



MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING – St. Elias Community School Council

Date: January 5, 2022
Location: via Zoom or phone

In Attendance

Members (via Zoom): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cassandra Wheeler (Chair)• Amy McKinnon (Treasurer)• Marsha Sparvier (Councillor)• Tracy Kane (Councillor)• Tinha Chambers (Councillor)	Staff (via phone connection): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nicholas Vienneau (Principal)
Regrets: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• John Fingland (Councillor)	Guests: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A
Minute Recorder: Laurette Sylvain (Secretary) – via Zoom	

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:37 p.m. Quorum was confirmed.

C. Wheeler opened the meeting by sharing that the emergency meeting was called on short notice because School Council had made a motion for the school to be closed and then was told that a motion wasn't required because the Deputy makes the decision if they feel there are unsafe conditions warranting school closure and the request to close was denied.

According to the Education Act, the School Council can only recommend school closure to the Minister.

N. Vienneau answered Council members' questions as follows:

How many students have been in attendance this week?

- There was 40% absenteeism of students yesterday and today was 61% absenteeism.
- It's almost easier to have all students do online learning with the number of staff and students who are absent.

How many staff are absent?

- 6 staff away yesterday.

- 13 staff were away this morning. Luckily 3 were late because of vehicles not starting due to the extreme cold and by lunch, we had 10.
- Tomorrow, there will be 9 staff away.
- Shawn Allen, the Administrative Assistant, may also be away tomorrow because she's not well. There's no relief admin assistant.
- The Vice-Principal is currently away.

How many classes do we have without teachers present?

- All classes are covered by substitute personnel.

What is the temperature of the school?

- The temperature in the school today was between 13-15 C.
- There are issues with propane regulators (when frozen, one of three boilers are working). The Property Manager did put a heater on the ventilator but the heater was removed. Tonight, the temperature is expected to drop to -47C. It will probably freeze up and will likely be around 13 C again tomorrow.

Other information shared:

- The School Council has asked the Department of Education to move to online learning for the remainder of this week, but that request was denied and the Principal was informed that the school would remain open.
- N. Vienneau also expressed concern that there should be adequate safety equipment for staff such as appropriate PPEs and/or face shields.
- N. Vienneau did take the concerns to the Superintendent who communicated the issues to the Deputy and the decision taken was that the situation was meeting operational requirements.
- YTA (now called the Yukon Association of Education Professionals) have asked the Government to delay the start of classes for one week.

School Council members expressed safety concerns with regards to the cold temperatures inside and outside the building as well as shortage of staff who are absent either due to extreme cold temperatures or illness. Members felt that parents had a right to know about the potential situation. When asked how many classes were without teachers, the Principal responded that every class is being covered by substitute teachers.

Weather Canada is forecasting -47 degrees C when school starts tomorrow morning and there may be issues with the boilers. Since School Council is concerned about the safety of the students attending school in-person this week, it was felt that parents should be notified of the potential situation prior to tomorrow morning in order to be prepared in the event that there are staff shortages and heating issues. Council members felt quite strongly that the situation should be communicated to parents in order that they be able to make informed decisions as to whether to send their kids to school or not.

Action: N. Vienneau will contact the Superintendent asking if a notice can be sent to parents before tomorrow morning so they can have a heads-up as to conditions at the

school. N. Vienneau will let School Council know of the Superintendent's decision with regards to this type of communication.

Action: Amy McKinnon will draft a notice to be sent to all families who have kids at the school and this will be distributed by the Principal on behalf of School Council as well as on social media such as The Happenings of Haines Junction Facebook site.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Cassandra Wheeler, Chair