

# West Coulee Station Elementary School Council Meeting

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## West Coulee Elementary Parent Society

### MINUTES

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 6:30pm Board Office Meeting Room

**In Attendance:** Ashley Bourassa (President), Michelle Hood (VP), Heather Bruce (Treasurer), Whitney Olitch, Autumn Barnes, Jenna Bailey, Taryn Guzzi, Dean Hawkins (Principal)

**Call to order** – 6:31pm

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion: N/A  
Second: N/A

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion: N/A  
Second: N/A

### Principal's Report: Dean Hawkins

- Building Update
  - Building is on track right now to be finished on time. It is looking great so far.
  - Ordering
    - All furniture has been ordered for classrooms and staff areas and we are on budget.
- Playground
  - Updates on grants
    - We currently have \$430,000 and we are waiting on 8 grant responses.
    - The city has given \$66,000 additional funds since our last meeting.
  - Quotes
    - The large playground we wanted was \$700,000 and the small one was \$350,000 which is way over budget. A request was put in for the rep to revamp and provide two other options that include a playground & fitness area or large & small playground. We should receive this in the next 7 days and then need to put a deposit down.
  - The Division has charitable status, but the society does not.

- 100 Women Who Care is an organization that chooses a charity to donate to after a presentation is given. Their next meeting is June 10<sup>th</sup> and Autumn would like to put forth our playground through the division as a potential recipient.
- Staffing
  - Teaching Process
    - The last 10 days and next 5 days have had interviews from 2pm-10pm. Candidates are being told today who were successful. There were about 80 expressions of interest and about 40 interviews conducted.
    - 7 English teachers, 1 Learning Support, 1 Music, 12 Spanish Teachers
  - Regi Rocha has been hired as head caretaker
  - Aimee Dewacht has been hired as vice principal
  - EA Process
    - Nothing to report right now
- Enrolment
  - Update on class sizes
    - 432 current enrollments: 270 Spanish, 162 in English – Large numbers in Kindergarten and Grade 1
    - Spanish K – 50 registered and 3 on the waitlist, 35 English Kindergarten
    - 2 English grade 3 classes, single classes for the rest
    - 2 Spanish classes per grade level
  - Schedule
    - Bell Times have been published and are on the website
    - Recess, Lunch, Recess – anticipate that students will eat in the foyer

### **Discussion Items from Attendees:**

- School Fees -T-shirts/Field Trips
  - Field Trip Fees – Vary by grade level. Right now, they are just looking at the maximum allotment that will be submitted to Alberta Ed for approval.
  - Cup Spirit Wear - \$10
  - Other schools have the following: Library book damages, yearbooks, programs at UofL, Recorders, Year-end BBQ, Hispanic heritage night, Spanish grade 2/3 year-end celebration, grade 4/5 flex Fridays, kindergarten book, art residencies, tech fee, extra-curricular, and club fees are all money lines that could be charged but aren't necessary to be implemented.
  - Dean will work with staff to create their own fee schedule and share amongst the council.
- ASCA information – Information highlighted below
- Transportation – City information – Byron Bazunis
  - PowerPoint was sent out for review
  - Dean has been persistent about crosswalk concerns and ensuring student safety
  - Autumn has a letter drafted to put forward to city council to try to expedite the building of the roads around the school. Ashley will forward it on behalf of the Country Meadows Community Association. Krysty can forward it on behalf of

Garry Station Community Association.

- School supplies – options a. Lists b. Order through the office
  - Dean will talk to his teachers to find out what they need and put together a list for school start option so that it one low fee that covers all necessary supplies.
- Staffing Updates
  - See Information highlights listed above
- School communication - Agenda's
  - Dean will discuss with his new staff what their teacher preference is and go for there.
- Sponsorship letter – Grand Opening
  - The letter has been drafted but it's put on hold right now until we are closer to the date of grand opening.
- MountainWest Studios – September 23
  - They are doing our photos this year for individual student pictures and class photos
- Photo Night Fundraiser- during the book fair evening
  - Book Fair – October 20-24
- West Coulee Station Elementary handbook
  - Positive feedback received from members
- Bilingualism – What does it mean to be a bilingual school?
  - See images below for working document
- Time Capsule – could we do that for the grand opening?
  - Dean will speak to staff about it

#### **ASCA INFORMATION:**

##### **Re: Support for Parent Engagement Activities**

**As you may be aware, last year the Board of Trustees passed the following motion:**

***The Board consider School Councils choosing not to purchase an annual ASCA membership be granted access to the funds originally reserved to cover membership cost to be used as needed by the council for parent learning purposes.***

**At the January 2025 Board meeting, the Board of Trustees passed the following to action the above motion:**

***The funds can be used for costs that are allowed under the Alberta School Council Engagement (ASCE) Grant funding rules, as well as for costs that support the use of the ASCE grant, which could include food.***

##### **What Does This Mean for Your School Council?**

**For any school council that did not join the Alberta School Councils Association (ASCA) for the 2024-2025 school year, \$100 will be transferred to the school for use by the School Council to support parent engagement initiatives.**

**These funds may be used for parent engagement activities as outlined in the ASCE grant guidelines or for other expenses not covered by the \$500 ASCE grant, such as providing food at parent engagement events.**

##### **Reporting Requirements:**

**School Councils that receive these funds must include a report on how the funds were used in their annual School Council report, which is submitted to the Office of the Superintendent in June 2025. This funding may be used to cover any expenditures to date in the 2024-2025 school year for parent engagement that are considered ineligible under the ASCE grant rules. Any unspent funds may be carried forward to the following school year for parent engagement purposes.**

**This funding process will continue in future school years unless amended by the Board of Trustees.**

##### **How Will the Funds Be Transferred?**

**The finance department will transfer the funds to the school, where they will be allocated to the School Council's general ledger account. These funds will be immediately available for use by the School Council.**

## **Definition of Bilingualism in a 50/50 Spanish-English School**

Bilingualism in a school where instruction is evenly split between Spanish and English means that students, educators, and the school community:

- 1. Develop Proficiency in Both Languages**
  - Students achieve high levels of **listening, speaking, reading, and writing** skills in both Spanish and English.
  - Language proficiency is nurtured through structured instruction and meaningful daily interactions.
- 2. Achieve Biliteracy**
  - Students are able to **read, write, and comprehend academic content** in both languages.
  - Instruction ensures that literacy skills transfer between Spanish and English, strengthening both.
- 3. Use Both Languages for Academic & Social Purposes**
  - Students can **think, learn, and express themselves** confidently in Spanish and English across subjects.
  - Bilingualism is fostered through **content-based learning**, not just language classes.
- 4. Embrace a Balanced Approach to Language Use**
  - The school **equally values both languages**, ensuring they are used across all aspects of school life.
  - Spanish and English are integrated into **instruction, activities, school events, and communication**.
- 5. Cultivate a Culturally Inclusive Environment**
  - Bilingualism is more than language—it includes **understanding and appreciating both Hispanic and Anglophone cultures**.
  - Students engage with literature, history, and traditions from both linguistic backgrounds.
- 6. Encourage Lifelong Bilingual & Bicultural Identities**

- The goal is for students to **not only maintain but continue developing their bilingual abilities** beyond school.
- Graduates leave with the skills to thrive in **multilingual and multicultural environments**.

**Working Definition for Your School:**

*"Bilingualism at our school means that students engage with, learn, and communicate fluently in both Spanish and English, fostering biliteracy, academic success, and cultural appreciation. We strive for a balanced, immersive experience that ensures both languages and cultures are equally valued and sustained throughout our educational journey."*

**Future Meeting Dates:**

- April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 6:30

**Adjournment: 8:05pm**

Motion: N/A

Second: N/A