sale of Father Jan and district office will be used to remove portables. There are 97 old portables, 37 of them are 45 years old. They cost lots of money to maintain. They are leaking and are a fire hazard.
- vi. (Joan) There is not enough room to build another school beside Father Jan while students are there. Need to relocate them.
- vii. (Joe) Drivers lost in shuffle
- viii. Need to firm up K-9 French immersion. Demand is very strong for K-9, not as high of a demand for high school french immersion. Need for new school to be in a growth area.
- ix. Proposal launched in Sept 2019, received 20K comments on thought exchange. Still looking for alternatives.
- x. Board meeting Nov 25, 2019 where the ideas from the online survey will be presented.
- xi. (Greg) St Gabriel is not accessible for special needs
- xii. (Joan) There are concerns from parents that the board is only concerned about district office and not the students. This is not true. The district office exceeds fire code, there are safety concerns for staff. Fire marshal had to come in during their last meeting.

d. Parent Perspectives: Celeste shared Michelle's Concerns

List of Parents' Perspectives

The following issues have been reported to me by numerous members of my school community.

Distrust and loss of faith in our trustees, school board and principal.

-Many say they will not vote for any current trustee in the next election.

-Others feel so blindsided that they are willing to leave GSACRD entirely.

-Tensions are running high between the school community and school admin resulting in a breakdown in collaboration and cooperation.

The proposal is not in the best interests of current ESSMY students.

-Senior High students feel discarded and unimportant.

-Current Grade 10's and 11's want to be allowed to graduate at ESSMY

-Junior High students are concerned about losing the Junior High experience, losing time in the gym and cafeteria, losing options and classrooms.

Overcapacity of a combined ESSMY-EMP.

-Enrolment will decrease as discontent in an overcrowded school increases. Damaging to single track French Immersion.

-Class sizes and congestion resulting in decreased education quality and student outcomes.

-No room to grow thereby limiting the success of single track French Immersion.

Inaccurately calculated utilization rates.

ESSMY as a Gr 7-12, currently has a net capacity of 626.

Adding EMP to ESSMY and becoming a K-9 school alters the calculation of the instructional area per student, resulting in a lower net capacity of 588.

Based on 2019-2020 school year enrolments at ESSMY and EMP, we have a combined total of 687 students. Adjusting the headcount for kindergarten and students with severe disabilities results in 621 students. The utilization rate for the proposed K-9 would be 107% on day one. Imposing a 107% utilization on more than 600 young students to address the infrastructure desires of the school board is unacceptable.

This Board's solution to the lack of classrooms is to split current classrooms into

2. This is preposterous and still does not address the over-utilization rate. Damaging French immersion.

This Board has stated that the Faith in our Future proposal is meant to preserve and save single track FI. However it will only result in overcrowding and frustration, which in the end will discourage students from staying in the program. ESSMY has enjoyed an 8% increase in enrolment over the last 3 school years. The merger will leave no room for future enrolment growth and sets the FI program up for failure!

Conclusion:

We invite any and all Trustees to tour ESSMY with our ESSMY and EMP School Councils to visualize the outcome of a K-9 scenario. We are confident that doing so will clearly demonstrate that the proposed merger is not feasible.

The proposal is not in the best interest of ESSMY students

e. Response from Trustees

- i. (Joe) This is a proposal with timelines; may not happen, timelines need to relax for 2020
- ii. Looking for other ideas
- iii. Another proposal may be put together after looking at thought exchange
- iv. Safety of kids is paramount
- v. (Joan) Once plan is decided upon and before it starts, an architect and experts will be consulted to make sure everything is up to code.
- vi. (Greg) Will discuss with school and parents prior to finalizing
- vii. (Joe) Cost to operate a high school is beyond comprehensible, especially with the new budget cuts from the UCP government.

f. Q/A from 10 members

- i. Helen Jamieson - What is the commitment from school district to keep single track French Immersion? Is single track French Immersion high school not feasible in this district? Red Deer just recently converted from dual track to single track. Since the start

of Dual track at SACHS (2014/2015) has there been an increase in student retention?

(Joe) - Increased by 50 students at SACHS

(Helen) - 2010 high school enrollment around 130 students

(2010-2011 grade 9-12 high school retention about 60%. It is the same in 2019-2020). Is the long term plan to phase out ESSMY single track French immersion to go to dual track at SACHS? Is there any chance of saving ESSMY high school?

(Joan) 7 years ago the board tried to keep ESSMY high school students by introducing some options, like yoga. Students wanted more, such as sports programs, more options, and bigger school experience, which ESSMY could not provide

(Helen) Some students are concerned that some core courses they need will not be offered at SACHS.

(Joe) Students was higher grades to get Rutherford scholarship and other scholarships. They are taking courses in English instead of French in order to achieve better marks.

(Helen) How is MCHS french immersion run? They only have 13 students in grade 9 and 10 students between grade 10-12.

(Joe) Can't speak of the numbers

(Cathy) 10, 20, 30 FLA all together

Only have FLA and social in French. It is a stretch to fund MCHS.

- ii. Tim Jamieson - The board thinks we need to build a new school in a high growth area. I feel this is false. If you offer a desirable program, people will choose to come from anywhere. People who want the programs will always exist. If you do not promote the program, people will not come no matter where you put the school. There are people in the area with special programs who are turned away from other schools because it is filled by students from outside their area. We need to provide programs that will entice people to our school.

(Joe) The statement "Build new schools in high growth areas" is based on Morinville servicing a certain area. Building a new school at Riverside might happen in 20 years. Public division wants to build a high school in Riverside.

(Tim) If we work better to promote the programs we offer, we could increase enrollment. We can go out to recruit students. Show prospective students what ESSMY has to offer. No other school can boast about the academic achievement as ESSMY can. Why let that go? We need to promote ESSMY programs. What we have right now is underutilized by 67%. So the statement that we need to build in a high growth area is false.

(Greg) Father Jan lost students to Lois Hole school. Families are moving to new areas. Some families want to have community schools.

Single track French distinguishes us from public board. Keeping senior highschool students is a challenge.

(Tim) People moved to this area to attend ESSMY. ESSMY is a model school, a hidden gem school. We need to promote this as a division.

(Greg) Can't actively promote ourselves to Edmonton, etc. Promote via public.

- iii. Suazanne Morton - Provincial budget more severe than anticipated. Will this affect the proposal? Will the proposal be dialled down or slow down?  
(Joe) We will take a look at the feedback. There might be a solution that has not been proposed.  
We are looking at a 3 million budget deficit.  
Nov. 18, 2019 we will have a meeting with the minister  
We have been hit with a massive increase in insurance for all our Buildings. Superintendent and board need to fine money. We have 2.6 million less coming in.  
Capital plan - there is something for each school and division.  
#1 - Morinville - renovation for CTS program. Government agreed to remodel the program. Money for renovation coming from infrastructure budget not education budget. May impact program.
- iv. Colin MacKenzie - I am a parent with 7 children over all the schools being talked about. Moved back to area so that my children could attend EMP and ESSMY. When we lived on base, we still had our kids come here.  
Questioning the process - are we really being consulted.  
Are you going into phase 2 with moving kids and planning?  
We would like to see more conversations with you before anything has taken place. If we don't hear good news, parents and students will get fed up and will leave and therefore dropping enrollment.  
There are no magic solutions. SACHS can't succeed fully without sending over programs.  
(Joe) Phase 1 feedback. (Execution was set for 2024). Timelines were set without knowing the repercussions. We will take all that we have heard over the past 6 weeks and look over it. We will come back and consult again in Jan/Feb 2020.  
(Colin) Need to communicate new proposal timelines to parents and to the public so that they have hope of where to enroll their children for next year.  
Is this only a consultation or a real proposal?  
There needs to be a better platform for better communication between the board and the parents/public.  
(Joan) I would like to apologize. When we rolled this out, it was to the best of our expertise. If we were to do it again, perhaps we

would do it differently. The first report will come out at the end of the month, so can't change the report yet.

(Joe) Consultations are one of our strengths. Engage everyone; teachers, students, parents. We have won awards for consultations. We are taking lots of notes, we are here to listen and speak to you and not to you and we encourage you to fill out surveys.

- V. Jenny Benke - I have 4 children in EMP and ESSMY. One of my children went to a public junior high school but came back to ESSMY to get into Faculty St. Jean. I see SACHS to out compete ESSMY with a nail in the coffin to ESSMY. We need to keep ESSMY viable. We are hurt and angry about this proposal. (This may not have been intentional). Where are the people looking out for our children? Some students have already moved from ESSMY in fear of this proposal. Principals shuffled in June. What will you do to regain the trust of the ESSMY families?

(Joe) Process was laid out as it was because it had to be laid out. Going forward, we will have a 2 way communication system.

(Jenny) You need to show parents that you are listening. EMP doesn't need to move and the ESSMY high school students do not need to move next fall. You need to have another proposal in which ESSMY can be kept grades 7-12, single track French Immersion.

(Joan) Again I extend my apologies. There was no hidden agenda when this proposal was rolled out. We did our best to roll this forward.

- vi. Wendy Pillott - How much space does the district office need?

(Joe) Can't answer that. Some people are located at the Grandin Hotel and some are at the division office. Some people are working in cubicles. This proposal goes beyond office space. We are in need of housing professional development days, housing St. Gabes.

(Wendy) I am not questioning needs, but questioning how much space is needed?

(Joe) Can't answer that.

(Wendy) In the future, you need to use multiple means for communication with parents and public.

(Joe) Lesson learned. Emails were sent, perhaps they were picked up as spam.

(Wendy) Physical mail or a print out should be sent home with the children.

Some people have no clue of what is going on. A physical printed version on the email, or mail out addressed to the family. Need to use media channels, more than just emails.

- vii. Shae Lupeschuk - I am a current grade 10 ESSMY student  
Statistics indicate that there is only a 1% difference in grades  
Between French and English.  
ESSMY is a  
-UNESCO school, which we utilize in our learning and activities.  
-OCEAN WISE - promotes ecological health throughout the country and world.  
-Single track French Immersion  
Our school is really special. There is no other school like ours!  
I felt none of my questions were answered at Open How.  
Have you taken any action on phase 2?  
(Greg) No.  
All my questions on line were answered with robotic answers.  
I would really like to stay at ESSMY and graduate from here.  
(Joe) This is something unique to ESSMY which can be promoted.  
(Joan) Gave her congratulations to Shae for coming here tonight to speak out.
- viii. Genevieve Gray - Why are you looking at this situation only through a budgeting standpoint?  
Why are there only 3 French schools targeted? Why not the English Schools?  
(Joe) Another proposal can be to make ESSMY a dual track school and move Fowler students to ESSMY.  
(Genevieve) The only parents talking to you are from the three French schools being affected. You are not getting all the stakeholders involved.  
EMP does not need to be changed.  
Talk should be about how can we keep ESSMY viable as a single track.  
There are so many other options for single track French Immersion, which  
is at stake at the moment of being taken away if you go through with this proposal.  
Is the board really open to consultation?  
- At the open house, you already had phase 1,2,3,4 out for viewing  
- No other proposals given  
A singes proposal created tension and a war between the families affected and the board. It is not too late to back track. We don't only want one proposal, we want several.  
You seem to ask parents to provide proposals. This is not our job, it is the boards. We are not privy to all the information that you have. This is an unfair request of the parents. Are you really asking us for proposals?  
(Joe) We put our proposals out there for you to knock it down.



Mission Accomplished.

(Genevieve) Ensure that parents are aware of extended timelines. Look to share with all schools, English and French within our district.

(Joan) What areas do we need to deal with? We get revenue from government from growth. We have to look at safety, accessibility, etc.

This was our best proposal with the resources that we have.

(Genevieve) If you can't retain your students, you can't have growth. This proposal sacrifices enrollment.

(Joan) We are doing the best with what we have.

- ix. Stacey Jost - Thank you Joan for apologizing. We felt that there was no transparency.

I am hopeful that the board is genuine with the consultation process.

We need to address the following:

- Enrollment - St. Albert French Immersion has one of the highest enrollment rates in Alberta. Since the proposal, damage has been done to our schools. Some students have already left. Others are not re-registering because of not knowing what will happen.
  - Bragging about single track French Immersion. Our students hear French everywhere at ESSMY, while this will not happen at Dual track schools.
- ESSMY will lose their junior high students if you open ESSMY up to K-9. There will be not enough options for the JH students and the sports teams will be too small. Kids will leave for better options and bigger sport teams at other schools.

Has the board considered what you will do with the collateral damage that

has been done and will be done?

(Joe) Don't know what to tell you.

Better communication with the timeline, give more feedback.

- x. Ed Beerwart - Questioning the process of your proposal  
Your job is not easy. Thank you for coming out to our meeting tonight. Other board members should bear the brunt. Thank you for coming.

Inclusive of everyone

Formalized Decision Making Model

The problem lies with not mapping this out clearly in the first place, and so you have lots of problems arising. Did you use a formal model?

(Greg) No

(Ed) ID problem, criteria for problem, what are the drivers for the problem. Map everything out on big pieces of paper which you place on the walls around the room to visualize it. You can therefore see solutions to arising problems. Create a short list and choose the best alternative(s).

Use a large Sandbox (digitally). Involve all the people, and utilize parents.

Following a structure like the one I just mentioned, might be a better solution to this problem.

(Joan) What do you do?

(Ed) Teach at NAIT - behavioral psychology

(Joe) We used Thought exchange and we did utilize paper and walls.

(Ed) The more people you include, the more process time you lose.

Map everything out digitally, keep online for everyone to see and comment on, so that everyone is involved.

(Board) Thanked Ed for this input

Celeste - Thank you to the 3 board members for coming to this meeting tonight.

(Joan) Thank you

8. Unfinished/Business Arising

A. French Language instruction at ESSMY - Chantal St. Jean  
Advocate speaking French all day for improvement of language.  
Only 56% of instruction time is in French.

(Cathy) Discussed with teachers at staff meeting. Oral French is the basis of French. We understand the tremendous benefits of spoken French. I encourage my staff to speak more French with the students. There is a commitment to speak 50-80% French with the students.

(Genevieve) How do we know more French is being spoken?

(Cathy) Entrust teachers are doing their job. There are certain subjects we need to do in English because we are not a Francophone school.

(Genevieve) We would like teachers to speak French in the hallways like they do in EMP.

(Cathy) Entrust teachers are doing their best. Discipline is always done in English so that everyone understands. We always start our day with a French prayer. Mme. Aultman does this every morning.

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B. School council table: Parent Teacher Interviews - Chantal St. Jean  
Have a table at the interviews to introduce parent council or contact info of parent school council.

(Cathy) Welcome to have a table set up or we can put the info into the school newsletter. There is also info on school website.

C. School Fees - Tabled to next month's meeting

D. Propose to amend the 2019-2020 Meeting Schedule - Chantal St. Jean  
Additional meetings on December 3, February 10/11 and May 5

We didn't have pressing issues last year so we were able to meet every other month. This year we have more pressing issues, and in need of more meetings.

(Cathy) Dec 3, 2019 - no issue, but need to be clear that there will not be any new information regarding this proposal by Dec. 2019. We will not rehash the same issues regarding this proposal at every meeting.

February 10/11, there is a proposed open house for February 3, 2020.

This week will be very busy and not the best idea for an extra parent council meeting.

Decide on other meeting dates at the next meeting

9. Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 3, 2019

10. Meeting Adjourned: 8:59PM