

Edmonton Northeast Christian School Council Minutes – October 23, 2023

Chair: Binoy P.

Attendees present: There were 43 people present at the council meeting. Names are available from the school council record upon request.

Welcome by chair (Binoy P.).

Fola O. asked to add the approval of the September 25, 2023 meeting minutes to the agenda.

Agenda was approved: passed with clear majority, none were against nor abstained.

1. Meeting was called to order by the chair at 7:07pm, followed by an opening prayer.
2. Acknowledge members present and establish Quorum.
 - A sign-in sheet was passed around to attendees.
 - The chair mentioned that we do not currently have bylaws around establishing quorum and that school council would look into the creation of bylaws going forward.
 - Christina P., Society representative, said that quorum would likely last for many years and turn out to meetings may not continue to be as high as at present. Quorum shouldn't be too high as to impede future decision making.
 - Binoy added that at his children's past school, the number for quorum was 8.
3. Reading and approval of minutes of school council meetings held on September 25, 2023 and June 5, 2023.
 - Christina P. provided a correction to the September 25, 2023 minutes that she could not attend due not illness, rather than due to a liaison meeting conflict.
 - Fola O. mentioned that the September 25 minutes did not state which sections Raegan referred to in her motion to approve the agenda originally provided. Also, his name was misspelled in the June 5 minutes.
 - Leesa O. clarified that on September 25, Raegan motioned to adopt the original agenda, not to remove section 6B, as stated in the unapproved minutes. She further suggested that the minutes be revised to accurately reflect the September 25 meeting's proceedings and to approve them at the next meeting.
 - Todd L. asked if people could email in their concerns.
 - Fola O. mentioned that there were several typos and spelling errors in the minutes for June 5 and Sept 25.
 - This item regarding the approval of the June 5 and September 25 minutes was adjourned to the next meeting.
4. Alberta School Council Engagement (ASCE) 2023 Grant
 - Binoy mentioned that the application for the grant was made by Karla LW on the school council's behalf.
 - Karla added that the application was submitted and how the grant funds can be spent is on the Alberta School Council Association (ASCA) website. Money used from the 2022 grant does not carry over into 2023.
5. Frequency and duration of school council meetings. Determine next meeting.

- Binoy opened the floor for discussion on how often meetings should occur and said that the minimum number of meeting per school year is four meetings.
- Todd suggested regular monthly meeting that occur at the same time of each month
- Nathan M. agreed with regular meetings once per month and that such a meeting frequency would allow the council to address issues that may come up.
- Rebecca V. mentioned that in the previous year, the meetings were held every other month, skipping December and that she was not opposed to monthly meetings.
- Karla mentioned that she made the recommendation of meeting every other month for alignment with the West school which has their meetings during the school day.
- Denise G. added that the West and High School have their council meetings together and that if people have children in schools at the northeast and west campuses, it would be hard to go to both if the times were coordinated to be at the same time.
- Christina said that creating alignment between the schools helps to avoid rivalries and that the Society Board typically meets on the first Tuesday of the month so that's a time to be avoided.
- Amy D. said that if our school council switches to a daytime meeting that it would be helpful to have a hybrid of in-person and remote attendance options.
- Raegan S. added that monthly meetings would allow for tighter one hour meetings so meetings are less likely to go over the expected duration.
- Binoy mentioned that each school has its own unique challenges and suggested they be treated individually. He would like to have a meeting next month (Nov).
- Todd said that if the Society Board meets the first Tuesday of each month, then the school council should meet the last week of the month so issues can be brought forward from the council to the Society Board for their next meeting.
- Binoy will work on getting the next meeting date set for November.

6. Increasing Parent Engagement

- Amy suggested that creating a remote option (e.g. Zoom) for attendance would help but would not be needed if we keep an evening timeslot for meetings.
- Karla said that virtual option was tried at a meeting last year and that it did not work well in terms of engagement
- Binoy added that at his past school the number of those in attendance was lower but that gained parent input through committees. This approach could be helpful when authoring the council's mission and vision and the development of bylaws
- Raegan suggested that a parent survey could be used and that the survey could be translated into different languages to reduce barriers, if there were volunteers from the group to assist with translation
- Binoy mentioned that a survey would assist in the school council in meeting its legislated role.

7. Call for motion to compile bylaws governing out meeting and conduct of affairs pursuant to s. 55(6) of the Education Act

- Binoy suggested that the council work on formulating bylaws.
- Binoy added that the June 5 minutes mentioned people getting together to work on bylaws but Denise advised that those efforts did not go further than establishing an executive. Due to concerns about managing a bank account, the Society took on managing funds raised from hot lunch.
- Binoy said the council executive would look into preparing bylaws.
- Denise asked if bylaws were required.

- Binoy advised that while bylaws are not required, they would help by laying out the rules by which the council is governed and that without bylaws, many things are left unclear. Bylaws would help the council be clear about its purpose.
- Nathan asked if it would be the executive creating the bylaws.
- Binoy responded that section 17(1) of the Education Act's School Councils Regulation says that each school council may make bylaws respecting the conduct of its business and affairs.
- Jenn B added that bylaws would lay out the number of executive positions and how often the council would meet. The drafted bylaws would be voted on by the members.
- Binoy said that two-thirds of the membership would be required to support the bylaw for them to be passed.
- Karla said that the West/High School council does not have bylaws.
- Binoy mentioned that bylaws would help meetings run more smoothly.
- Edwin L. supported the idea of having bylaws and suggested that the executive draft the bylaws and the members vote on them.
- Karla suggested creating a subcommittee to make the bylaws.
- Todd motioned that the executive prepare draft bylaws to be presented to members for input
- Nathan seconded the motion.
- Karla recommended that the bylaws be provided before the next council meeting.
- Todd mentioned that bylaws could be obtained from several schools to assist with the drafting of the ECNS school council bylaws which could be amended over time as needed.
- Binoy added that enough time needs to be taken for members to provide input.
- A vote was taken on the creation of draft school council bylaws by the council executive, for which there was a clear majority, none against and 2 abstained.

8. Mission, Vision and Goals of School Council

- Binoy said that the School Council Resource Guide mentions having a mission, vision and goals for school council. These will help to focus the council's efforts, actions and purpose, and need to be in solidarity with the school and Society.
- Members were asked to communicate their suggestions for the mission, vision and goals by email, and that the email address will be provided.
- Karla added that they should be in alignment, but each are separate entities so it's good for school council to have its own mission, vision and goals.
- Edwin supported the idea of creating the mission, vision and goals and asked for clarification about the process for creating these.
- Todd mentioned that anything worked on gets voted in or doesn't.
- Jenn said that the executive asked for feedback and that the feedback will be used in the drafting process.

9. Unfinished Business

- Binoy asked if anyone wanted to raise an unfinished business from the June 5, 2023 or September 25, 2023 meeting.
- Fola asked if there was anything regarding traffic safety to share.
- Raegan clarified that at the September 25 meeting she asked to dispense with the item on traffic safety. There were no updates.

10. New Business

- Raegan clarified that at the September 25 meeting she asked to dispense with the item on traffic safety. There were no updates.

- Christina felt that school council had been a good opportunity for communication from the Society Board in the past five years.
- Binoy mentioned his commitment to try and keep the meeting duration within an hour so five minutes could be utilized for sharing Society updates.
- Raegan asked if there was any other business people wanted to discuss before adding time to the meeting.
- Lisa H. asked if the principal had a report
- Karla said she did have a report but it was not on the agenda
- Jenn added that the principal's report was good but that it takes a good chunk of the meeting and some people want it put on Schoolzone so every parent can get it.
- Todd asked for the principal's report to be posted with the minutes and the agenda for the next meeting.
- Karla said she could have her report posted with the minutes and the agenda.
- Rebecca V said she likes hearing from administration in-person but that the information could also be posted.
- Todd suggested having the information posted on Schoolzone in advance and providing five minutes for it in the meetings.
- Carita thought people want to hear what the report is and that it is not needed ahead of time. The principal could provide an abbreviated version.
- Binoy asked for the report to be added to the announcement of each council meeting on Schoolzone and supplement with a brief report at the meetings.
- Edwin said a standing order could be put in each agenda and the executive could manage the time during the meeting. The principal could be consulted to see how much time she needs.
- Rebecca wanted to hear from the Society as well at meetings.
- Karla shared dates of upcoming events that were posted on the school calendar on Schoolzone
- Christina asked if parents were welcome at the Remembrance Day assemblies and Karla responded that parents are always welcome at assemblies.
- A vote was taken to add 5-10 minutes to the meeting time for Christina to give an update from the Society
- Christina shared the responsibilities of the Society and the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB). See handout attached.
- Binoy shared that the Society can be emailed to send things to the Society Board.
- Rebecca asked how much the Fall Carnival and auction raised.
- It was shared that the Carnival raised \$17,600 and the auction raised \$40,000, all of which is to be directed to the NE site redevelopment called Creator's Classroom.
- Binoy brought the meeting to a close at 8:22pm

11. Closing prayer