

**Parent Council of River Heights Elementary School**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 5, 2018**

Attendance: Taneill Selinger, Katie Albers, Tara Betts, Kristin Cassell, Juanita Whalen, Kim McDowall, Larissa Kowalchuk, Natosha Mastel, Laura Gale, Alana Durbeniuk

1. Call to order: Katie Albers called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. As a reminder, Katie referred to the front of the agenda for co-chair contact information and to the back of the agenda for meeting rules of order.
2. Adopt Minutes: Minutes from the June 6, 2018 parent council meeting were adopted by Larissa Kowalchuk and seconded by Alana Durbeniuk.
3. Presentation - Peggy Revell, Education Coordinator for the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter
  - a. Goal - to provide schools and families, those on the ground floor, with information, communication and resources related to family violence/abuse.
  - b. Programming/Resources - The first interaction with a potential victim can make the difference with regard to reporting and seeking help. The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter offers the following resources:
    - i. 24/7 Helpline (403-529-1091) - available to anyone in need of support, those in crisis and also those who are peripherally involved who have questions.
    - ii. Phoenix Safe House (First Stage) - provides 30 day emergency shelter to women and/or children to get them out of crisis situation. There is a trained worker on staff to walk through safety planning.
    - iii. Musasa House (Second Stage) - this is a year long program, townhouse living, offered to women and/or children. Counselling (adult/child) and support are provided to help rebuild confidence and prepare for life after abuse. Day care is also provided.
    - iv. Housing First - a community housing situation designed to provide safe and affordable housing for homeless individuals and families.
    - v. Outreach Services - located at the Ridge, there are workers on site available to offer support for all manner of situations.
    - vi. Youth Programs - teen programming and group support available through Outreach Services provide education and training on healthy relationships. Children's SAFE summer fun program for children affected by family violence.
    - vii. Safe Families Program - outreach workers team with Medicine Hat Police Service to provide continuing support after incident.

- viii. Partnership with SPCA - for those hesitant to leave a violent situation where a pet is part of the equation, the SPCA will provide temporary shelter.
  - ix. Communication - connections to all resources are available through the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter website [www.mhwss.ca](http://www.mhwss.ca) and on social media.
- c. Types of Abuse/Violence - Abuse/violence is about power and control. There may be complicating factors, but power is a choice. The responsibility is always on the abuser. There are repercussions for all family members and can be spillover into the school setting when family violence escalates. Types of abuse/violence (not limited to this list):
- i. Physical abuse - 1 in 8 women are physically abused. Most is obvious and will usually result in criminal charges with physical proof.
  - ii. Elder abuse.
  - iii. Emotional and verbal abuse - gas lighting as an example, where the abuser undermines someone with insults until they lose touch and question themselves. In good relationship, we lift each other up.
  - iv. Financial abuse - controlling someone's money.
  - v. Sexual abuse.
  - vi. Religious and cultural abuse.
- d. Signs of Abuse/Violence and Response
- i. Signs - signs can be difficult, just because you don't see them, doesn't mean they are not there. In some cases they are physical. Some will isolate themselves out of shame or put on a good mask. Abusers can also be tough to spot and could appear as someone kind and generous.
  - ii. Response - a potential victim may disclose something in conversation that makes you question what is happening to them. If you give negative reaction a victim will shut down. Be ready to listen, listen fully, affirm and express concern. Help them to understand they are not alone, what is happening is not their fault and it is not right. Encourage them to tell it like it is, not to downplay. You are not trained counselor, offer support and services. Remember to be respectful of victims position, don't confront the abuser, it can be dangerous and deter the victim from seeking help. Honor and acknowledge victims resistance and appreciate any steps they have made toward remedying their situation, regardless how small.

4. Reports from school and council:

- a. School Administration Team - Natosha Mastel and Laura Gale
  - i. Event Calendar

1. September 13 - Parent & Community Convention
  2. September 13 - Welcome Back BBQ
  3. September 17/18 - School Photos
  4. September 22 - Online Clothing Store Closes
  5. September 28 - River Flats Run
  6. October 3 - Goal Setting Evening
  7. October 3 - Parent Council Meeting
- ii. Introductions - Those present provided an introduction, name and information about children at the school.
  - iii. The Parent and Community Convention - This event will be held on September 13 starting at 3:15 pm, immediately followed by the catered Welcome Back BBQ on the tarmac from 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm. Medicine Hat College education students will be on hand to provide childcare in the gym for the duration of the convention, with a sign in/out system. In addition to presentations by the teaching staff, both Peggy Rivell (Medicine Hat Women's Shelter) and Tanis (Family School Liaison) will be in attendance at the convention. Tanis is a mental health care professional who will provide resources to the school twice a week, Monday and Tuesday. She will meet with students and parents with flexibility for home visits. More information will be available next week regarding this event.
  - iv. Newsletter - There will be a new format for newsletter going forward (smore). It is phone friendly with links to information in place of pdf. Once in place, feedback would be appreciated.
  - v. Meet the Teacher Event - On Thursday, August 30th, River Heights hosted its first meet the teacher event. There were 42 respondents to the survey regarding same and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. As a result, the first day of school looked very different, relaxed. Thank you to all who attended the event and provided feedback.
  - vi. River Heights Clothing Line - River Heights has partnered with Sports Connection to offer a line of RH clothing through an online format. There are samples in the display case near the main entrance of the school and Sports Connection will welcome anyone looking to try items on before purchase. The clothing is intended as a community builder, encouraging a sense of belonging. Although there is a nominal return to the school from purchases, the costs have been kept low to promote this idea. There will be a link in the newsletter to the online store.
  - vii. RH Book Club - Laura Gale and Laura Undershute are creating a River Heights book club as a way to connect parents. The club will meet once

in the fall and again in spring. The format and concept will be announced in September, with the first book title posted in October. They have partnered with the Medicine Hat Public Library to bring in copies. Anyone wishing to join can participate in a variety of capacities. A get together will be planned, with coffee and snacks, approximately two months after the title is issued, to discuss the book. More details will follow in the newsletter.

- b. Report from Co-Chairs - Katie Alberts and Taneill Selinger
  - i. Fundraising - the hot lunch program will be the fundraising priority this year. It was a great success during the previous school year and if targets are achieved, will meet all budgetary requirements for the parent council. With the exception of silent fundraisers such as movie nights, all other fundraisers will be suspended, i.e. popcorn, magazines, greeting cards. The target sales for the hot lunch program will be reviewed in January. Please encourage all to participate in this program.
  - ii. Remind App - the parent council has set up a group on the remind app to facilitate communication with parents for the hot lunch program and school events. To join, either download the app or text the number (587) 409-2952, then enter @rivheipc to find the group. This information will also be detailed in the newsletter and on Facebook.
  - iii. Committee/Volunteer Requirements - several committees are still in need of chairs/volunteers and must be filled within the next few weeks. Parent council will continue posting. The same core group of people have been supporting these initiatives over the last couple of years. We need new people to join in the fun and enjoyment offered by these rewarding volunteer opportunities offer. It was suggested that a more detailed description of the volunteer positions and time commitment would be useful in recruiting. Unfortunately, if we cannot find committed volunteers for these positions, parent council may have to forgo them. To date, email appears to be the most effective form of communication in recruiting. The committees and volunteer requirements are outlined below:
    - 1. Casino - Jerri-Lynne Worth and Mel Doyle
    - 2. Bulletin Board - Kathleen Longpre
    - 3. Council of School Councils - Katie Albers and Taneill Selinger. Alana Durbeniuk offered information to the co-chairs regarding reporting requirements for the council.
    - 4. Lost and Found - volunteer required. Looking for someone to tidy the bins throughout year, go through bins 3 to 4 times per year

and display items, post items on Facebook as required and transfer expired items to the parent council shed.

5. Library Helper - waiting for confirmation on the need. Kim McDowall offered access to Medicine Hat College students to fill this position if required.
  6. Fine Arts (Booking Special Guests/Events) - Larissa Kowalchuck
  7. Kindergarten Welcome - poorly attended last year, unlikely to continue.
  8. Hot Lunch - Alana Durbeniuk
  9. Movie Nights - Alana Durbeniuk. Alana would like to try to host two events this year, but is looking for someone to pass the torch to. This is a one day commitment and generates about \$300-500. A volunteer would assist in making popcorn. Kim McDowall offered to assist Alana.
  10. Family Fun Nights - volunteers required. Ideas include paint night and family dance evening with Mel Doyle (Renew Dance Studio).
  11. Skate-a-thon - Stacy Franz and Carissa Parsons
  12. Winter Village - committee/volunteers required for event in December. Tara Betts and Juanita Whalen offered assistance.
  13. Staff Appreciation - committee/volunteers required to honor teachers in the spring.
  14. Spring Fling - committee/volunteers required near the end of the school year. Some of the team from last year's event are willing to help.
  15. Donuts for Dear Mom (instead of muffins) - Janay Gregory
  16. Donuts for Dad - committee/volunteers required.
- c. Report from Treasurer - Kristin Cassell - see attached Financial Report
- i. Errors or Omissions - The current surplus as reported on page 2 of the report should read 2017/2018 Surplus - \$4207.28 and will be adjusted for a recent reimbursement to Tracy Herter.
  - ii. Optimal Learning Environment - Natosha Mastel offered that the funds have been put to good use within the classrooms and photos would be provided to parent council of the relevant purchases.
5. Report from committees and council representatives:
- a. Hot Lunch - Alana Durbeniuk
    - i. Hot Lunch Menu for September
      1. Friday, September 21 - Pizza and fresh veggies
      2. Friday, September 28 - Hot dog and freezies

- ii. The hot lunch menus for September and October will be in the newsletter. Alana is still waiting on vendors for price confirmation for November/December. The cost of everything in the marketplace is going up and will be reflected in the hot lunch pricing. Alana hopes to buy in bulk and freeze items wherever possible to minimize increases. Although some parents have reached out to offer help, more volunteers are required. There are a number of ideas under consideration to recruit parents and encourage kids to help out as well, i.e. assigning different grades to look after hot lunch and posting a list of requirements near the office for sign up. Alana will email an itemized list of volunteer requirements to Katie/Taneill prior to the Community Convention on September 13th so it can be advertised at the Parent Council table.
  - b. Casino - Jerry-Lynne Worth  
Report deferred until October meeting.
  - c. Spring Fling - Jerri-Lynne Worth  
Report deferred until October meeting.
  - d. Donuts with Dad - Chantelle Bruins (not present) forwarded a report through Katie Albers. The donuts purchased from the Redcliff bakery were delicious and the event was a success. For future events, however, the coffee requirements should be increased. Very few people checked coffee on the RSVP, but the supplies ran out. The event cost was \$521.62 and has been reimbursed.
6. Old Business - N/A
7. New Business - N/A
8. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

The next Parent Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 3rd at 7:30 pm in the library. Note: We encourage every family to participate in our online QSP renewal program. All funds raised will support our school. Shop at [www.qsp.ca](http://www.qsp.ca). This year we have opted out of the magazine fundraising campaign, but if you were to reorder, place a new order or shop, the profits will still come the school. OUR GROUP ONLINE ID ISL 36966036