

SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, February 18st 2025
SAM Library | 7:00 p.m.

Actions

New actions:

- Dawn will reach out to Saffron Centre to look at dates for their availability and school availability in April and May. Will come back to our next meeting with dates to host their two-hour cybersafety presentation.
- Stephanie Ladouceur will reach out to find dates that Unplugged_St.Albert is having workshops in our community so that we can advertise to our parents.
- Jayson will look into coordinating an evening workshop to help parents set up their children's phones with parental controls. Date to be after the Saffron Centre cybersafety presentation.
- Jayson will draft a letter from our school council to the education minister and two MLAs in St. Albert to express parents' concern about the Literacy & Numeracy Screeners. Copy the premier, education critic, principal, and superintendent. Jayson will draft a letter and share with the school council attendees to collect comments for a week.

Previous Actions

- Dawn will coordinate with principals at Hillgrove, Lorne Akins, and Paul Kane to suggest a schedule for 2025-2026 SAM school council meetings that avoids the dates of their school council meetings.

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 travelling 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 Welcomes and Introductions

Principal: Dawn Rothwell

Trustee: Sheyanne Levall-Crouse

Chair: Jayson Loewen

Vice Chair: Celeste Fowler

Secretary: Christine McMurren

COSC Rep: Linda Marchand

Online moderator: Stephanie Ladouceur

Communication specialist: Stephanie Ladouceur and Stephanie Morris

Attendees:

Dawn Rothwell
Trustee Sheyanne Levall-Crouse
Jennifer Bowen
Lancy Dreger
Kim Phillips
Heather Friedenthal
Kim Smolley
Jayson Loewen
Celeste Fowler
Stephanie Ladouceur
Stephanie Morris
Darla Loewen
Jazzie Buller
Paula Requa
Cherise Fowler
Kolby Iezzi
Chantell Grandy

2.0 MINUTES

2.1 Previous School Council Meeting Minutes:

Recommendation: that the minutes of the previous School Council Meeting ([January 21, 2025](#)) are approved as circulated.

- Approved with no suggested changes.

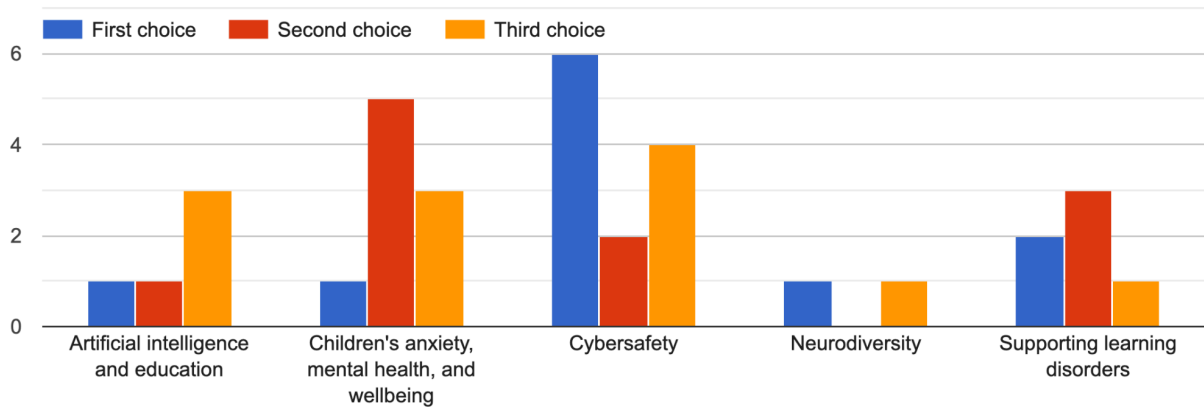
3.0 COUNCIL BUSINESS

3.1 Review the SAM School Council Purpose Statement

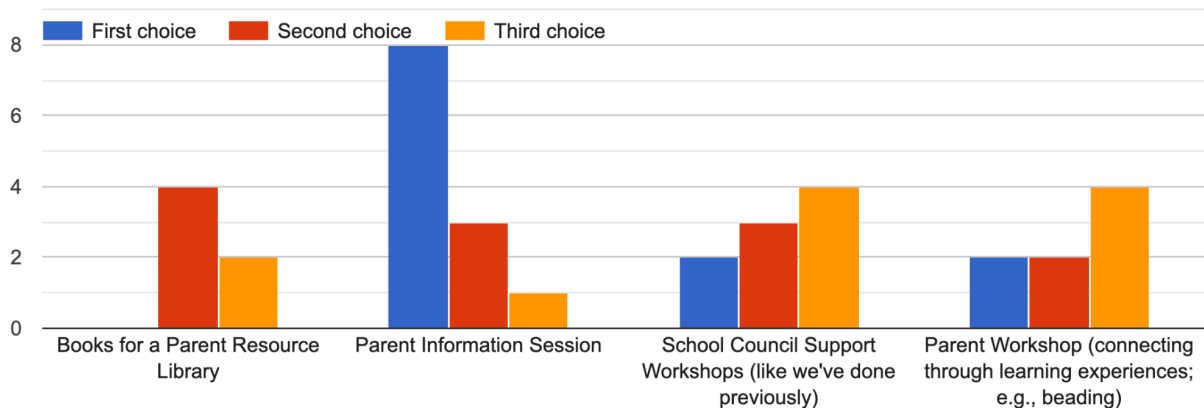
As we work to support and enhance student learning at SAM, we will participate in the SAM School Council in an advisory role to the principal where we will foster, develop, maintain, and reflect the culture of the school. To do this, we will create forums for discussion, provide opportunities for families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

3.2 Alberta School Council Engagement Grant: Survey Feedback (12 responses)

Which topics interest you most as a parent of a student at SAM?



Which engagement formats would you appreciate most?



Cyber safety came out overall as the number 1 topic. Parent information session was the most wanted format.

Possible sessions

- [Saffron Centre cybersafety presentation](#)
 - Cyberworld Presentation 2 hours @\$199
 - We can use grant money for this presentation.
 - Agreed to look for dates in April or May.
 - Dawn will reach out to Saffron Centre to look at dates for their availability and school availability in April and May. Will come back to our next meeting with dates to host their two-hour cybersafety presentation.
 - Discussed how to increase participation: set the date far ahead of time, send multiple reminders, consider creating a poster.

- Unplugged_St.Albert, a community initiative to raise awareness regarding the overwhelming negative effects of Smartphones and Social Media for children and adolescents.
 - Discussed whether to host a session at our school. Concerns were raised about hosting too many workshops in the last few months of school.
 - Agreed to advertise community sessions of their workshop.
 - Stephanie Ladouceur will reach out to find dates that Unplugged_St.Albert is having workshops in our community so that we can advertise to our parents.
- Workshops to help parents set up their children's phones with parental controls. It could be parents helping parents, or even teenagers helping set up in ways that they know are secure.
 - One suggestion was to ask a high school teacher of a computer course if they think teenagers helping secure phones would be appropriate. Jayson will reach out.
 - Agreed to pursue. Plan to have the workshop after the Saffron Centre cybersafety presentation.
 - Jayson will look into coordinating an evening workshop to help parents set up their children's phones with parental controls. Date to be after the Saffron Centre cybersafety presentation.
- Numeracy kits could be bought with the grant money (idea from COSC). Students could sign out the kits to keep learning at home.

4.0 SCHOOL REPORT

4.1 School Report:

Provincial Government Assessments

- [Literacy & Numeracy Screener Discussions](#)
 - 2023-24 Administration Grades 1-3
 - 2024-25 Administration Grades K-3
 - Teachers expressed concern about the time taken away from the classroom (24 for one teacher, 14 hours for another), the cost incurred (hired subs to allow one-on-one testing), harmful effect of students (some of whom cried), lack of utility to teachers, and disruption to the start of school process.
 - The division superintendent presented feedback from staff to the deputy minister of education.
 - Trustee: we continue to advocate that these assessments are not effective and the cost takes money out of the budget for other things we planned to do.
 - Question: What was the government's purpose for these tests? Trustee: To have something measurable across the province to show where students are.
 - Schools are required to do this and will inform parents when it is happening. We will try to do tests in a way that does not harm our kids.
 - This is the first year for kindergarten and third year for grades 1-3.
 - How can parents support? Don't put pressure on the kids about these tests. Downplay the tests with students. Don't put too much weight on one type of assessment.
 - Suggestion: A well designed sampling plan would allow collection of higher quality information at a fraction of the cost.

- Suggestion: Write a letter from our school council to the education minister and two MLAs in St. Albert to express parents' concern about the Literacy & Numeracy Screeners. Copy the premier, education critic, principal, and superintendent. Jayson will draft a letter and share with the school council attendees to collect comments for a week.
- 2023-24 Provincial Achievement Test (PAT) Results
 - [Gr 6 Social Studies - Digital Administration \(Results\)](#)
 - All PATs will be administered digitally going forward, starting this year.
 - A suggested next step for improvement seemed to be encouraging more debate, case studies, and project-based learning to strengthen analytical skills. Teachers in the school noted they already use those methods and that it is possible that the contexts in which students practice that thinking does not translate into written tests.
 - Comment: I heard that learning with pencil and paper uses different neural networks than typing on a computer, so assessing using a different method than was used for teaching may put students at a disadvantage.
 - Optional Administration (No results)
 - Grade 6 ELAL
 - Grade 6 Math
 - Grade 6 Science (No PAT; SAM piloted new curriculum)
- 2024-25 PAT
 - Grade 6 Math - Digital Administration
 - Grade 6 ELAL - Digital Administration
 - Grade 6 - Social Studies - Digital Administration
 - Grade 6 - Science (No PAT; optional Field Testing)
- Families can request that their students do not participate in the PATs. Diploma-level PATs cannot be opted out of.
- Teacher comment: Either we should care about a standardized test and students will care about it, or we should not care about it and not do much about the results. I am concerned about the huge volume of information in the new curriculum and how that will be tested with a standardized test. There are few resources for the new curriculum, except some online links from a government website, some of which (e.g. BBC content) are not accessible from Alberta.

[Provincial K-6 Curriculum Update](#)

- SAM Experience 2022-23
 - Implemented new K-3 ELAL and Math
 - Implemented new K-6 PE and Wellness
- SAM Experience 2023-24
 - Implemented new 4-6 ELAL and Math
 - Implemented new K-3 Science
 - Optional implementation of 4-6 Science
- SAM Experience 2024-25
 - Implemented new 4-6 Science
 - Optional implementation of K-6 Social Studies
- SAM Experience 2025-26
 - Implementation of new K-3 Social Studies
 - Optional Implementation of 4-6 Social Studies

- Teacher comment: The division did a great job supporting the roll-out of the new curriculums. Teachers support each other. Buying resources has come out of the pockets of teachers.
- Parent Comment: Albertans Defending Public Education is a group that advocates for students.
- Teacher comment: The previous curriculum had front-matter that gave context for what students were expected to learn over their twelve years in school. This curriculum has no front matter.

School Planning Update for 2025/26 School Year

- Kindergarten - Registration open now!
- Returning Student Registration - opens March 3rd!
- We are trying to attract more kindergarten students to the afternoon class. Morning classes are expected to be filled from within our catchment area. Afternoon classes will have openings.
- We need accurate registrations early to have good information for budget planning. Please submit returning student registration forms early! Spread the word.

Soccer Academy Update

- Expansion to other schools is planned: Hillgrove, Paul Kane, and Leo Nikerson.
- Parent Information Evening - Thursday, Feb. 27 @7pm Paul Kane
- Predict that SAM will continue with two classes of soccer academy.

[February 2025 Division Policy Review](#)

- E-140, Field Trips
- E-610-AR, Class Size
- G-100, School Council
- [Policy Review Process & Schedule](#)
- [Division Policy Manual](#)

4.2 Upcoming Events

- Wed, Feb 26 - Pink Shirt Day
- Fri, Feb 28 - Spirit Assembly (afternoon)
- Mon, March 3 - Returning Student Registration for 2025/26 School Year
- Wed, March 5 - Cupcake Day
- Thurs, March 6 - Div 2 Ski/Snowboard Trip
- Fri, March 7 - Staff PD Day (No Students)
- Wed, March 12 - Celebration of Learning
- Thurs, March 13 - Celebration of Learning
- Sun, March 16 - SAM Chorus at the Winspear

5.0 TRUSTEE REPORT

5.1 Trustee Report: Trustee Levall-Crouse

- Community Information: Potential School Sites
 - Trustee described advocacy work with the City of St. Albert for school sites, disagreement about where to build a high school, and urgency to have a school site ready in time to receive funding from the Alberta Government's school accelerator program. See attached report for details.

- Question: At some point, do we close school borders? Trustee: Some schools have strict borders depending on enrollment.
- Question: Does the division already have K-9 schools? Demko and Gish are K-9. Why pursue K-9? Gives more space for growth. It's easier to add a junior high later if we need more space.
- Question: Why do high schools offer the same programs? Trustee: They do offer some different focuses. Principal: You want some of the same experiences to serve all communities. Mechanics program is a big difference between the schools because Bellerose was built as a composite high school to target trades. One high school offers AP and one IB. Trustee: ideally we would have a wish list of programs to offer in the future. If we had a collegiate school, we could offer even more opportunities.
- Advocating for school sites took time away from advocating for more funding, better testing, and other issues.
- Questions: will the public and catholic school boards ever merge? Trustee: Legislation was written to allow the major religion in an area to have their own schools. Francophones schools are very protective. Unlikely to merge.
- Partnership workshop was last week. The division redid our beliefs. Connection, growth, and wellness served us well as coming out of the pandemic but we now need to go deeper.
 - Commit to one year of growth for each student, each year. Want to make it equitable for every child to achieve one year of growth.
 - The kids are much smarter than us when it comes to racism and bullying.
 - We will take back feedback and our Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Barrett, will summarize the work. Expect to publish in May.
 - Draft foundation framework:

We are a high performing education system.

Purpose: Equity is our process. Excellence is our goal.

We pursue equity and excellence by:

- Nurturing each other with kindness, dignity and compassion.
- Contributing to the development of curious and reflective learners who question, take action and seek purpose in their lives.
- Committing to a common goal of at least one year of growth for each student every year.
- Engaging in intentional and differentiated actions to meet the diverse needs of individuals and groups.
- Dismantling discrimination and addressing the impacts of oppression.
- Committing to a common goal of at least one year of growth for each student every year.

Our Principles

- Diversity is a fact. We are all diverse.
 - We honour diversity.
- Inclusion is a commitment. We act to value, respect and empower others every day.
 - We champion inclusion.

- Belonging is a feeling. Each person has the right to be accepted as their authentic selves.
 - We cultivate belonging.
 - Disruption is an imperative. We challenge singular views, experiences or stories.
 - We nurture disruption.
 - Pedagogy is a catalyst. We grow in our learning when we connect, explore and take risks within our instructional relationships.
 - We leverage pedagogy.
 - Accountability is a responsibility. We hold each other responsible for our shared commitments.
 - We embrace accountability.
- Next board meeting is February 19.

6.0 OTHER COUNCIL BUSINESS

6.1 Correspondence

- Grad sweaters: A parents asked if grad sweaters were going to be an option again this year. Email on Feb 6 included instructions on how to order by the Feb 28 deadline.

6.2 COSC Jan 30, 2025 summary - Jayson

- Deferred to the next meeting.

6.3 St. Albert Public Schools Partnership Workshop February 13, 2025 summary

- Attendee: Met with a parent group, mixed group, then combined into parent group again. Appreciated the mixed group and hearing from the students. It was great to hear from admin, staff, and support staff. The parent group that I was part of, from my perspective, was not valuable to the event. The discussion was overwhelmingly about how to know what our kids will learn every day and opt out when we don't agree with it. The feedback I gave about the event was that I wished the parent group was instead a mixed group of community members, not just parents on their own. We are not in the schools every day. The messaging of equity, diversity, and inclusion was not represented in the parent group—the people who attended could afford to take the day off or afford child care. I thought the mixed group was valuable. Not all voices were represented in the summaries at the end of the day.
 - Trustee: would collecting feedback afterward be helpful (to represent all voices)?
 - Parent suggestion: provide content ahead of time to attendees so they have time to think ahead of time and come prepared.
- Second attendee: It was a phenomenal experience to attend the workshop. I talked with people I normally would not talk with about subjects I normally would not raise. It was well worth investing most of a day to attend and the experience challenged my thinking. There is much we could discuss about the draft but I was more interested in what was not present. Education was not at the centre. Pedagogy was mentioned almost as an afterthought in the proposed foundational principles. Learning and growth were mentioned within the goals but they could be stronger.
 - Discussed the commitment to a common goal of at least one year of growth for each student every year. Achieving that for every student would be a huge

endeavour. Discussed if that was a strong enough mission or if it could be something more, like maximizing learning for all students. However worded, that goal could take more than all of the attention of teachers.

- At the workshop, teachers, parents, and a constable expressed concern that too much was being loaded onto teachers—educate, instill morals, discipline, and in some ways raise our children. The proposed purpose and principles seem to invite more overload.
- A possible ideal aim could be to get all students to the highest possible level we can get them to in the time that we have with them. Each student may have different growth potentials each year and some periods may require growth that cannot be measured academically. The aim should be optimal learning for all. Thinking like that can focus the job of teachers, administrators, students, and parents on how to optimize a group of students in the months they are in a class and the years they are in the division. The system includes everyone who interacts in the education of students, so optimization requires cooperation between everyone in the system—students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community. That is a huge mission. If that were at the centre, other principles and goals could support it.
- Aiming for an ideal that we can never achieve but always approach can give a true north direction. Creating constancy of purpose toward improvement of education services would give a purpose that never ends. Continual improvement of education or optimal learning or however it is worded seems like it should be the central purpose, with everything else supporting.
- Trustee: I will take the feedback to an upcoming board meeting.

6.4 Is the current school online calendar meeting the needs of families? (Continued discussion from January meeting.)

- Deferred to the next meeting.

7.0 FUTURE MEETING DATES

7.1 Schedule future meeting dates:

- Tues, March 18 @6pm
- Tues, April 8 @7pm
- Tues, May 20 @6pm

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

9:20pm