

December 1, 2021



STEMIA SCHOOL COUNCIL

1204 96 Avenue SW
Calgary, AB
T2V 0Y1

MINUTES

Deborah Toth, Secretary

STEMIASCNovember(1)

DATE/ TIME

December 1, 2021/ 6.30 PM via ZOOM

FACILITATORS

STEMIA School Council Executive Committee

ATTENDEES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Golden (Gurmeet) Bhatia (Chairperson)
Shawn Furlong (Vice-Chairperson)
Deborah Toth (Secretary)

SCHOOL STAFF/ ADMINISTRATION

Kerry Blum (School Principal)
Caitlin Gillie (Teacher Representative)

PARENTS

Janet, Trish W., Cat K., Tammy K., M-C H., Bernette H., Sucheta A., Savitri D., Avril P., Pappala, Neetha P., Gabby, Jemma S., Rebecca O., Harpreet S., Etta A. Eloise A., Joseph P., Karen A.

APOLOGIES

Angela Ball (Treasurer)
Josephin Justine (Co-Treasurer)

CALL TO ORDER

Quorum declared to be present and meeting **called to order at 6.32 PM** by Golden Bhatia.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

WELCOME

Golden Bhatia introduced the members of the Executive Committee and gave a Land Acknowledgement.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

APPROVAL OF AGENDA WITH AMENDMENTS (Golden B./ Shawn F.)

Proposed amendment 1: Items 7.1 and 7.2 will be presented by Golden Bhatia instead of Angela Ball.

Proposed amendment 2: Items 7.3 and 7.4 will be presented by Shawn Furlong instead of Angela Ball.

Agenda with amendments was unanimously approved as distributed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 3, 2021 (Deb T./ Golden B.)

The Minutes from our November 3, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

REPORTS

CHAIR REPORT- Golden Bhatia

\$500 Grant from Government of Alberta

Our STEMIA Society's COO, Lisa Davis, sent in our request and our School Council was approved for the \$500.00 Engagement Grant. The grant funds will be deposited in our new ATB Community Spirit Bank Account soon.

New Bank Account

We opened a new bank account with ATB Financial. More information will be provided in our Treasurer report.

Website and Instagram

We are still working on our school council website and will provide an update at our next meeting. We are also in the process of setting up an Instagram account. Our Instagram page will feature updates about work and events.

PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE REPORT- Kerry Blum and Caitlin Gillie

KERRY BLUM

Special Guests at STEM IA on November 9, 2021

We had some special guests at the school, including Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, Education Minister Adriana LaGrange, and the MLA for our area, Minister Tyler Shandro. It was an honour to welcome these guests who stayed for over two hours. We showed them around the school and shared what our program was all about. We took them into the Hive and our students talked to them about the various projects they were working on in STEM101. Some of our Grade 9 students shared what they were working on in Social Studies, and gave them a tour of Ottawa through their VR goggles.

After a tour of the school, we had a closed-door meeting with our guests, Superintendent, Board Chairman, and co-founders. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the funding we received relative to what other CCSD and public CBE schools have been granted.

We also discussed some of our long-term hopes and aspirations for our program.

November 12, PD Day

Our staff spent some much-needed time as a group reconnecting. We talked about the shared vision we have for our charter school. This PD day was also a great opportunity for teachers of different grade levels to connect and work together.

November 19, Follow-Up Meeting from Premier Kenney's visit

We had a follow-up meeting with Deputy Minister of Education, Andre Tremblay as well as two of his ADMs (Assistant Deputy Ministers). The meeting was centered about our previous requests to the Premier on what they could give to our school and their updates.

November 26, Volleyball Tournament

Last Friday, on November 26, we had over 40 kids in the gym for our volleyball tournament. We couldn't join the league because of our late entry into the Athletic Association, but we were able to hold an in-house tournament with 4 teams. The event last about 3 hours and tomorrow, the winning team will face a team of teachers.

Calgary Athletic Association

We were able to successfully apply and join the Calgary Athletic Association which hosts teams from other Charter schools and Calgary private schools. This year, we will be part of their basketball, badminton, and track league. In the future, we will look at joining their volleyball, soccer, and cross-country league. We have ordered uniforms and we're sprucing up our gym. The tryouts were held this week resulting in 45 girls and over 70 boys trying out. What an amazing turnout! It's great to see our students wanting to contribute to our Sparks community.

Clubs

Our clubs are still going strong, Monday to Thursday. Our students in the robotics and art clubs are excited to keep exploring different subjects on a deeper level.

Report Cards

Our term just ended on Friday and our new options started this past Monday. We will be releasing report cards just for the option courses only. There will be final marks and comments from your option teachers. The report cards will be released via PowerSchool, so please log in PowerSchool and not Schoology to view the report cards.

Covid-19 Updates

Parents have received letters from our administration regarding two cases of Covid-19. Alberta Health Services will inform us of a positive case at our school, but often times, parents will alert us first if their family is affected by a positive case. It takes approximately 24-48 hours before AHS lets us know of a positive case within our school. If there is a confirmed exposure and if the student was contagious while in school, we will let the students' families know about the exposure. However, there is no need of isolation for those affected students. Our first case didn't involve any confirmed exposure, but our second case did. We reached out to students who were affected by the second case.

Our kids' hygiene has been amazing and everyone has been diligent with masking rules. We are still giving away lots and lots of masks every day. Please send two or three extra masks with your child so they can be used throughout the week in case of loss or breakage.

Upcoming Dates and Extended Absence

December 17- Winter Break. Kids will be out at 1PM

January 4- PD Day

January 5- Students come back to school

Midterms- January 10th-17th (ELA and Science)

January 18th (Social Studies) and January 20th (Math)

We will be providing lots of information to parents and students about midterms prior to these midterm dates. We do not expect students to be studying or doing a bunch of homework during the winter break as we understand that families need a break and spend time together.

If your child will be missing school for an extended period of time (3 or more days), please have your student fill out an extended absence form. The form will be passed around your child's teachers so they can share information about what your student may be missing or needs to work on. The form goes to the parents and comes back to me. This is important for our records and it would be much appreciated that you fill out this form if you're planning an extended holiday or religious celebration.

In-person Open House

We are hoping to have an in-person open house in February but that could change depending on what is going on with Covid-19.

Next Year

Last week, we held a virtual open house for prospective parents and over 200 participants attended the event. Mr. Kennedy talked about our program and vision. Next year, we are planning to have 4 Grade 7 classes. Next year, we will only have room for 4 Grade 7 classes. Today is the deadline to register for grade 7, even for siblings of students who are currently enrolled. We will be doing a lottery just for those grade 7 spots next year the week before the winter break. Siblings do get priority in the lottery draw.

As for our current Grade 8 and 9 students, we will be asking their families if they intend to return to school next year. A letter will be sent in March. If these students decline their spots for the next school year, we will then look at accepting new students to take these spots. A draw will be done to select students who are interested in our program at the grade 8 and 9 levels.

STEMIA High School Location

At this time we want to let you know that the government of Alberta is very committed to letting us open a school for Grade 10 students in September 2022. During the visits with the Premier and Deputy Ministers, these officials have expressed that they are committed to seeing us open a Grade 10 location. We have a proposed location and have submitted all the necessary documents. We are pushing for a final decision from them at the end of this calendar year. We have told them the importance of knowing of their decision by January 1st so we can start planning. We will provide some updates as soon as we're able to. Our Grade 10 will be at a different location than our current address, but I am not at liberty to divulge information about our proposed location.

I encourage parents to have a back-up plan and make sure you register a spot at your designated school. I will meet with our grade 9 students and carry out some high school program planning. I'll help them understand what high school looks like and we'll be supporting families as they start thinking about their grade 10 planning.

Teacher Representative Report

CAITLIN GILLIE

Student Council Update

The students have been super engaged- it's up to me and Ms. Ochitwa to make sure we can guide them and help their plans come into action.

The kids have so many great ideas about their pre-Christmas activities, and one of them involves selling candygrams priced at \$2 each. All the proceed will go towards a fundraiser

called Team Seas that aims to clean up our oceans. This idea is pending approval from the school administration.

Our student council is also excited to be planning out Spirit Week which will take place during the last week of school. Spirit Week may involve pajama day, ugly sweater day, etc.

We're still working with our students to help them figure out how the council should operate. Our students have made a suggestion box that will be permanently available for all students to put in their ideas and suggestions about what they want their student council to work on.

Another great idea that our student council had was STEM Olympics where students can sign up for different Olympic challenges. These ideas are just conceptual at the moment and we will consult with the school administration before we make any final decisions.

Instagram Account

If you want to follow our student council Instagram account, please send us a direct message with your name and your name of your child/ grade. We want to make sure this account remains safe and only includes members of our school community. Our username is @stemia.stuco.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from parent: Can you talk about shaming at the school. There have been some problems about body shaming and I would like for you to talk about this.

Kerry Blum: "I am not exactly sure what specific situation we are referring to, so I will speak more generally about this. As far as creating a safe and welcoming environment goes, this is incredibly important to us. We want everyone to feel safe so that they can maximize their learning potential. It doesn't matter how great the robotics lesson is, if a student is not feeling comfortable, that's a big issue. Any incidents that have been reported to teachers or through parents, we have dealt with it very quickly. We'll always be in touch with parents when their child has maybe made the mistake of speaking without being thoughtful about their words. We're open to students and parents reaching out because building that advocacy for our kids is important."

Question from parent: What will the report card look like? Will it be a letter grade or percentage?

Kerry Blum: "All of our grades across the board are percentages for core courses and options, exactly the same as what you see in Schoology. I encourage our parents to visit their child's Schoology account to keep up with their grades, assignments, or updates from teachers. PowerSchool is more of an official procedure that we need to go through for the government. If you have trouble logging in to your Schoology account, please reach out to your Stand-Up teacher or myself. Alternatively, you can talk to Ms. Cormier at the front desk and she can help you with the login information. Her email address is l.cormier@stemia.ca."

Question from parent: Can the student council look at fundraisers for our veterans or local organizations that deal with homeless people?

Caitlin Gillie: "That's a great idea and I will bring this up with the kids tomorrow. Thank you for this question."

Kerry Blum: "I also want to remind everyone that the student council is involved in fundraising initiatives that are different from parent council fundraisers. Our student council members are very passionate about various causes and we will help them "streamline" and make sure they

prioritize their fundraising goals. We'll make sure the kids care about global causes, but also help local organizations such as, the Calgary Food Bank as well as local homeless shelters, etc."

Question from parent: I know you can't give much information about the High School location, but can you at least indicate which quadrant of the city you are looking at?"

Kerry Blum: "Unfortunately I can't share any information about this for the time being. I can tell you that it is somewhat central and it is very close to the LRT line to a post-secondary institution in Calgary. That is all I can say tonight and I appreciate your patience and understanding."

Question from parent: For High School, will there be an AP or IB courses offered?

Kerry Blum: "Yes, we will be looking at advanced placement (AP). Right now, we are doing a lot of research on how we can effectively deliver those AP courses. We won't necessarily be offering pre-AP courses. AP courses technically means that they would have to go through an AP exam at the end of their 30-level classes. However, different high schools tackle this differently and at this point in time, we are committing to offering 20 and 3- level AP courses depending on our resources etc."

Question from parent: Will our Term 1 report cards be available for registration to our designated high school?"

Kerry Blum: "If you mean the official report card- it wouldn't be available until February 2022. We welcome you to take a screenshot of your child's report card if you want to share it before then for registration purposes. The deadline to register for alternative programs is the 15th of March, so that gives plenty of time for you to get the official term 1 report card. For other programs with earlier deadlines, please use a screenshot of your student's current report cards. If you need something more official, I can sign off on it. Please connect with myself or Ms. Cormier about this."

Question from parent: I want to dispute my child's grades. Who do I talk to about this?

Kerry Blum: "Good question, as per our policy, please go to the teacher first. To avoid confusion, we encourage our students to talk directly with their teacher and advocate for themselves. It's always best to have the student communicate directly with the teacher because they understand the specifics of different assignments or projects. If this isn't resolved, we encourage our parents to email the teacher directly. If it is still not resolved, then the school administration or the learning leader will step in."

Question from parent: The information in Schoology doesn't always match up with what appears in PowerSchool. Can you explain why?

Kerry Blum: "Schoology and PowerSchool are two separate software programs, but they're supposed to talk to each other to sync information about grades. We are finding, and this is not just our school, that PowerSchool is not translating the marks appropriately. I would recommend that you do not look at PowerSchool for marks. For now, just focus on Schoology for grades. Everything will be current in Schoology and avoid PowerSchool for marks."

TREASURER REPORT

UPDATE BANK ACCOUNT (Golden B.)

We opened a Community Spirit account with ATB, but this type of account could change based on the number of transactions we intend to process in the near future.

BUDGET (Golden B.)

Our Treasurers, Angela Ball and Josephin Justine, are currently working on a budget based on the school administration's wish list. We're looking at e-book memberships, picnic tables, and staff appreciation events.

PAUL DAVIS WORKSHOP (Shawn F.)

The Paul Davis workshop has been highly recommended to our council. He is a popular public speaker that helps students and parents navigate issues that come with online social networking.

More information: <https://socialnetworkingsafety.net/sample-page/>

Motion to approve spending for the Paul Davis workshop (Cost between \$1000-\$2000) (Shawn F./ Golden B.) POLL

Motion unanimously passed.

MASK INITIATIVE (Shawn F.)

Our School Council is looking at selling masks to our school community. These customized masks would have our unique school logo. They'll create a great sense of community and we're really excited about this project. We may be able to get a donation to pre-order these masks. If our potential donor is not able to help, we will look at collecting payment from parents first before distributing the mask.

Motion to approve spending for pre-order masks (Up to \$1000) (Shawn F./ Deb T.) POLL

Motion passed with 82 percent approval rate.

UPDATES

FUN LUNCH (Deb T.)

We made about \$500 with our first Fun Lunch which featured SUBWAY sandwiches. We value the feedback we received from parents and have passed on your comments to our Fun Lunch Coordinators.

CHRISTMAS INIATIVE (Deb T.)

We are looking into organizing a Holiday Week for our STEM IA between December 13-16. Awe sent a Sign-Up Genius form and asked parents to sign up for various meals, snacks, and anything they can contribute to this event. Thank you to those who have already signed up. We really appreciate everyone's enthusiasm and look forward to making this a special event.

CROSSWALK (Deb T.)

Shawn Furlong and myself put in a request with the City of Calgary for a crosswalk right where the entry doors are located. This would effectively help with the busy traffic during pick-up and drop-offs at this specific location.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date for STEMIA School Council is: Wednesday February 2, 2022
Ms. Golden Bhatia **adjourned the meeting at 7.56PM.**

