

February 2, 2022



STEMIA SCHOOL COUNCIL

1204 96 Avenue SW
Calgary, AB
T2V 0Y1

MINUTES

Deborah Toth, Secretary

STEMIASCFebruary2022(4)

DATE/ TIME

February 2, 2022/ 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)
Angela Ball (Treasurer)
Josephin Justine (Co-Treasurer)

SCHOOL STAFF/ ADMINISTRATION

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

PARENTS

Connie, Chris O., L.G., Kayers, Rita S., Cat K., Ibeth A., Viraj I., Ayaan I., Debbie F., Salima I., Tammy K., Lori S., Mina I., Raj, An K., Ksenechal, Advika P., Henny B., Giwa, Rebecca O., Aimee.

CALL TO ORDER

Quorum declared to be present and meeting **called to order at 6.35 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 (Deb T./ Golden B.)

Proposed amendment 1: Items 7.2 appear twice in the agenda. We will change the second item 7.2 to 7.3.

Proposed amendment 2: Items 7.1 will be presented by Golden Bhatia instead of Angela Ball. Items 7.3 and 7.4 will be presented by Josephin Justin instead of Angela Ball. Agenda with amendments was unanimously approved as distributed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2021 (Deb T./ Angela B.)

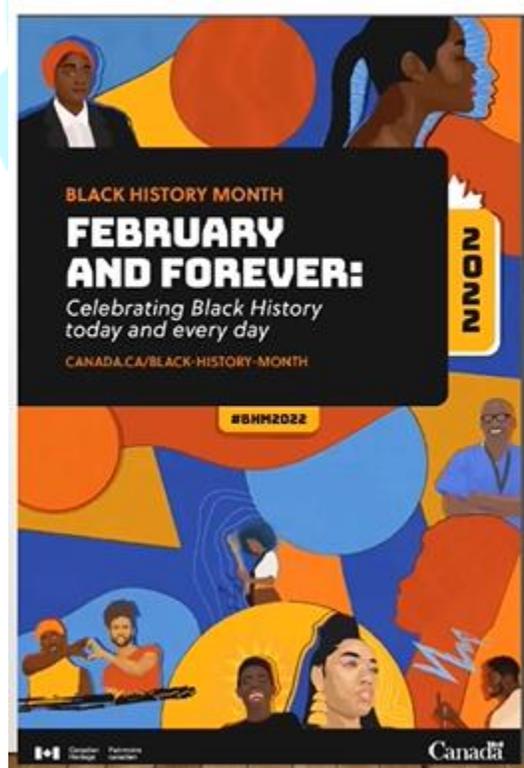
The Minutes from our December 1, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

REPORTS

CHAIR REPORT- Golden Bhatia

Black History Month and Lunar New Year

Golden wished a belated Happy Lunar New Year to families who celebrate this event. She also reminded everyone that February is Black History Month, where we celebrate and recognize the positive contributions of Black-Canadians.

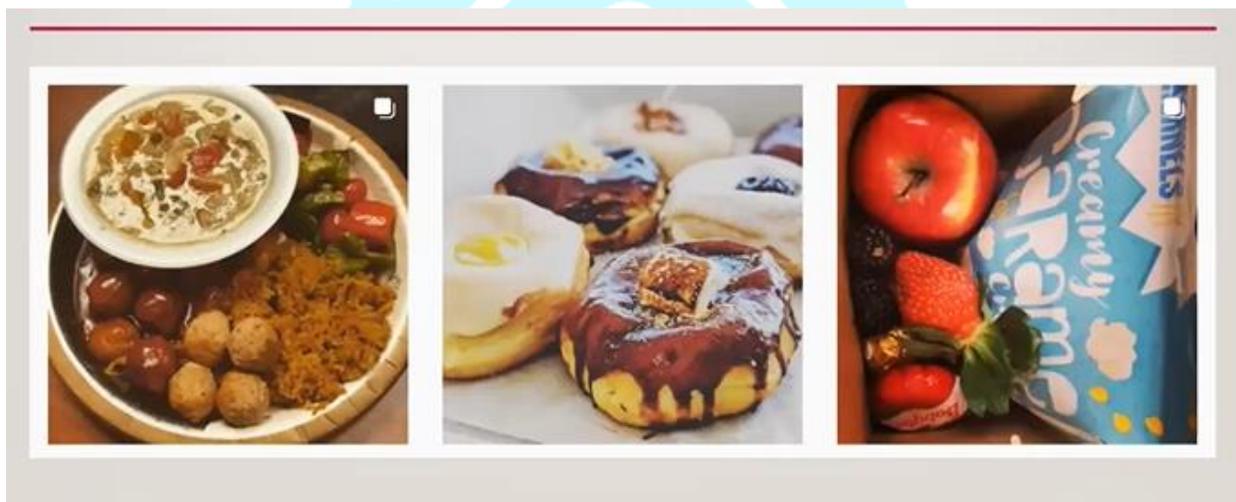


Instagram Account

Golden shared that we shared pictures of our Christmas and Fun Lunch (Booster Juice and Jelly Doughnuts) events through our Instagram account @stemia.paco.

Christmas Appreciation Gifts for Staff and Bus Drivers

Golden thanked all the parents who sent in monetary donations for council to purchase Tim Hortons \$25.00 gift cards for all 32 staff members and 8 bus drivers. The gifts were incredibly well received. She also thanked parents for their food contributions for the Holiday grazing boxes and the delicious homemade dishes.



Mask and Rapid Test Kit Distribution

Mask packaging and COVID-19 test kits distribution was carried out by a group of volunteer parents. Golden thanked the parent volunteers for staying longer than their scheduled shift to make sure the distribution process was a success.

Golden shared that parents had questions and concerns regarding the evolving COVID-19 situation. She thanked our School Principal and School Superintendent for their hard work during those uncertain times.

New Website

Golden shared the address of the new website for the STEMIA School Council and Parent Fundraising Society. She invited parents to visit the site at www.stemiacouncil.ca

Priorities

A pre-council meeting took place between the School Principal and the school council executives. During this meeting, Ms. Blum shared that the school's Wishlist and priorities include: Outdoor picnic tables; Paul Davis Online Safety Workshop; Portable Fitness Equipment; and an Electronic Library.

Science Fair

The STEMIA Science Fair will take place on February 25, 2022. A pre-council meeting vote took place among the 5 School Council Executives to approve spending of \$190.00 for 13 Amazon e-gift cards for the winners and runners-up of the Science Fair. Each executive voted “yes” to the spending proposal.

PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE REPORT- Kerry Blum and Caitlin Gillie

KERRY BLUM

Thank you to School Council

I want to thank our School Council and all parents in attendance today, for their tremendous support. Thank you for all the goodies and homemade foods you sent over Christmas. We are privileged and lucky to have such a supportive parent community.

January Extended Holiday

The government’s extended holiday announcement was a good opportunity for us staff and teachers to come together and plan for our students’ return to school. Our teachers used these extra four days to collaborate and re-focus on our priorities that were set last fall. They also spent some time planning their work for January and preparing to the possibility of their classroom moving online. We also spent time with our teachers helping them develop effective learning checks. I am so proud of our teachers for developing these learning checks.

Schoology Marks

We receive a lot of questions about why the Schoology marks keep fluctuating. This is partially because we’re figuring out a new program and we’re making sure that everything is aligned fairly for all students of each grade. For instance, if you have twins and they’re in two different grade 7 classes, we want the assessment piece of their Math- or any other subject- to be the same. We’re working hard with all of our teachers to make this happen and make it consistent across the board.

Report Cards (Friday February 4, 2022)

You will soon be able to view your child’s report card for the core subjects via PowerSchool. You will also be able to view comments from the teachers. Our teachers have dedicated hours to write meaningful comments about your child’s work, so please take the time to read about those “celebrations” and comments about areas of growth. We want our students to focus on their areas of strength and growth. Go easy on your kids and be positive with your feedback.

Mid-Year Learning Checks

Our Charter program believes that these mid-year learning checks are an important part of our program. It’s not just a matter of grades- these learning checks help our students figure out how they can effectively study and prepare themselves for an exam. They also help our students deal with feelings of anxiety and stress. We don’t want our students to be scared of these learning checks, but we need our students to take them seriously. We will keep working with our students on developing skills for learning checks. I am extremely proud of our students’ performances.

Teachers’ Convention

We have our Teachers’ Convention on February 17th and 18th. There will be no school on these days. We’re going to take this time to reflect on what is going well and what we need to work on

as a team. We're also going to take some time to teach our staff how to deal with IPPs and how to write meaningful comments for our exceptional needs students. We currently have 72 exceptional needs kids at our school.

Basketball

Independent Schools Athletics Association has decided to move ahead with sports competitions. We're currently number 1 in our division and we're very proud of our STEMIA teams.

COVID-19

Mr. Ackerman is a statistics genius and he is very good at gathering information about daily absences due to illness and COVID-19. We're closely monitoring this data and we have about 30 absentees daily. We're currently watching specific classes which have demonstrated a spike in COVID-19 cases. If we see a massive spike, we will move our classes online, but we're trying our very best to stick to the in-person learning format. If we have to go online, you may only receive a 24-hour notice for this transition.

We know that in-person learning is better for our students and our teachers; we're working hard to cover teacher absences. We have about 20 guest teachers that work as substitutes, but right now, we only have about 3-5 guest teachers available due to illness. We're doing our best to internally cover teacher absences, with myself and Mr. Ackerman covering for staff that have taken time off to recover from their illness.

Once our provincial case numbers start to decline, we will look at relaxing some measures, such as our students being able to eat outside during lunchtime. We would also look at getting our clubs up and running again. Thank you calling in when your child is absent- it really helps us determine what to do next when we receive information about a positive case or an illness.

High School Update

I've met with our Grade 9 students during SPARK time on Fridays. I made a PowerPoint presentation for our kids and our parents to answer general questions (credits, diploma, semesters, types of courses) about high school. This PowerPoint is posted on Schoology for both our students and parents. This information will be helpful whether they stay with STEMIA, or go to a different high school. We also let our students have a sneak peek at courses that we would be offering in high school. We have been working with organizations such as UofC Engineering and Medicine and the UofA Math Department; they've been helping us build and plan courses that will effectively benefit our high school students. These courses are being developed based on what these professionals say children need for post-secondary education. We're also developing a Math Honors program with a UofC Math Professor and a Biology Honors course with the Cummings School of Medicine.

Final formal approval for our High School location is 100% relying on Provincial budget approval. The education provincial Treasury board gets together at the end of February. We have gone through all the necessary steps to receive approval and have submitted all the documents required to go through with this process. I can assure you that together with Lisa Davis, our administration has been in close contact with the Deputy Education Minister to work on our needs and proposal. Until we have that formal approval, it wouldn't be prudent to publicize information about the high school information.

We have been working with architects for our Grade 10 High School students to benefit from a great space. Next year would only welcome Grade 10 students, with Grade 11 being added the year after. Our goal is to welcome one thousand (1000) students. Both campuses (junior high

and high school) will keep collaborating closely. Again, we just need approval from the government to move forward and we appreciate your patience.

Accountability Pillar Survey (Assurance Education Survey)

The Accountability Pillar Survey is now called the Assurance Education Survey. In charter school, all parents and all students are required to fill this. I will be sending a survey in the coming weeks. This survey is so important for you to fill out. It gives us valuable information and baseline data on what you're enjoying and what we can improve.

The Assurance Education survey is pretty broad in nature, and our School Superintendent would like to know if you have any suggestions on what you would like to see in a secondary parent survey that we will be sending out. This survey will be more specific to our STEMIA program. If there are certain questions that you would like to see in the survey, please reach out to myself or Ms. Blum.

Next-Year Planning

We will be sending an "Intention to Return" survey to find out who wants to return. Our waitlists for Grade 8 and 9 are significant with about 110 per grade. We're not opening new Grade 8 and 9 classes, so we need to know from our parents who intends to return.

Uniform Store

Please note that Uniform Store (Beast Clothing online store) will close today. We've had to remind our students about the dress code. The tops (shirts, sweaters, etc.) need to have the visible STEM logo. That's part of our uniform code. Please do a little check on your child to make sure they're abiding by our uniform protocol.

Volunteers for STEM IA Board Committees (Rebecca Ostrikoff)

The STEMIA Society (which is the governing body of our school) is looking for volunteers for different committees that are focused on technology, HR, auditing, etc. If you're interested in volunteering in one of these committees, please reach out to myself or Ms. Higgins.

Teacher Representative Report CAITLIN GILLIE

Science Updates

We had a Petroleum Engineer that really engaged the students on the topic of "heat transfer". Our guest talked about his work and even had some great demonstrations for our students.

All of our Grade 7 students enjoyed a virtual field trip at the Royal Tyrrell Museum. It was very curriculum focused and the instructor went through the unit that we're currently focusing on, Planet Earth. The field trip even included a game show that engaged our students.

We might be having a Geologist in the school to have a little chat about her work.

STEMIA Science Fair

During the last week of February, we will be holding our first STEMIA Science Fair. We are looking for parent volunteers to come in as guest judges. Please sign up using the link below. You will be asked to share a brief outline of your educational or professional background in Science, Tech, Engineering, or Math.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4aaca828a5fcc52-guest>

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from parent: Is there a cap on the number of IPP students that the school can accept?

Kerry Blum: “We met with Alberta Education today to review our funding for IPP students. According to the Alberta Education Act, our school is open to anyone and we do not look at IPPS (on applications) when we put names in the lottery system. I can share with you that 18% of our school population has been identified as exceptional needs. In comparison, 16% of CBE’s population has been identified as exceptional needs students. The reason why we have 18% is purely based on the outcome of the lottery. We want to be transparent with our parents and we’re honest about what we’re giving to our exceptional needs students. You, as a parent, need to decide if we’re the best fit for your child and if we’re realistically meeting their needs.

Question from parent: Will the junior school move to the new high school location?

Kerry Blum: “Not right away- we eventually want to move towards both campuses merging into one. However, at this point, this might not be possible. We still need to work on the lease agreement as well as government requirements to make this happen. For now, and the imminent future, our Junior High kids will continue being at our present location.”

Question from parent: Does AHS still notify you of positive cases and what is the vaccination rate among students?

Kerry Blum: “AHS is not doing contact tracing and we no longer receive notifications. People do not require to share information about their positive cases or their vaccination status. We do require proof of vaccination from our staff, or a negative 72-hour COVID test. I can tell you that the vaccination rate among staff is high and anyone who is working closely with the children needs to provide a negative COVID test.”

Question from parent: Can we do a Casino Fundraiser to help our school with materials and learning resources?

Deb Toth: “Yes, we absolutely can and we have a Casino Director who will be working on AGLC applications to help us with this process. Casino discussions take place during the STEMIA Parent Fundraising Society meetings. As of today, we are waiting on the government of Alberta to complete incorporation of our society. Once this is done, we can focus on working with AGLC to be accepted at a casino fundraiser event.”

Question from parent: Will kids benefit from field trips like swimming, TELUS sparks, etc.?

Kerry Blum: “I hope so! Unfortunately, because of COVID-19, we’re very tied as to what we can do for field trips as these are affiliated to the Exemption Program that requires proof of vaccination. We can’t ask our students for proof of vaccination so it’s difficult to set something up with programs that require this information. As soon as we can do safely, we will push for these field trips.”

Question from parent: When will you be able to confirm that the Senior High program will be moving forward?

Kerry Blum: “We share your frustration in not being able to share what is happening with this situation. However, I can assure you that we’re doing everything in our power to convince the government that we need answers for our parents. I was told that once the Treasury board makes a decision, we will have a better direction, but I don’t want to give you an exact date for this confirmation. It wouldn’t be prudent. We will give you an answer as soon as we’re able to.”

Question from parent: Will you be offering AP courses in High School?

Kerry Blum: “Having much experience in AP and IB programs, along with extensive research across Canada, we have decided that the best fit for our mandate is an honors program. An honors program will touch on the excellence that AP and IB programs require, but also on the practicality that post-education institutions are asking for. In the first two years, we will not be looking at Ap or IB programs, but our honors program will be offering something beyond what AP and IB can provide.”

Question from parent to Rebecca Ostrihoff: What is the time commitment for the volunteer positions on the STEMIA Board?

Rebecca Ostrihoff: “It is about 4 meetings a year and it’s pretty minor time commitment. I will share my email address so you can reach out to me directly.”

Question from parent: Will the class groupings be the same for Grade 7 students that are moving to Grade 8?

Kerry Blum: “No, we will be re-arranging classes to effectively balance everything. We will take into account which students work well together and we’ll take in consideration our students’ various strengths in different areas of study.”

Question from parent: Although this is a STEM School, I want to ensure my children are well rounded. What options and opportunities are in place to ensure fitness and any artistic strengths within the context of STEM?

Caitlin Gillie: “Our clubs provide an opportunity for our students to have a creative outlet, especially for arts. We also give options to our students to let us know how they understand the curriculum. They can draw, make an animated video, or even write a song to show that they’ve understood various lessons.”

Kerry Blum: “We are a niche school and we will more likely never have a band or a drama production. However, we’re looking into creative things that can incorporate the STEM element such as electronic music and digital arts. In terms of fitness, each class dedicates at least 40-50 minutes to physical education. The fitness piece is important and we want our kids to be able to enjoy some form of physical activity on a daily basis.”

Question from parent: Will there be a consignment store for used STEMIA uniforms?

Deb Toth: “Pre-covid, for my other children’s school, we used to have a sale in the gym where parents could come in to buy and exchange clothing. However, COVID makes it difficult to plan for such an event. I recommend Kijiji or Facebook Marketplace. In the future, if the demand is there, council will look at facilitating an event like this.”

Question from parent: Will you be the Principal at the high school?

Kerry Blum: “My ties with both campuses need to be strong so we can continue the great work we’ve been doing. My desire is to be the Principal for both locations as our school community continues to grow. We will just need to figure to the logistics of how to make this happen.”

Question from parent: Can we look at physical books for our children? What are you doing to encourage physical writing skills?

Kerry Blum: “The sheer cost of books would result in thousands and thousands of dollars for resources that are available online. I also want to remind everyone that we don’t teach textbooks on a page-to-page basis. We focus more on curriculum learning and not all textbooks are 100% focused or tied to the curriculum. In some cases, we have hard copies of books and have compromises for some subjects like Math and Novel sketch studies.”

Not everything is happening digitally, but the truth is, because we're a STEM program, a lot of writing and editing takes place at a computer. However, our students often have the option of physically writing their assignments or doing it online."

TREASURER REPORT

UPDATE BANK ACCOUNT (Golden B.)

We opened a T-Bill Savings Account and allows us to bypass fees for e-transfers. We now have two bank accounts: the Community Spirit Account and the T-Bill Savings Account. Both accounts are with ATB Financial.

TREASURER REPORT (Josephin J.)

7.2 Treasurer Report (Josephine Justin)

STEMIA School Council
Treasurer Report: February 2, 2022
Period of December 2, 2021 to February 2, 2022

COMMUNITY SPIRIT			Money In	Money Out
Starting Balance			\$ 3,877.91	
Deposits/Income				
Date	Type	Description		
02/12/2021	Deposit Cheque	Alberta School Council Engagement Plan	\$ 500.00	
20/12/2021	Deposit Cheque		\$ 591.42	
20/12/2021	Deposit Cash		\$ 62.25	
30/12/2021	Deposit Cheque	Mask vendor	\$ 1,000.00	
PROJECTED EARNINGS	Deposit Cheque	Fun Lunch (Kernels/Booster Juice/Jelly Doughnuts)	\$ 1,724.24	

T-BILL SAVINGS			Money In	Money Out
Starting Balance			\$ 1036.28	
Deposits/Income				
Date	Type	Description		
10/12/2021	E-transfer auto-deposit	Donations for Christmas gift cards for STEMIA staff and bus drivers	\$ 1036.00	
31/12/2021	Interest		\$ 0.12	
31/01/2022	Interest		\$ 0.16	
PROJECTED OUTGOING		Reimbursement for Gift Cards		\$ 1000.00

APPROVAL OF TREASURER REPORT (Josephin J./ Angela B.) POLL

Motion unanimously passed.

TREASURER BUDGET (Josephin J.)

7.3. Budget Priorities (Josephine Justin)

1. Picnic tables

Request- this is an estimate- we are still getting quotes from different companies.

- two round picnic tables (\$1,778.00/table)
- one rectangular picnic tables (\$1,841)
- two benches (\$661.00/bench)

***Freight, GST and installation are not included.

2. Paul Davis

- Educating Children and Empowering Parents on the Topic of Social Networking & Online Safety
 - o One day Seminar for Students in May
 - o Online Seminar for parents in May
 - Cost: \$1500.00
 - Payment will occur in May

3. Portable fitness equipment

Associated costs will come after changes to the aux gym have been completed.

4. Electronic Library

Aside from the Calgary Public Library, what other resourcing options exist- we are looking into different e-library options and costs.

5. Science Fair

Science Fair prizes (\$190.00) and the executive committee has approved this expense

UPDATES

FUN LUNCH (Deb T.)

We're anticipating a cheque of about \$1,724.24 for the 3 Healthy Hunger events held between November and December. Our Booster Juice Fun Lunch had many hiccups and we were able to get a larger share of the vendor's revenue as compensation for the inconveniences and wrong orders.

CRAFT SALE (Deb T.)

The school received a large donation of craft items and we're in the process of setting

something up to have parents come in and purchase these quality items. All proceeds will go to our school council.

WEBSITE (Deb T.)

Our new website is up and running! Please visit our website at www.stemiacouncil.ca. The website will have information about upcoming events, the mask fundraiser, and the minutes from our previous meetings.

MASK FUNDRAISER (Shawn F.)

Our Mask Fundraiser will launch on Friday February 4, 2022. You will be able to pay for the mask through our website via e-transfer. These are soft and comfortable STEMIA masks that have a filter, adjustable ear loops, and a flexible nose bridge. They are great quality masks that will feature our unique STEM IA logo. Masks will be selling for \$10 each or \$25 for a pack of 3 masks.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date for STEMIA School Council is: Wednesday March 2, 2022
Ms. Golden Bhatia **adjourned the meeting at 7.57 PM.**

