

**SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING  
Tuesday, April 16th 2024  
SAM Library | 6:00 p.m.**

**Decisions**

None noted.

**1.0 AGENDA**

**1.1 Land Acknowledgement:**

We are grateful to live, work and play on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. This land is a traditional meeting ground, gathering place, and traveling route for many Indigenous people whose diverse cultures have enriched this land for generations.

We honour the Elders, Knowledge Keepers and other Indigenous voices who share their stories and wisdom with us as we work towards reconciliation in a good way.

We are treaty people and promise to work towards repairing relationships by showing kindness to each other and stepping gently on the land.

**1.2 School Council Purpose Statement**

*As we work to support and enhance student learning at SAM, we will participate in the SAM School Council in an advisory role to the principal where we will foster, develop, maintain, and reflect the culture of the school. To do this, we will create forums for discussion, provide opportunities for families to participate, and, to the best of our abilities, represent our various school community views and voices.*

**1.3 Attendees**

Dawn Rothwell  
Cam Makovichuk  
Linda Marchand  
Celeste Fowler  
Heather Friedenthal  
Kim Robertson  
Jennifer Bowen  
Lancy Dreger  
Michelle Provost  
Jayson Loewen  
Darla Loewen  
Sean Cheyney

John Allen  
Stacey Fortuin  
Stephanie Ladouceur  
Kolby Iezzi  
Stephanie Morris  
Sara Gossa  
Jasmine Buller  
Paula Requa

## 2.0 COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

At this point in the agenda, supporters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie School are invited to make brief comments or ask a question of the council.

## 3.0 MINUTES

### 3.1 Recommendation:

“That the minutes of the previous School Council Meeting ([March 19, 2024](#)) are approved as circulated.”

- Approved online.

### 3.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

- None noted.

## 4.0 COUNCIL BUSINESS

### 4.1 Trustee Report - Trustee Allen

- Trying to work out with the government building a new K-8 school and a new high school.
- Approved using the Outreach building for another ten years and the maintenance required for it.
- Budget came from the government. They granted the request from school boards to increase reserves available to the school divisions from 3% to 6%.
- In April, Alberta public school boards met. Most discussion was about challenges presented by government decisions. Some concern was raised about political parties moving into municipal elections and what that would mean for school board trustees. Alberta government’s desire to have all work done through them instead of the federal government could affect things like child care and education funding.
- Met with MP Cooper. Discussed work he did around transportation, early childhood education, Jordan’s principle bill that he sponsored. Trustee Allen will have a follow-up meeting with MP Cooper in May.
- Q: What does the school board think about Mother’s Day and Father’s Day and Family Day? Trustee Allen: The board does not have a position and lets school communities make their own decisions.

### 4.2 Council Business

### 4.3 Sir Alexander Mackenzie School Reports

#### School Report:

- Presentation: SAM's Work in Equity and Decentering
  - SAM has been a leader in the district with reconciliation and equity since the 2017 report. SAM has been recognized quite widely for their work. "Every child matters" includes all children.
  - Dr. Dustin Louie (UBC) helped expand the view of reconciliation toward equity. Equity is everyone getting what they need, not everyone getting the same thing. There are many barriers to equity.
  - Decolonization: challenging the single viewpoint or story that defines, interprets, and normalizes knowledge, experiences, and people. - Dr. Louie
  - Intersectionality: Recognizing that we all have different identities that intersect to make us who we are. Rarely does anyone understand all of our identities.
  - Decentering: understanding that there is a worldview that has dominated education in Canada. We are not eliminating that worldview, just making some room for others. "Whose voice is missing?"
  - Celebrating all families. Honours the truth in our students that they don't all have a mom and dad. Allows students to claim their family's identity in an open and safe way. Normalizes the diversity of families at SAM school. Ensures students with single parent/same sex parent/no parent/absent parent households do not feel othered. Brings together everyone who supports a child. Celebrates diversity.
  - Mother's Day and Father's Day are not part of the curriculum. While there is no curricular obligation to celebrate a holiday at school, we are looking for opportunities to continue strengthening our community with experiences that engage all families. Although it has been the norm to recognize and celebrate Eurocentric holidays, part of our decentering work has been to shed light on the experiences of our students who do not or cannot engage in these holidays. For example, our winter concert focused on the way many cultures use light in their celebrations. It was beautiful.
  - Aligning with St. Albert Public School Division's belief statement and policy that schools must be safe and caring environments where students, staff, and parents feel connected, valued and respected.
  - What we used to do cannot continue at the cost of student's emotional safety. Every teacher can tell you about a time a child was upset at school because of Mother's Day or Father's Day celebrations. Without intending to, we used to elevate the crafts and activities of these days over the emotional safety of a child. Now we know better. This is part of decentering. We are not erasing Mother's Day and Father's Day, we are making space for diverse families to feel included in our school community.
- Conversation: "Breakfast for Dinner" Event - Celebrating SAM Families
  - Q: Could it be an opportunity missed to celebrate parents?
  - Q: What if a child has a bad experience of family all together? How far does it go? The beauty of a word like "family" is that it can be defined in different ways.

Bring your people—whomever those people are to you. It's not for us to determine who those people are in your life.

- When you say, "This is for Mother's Day," and you need to explain to a child who does not have a mother that they can make the craft for someone else, it is painful.
- If we don't celebrate these holidays, why do we celebrate other ones? Chinese New Year, Thanksgiving, Christmas. How is this different from those events?
- This was a hard decision and a lot of thought went into it. It's not to make anyone upset. It's about those people who have to sit across from those kids and ask who else they might be able to make a craft for. Other kids ask, "Why are they not doing Mother's Day?"
- Crafts sent home from school tend to end after grade six. There is opportunity for families to create their own traditions that go beyond elementary school.
- We know better so we can do better. We want to avoid harming children.
- Suggestion: Lunchtime club for children who want to make a craft. Is that a viable option? Response: Why would it have to happen in the school? At SAM school, we will not have a club that excludes certain people. That's not the philosophical stance we take.
- Suggestion: Could teachers send a generic craft/art home for the Mother's Day/Father's Day weekend? Something that was created as part of the regular curriculum.
- Several teachers shared their experiences working with hurting students during activities targeted at Mother's Day and Father's Day. Some parents expressed support for avoiding Mother's Day and Father's Day within school. Some parents expressed disappointment at a perceived loss of Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations, citing a desire to celebrate mothers and to uphold traditional values.
- SAM school will celebrate all adults important to children with a breakfast for dinner event.
- [Parent/Guardian Input for Class Placement 2024/25](#)
  - Input should be what parents believe will benefit children in the classroom. Responses will help inform some classroom decisions.
  - Many families have toured SAM recently, more than in the past few years.
- PAT Exam Update - Alberta Education Announcement
  - SAM will field test the English and Math Provincial Achievement Tests (PAT).
- Family STEAM Night
  - May 2 evening will be family STEAM night where students and their families can come try STEAM activities.

Upcoming events:

- Wed, April 17th: SAM Songsters & Chorus Spring Concert (4:30pm)
- Mon, April 22nd: NO SCHOOL - PD Day
- Fri, April 26th: Spirit Assembly 10:30am
- Wed, May 1st: Kindergarten Test Drive, Cupcake Day, Early Dismissal
- Thurs, May 2nd: Family STEAM Night 6-8pm
- Thurs, May 9th: Class Photo Day, Sibling Photos, Kinder Grad Photos
- Thurs, May 16th: SAM Showcase

- Fri, May 17th: NO SCHOOL - PD Day
- Mon, May 20th: NO SCHOOL - Victoria Day
- Tues, May 21st: School Council and SAM Fundraising Meetings (6-8pm)

#### 4.4 Division Policy Review

- [Policy Review Process & Schedule](#)
- [Division Policy Manual](#)

### 5.0 OTHER COUNCIL BUSINESS

#### 5.1 Correspondence

- None noted.

#### 5.2 COSC

- No update.

### 6.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ASCA workshop is booked for May 16 at 7pm: Effective Engagement in Our School Community. It will be virtual and in the library.

### 7.0 FUTURE MEETING DATES

#### 7.1 Schedule future meeting dates:

- Tuesday, May 21st, at 7pm

### 8.0 ADJOURNMENT

7:17pm

## COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Linda Marchand</b>
<b>Vice Chair:</b>	<b>Celeste Fowler</b>
<b>Secretary :</b>	<b>Jayson Loewen (Stephanie Ladouceur, Paula Requa)</b>
<b>COSC Rep:</b>	<b>Linda Marchand (Celeste Fowler, Jazzie Buller)</b>
<b>Admin Team:</b>	<b>Dawn Rothwell (Principal)</b> <b>Cam Makovichuk (Assistant Principal)</b>
<b>Trustee:</b>	<b>Trustee Allen</b>