

BIRCHMOUNT PSSC MEETING MINUTES

Monday March 17, 2025

Attendees:

Sandra Savard
Dominic Vautour
Craig Murphy
Grant Bourque
Melanie Doucet

Tim Carson
Lara Falana
Daphne Hachey
Lisa Bourgeois
Kelly Olaveson

Vivian Archibong
Christa Kirk
Owen Brinson
Vivian Lam

Meeting started at 6:30 pm by Grant Bourque

1. Opening

- Introduction of Members - all attendees introduced by name.

2. School - Principal's Report from Sandra Savard (Principal)

- Update on school facilities:
 - Gym – flooring work to be completed during Summer 2025.
 - Kitchen/Home Ec. Room – renovation in Summer 2025. Nathaniel Steeves had meeting regarding layout.
- Update on school enrollment, classes, staffing: 573 students (decrease) but 10 new students to start at school bringing enrollment to 583. Change in staffing – Mme Gagnon is off, Ms. Caul and Ms. Daley have changed roles to cover.

ACTION ITEM: Continue with school safety/improvement items. Continue school repairs/updates.

3. Birchmount School Update

- Student Life:
 - Sports: Boys/Girls Basketball has started; boys team won first game.
 - Clubs: Drama Club is up and running.

4. Proposed Calendar Change Starting in 2025-2026 School Year for AESD Schools – Sandra Savard

- Sandra presented a proposed change to the school calendar for the 2025-2026 school year, as recommended by AESD School Board. The number of PL Days to increase by 11 during school year, for Teacher Professional Learning time, collaboration with fellow staff and specific learning; resulting in 2 PL Days added per month.
- Currently snow days turn into Teacher collaborative days, virtually.
- Pilot Projects always running within province.
- The purpose for the change is to:

- improve student achievement and engagement,
 - increase Teacher training, mentoring and retention (e.g., estimated 500 Teachers to retire in 5 years, need to improve Teacher retentions especially past 5 years),
 - improve well-being of Teachers and reduce burnout,
 - increase collaboration among Teachers (e.g., Teachers teaching same grade/subject),
 - provide Teachers with dedicated hours to learn, needed during the school year (e.g., currently, last PL Day was August 2024; next PL Day is June 2025),
 - align systems across country and to align French and English School Boards in Moncton,
 - allow high school students to work on extra days off,
 - improve student mental health - Christa mentioned seeing 'Teenager' Mental Health conditions in younger children, and
 - provide parents/guardians with calendar ahead of time so they know when students have days off and can make necessary childcare arrangements.
- Effectiveness of change(s) to be monitored and qualified/quantified; changes to be ongoing; continued discussion and evaluation. Sandra confirmed data will be collected on effectiveness of changes, long term (e.g., engagement outcomes, community responses, etc.). Tracking to begin at start of project. Lara would like data to be shared. Melanie confirmed AESD collects lots of data.
 - Concern expressed regarding provincial curriculum vs. other provinces. Would students suffer with less instruction time/days in class?
 - Sandra responded that if Teachers have **more time** to prepare/learn/collaborate, they do better and students do better. School curriculum is new this year, so Teachers did not have much time to adjust.
 - Sandra mentioned a study by John Hattie, which found student achievement improved when Teachers had more time to prepare and collaborate. Homework had no affect on learning, so no changes to homework strategies.
 - Owen asked how the plan would be implemented. Sandra mentioned that the AESD would gauge interest, set pilot sites. AESD is more compact than other school districts. Will align English and French School Districts.
 - Could change a Monday-Friday daily schedule to a Day 1-5 daily schedule.
 - AESD to consult and address concerns of stakeholders (e.g., Teachers, Support Staff, PSSCs, etc.) before accepting proposed plan.
 - A more effective and sustainable education system: more Teacher collaboration improves student achievements (more students at grade level for reading and numeracy), graduation rates increase, improved student learning outcomes, better situation for Teachers (e.g., more collaboration, improved wellness, improved Teacher retention). Christa pointed out benefits to Mental Health - students learn better in classrooms where Teachers have good mental health.

- Owen discussed biggest impact will be on students in K-Gr. 5 because they will need caregivers on extra PL Days. Sandra mentioned impact on parents/guardians with young children and people who work from home.
- Currently student Teachers in practicums are pulled to teach due to shortages.
- Both Sandra and Dominic commented on Superintendent – fearless, willing to try new ideas, as long as in best interest of Staff and students. He also accepts responsibility. Wants to improve education system.
- Dominic mentioned that the BMHS Summer Learning Centre has high enrollment numbers for Teacher training/learning to improve/upgrade skills (on their own time), especially since COVID.

ACTION ITEM: Sandra to compile questions/suggestions/concerns/comments/feedback from Birchmount School PSSC Members and other school stakeholders. Forward to AESD /Superintendent for review.

5. Miscellaneous Notes

- Grant identified need for more parent/guardian members on Birchmount School PSSC, 6-12 members not including Home and School member(s), Teacher Rep(s), Admin. Especially since change(s) to education system coming.

6. Outstanding Items

- Discuss how to deal with Composite Graduation Photos (Sandra) – still on hold. Upcoming school anniversary (60th).
- Christa and Sandra to follow up and coordinate information sessions. Limited time due to Parent Teacher Interviews, PL Days, etc.
- Implement surveys to assess current school status.
- Follow up with AESD about volunteer requirements.
- Identify possible sports/arts/activities for students.
- Sandra to follow up with Home and School Committee for pizza lunch(es). (Ms. Nowlan, sports teams/clubs).

Meeting Minutes from previous meeting (January 20, 2025) reviewed and approved. Motion to approve by Owen, seconded by Craig.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: May 12, 2025 at 6:30 pm

***Discuss District Improvement Plan.**

Meeting ended at 7:28 pm by Grant Bourque

I trust that the above reflects an accurate account of our meeting. In the event that further clarifications are required or that any items are missing, please do not hesitate to contact the writer.

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Olaveson