



**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING**

**Date:** February 22, 2022  
**Time:** 4:30 p.m.  
**Location:** via Zoom or Room 9 of St. Elias Community School

**In Attendance**

<p><b>Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cassandra Wheeler (Chair) – in person</li></ul> <p>Via Zoom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amy McKinnon (Treasurer)</li><li>• Tracy Kane (Councillor)</li><li>• John Fingland (Councillor)</li><li>• Tinha Chambers (Councillor)</li><li>• Marsha Sparvier (Councillor)</li></ul>	<p><b>Staff (in person):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nicholas Vienneau (Principal)</li><li>• Brian Eleniak (Vice Principal)</li></ul>
<p>Regrets: N/A</p>	<p><b>Guests (joined via Zoom):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hon. Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education</li><li>• Amy Ryder, Ministerial Advisor to Minister McLean, Cabinet Office</li><li>• Nicole Morgan, Deputy Minister of Education</li><li>• Marilyn Marquis-Forster, Superintendent, DOE</li><li>• Lori Choquette, School Council Liaison, DOE</li><li>• Erin Pauls, Director of Education, CAFN</li></ul>
<p><b>Minute Recorder:</b> Laurette Sylvain (Secretary) – via Zoom</p>	

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

It was moved by Amy McKinnon and seconded by Tinha Chambers that the agenda be adopted. All approved.

*Erin Pauls joined the meeting at 4:35 p.m.*

### 3. Approval of the Previous Minutes

Since Department of Education guests had joined the meeting, a member suggested moving forward to New Business and deferring this item to later. All agreed.

It was proposed that amounts in the Treasurer's report be corrected to be consistent with those from the written report submitted by the Treasurer showing School Council ledger account balance of **\$3,476.37**.

It was moved by Tracy Kane and seconded by Tinhá Chambers that the minutes of the regular meeting held on January 18th be adopted with the above changes. All approved.

### 4. Community Input (welcoming of guests/others from the community)

C. Wheeler welcomed all the guests and expressed thanks to Minister McLean and other senior officials to have attended today's Council meeting.

### 5. Principal's Report

Further to the Principal's reports emailed to Council members on February 22, 2022 and shown below, additional information was included as follows:

- 1) We are moving forward with the outdoor learning space, working with CAFN, YFNED and the Department of Education
- 2) The art project did not go through, we want to thank council for their support, we got funding from CAFN to move forward with the project which is amazing
  - *E. Pauls said CAFN has agreed to provide funding and it should be formally approved on March 24<sup>th</sup>.*
- 3) Second semester has started off well however there was a few small hiccups, will remedy this for next year.
  - *Course credits not allocated correctly. Course names should match B.C. names.*
- 4) Staffing plan is in we did get cut a 0.5 FTE of a teacher
  - *Was due Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>. We lost learning assistance time and high school teaching time.*
- 5) EA allocation requests are due March 03 and Eleanor Charlton is working hard on them
- 6) Cooks are cooking at Daku, things have been going well on the school end.

- 7) Eleanor has been completing reading assessments up to grade 4/5. Everyone is below the grade average on the reading assessment.
  - *E. Pauls said that CAFN would be interested in working with the school to come up with a creative solution to support the learners and close the gap.*
- 8) High school parent teacher conferences are March 1 and 2. Intern reports will go home before the conferences
- 9) Wise program is going well. They had a successful bison hunt and currently on the trapping trip.
- 10) Language teachers have organized a great week of ice fishing this week on Pine lake for all classes.
  - E. Pauls said food could be supplied at the WISE program because there is funding for that.
  - Pine Lake is overfished therefore it might be a good opportunity for students and community members to learn about the fishing regulations. N. Vienneau said that the Conservation Officer was invited to talk to the students about it.
- 11) Culture week will be March 28th to April 1st

#### [Principal Report Part 2](#)

### **6. Treasurer's Report**

Further to the Treasurer's report emailed to Council members on February 19, 2022, Amy McKinnon shared additional information as follows:

- The quote for the grad hoodies for the Class of 2022 was \$700 + GST.
- The School Council usually sponsors high school awards at year-end, therefore asked if amounts were available.

**Action:** Brian Eleniak will provide the amounts for high school awards to C. Wheeler.

#### [Treasurer Report](#)

### **7. Business Arising from Previous Minutes:**

#### **a) Standing Action Items**

- **All members:** brainstorm how to make use of our professional development (PD) funds. It was suggested that the funds could be used towards: *(we have been using funds towards FNSB communication and information).*
- **All members:** *Special meeting to discuss School Growth Plan (remove)*
- **All Members** - should read the *Inclusive and Special Education Review, including Child and Youth Advocate Attendance* reports on their own time and

this item should remain on the agenda for discussion. The reports were emailed to members and can also be accessed on YE's website. (done)

- **M. Marquis-Forster** - to follow up on My Math Path order. (we should start using after March break).
- **A. McKinnon** - will inquire at **Computec** Embroidery in Whitehorse to obtain costs for hoodies for 12 graduates. (done and provided to Council members)
- **C. Wheeler** - will obtain procedures from Elections Yukon as to how those who are isolating can still vote. (done)
- **C. Wheeler** – will speak with M. Chiblow to follow up regarding the tutor's concerns. (yet to do)
- **L. Sylvain** – to email Cindi O'Rourke to extend an invitation for 1 or 2 representatives from the student council to attend our next regular meeting on February 22nd. (done and ongoing)
- **L. Sylvain** - to draft a letter to the Minister of Education regarding teacher and EA allocation and send to School Council for review, once E. Charlton returns. (no longer necessary as issues will be addressed with DOE Minister and senior officials attending meeting)
- **L. Sylvain** – will draft a letter to the DOE for members' review re: Administrator's decision-making, request for review of Operational Plans and clarification on wording in the matrix/table provided by DOE. (no longer necessary as issues will be addressed with DOE Minister and senior officials attending meeting)
- **N. Vienneau** - will contact M. Marquis-Forster, the area Superintendent, on Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>, to follow up regarding the request for C. Segriff's extension. (done although employee is moving back to Whitehorse)
- **N. Vienneau** - will ask if high level data of Literacy and Numeracy results can be shared in the school's newsletter so that parents can view. (Data can be shared with School Council but not on newsletter).

b) First Nation School Board – refer to notes below.

c) Grad 2022

- An alternative plan for grad ceremony should be discussed in the event that the traditional grad cannot move forward as planned, due to COVID restrictions.
- The grad committee is tentatively organizing fundraising events for March 7.
- E. Pauls shared that 100% profits could be made by:
  - Students setting up a canteen and she could provide a Purchase Order and 100% profits would go towards the grad. They would not charge for the items being sold.
  - There could be ticket sales for an Easter basket, which E. Pauls has approved to purchase.
- Grad is still being planned for June 8<sup>th</sup>. As C. Wheeler will not be able to attend on that day and give a speech on behalf of School Council, J. Fingland offered to do so.

## 8. New Business:

C. Wheeler welcomed Minister McLean. Minister McLean said she reached out to all School Councils to build relationships and start conversations. She then acknowledged being on the First Nation traditional territories. She introduced officials from her staff and Department of Education senior officials. Minister McLean congratulated the St. Elias School Council and the community to have passed the vote on the FNSB and making that historical decision. She said one of the first Government to Government meetings she had was with Chief Steve Smith and she always remembers Chief Smith stressing that Education is our primary focus.

### a) Operational Plan from Department of Education, GY

Minister McLean acknowledged everyone's efforts on developing and following the operational plan. We have shifted in our way of monitoring and now asking parents to tell us if their kids are away for illness reasons and there is surveillance with that report. They watch for higher percentage of absenteeism from the daily reports received which show percentage of absenteeism. N. Vienneau said they are asked to self-monitor. Minister McLean said that there have only been a couple of outbreaks in schools. She added that if schools moved to remote learning, it was generally due to capacity of staff. Balancing public health and capacity are two areas to consider. Operational plan guidelines were changed over time. All schools have done an exceptional job.

Amy McKinnon mentioned that a letter was being drafted to identify some issues and the operational plan was one of them. She asked whether the territory's operational plan had been updated to reflect the new Omicron variant which was determined to be more transmissible than the previous variant. Was there a process in place to undertake a review? She then shared that the school posts the daily and weekly percentage of absenteeism.

Minister McLean mentioned that they work closely with the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) and Yukon Communicable Disease Centre (YCDC) and on a daily basis, a crisis intervention team is in place to monitor and manage. The only change that was required in November was that those measures we had put in place were adequate. We had already made those steps in November so it was determined that the measures and guidelines by adding the need for masks were sufficient. She said that they know that in-person learning is the best place for children to be. The plan is constantly being reviewed.

N. Morgan shared the process moving forward. With Omicron, we saw it was very transmissible. Exposure notices were past the date when the information would have been useful. Attendance surveillance is now in place. Percentages of absenteeism are monitored for the presence of communicable disease. Before the pandemic, about 5% of absenteeism was the threshold in which to report. With Omicron, the rate was much higher so they had to discuss how to handle that. Information is gathered from the Principals showing patterns from past to present. They also look at the vaccination

rate for the different age groups. They continue to meet regularly with MOH and her staff.

- b) School Closures &
- c) Principal's Decision-making and Authority

C. Wheeler noted that there was concern about what would trigger a remote learning scenario. She shared a situation faced by the school with teachers absent in one wing of the school, even though it may have not been a huge percentage of overall staff and there were other issues going on as well and we needed to make families feel more comfortable.

Minister McLean recognized the frustrations during that time and was aware that there were issues with the furnace as well. She stated that as we move forward with FNSB, there will be a lot of changes. Chief Smith questioned that situation with the Minister as well. She is interested in knowing what would work better in the future.

N. Morgan spoke about that process. She thanked C. Wheeler for sharing a bit more about that experience. Many community members are involved such as Principal, school council, and there were a lot of factors (boiler, cold weather, Omicron variant) in that first week back. She believed that Ryan Sikkes expressed his regrets to the School Council around that situation and agreed there could have been a better assessment of what was going on inside the school. It was complicated. HPW staff who look after the facility who were also feeding up information to the Director of Operations who was speaking directly with the Superintendent. That is the importance of the relationships and our communications so we can make efficient decisions. The only person who has the authority to close the school is the Minister of Education. Currently, we are still operating under the CEMA.

She said they acknowledge the need to work closely with School Councils and First Nation governments to understand what is going on in the community. She said that resolutions can be brought forward to the Minister to make better decisions for the community. L. Choquette did a lot of work to support School Councils to make resolutions. She also said that during the pandemic, First Nation Governments were making their own decisions for their citizens.

Amy McKinnon provided some more insight with the situation raised by C. Wheeler, which occurred in early January. She asked what the threshold was to move to remote learning. There is a document which shows % and majorities. With more than half of teachers absent, the school's high school students could still not move to remote learning. Our School Council passed a resolution to close the school and communicated that with DOE. We were unaware as to whether it was sent to the Minister's Office. We learned late in the day that the school was not going to close and there was no opportunity to speak with the parents. Council felt that the situation was not fully understood nor being acknowledged, therefore parents were informed through social media. Parents were unaware that many staff were gone, that boilers were not working, and the school was very cold. We wanted to ensure that the school community knew what was going on. The biggest concern was how we communicate with one another. We would have preferred that the communication be sent by the Department but felt we had to inform the parents when that wasn't done.

N. Morgan thanked the group for having the opportunity to talk about it. She stated that communication is key, before emergency situations occur. She replied by stating that the resolution that we received was still being worked on with the Superintendent and the ADM. While the outdoor temperatures were frigid, indoor temperatures were also very cold. There was conversation around that and reports about space heaters being deployed. She recommended that we have pre-established communication chains. She acknowledged that there's a lot of work to do on communication.

In terms of the percentages, the Deputy referred to the table (the blue color) as being the reference to decision-making around programming based on public health reasons. In many schools, it was a low-risk environment. Four high schools could not meet the health and safety guidelines so they went to 50% of their enrollment and went ½ remote and ½ face-to-face. Where we want low risk for public health reasons, we want high capacity for operational reasons. There were a lot of questions at the time about where our scenario fit in the table. The possibility of redeployment of staff was looked at. She agreed that Council was right in recommending the move to remote learning. Are there kids already at school given the temperature? She said the decision-making needs to be clear. The MOH continued to issue NO reason to close so we were looking at operational at that particular time. DOE's priority is on improving communication.

Minister McLean appreciated the scenario being described in that way. She said that it was clear there was a communication breakdown. There may be other similar scenarios which would require resolutions to be moved along and made the commitment to have a more direct line of communication and apologized for that situation to have occurred. She also apologized for taking so long to meet with School Council.

*Marilyn Marquis-Forster left the meeting.*

- d) Clearer Definitions under Appendix C – this was somewhat covered when discussing the need to go to remote learning.
- e) Rapid Testing in Rural Communities – did not address this.
- f) Staffing of Teacher and Education Assistant positions
- g) Staffing of Special Needs/Learning Assistance Teachers
  - Teacher allocation – there's a new formula which resulted in losing a half-time teacher so C. Wheeler asked for clarification on percentages as it just said "higher than average". The Minister said they are struggling to staff positions in Yukon. She said she thought it was not a loss of a half-time but a slight reduction.
  - N. Morgan said they are projecting reduced enrollment at St. Elias School. The index was moved to a reconciliation staffing so our school was scheduled to receive a .5 and then it got moved to .4 so it was reduced by a .1. Allocations were based on projected enrollment. She said they want to do anticipatory recruitment and are working with the Public Service Commission on that as well as on creating Yukon stories about what it's like to live and work in the Yukon, as a recruitment strategy. If enrollments go up, this is discussed with the Superintendent and Principal to see if patterns shift to increased enrollment but the cut-off date is September 30<sup>th</sup>. DOE is working with the FNSB to explain how they determine staffing teacher allocation while adhering to provisions in the collective agreement. In terms of Education Assistants, it's an ongoing conversation. She mentioned the work on the review of inclusive and special education. There is lots of work around service models. What are the different types of support that we will need? There is an awareness of mental health and actions to be taken. More generalists or



clinical support are needed in a Hub. There is an increasing concern of mental health around young people in the schools, and it will take months and years to recover from the pandemic.

- C. Wheeler shared that we no longer have a Counsellor in the Hub in August and therefore there is currently no Mental Health Support worker/professional in Haines Junction. She mentioned that many students are currently struggling and there's this lack of support.
- Minister McLean said that the impact the substance use crisis has on school communities is recognized. Many of our communities are struggling with so many losses and they are looking at holistic support.
- Minister McLean said she was glad that Erin Pauls was a member of the initial committee and could raise these issues when we transition to the FNSB. As N. Morgan pointed out, the work on inclusive and special education and looking at overall reports need to be addressed. She expressed that that was her commitment as Minister to make the shift in education. They need to be connected with our communities and our partners. Early learning to childcare to university and through the school system is vital for our community.

*C. Wheeler and those present at the school lost internet connection at 5:39 pm.*

- A member expressed that the models and ratios do not work for our school and was glad it was being reviewed as we move towards FNSB. We need to make the allocation model better, ensure it works for rural schools, and be adaptable to unique situations.
- The Minister said we have 8 communities of authority that will really change the allocation system. It was pointed out in the Auditor's report, Nikki Yee's report and the Child and Youth Advocate's report.

*Those present at the school re-connected at 5:41 p.m.*

- There were seven (7) recommendations from the Hidden Valley situation. Action plans will be released in the next few days. It points to some really specific work. Basing allocation purely on enrollment and not including need is not working. Minister McLean said her commitment is to address those recommendations. We are learning from the situations unfolding in our schools. Education should look different in 5-10 years. I have been given a lot of leeway from my colleagues and Cabinet to make changes. We should have the best system in North America because we are Yukoners and we lead!

#### **h) Computer Allocations**

- C. Wheeler says that it is difficult trying to promote computer literacy with less resources and having to make it work. Minister McLean responded that there is a dependency on devices and this issue is incredibly important. She said she is hearing that student needs are not being met. She believes this can be addressed at the Superintendent and Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) level to determine the needs and working with the IT department. Modern ways of learning do include remote. She felt optimistic that we were moving into endemic stage and a bit more normalcy.
- N. Morgan said they did a fair amount of work in understanding what role technology would play. Technology is refreshed every 3 years instead of every 5.



Moving away from computer labs. SESC was experimenting with blended learning. Many school communities found it wasn't going well at all. Students were just given courses online. From feedback, the students want a bit of both worlds – hands-on, go on the land, but they found technology more engaging and helped them work at their own pace. We learned that we're on the right path. We are not trying to provide each student with their own devices. That allocation model is not based on enrollment but on projections as to how much devices are going to cost us so that we keep within budget. There is: one Ipad for every 3 students; 1 MacBook Air for every 6 students; one (1) 27-inch Mac Desktop for every 15 students. Schools can trade in if they want to replace certain items to meet their needs. DOE was extremely well-positioned for this pandemic. We have a 1-to-1 cost sharing for laptops for all our teaching staff, so we didn't experience barriers for teachers to have their own devices to do remote learning because they already had them. We have one of the highest ratios in the country for devices. We learned in the pandemic that it's still not equitable. The IT team at DOE is now spending a lot of time to get our school network ready to bring your own device. Their child can bring that technology in the school and use it. We will continue to grow in this area. A lot of work went into cybersecurity. We had to do some work to increase security and get more bandwidth. We are trying to build models for local decision-making in how you set that technology up. We are working with the staff to make sure they understand that the secret to blended learning is that it is blended with hands-on experiential learning opportunities. She ended by saying that we work at the primary level to put parameters around the amount of time technology is used and gradually introduce the screen time.

- C. Wheeler said that the use of cellphones was banned at the school. There were concerns around students using Ipads for organizing of mischief. Another issue is having to purchase adapters out of the school budget. N. Morgan shared that they are looking at ways of limiting access on the school network and various social media platforms. We can block access to various types of platforms and putting parental controls. There is an education piece for students on the use of technology and their responsibilities. There are connections to digital literacy and understanding cyberbullying. We have a curriculum around digital literacy. There is a partnership with parents and school staff in how we roll out technology. These skill sets are very important tools for students, especially those continuing onto trades or post-secondary environments after high school.

### **First Nation School Board:**

Minister McLean congratulated the St. Elias School community for taking the leap in this exciting era. She was honoured to stand beside the leaders, the Chiefs, Mary Jane Jim who delivered the prayers, and Melanie Bennett. Erin Pauls and Jocelyn Joe-Strack are members of an Interim Governance committee and named some others. They will continue to work with DOE to ensure a smooth transition. There will be a number of next steps. The committee will launch a new Board. Until the Board is elected in the fall (Nov 2022 is the anticipated date), there will likely be many questions. She said she was excited about the next Chapter.

E. Pauls expressed that from a CAFN perspective, it was important to have healing in the community and it was a real honour to be a part of this process. She recognized that there is a division in our community between First Nation and non-First Nation so moving forward, she would like to emulate reconciliation and action as we do within our First

Nation governance. The School Council will have a front row seat. It's an exciting new Chapter.

The Minister encourages conversation to take place about that divide and ways in which to bridge it. She mentioned the importance of bringing the educators with us and to learn together. The FNSB will bring the First Nation ways and understanding cultural ways across the territory. She said she was looking forward to further dialogue around this. Everyone wants to make sure we are moving together.

C. Wheeler shared the feedback from the referendum and said the method and timing of communication of FNSB was not the best. Some would have preferred in-person which was not possible because of the state of the pandemic. Others felt that not all their questions were answered; for example, with selection of Board of Trustees. Once they see how everything unfolds, that was the uncertainty. All we can do is move things forward and show them it really was the right decision.

Minister McLean said her role was to stay neutral so while she saw some concerns online, she did not respond. Change management is part of what we need to do together. DOE will work closely with the Interim Committee. Melanie Bennett stated that it will take some time to see changes. Some determination will need to be around local advisory committee which are things that are being worked on right now. We want to help bring folks along.

N. Morgan emphasized that DOE's technical team has been working along the CCOM, who have been working very closely with the Interim Committee to ensure that proper structures are in place to ensure success. The first day of the school year is when School Council will dissolve. By then, the new Executive Director (ED) will be named.

Amy McKinnon emphasized the importance of having a local committee. Community members will likely be asking what comes next. What does the continuity look like?

Minister McLean said we know School Council will remain involved in transition until the first day of the school year. There will be a gap between August and November. The ED becomes an equivalent of a Superintendent. She said she didn't want to provide too many more details because that will be addressed in the process with those people in DOE and FNSB.

N. Morgan noted that on February 14<sup>th</sup>, there was a letter of agreement that was signed between Minister of Education and Chief Tramm and it outlined how the Governance committee was going to function in order to ensure a smooth transition. When the trustees get elected in November, they will approve actions or change with what the Interim Committee is going to be doing. N. Morgan said the Chief's Committee made it clear that the priority will be on local committees. They have a strong commitment to local input.

E. Pauls provided high level information as to next steps to all Directors at CAFN. She will be attending a first meeting with the Governance committee on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> and will raise the need to do community outreach as one area to address. Policies and procedures will have to be established and community consultations with those who have signed on will need to be organized. She will keep us updated. The importance of local involvement was emphasized by the Chief's committee.

The Minister said the agreement is a public document and encouraged everyone to read it. The Minister outlined some key points in the agreement. N. Morgan will try to locate a signed PDF version.

When asked about record keeping during the transition to the FNSB, L. Choquette explained that School Council records are not managed by the Department. They are

emailed to her for funding purposes and other technical reasons. Records are historical; School Council minutes would be sent to Public Archives.

It was suggested that in-person meetings be organized in the communities to discuss the FNSB and answer any questions.

C. Wheeler thanked the guests for having joined us.

*The Minister and her staff left at 6:41 p.m.*

i) School Calendar

Our PD day is Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup> so first day back for students would be August 29<sup>th</sup>. We would be getting out June 9<sup>th</sup>. It takes into account the statutory holiday in November. We had approved it with M. Mann last year.

**Action:** C. Wheeler will send the calendar dates to Lori Choquette.

## 9. Correspondence

N/A

## 10. In-Camera/Out of Camera

- In-camera started at 7:24 p.m.
- Out of camera at 7:39 p.m.

## 11. Next Meeting

Date: March 22, 2022  
Time: 4:30 p.m.  
Location: TBD

## 12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Cassandra Wheeler, Chair