

WBS School Advisory Council

Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025

Time: 07:00 p.m to 8:15 p.m

Location: WBS Seminar Room

Members Present:

- 1. Co-Chairs:** Gary Schmeisser (Community Member), Julia Spence (parent of P-3, French Immersion)
- 2. Principal:** Susan Casey (Principal PP- grade 6)
- 3. Support Staff (Library Specialist):** Heather MacIntyre (Support Staff Library)
- 4. Teacher Representative:** Shannon Christie (Grade 4 teacher, English Program)
- 5. Teacher Representative:** Corinne Trottier (Grade 5 teacher, English Program)
- 6. Teacher Representative:** Paola Bartolacci (Learning Support, English Program)
- 7. Parent Representative:** Alex Li (parent of P-3 student, French Immersion)
- 8. Parent Representative:** Haley Flewwelling (parent of P-3 /4-6 student, French Immersion & Home and School Representative)
- 9. Parent Representative:** Bei Zhou (parent of P-3 & 4-6 students, English program)
- 10. Community Member:** Tricia Schmeisser
- 11. Community Member:** Susan Hart
- 12. Community Member:** Janice Aucoun

Regrets: Courtney Smith, Joanne Treen & Shannon Christie

Observers:

1. Joanne Treen (Vice Principal, WBS, Grades 4-6)
2. Jacinta Heckman
3. Courtney Smith (Vice Principal, WBS, Grades PP-3)
4. Kelly Cull
5. Greg Monette

1. Opening

The meeting commenced with the distribution of the agenda and meeting minutes from the last SAC meeting from January 21, 2025. Round table introductions were had for new attendees. In the call for approval of the meeting agenda it was suggested that the order be changed to allow the community speakers to go first. This was declined.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the **November 19, 2024**, meeting were approved and distributed. The minutes will be posted on the school website under the SAC page.

3. Principal's Report: November 2024

1. Enrollment:

- a. We continue to welcome new students to WBS. Our enrollment is 1125 students
- b. We have welcomed over 76 new students to WBS since September 2024.
- c. Our grade 1 English classes are over hard cap by 1 student in each class. A couple of our grade 5 classes are over hard cap by 1 student; and FI Primary is over hard cap by 1 student.

2. School Events

- a. Winter Concert in December: The theme for our concerts this year was Blanket of Snow: Our Community is a Quilt. Our concert was a winter concert based around the themes of friendship, community, and togetherness. The intention of the performance is to share songs that feel cozy and warm and so we've included songs about snow, light, and being together. It is called Blanket of Snow because we are centering the concert around the idea of quilting.
- b. Spirit Week happened the last week leading into the winter break. Classes participated in our "Sparkles-the kindness reindeer" challenge and a Holiday Clue school wide game; We partnered with our Home and School Team to offer a school wide hot chocolate event for all students and staff. It was well received.

3. Student Success Plan for WBS:

- a. We have begun short cycle 2 of our success plan.

Literacy Goal: We will improve student achievement in literacy, with a specific focus on our students of African and/or Mi'kmaw/Indigenous ancestry.

1. Student Data: Our student data shows that our writing across the grade levels is lower than we would like. This information has informed our next cycle focus.

2. Strategy/Actions: What will you do next to impact the learning for ALL students?

- Explicitly engage students in firm learning goals for writing, why they are learning it, and the success criteria to meet the outcome. (Firm Goals-Flexible Means)

- Develop targeted strategies to further support the reading and writing reciprocity.
- Continue to use data from classroom assessments to refine and adapt instruction for individual and group needs.

<p>What will it look like when students are succeeding?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Classroom data will reflect student progress in reading and writing · Students will be able to speak about the learning goal they are focusing on, why they are learning, and what meeting the outcome will look like for them. · Students will be able to engage in longer periods of independent reading and writing tasks. 	<p>What will our practice look like when teachers are implementing the strategy/actions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Teachers will implement the UDL framework of Firm goals with flexible · Teachers will implement literacy workshop that intentionally highlights the reading/writing connection around the strategies being taught · Teachers will be engaged in collecting formative student data and lesson plan using the data collected
--	--

Mathematics Goal: We will improve student achievement in mathematics, with a specific focus on our students of African and/or Mi'kmaw/Indigenous ancestry.

1. Student Data: The student data shows that most students across the grade levels are meeting expectations or at cusp of meeting the expectations.

2. Strategy/Actions: What will you do next to impact the learning for ALL students?

- Explicitly engage students in firm learning goals, why they are learning it, and the success criteria to meet the outcome.
- Develop targeted strategies to further support stamina in problem-solving activities.
- Continue to use data from classroom assessments to refine and adapt instruction for individual and group needs.

<p>What will it look like when students are succeeding?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Student classroom data will reflect student progress in math fluency · Students will be able to speak about the learning goal they are focusing on, why they are learning, and what meeting the outcome will look like for them. · Students will be able to engage in longer periods of problem solving activities · Students will be engaged in the learning activities and are active participants in their own learning. 	<p>What will our practice look like when teachers are implementing the strategy/actions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Teachers will implement the UDL framework of Firm goals with flexible means · Classroom data will reflect student progress in math fluency using the document: criteria for determining students' level for computational fluency · Teachers will be engaged in collecting daily formative student data and lesson plan using the data collected · Teachers will design lessons and activities that engage students in their learning (foster active participants and build student agency)
---	--

Well-being Goal: We will improve student well-being, with a specific focus on our students of African and/or Mi'kmaw/Indigenous ancestry.

1. Student Data: What will you do next to impact the learning for ALL students?

The wellbeing data that we have collected indicates that there needs to be a continued focus on getting to know our students and families as they are known. By doing this, our WBS community will know that they are respected and valued for who they are.

2. Strategy Actions:

- Continue to support the collaborative work between classroom teachers and knowledgeable others within the building to support student wellbeing.
- Maintain and enhance community-building practices to foster student well-being and engagement within individual classrooms and as a whole school.

<p>What will it look like when students are succeeding?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students are actively engaged in school wide activities such as spirit week, food drives, and/or extra curricular activities, etc · Students are actively participating in classroom circles of discussion and learning. 	<p>What will our practice look like when teachers are implementing the strategy/actions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Staff are encouraging student participation in school wide and classroom activities; staff are also participating in these initiatives · Staff are working with knowledgeable others, by consulting or co-teaching lessons that focus on the students' social and emotional learning
--	---

Comments and Questions:

Q: Regarding students with special needs, do teachers have time to plan and deliver the learning to them?

A: Yes. Classroom teachers deliver a mini-lesson, and students go off to do their work. Teachers can then pull a small group or work 1-1 to spend time delivering instruction to students to meet the needs of those students.

This same process is followed in high school as well.

UDL (Universal Design for Learning) aids in this process. Teachers provide firm goals with flexible means to achieve them. Students have multiple means to demonstrate their understanding of the learning. Teachers always refer to the outcomes, what is it that students are asked to demonstrate?

Q: In terms of student choice and UDL, what if someone chooses to never read, at what point is there a conversation with families or the student to try something different.

A: The teacher can encourage them to try, or make a decision for them.

4. Parent Input

The School Advisory Council would like to acknowledge and thank WBS parents Kelly Cull and Greg Monette for bringing forward their concerns and feedback around the school concert.

Presentation from Kelly Cull

Ms. Cull presented to the SAC and provided feedback on the winter/holiday concert. She acknowledged the significant effort required to organize such a large student population for the event. However, she expressed concerns about the current approach to the Holiday Concert, particularly the absence of traditional holiday music and decorative holiday elements.

Ms. Cull noted that nearby schools, with similarly diverse populations, focused their concerts on December holidays, including Christmas. She observed that many WBS children were dressed in holiday attire yet sang unfamiliar songs with themes Ms. Cull felt were not celebratory or well suited for children. She pointed out the disconnect in the children's engagement during a time usually filled with excitement, cheer, and anticipation.

While emphasizing that diversity should always be a core value of the school, Ms. Cull celebrated how her own children participated in other cultural festivities at school, like Diwali. She suggested that WBS should not shy away from celebrating traditional Canadian holidays, such as Christmas. She shared the belief that it is possible to celebrate Canadian traditions in a way that is inclusive and respectful of all cultures and that celebrating cultural events together – even traditional ones – fosters inclusivity and supports learning.

Presentation from Greg Monette

Mr. Monette expressed that he felt similarly to Ms. Cull. He echoed that kids want to sing familiar seasonal songs that bring them joy and excitement. Mr. Monette continued that his reason for speaking to the SAC was to offer suggestions for WBS's consideration moving forward in how holiday concerts are approached.

Mr. Monette expressed his gratitude for living in a multicultural neighbourhood and was thankful his children were able to celebrate many different cultural traditions – both religious and non-religious - with their neighbours and friends. He was happy that they had similar exposure to this multiculturalism at school in their school activities and celebrations. As someone who has a background in theology, Mr. Monette noted the importance of celebrating everyone's differences as a way of uniting together.

Mr. Monette suggested that if the school holds a holiday concert, that it should be a holiday concert that is inclusive of traditional songs. He suggested that a survey be done to understand the cultural backgrounds of WBS's student population and that songs representing those cultures/holidays are sung by classes who also explain its importance. He felt that recording each class and then sharing it with all classes would be a great learning opportunity for students.

5. Old Business

None.

6. New Business - School Celebrations

Family Survey Results Summary

1. Inclusivity and Diversity:

- o Families value the school's multicultural celebrations, like Diwali and Lunar New Year, which promote respect and curiosity.
- o Some feel underrepresented holidays (e.g., South American or additional Asian traditions) could be added.
- o There's concern that traditional Canadian holidays, especially Christmas, are being overlooked.
- o Families want a blend of local traditions and global celebrations in events like concerts.
- o Celebrations foster belonging and joy but can also overwhelm families with busy schedules.
- o Families want to celebrate Canadian traditions alongside multicultural initiatives to maintain community heritage.

2. Suggestions for Improvement:

- o Incorporate both traditional and diverse cultural elements in concerts and events.
- o Streamline holiday schedules to reduce stress and provide advance notice for better planning.
- o Include cultural lessons and visual displays to educate students year-round.

Staff Survey Results Summary

1. Inclusivity and Diversity:

- o WBS effectively celebrates various holidays, fostering belonging and cultural awareness.
- o Balancing inclusivity with time and resources is a key challenge.
- o Limited time and knowledge make it hard to celebrate all holidays equally.
- o Celebrations help students learn about peers' traditions and reduce biases.
- o Ideas like cultural fairs or student presentations could enhance engagement.

2. Suggestions for Improvement:

- o Survey the community to identify important celebrations.
- o Invite families to share traditions or provide resources for authenticity.
- o Continue the current inclusive approach with small adjustments for balance.

Student Survey Results Summary

1. Inclusivity and Diversity:

- o Students value celebrations like Diwali, Lunar New Year, Ramadan, and Hanukkah.
- o Activities such as presentations and projects help students learn about global traditions.
- o Most students feel included, citing events like the Winter Concert and classroom discussions.
- o Some expressed a desire for equal focus on their traditions, including Christmas and Brazilian holidays.
- o Popular initiatives include Spirit Week, holiday crafts, riddles, and hot chocolate day.

2. Suggestions for Improvement

- o Incorporate more diverse holidays, such as Brazilian celebrations or Lunar New Year.
- o Balance multicultural celebrations with local traditions like Christmas.
- o Introduce interactive learning like cultural fairs, craft-making, or themed

Overall Insights and Trends from the 3 Survey Results:

1. Celebrations and Inclusivity:

- Families, staff, and students appreciate multicultural celebrations like Diwali and Lunar New Year, which foster respect, curiosity, and belonging.
- Concerns include underrepresentation of certain traditions (e.g., South American, additional Asian, and Canadian holidays) and the need to balance local and global traditions.
- Celebrations foster joy and connection but can overwhelm schedules or resources for families, students, and staff.

2. Suggestions for Improvement:

- Incorporate a broader range of cultural and traditional celebrations, including underrepresented holidays.
- Balance local traditions like Christmas with global celebrations to maintain heritage and inclusivity.
- Use interactive activities such as cultural fairs, themed performances, and other activities to engage students.
- Simplify event schedules and provide advance planning to reduce stress for families, students, and staff.
- Invite families to share traditions and provide resources to enhance authenticity and cultural learning.

3. Recommendations:

WBS should build on its strong foundation of multicultural celebrations by ensuring balanced representation, integrating interactive and engaging activities, and fostering collaboration with families. This approach can further promote inclusivity, cultural awareness, and a sense of belonging within the school community.

Questions and Comments:

Question: Will you be sharing this information with the broader school community?

Answer: With only a small number of people completing the survey, the information may be best kept within the SAC.

Comment: We don't want to lose what Canadian culture is, however, the concert doesn't need to be religiously slanted. Some people may want to learn those cultures (that are celebrated in Canada).

Comment: is this (a school concert) something our community wants? A lot of audience members left during the concert, despite many reminders not to leave before the end of the concert. These departures resulted in a lot of questions from students as to why people had left. It threw the school community for a loop with so many people leaving before the show ended. Staff were wondering if maybe the concert is not the thing the community is looking for.

Comment: Don't let this action end concerts at WBS.

Comment: There was verbal abuse from some audience members who were asked to pause their departure while classes were entering the gym to perform.

Comment: Next time expectations should be stated before the concert starts.

Comment (from SAC member talking of their lived experience, has lived in Canada for 20 years): Don't avoid the word, Christmas. From a newcomer's perspective, I want a Christmas. Offers lunch and learns for corporations to learn about Chinese New Year. Has had 14 events over the past 8 weeks. HRCE could adopt this approach, having high school students involved. Use the name (Christmas) and if you want to celebrate, celebrate properly.

Comment: Some of the dissatisfaction with the holiday concert, or poor attendance for the duration of concert, could be because there is an expectation for Christmas or holiday themed concert at school. WBS is made up of students who came from nearby schools where Christmas was celebrated at school and a traditional concert is held. This expectation is held by the families as well.

Question: The issue could be that the concert was during the day. Can it be held at night?

Answer: There are students with medical needs who require an EPA to attend the concert. EPA's do not work in the evening. All staff involvement post contractual school hours are voluntary.

Comment: The holiday concert is in addition to the outcomes required for music class. The songs were all chosen purposefully to meet curriculum outcomes in language arts, health, social studies for the grade level that sang them. There was teaching that happened in the music classroom and general classroom prior to the concert and songs were vetted and approved against the grade level curriculum outcomes.

Feedback: Some SAC members felt the curriculum should reflect holiday songs if teachers opt for a holiday concert as a learning activity. The principal noted that the school does not make curriculum- curriculum is set by the Province.

Comment: Can we continue this conversation at the next SAC meeting to get a firm answer to whether the concert next year will include traditional Christmas carols.

Answer: At this time, the current SAC cannot make the final decision about the future of the concert. SAC will revisit the conversation about the concert in September 2025.

Comment: It's never too soon to gather volunteers to help others learn about diverse cultures in the community.

Comment: There were lots of events in the building including, Sparkles the Christmas reindeer challenge, school wide hot chocolate and a visit from Santa. There is no fear of saying Christmas or celebrating it.

7. SAC Funds and Review of Funding Proposals

Motion approved to carryover funding approvals to the next SAC meeting in February.

8. Confirming the WBS Home and School committee will contribute \$2000 to the school mascot.