

**West Bedford School
School Advisory Council (SAC)**

November 28th, 2023, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Location: West Bedford School Library

Members Present:

1. **Co-Chair:** Karen Lockerby-King (parent of a 4-6 student, English program/formerly French Immersion program)
2. **Co-Chair:** Jamuna Loganath (parent of a 7-8 student, English program)
3. **Principal:** Susan Casey (Principal, grades PP-8)
4. **Teacher Representative:** Corinne Trottier (Grade 6 Teacher, English Program)
5. **Support Staff (Library Specialist):** Heather MacIntyre (Support Staff- Library)
6. **Teacher Representative:** Shannon Christie (Grade 4 teacher, English program)
7. **Teacher Representative:** Paola Bartolacci (Learning Support Teacher)
8. **Parent Representative:** Yin (Alex) Li (parent of a P-3 student, French Immersion program)
9. **Student Representative:** Meagan Fry (Grade 8 Student, English program)
10. **Student Representative:** Kanishka Loganath (Grade 8 Student, Eng, program)
11. **Community Member:** Gary Schmeisser
12. **Community Member:** Moataz Ibrahim

Apologies:

1. **Parent Representative:** Bei Zhou (parent of P-3 & 4-6 students, English program)
2. **Community Member:** Krista Beam

Observers:

1. Courtney Smith (Vice Principal, WBS, grades P-3)
 2. Isabelle Obeid (Supervisor)
-

Meeting Summary

The Co-Chairs set the agenda and Jamuna Loganath chaired this meeting.

1. Opening

The meeting commenced with the distribution of the agenda, October month meeting summary, and Student Success plan copies to the SAC members. New community members, and Kanishka Loganath (student member), introduced themselves, while others briefly stated their names and roles in the SAC team.

The meeting agenda was unanimously approved. It was suggested by the Co-Chairs that the agenda be posted on the school website under the SAC page prior to each meeting.

A discussion arose concerning the committee's role, prompted by Gary who expressed a desire for clarity on the committee's mandate and role. He emphasized the importance of understanding the committee's true role to avoid becoming a platform solely for parental complaints. Karen reviewed the role referencing the SAC agreement, bylaws, and guidelines, emphasizing the role of SAC in representing the school community and facilitating communication between parents and the school. Isabelle, the supervisor affirmed that SACs are not meant to serve as complaint platforms but rather as avenues for providing perspectives and feedback to the principal. The need for alignment and clarification regarding the committee's role as highlighted for further discussion in subsequent meetings.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the preceding meeting garnered unanimous approval from all attendees during the current session. A consensus was reached that, once officially endorsed by all members, these minutes would be posted on the school website under the SAC page.

3. Principal's Report:

Various updates were shared with the SAC by the Principal. The focus remains on building community spirit, with student ambassadors organizing a successful Spirit Week in October and currently running a cereal drive for the breakfast program. Plans for a December Spirit Week leading into the winter break and discussions on school branding, including the logo, colors, and mascot, were highlighted. The Fine Arts team organized a Remembrance Day virtual assembly, and upcoming events include holiday concerts and a spring musical involving student leadership. The school success plan, encompassing literacy, math, and well-being goals, was briefly discussed, with a detailed review anticipated later.

Professional development activities, including team building and workshops, were outlined for the upcoming PD Day. The SAC's responsibility in overseeing government funds, amounting to \$6,200, was mentioned, with a proposal for a systematic approach to teacher funding requests. Additionally, an update from West Bedford High included discussions on roles, communication methods, and initial steps in their School Success Plan. The meeting concluded with the principal's report, providing insights into the progress and initiatives at both schools.

4. Highlights

- i) **Reflection:** A discussion was held regarding the selection process for the new SAC Community Members. An executive decision was made by the principal for expediency. It was agreed there is an opportunity to improve consultation and collaboration going forward, and that selection of future members should follow the By-Laws (as approved by consensus at the meeting).

- ii) **By-Laws discussion:** There was a proposal to replace the specific quorum number with a two-thirds requirement to allow flexibility with changing membership. The importance of maintaining a minimum number for a quorum was highlighted, with a suggestion to set it at seven members. Members felt the agreement as proposed filled this requirement. Lastly, there was consensus on moving forward with the agreement as proposed, and members expressed their understanding of the bylaws, signaling readiness to proceed.
- iii) **Parent Survey:** The survey questions for parents were distributed to the SAC members except the new community members via email following the last meeting, receiving unanimous approval via email. The committee explored the possibility of incorporating the survey link in communications to both parents and students. It was decided to extend the survey link to the new community members for their input. There was a concern about the SAC's role in managing feedback and whether a survey was still relevant. Members acknowledged the school's newness and suggested addressing security and community well-being concerns through a possible public meeting.
- iv) **Policy Development:** Members sought clarification on their role in policy development, especially in the context of a new school with unique challenges. The understanding was that SAC could provide input on policies developed by HRCE, and the committee would be notified of policy reviews and changes.
- v) **Feedback Handling:** Concerns were raised about effectively handling feedback from parents and students. Suggestions were made for a structured system that acknowledges receipt of feedback and categorizes issues into manageable buckets. The importance of communication and transparency in conveying whether an issue can be addressed by the school or needs board-level attention was highlighted. It was also noted that HRCE has policies and procedures for staff to follow when handling concerns from students and parents. It would be good for the committee to become familiar with these policies.
- vi) **Addressing Concerns:** Discussion around the role of SAC and how the committee can help was discussed. The challenge of balancing the need to address concerns promptly with the reality of certain issues requiring more time for resolution was discussed. The importance of conveying to stakeholders that their feedback is considered and will inform future decision-making, even if immediate changes may not be feasible, was emphasized.
- vii) **Role in New School Development:** SAC members sought guidance on their role in the unique circumstances of a new school, where feedback could influence the development of new policies. The clarification provided indicated that feedback regarding aspects like school location would be considered in future planning, even if immediate changes were not possible.

- viii) **Secretary and Funds Manager:** The parent representatives stepped forward to fill crucial roles within the committee. Alex volunteered to undertake the responsibilities of the Funds manager, while Bei already accepted the position of secretary.
- ix) **Student Representative Issues:** The student representative raised concerns regarding school policies, particularly the school policy regarding not allowing cell phones in the school. The student proposed a more nuanced approach, suggesting regulated usage during class hours for educational purposes and during lunchtime for social well-being. Another concern involved limitations on eating times during class, prompting discussions about setting expectations and gradually introducing changes. Issues of racist language and challenges in understanding the perspectives of students from different grades were brought forward. Principal Casey noted importance of promoting positive behaviors and fostering a strong school culture was being emphasized. Principal Casey noted that building expectations and addressing specific issues, such as food waste and cleanliness, were key steps in creating a respectful and inclusive environment.
- x) **Student Success Survey:** The upcoming Student Success survey for West Bedford students was mentioned as a valuable tool for gathering data on student experiences. The survey results will be shared with the SAC to inform discussions and decision-making.

5. Action items for follow-up:

- i) Jamuna - to send the Parents Pulse survey to the community members for review.
- ii) Principal Casey to prepare the final version of the By-laws and the agreement for signing.
- iii) Principal Casey is preparing the Student Success Survey
- iv) By Dec 11: Co-Chairs to circulate the Agenda for the December 19 Meeting and the Minutes for the previous November 28 meeting.
- v) By Dec 13: All SAC members to send additions to the draft Agenda to be sent to Co-Chairs
- vi) By Dec 15th: Co-Chairs to send Final Agenda to all SAC members.

6. Next Meeting: Tuesday December 19, 2023

7. Meeting Adjourned: 8:00 PM.