

Aurora Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 17, 2016

1. **Call to order and roll call.** The meeting was called to order at 6:11 pm. By Dr. Shamir Mukhi, Board Chair.

Present: Dale Bischoff, Rehana Devji, Holly Maccagno, Shamir Mukhi, Steven Penney, Qumber Rizvi, Janet Rockwood, Jacquie Harmon, Ian Gray, Peter Dang.

2. **Agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda as amended made by Steven Penney

Seconded by: Rehana Devji.

Carried.

Additions to the agenda:

4.d. action research CoP

5. a. teacher dress code

5.f. letter to the Minister re: enrollment cap

3. **Board meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept the minutes of Sept 19 as amended, made by Steven Penney,

Seconded by Rehana Devji.

Carried.

Review of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Membership (September 19) to be considered at the AGM of November 24.

4. **Guest reports**

- a) **Elementary School Principal:** Jacqueline Harman reported on U of A student teachers, construction update, the teacher professional development schedule, school events/clubs, hot lunch program and the Oct 12 fire drill. However, most board questions and discussions revolved around two issues including lunch eating time and the after school study period.

Mrs. Harmon reported that some students were not finishing their lunch in the 15 minutes provided. Therefore she extended the eating period to 19 minutes. Teachers are concerned about their lunch break. During student eating time (19 minutes) supervision includes: 8 teachers, 4 paid supervisors, 2 volunteer parents and school administration supervising 17 classrooms. Teacher lunch breaks alternate from 26 minutes one day to 45 minutes the next day.

The other issue that Mrs. Harmon answered numerous questions on was how the after school (optional) study period operated. Parents wondered what the period was meant for as different teachers appeared to use the time differently. One Board member commented that the school website states that the after school study period could be used for homework or teacher help. Some teachers request that students do silent reading. All four grade two (G 2) teachers were collaborating and working on reading

while one parent in particular was asking to opt out of reading to do math homework. Mrs. Harman supported the grade 2 teachers for working collaboratively to improve student reading levels. This is a current goal in the elementary school. She stated that reading is also a homework goal. It was suggested that parent choice should be respected if a parent wanted to opt out. Is the after school study period related to the homework debate that went on last year? Both the study period and the amount of homework will be issues that the Board will bring up when parents and teachers are consulted in the spring of 2017.

Action item 1: Jacquie Harmon will provide a written update report on the grade 2 after school study period.

- b) **Middle School Principal:** Janet Rockwood reported on safety (fire drill and preparation for a lock down), teacher PD days, report cards (Nov. 25), the middle school teacher growth supervision and evaluation process, athletics highlights, school council and the robotics option.

Most Board interest was on Janet's brief explanation of the grade 6 and grade 9 PAT results which continue to be strong. A summary chart of Aurora PAT 6 and PAT 9 was discussed. Aurora middle school teachers are completing a full analyses of the results which will be provided to the Board. Mrs. Rockwood reported that while she was happy with the strong results from the PAT 6, she was disappointed that the PAT 9 had shown some slippage.

Action item 2: Janet Rockwood will provide a written report on the Aurora middle school PAT results.

- c) **Director of Technology:** Ian Gray reported that the Learning Commons (LC) facility is fundamentally complete, with only minor fixes necessary. The LC is open during recesses and during the lunch hour. Many students are visiting. The LC is also open during study and after school until 3:45 p.m.

A new staff member, Stephen Balchan, a certified teacher, was hired to assist with all things Learning Commons related. The utilization rates of the Chromebooks is very high. We have recently added a set of laptops which are shared with the middle school.

5. **Secretary Treasurer:** Holly Maccagno reported that work is ongoing for the annual financial audit. There will be a full review of the audit report at the Board meeting of November 21.

The other issue that Holly reported on is the urgent need to hire support staff assistance in the Board office. Two part time temporary positions are being advertised (one for transportation support, the other for office support). In addition a support person has been hired full time to assist in the Learning Commons.

6. **Superintendent:** Dale Bischoff reported that Phase 1 construction was substantially completed with some deficiencies (locker replacement and LC office remaining). Phase 2

modernization (elementary gym, elevator project) were on hold until a new architect search is completed. The elementary gym will be ready for gym classes mid-November. The Nov. 24 AGM preparations are well underway (nominations, parental notice etc.).

Finally, the superintendent provided the Board with copies of the Aurora “*Action research Community of Practice – Volume 1 2015-16 Annual Report*” publication that highlighted teacher action research over the past school year. The Board expressed support for the program to continue.

7. Board Committee reports

- a) **Communication** Rehana Devji reported that the Learning Commons opening on October 14 was successful. The 20th anniversary committee, parents, teachers and students were thanked.

Mrs. Devji also stated that she had concerns that the staff dress code was not well followed. She expressed that since students were well dressed especially on Mondays and dress days that teachers should lead by example by dressing smartly on dress days.

Action item 3: The superintendent will request that the Policy Committee review the dress code policy (AR5130).

- b) **Technology/Learning Commons** Qumber Rizvi reported that there had not been a meeting.
- c) **Finance:** No report. The audit is ongoing.
- d) **Transportation** Dale Bischoff reported that the transportation committee had made changes to the Windermere/Riverbend and Ellerslie routes to reduce the long student ride times. The expectation was that all Aurora bus routes would be re-planned before the end of the school year to shorten ride times. This would require fewer stops to pick up clusters of riders. The stops would be at ETS stops on wider roads (plowed after snowfall). We would no longer drive into non ETS streets to provide door service. Some parents were protesting that transportation services were reduced but our goal is to shorten student ride times without having to add more busses at considerable cost.

GPS implementation is slow in implementation as we have been short staffed at the Board office. Our transportation Committee is making progress with the planning support of parent volunteers Marla Leganchuk and Tejinder Bansal. A big thanks to both.

- e) **Policy:** Steven Penny reported that there had been no meeting.
- f) **Growth** (Shamir) No report as the highlights were covered in the superintendent report.

8. Board Chair items

- a) Let's grow together evening – team building. Shamir proposed a meeting with teachers to begin a process of stakeholder dialogue. It could be a casual get together with staff and spouses, or a Christmas party for staff hosted by the Board or perhaps a meeting with staff at a PD day. Shamir will meet with the school principals and superintendent to discuss some ideas about a meeting with staff before Christmas.
- b) Aurora in Review (AIR) with High School consultation. Dr. Mukhi commits to providing a comprehensive year-end written report to stakeholders at the AGM on the last year in review. Since one of the big current issues under discussion is school enrollment growth and the long held Aurora goal of providing a high school program of studies. To get outside feedback on how parents felt about enrollment growth and a possible high school program, Dr. Mukhi proposed having a consultant survey parents on organizational growth questions. Dr. Dave van Tamelen will be contacted to survey parents.
- c) The Board discussed their role on anti-bullying communication. Does the Board deal with this just in their responsibility for policy or should they send messages about tolerance in the school newsletters etc.
- d) Shamir attended the TAAPCS meeting in Calgary (Friday Oct. 7) as the Aurora Board representative. Dr. Mukhi recommends that Aurora directors support TAAPCS by attending their meetings. This is our primary network of professional colleagues and our best network for political support. We are in this together. Shamir reported on the research report that are regularly provided at TAAPCS meetings and stated that we needed to continue to support our Aurora action research community of practice (CoP). Reach is a mandate from the government for all charter schools.

Motion to go in camera made by Rehana Devji at 8:32 pm.

Seconded by Steven Penney.

Carried.

Motion to come out of camera made by Steven Penney at 9:20 pm.

Seconded by Qumber Rizvi.

Carried.

Calendar reminders

- a) Next Board meeting (Monday, November 21) 6:00 – 9:00 pm
- b) AGM (Thursday (November 24)

9. Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm