

December 14, 2022



# STEMIA SCHOOL COUNCIL

1204 96 Avenue SW  
Calgary, AB  
T2V 0Y1

MINUTES

Deborah Toth, Secretary

STEMIASCDecember2022(11)

## **DATE/ TIME**

December 14, 2022/ 6.30 PM  
Unit 150, 3553 31 Street NW  
STEM Innovation Academy Senior High Campus

## **FACILITATORS**

STEMIA School Council Executive Committee

## **ATTENDEES**

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Shawn Furlong (Vice-Chairperson)  
Deborah Toth (Secretary)  
Josephin Justine (Treasurer)

### **APOLOGIES**

Ibeth Albertazzi (High School Director)  
Golden (Gurmeet) Bhatia (Chairperson)  
Caitlin Gillie (Teacher Representative)

### **SCHOOL STAFF/ ADMINISTRATION**

Kerry Blum (School Principal)

### **PARENTS**

Agga C., Kim S., Rebecca O., Kaeleah S., Craig S., Ritu S., Saurabh K., Corrina M., Nicole M., Karen A., Rishma M., Salima L, Jayce L., Sara S. M-C H., Rick F., Jeni A., Idongesit A., Mohammad S., Liliana K., Kim S.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Quorum declared to be present and meeting **called to order at 6.33 PM** by Shawn Furlong.

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

### APPROVAL OF TODAY'S AGENDA December 14, 2022 WITH AMENDMENTS (Shawn F./ Deb T.)

Agenda, with amendments, was unanimously approved as distributed.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF November 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2022 (Deb T./ Josephin J.)

The minutes from our November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting were unanimously approved.

## REPORTS

### CHAIR REPORT- No report- Apologies from our Chairperson

### PRINCIPAL REPORT- Kerry Blum

#### Science and Math

Our Science and Math teachers from both campuses met on Professional Days (November 10<sup>th</sup>) to discuss what can be improved in terms of curriculum. This was a great meeting that centered on what can be done to better prepare our kids and get them throughout all grades. The Humanities teams also got together to look at the rubrics that are used to mark the Grade 9 PATs. They also looked into what type of useful feedback can be shared with the students so that they continue improving.

#### December 1<sup>st</sup>, Open House at the High School

Our Open house for prospective grade 10 students will take place on December 1<sup>st</sup> at the senior high campus. We had a little over 150 attendees and our student ambassadors did a phenomenal job representing our school. Lisa Davis and I held a bit of a more formal session about who we are and what our STEMIA values are.

#### Biomedical Program

I went to Kalispell, Montana, to spend the day at a High School with Biomedical leaders. My goal was to learn more about how we can offer a biomedical program by looking at what other international STEM programs offer. [Project Lead the Way](#) (PLTW) is an organization that we've connected with and that has helped us discover more about how to properly design biomedical sciences courses. Project Lead the Way's President met with us and they're willing to partner with our school; STEM Innovation Academy would be the first Canadian school to have a partnership with PLTW. We will write a proposal to the Government of Alberta for the course curriculum. I am very excited about this; students who have worked under the umbrella of PLTW have excelled in biomedical sciences and this increases their chances to be accepted in the biomedical field.

### **Grade 9 PAT results**

The results will be posted on our website within the next month. Parents should have received the individual results for PATs. Overall, we're thrilled with the results.

### **Bus Update**

First Student has been extremely kind to us. Compared to other schools, most of our routes have a permanent driver. Unfortunately, our Route 1 driver had to leave due to medical concerns. I was reassured that his resignation had nothing to do with student behavior. We currently don't have a permanent driver for that route and First Student let me know that as of today, they don't have anyone in training. Southland is facing similar challenges and we've looked at alternative options and contacted other bus companies to see if they can help. Unfortunately, the shortage of bus drivers across the province makes it difficult for First Student, and for all other bus companies, to have all their routes filled. I want you all to understand that I know the situation isn't ideal, especially for our working parents. However, please continue trying to use the WhatsApp chat to arrange for carpooling. We know this doesn't work for all families, but this might be a temporary solution until First Student can fill this route with a permanent driver.

### **Basketball Teams**

Our Basketball teams have been formed and the league games have already started. We are so grateful for the teachers and coaches who are volunteering their personal and family time with this.

### **Extra Help for Students**

We looked at the performance data we have and have noticed that some of our students are struggling. We want our students to be as successful as they can, but we do need our parents to help. Right now, 22% of our Grade 9 kids are not hitting the 50% mark. We're looking closely at our methods but please your kids are at school as much as possible. We understand that there are illnesses that may impact your family, but if the student is staying home, please make sure they keep up with their school work by going on Schoology. Our teachers regularly post updates to make sure that those who are absent can keep up with what they've missed in class. Parents, please check your child's marks on Schoology and work with them to catch up on assignments. Help us keep our students accountable.

### **Grade 9 Parents**

It will soon be time for our parents and students to decide where they will be heading to in High School. We are guiding our students to help them understand what grade 10 looks like at our senior high campus. We know that this may not work for all families, but we're offering some competitive and innovative courses. We will take our grade 9 students to our high school for a tour. We're willing to answer any questions or concerns you have- please don't hesitate to reach out if you want more information about our high school program. We will have room for about 275 Grade 10 students and we have another 200 people on a waitlist.

### **Midterms and Final Assessments**

Our junior and high school students will be going through mid-year learning checks and final assessments in January. Please don't book holidays during that time. It's important for them to attend.

### **STEMIA Online Journal**

We started an online journal to showcase what our students are working on. Mr. McWilliam put these stories together to share what has been going in our classrooms. If you can, please take

some time to read these amazing stories to learn more about your child's work. The link is: [stemiajournal.ca](http://stemiajournal.ca). The journal will also feature our newspaper.

The screenshot shows the website stemiajournal.ca with a navigation menu for 'STEMIA Journal', 'JuniorHigh', and 'HighSchool'. Three article cards are displayed, each with a 'LEAVE A COMMENT' link. The first card, 'MakerSpaces Teacher Tour', features an image of a black t-shirt with 'MAKE LEARN INVENT' printed on it. The second card, 'Charlie Chaplin Shorts', has a black background with white text and a small image of a video player. The third card, 'Grade 8 Gamified', shows a map of Canada with a yellow ribbon.

## TREASURER REPORT

### STEMIA School Council Treasurer Report: Nov 09, 2022 (AGM) Period of June 8 to Nov 09, 2022

				Money Out
<b>Starting Balance</b>			<b>\$1414.35</b>	
Deposits/Income				
Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Type	Description	Deposit	Expense s
10/15/2022	E-transfer	Welcome Breakfast		\$494.19
10/15/2022	E-transfer	Fun lunch Juices		\$55.77
<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>\$864.39</b>	

## TREASURER REPORT (Josephin J.)

### APPROVAL OF TREASURER REPORT (Josephin J./ Stacia S.)

Motion unanimously passed.

## UPDATES

### Christmas Week at STEMIA (Deb T.)

Our last school week before the Christmas Break will feature delicious treats and homemade goodies for our Junior and Senior High Staff. Thank you to all the volunteers who have signed up for a slot on Sign Up Genius. The goodies that you send are greatly appreciated! Please follow us on Instagram @stemia.paco for updates and pictures of the Christmas week.

### Bus Update (Deb T.)

I would like to quickly re-iterate the rules of our bus WhatsApp groups. Please take a look at the slide below.

**18+ / ADULT/ PARENT MEMBERS ONLY**

**NO STUDENTS ALLOWED**  
Protect the privacy of our students  
Do not share the invite link without our moderators' permission

**CARPOOLING/ UPDATES**  
The main purpose of the chat is to provide updates and facilitate carpooling options. The platform should be left open for critical updates regarding carpooling or bus timings.

**COMPLAINTS**  
Complaints about a driver, student behavior, bus fees, or bus-related issues need to be taken to the school administration or First Student

**PHONE NUMBER**  
FS: 403.531.3900/ better to call during lunch hours for non-urgent matters

**GOOD TO KNOW**  
Your STOP number.  
Parents that share a stop with you.  
Talk to your child about having your contact info handy.

2    **STEMIA BUS CHAT RULES**    December 14, 2022

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Question: As a working parent, I am concerned about the bus issues. Will Bus 1 service be restored before the winter break?**

Kerry Blum: If it was up to me, you would have a bus right away. However, I hope you can understand that this isn't up to me and to our school. The bus driver shortage is beyond our control. I can share with you that First Student has a training process of up to 6 weeks. This is longer process than before because of the M.E.L.T\* requirements. Hypothetically, if they had someone in training as of today, this would take more than 4 weeks to finalize this driver's license and training. As of right now, First Student does not have any driver in training, nor does it have extra drivers to cover our route. I can also tell you that First Student has many routes

from other schools that have not had a permanent driver since day 1. Therefore, we might not get first priority when new drivers are being hired. This is unfortunate but we are unlikely to have a driver before the winter break. I cannot say how long the disruption will be. If you know someone who is interested in driving, please pass on their number to First Student.

I've also reached out to Southland and seven other companies. None of them have extra drivers that can take on our route. Other schools are struggling as much as we are. The problem is not the bus company but the province-wide shortage of drivers.

If you're calling the school or First Student, please be respectful and kind. They are often at the receiving end of verbally abusive parents and we do not condone this behavior. First Student's supervisor has been very cooperative and helpful. We have continually expressed our frustration to them in a way that is respectful. I want our parents to be a good example for our students and our school, so please try to be understanding. If you want to speak directly to our School Superintendent or myself, please book an appointment by calling our main office.

\* [LEARN MORE ABOUT THE M.E.L.T PROCESS](#)

**Question: Will there be space for new students going to grade 11?**

Kerry Blum: We will have some space for new grade 11 students, but not much. We need to look realistically at class sizes. Right now, we have 111 students, and we are looking at approximately 15 new stops for Grade 11. We are looking at 275 Grade 10's, and 130 Grade 11's, so 405 students for next year.

**Question: Are we looking at bussing for Grade 10 students, even if the bussing is just from the C-trains?**

Deb Toth: At the moment, there is no yellow bussing for the high school. I monitor the chats for the North and South groups for our High School families and have received positive feedback on how the kids are doing. Many of the south kids meet at the Bridlewood Station, and the North kids meet in Tuscany or Dalhousie. The NE kids often take a bus that will take them directly to Brentwood station, or they sometimes have to hop on another train to get to Brentwood. The school is right across the parking lot from the station. In fact, it is about 5-10 minutes walking distance. I encourage parents to do a "test run" in the spring. You may also sign up in the high school chats to learn more about how other kids are traveling and connect them to one another so they can travel as a group.

**Question: We received a letter about paying about bus fees. Can you give us the deadline?**

Kerry Blum: We get billed monthly from First Student and we need to pay them when we receive the invoice. As of right now, many of our families haven't paid their bussing fees, and this becomes difficult for us to cover the bussing cost. We need our parents to pay their bus fees so we can continue running the bus service. I can assure you that we will give parents a refund in the spring. This will be a one-time payment to our families who have been impacted by severe delays. Again, we will not reimburse families on a monthly basis. The refund will come in late spring.

We need you to pay your fees in full by the end of January 2023. If you are unable to pay your fees, we will unfortunately have to discontinue the bus service for your child. This is incredibly unfortunate but the reality is that the bus service relies on your payment.

**Question: Our Route 5 driver is always late to pick up the kids in the afternoon. My understanding is that the driver does another route before he does ours. Can the driver not do that and focus on us instead?**

Kerry Blum: I have been speaking with First Student multiple times about this driver. The driver is trying their best to do better with the timing, but I ask yourself to put yourself in the shoes of the parents who have no driver at all. The route 5 driver is helping out another school who does not have a permanent driver. I understand that this can be frustrating, but this is First Student's attempt to "share the load" and help as many families as they can. I have expressed to First Student that driver should be here no later than 3:45 PM and they will do their best to honor that time.

**Question: Will siblings be getting priority in the lottery system for acceptance at STEMIA?**

Kerry Blum: Siblings do get some level of priority provided that there is space and resources available for the sibling. As such, it is not an automatic "yes". We do consider a few things and abide by the Education Act for Charter Schools. If you have more questions or want to share the specifics of a sibling who wants to be part of the program, feel free to reach out by calling me.

**Question: I've noticed that the kids at my bus stop are not wearing the school uniform. What is the school doing about this?**

Kerry Blum: We've chosen a variety of uniform outfits that are suitable for every comfort level; all students should be wearing their uniforms at all times. We've had to remind some students to abide by our uniform code. If they get a reminder more than twice, we call the parent/ guardian to explain our uniform rules.

## **ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING DATE**

**Shawn Furlong adjourned the meeting at 7:39 PM. The next meeting will take place IN-PERSON on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 PM**