

CIS - OBK School Council Meeting # 6

Date:	Thursday, February 02, 2017
Time:	6:30 PM – 7:30 PM
Location:	Upper Floor in the open space - OBK Campus 225 – 28th Street SE, Calgary Alberta
Participants:	School Council Members, Administration, Society Members, School Council Executive Committee.

Names	Positions	Email Addresses
Don Zech	Palliser Trustee	don.zech@pallisersd.ab.ca
Raiha Idrees	Principal CIS – OBK Campus	raiha.idrees@pallisersd.ab.ca
Abdullah Omar	Chief Education Officer - CIS	omara639@gmail.com
Adam Browning	Palliser Visitor	adam.browning@pallisersd.ab.ca
Ahlam Sadden	Chairperson	ahlamsadden@hotmail.ca
Nida Aziz	Vice Chair	nida_salman@hotmail.com
Nada Merhi	Treasurer	nadamerhi@hotmail.ca
Huda Birani	Secretary	hbirani_87@hotmail.com
Anjum Dawood	Parent Representative Coordinator	anjdwad@yahoo.ca
Nadia Harati	Volunteer Committee Lead	harati.jeha@gmail.com
Nick Irving	Acting Teacher Representative	nicholas.irving@pallisersd.ab.ca
Fatema Itani	Parent	Fatema.itani@gmail.com
Saba Adil	Parent	sabadil27@yahoo.com

Opening duaa @ 6:43 by Adam Browning

Ahlam:

- Don Zech, a Palliser Trustee is subbing for Colleen Dietz today.
- Meeting Minutes from January 12, 2017 are approved.

Adam:

- Don Zech has devoted his life to public education, as an educator, school and division administrator, and Board chair, vice-chair and trustee. Zech retired from teaching in June 2000, following a 34-year career, 32 of which were in an administrative capacity. Shortly after his retirement, Zech was elected to the Board of Trustees of Palliser Regional Schools in 2001. He served as Board Chair for nine years and as vice-chair for two years. Zech holds graduate degrees in administration, special education and curriculum.

Don:

- Since retirement from teaching of 32 years, continued my career with Palliser into the administration sector and took over many positions like principal, deputy superintendent, board chair and trustee.

Adam:

- Discussing safety measures taken after the shootings in a Quebec mosque.
- Society has increased some security measures.
- Parents received notice regarding the cancellation of Jumma prayers at the Omar Bin Al-Khattab Campus's gymnasium.
- Parents commented in favour of this decision.
- Prayer in the school facility can be a distraction to the school and students, working toward trying to get support from a liaison police officer/resource officer to increase communication to and from school.
- There is shortage in the city of officers to accommodate all our schools.

Ahlam:

- Did Calgary police offer to help or did our school reach out?

Abdullah:

- MCC contacted Calgary police in the highlight of the recent shootings at the Quebec Mosque.
- A security guard would be assigned to all the Islamic institutions in Canada in order to take some security measures.

Group chat:

- What will happen now in regards to jumma prayers at the school?

Adam:

- Cancellation of Jumma prayers at the OBK Campus was a request from school for a long time.

Group:

- School Council and majority parents vote in favour of the cancellation of Jumma prayers at the OBK Campus.

Ahlam:

- What can we do as a solution?

Saba:

- Marlborough community centre is open for Jumaa prayers for those who live close by.

Adam:

- School will continue on Friday. Students learning is our priority.
- A small group of people are upset however there are multiple venues to attend for prayer.
- Reroute the people to other venues.
- Parents will be spoken to by police for those who attempt to attend jumma prayer at OBK

Raiha:

- Washrooms on main level are inaccessible for Kindergarteners and Grade 1 students. They have to use downstairs washrooms during public jumma prayer time which has caused disturbances and accidents.
- School will have Friday prayers lead by the students from now onwards until further notice.

Ahlam:

- Is there a security infrastructure in place?

Abdullah:

- MCC is working on it
- Majority wants the fence to be installed as a priority.
- MCC is applying for the non-profit safety grant offered to the Islamic institutions in Canada.

Ahlam:

- Discussing cellphones and electronic devices usage during school hours and its policy.
- Is it allowed for students to bring such devices?

Fatema:

- Doesn't agree with having hand held devices at school.
- Kids spend enough time on devices at home.
- Recess should be for running and more less distracting activities.
- Shouldn't have to use device during school time

Raiha:

- We found students were abusing the policy.
- Wanted parents to sign off on it to keep policy active.
- Our school doesn't allow devices and game playing during school hours.

Raiha:

- A clear notice will be formulated stating the policies in effect for using cellular / electronic devices on campus. Parents will be notified accordingly.

Adam:

- Kids need these devices for learning purposes. Emphasized on training kids to use these devices responsibly.
- There are expectations on how kids should be using it.

Raiha:

- There will be a workshop in middle of February for parents on safe usage of technology.
- Parents need to be aware of what the kids are doing online.
- Restricting usage of these devices can be challenging as kids do find a way of using it by borrowing it from their friends. We should work on teaching our children to use technology responsibly.

Ahlam:

- What is available to us for kids publishing abilities?

Adam:

- Palliser is introducing a program called "Words your Way" which allows students free writing. Students will not be asked to correct their spellings. This will encourage students into writing about their idea and concentrate on the story line.
- Students will be writing their own pieces (stories with illustrations) and it will get a chance to be published under the student name as an author with its own ISBN number.

Ahlam:

- Any feedback from Palliser regarding purchase of our tablets?

Adam:

- Currently in loop of scheduling a meeting with Palliser and will keep us updated.
- It will be looked at in a broader perspective and delegate.

Adam and Don left meeting at 7:20 PM.

Discussion regarding stocking vending machine:

- Vending machine has arrived in the school in a crate and is ready to be set up.
- Main floor is a good accessible place for everyone. Need to have an electrician come in for wiring and power outlet.
- School Council wants to fill it with nutritious items and brought couple of healthy items for test.
- Goal is to stock it with milk, water, yogurt parfaits, fruits, vegetables and healthy snacks.

Nada:

- There is also a cellphone app that will notify us when any items are low and to restock.
- We are excited to get the vending machine as new. It was listed for \$3000 and we brought the price down to \$2000.

Ahlam:

- In regards to the bake sale we will have it on February 9th, 2017.
- Proceeds from vending machine will go towards sports and health initiatives.

Raiha:

- Suggested to clarify to parents as to where proceeds from bake sale will go as well for the vending machine.
- Send out bake sale letter on Monday.
- Give a morning announcement regards to the vending machine so students are aware of it

Ahlam:

- Fatema to discuss the Tahfeeth leadership program.

Fatema:

- Explains the best way to teach our children to be leaders is to gain leadership skills through hands on volunteering experience in our community.
- Need to arrange separate dates for the boys and girls.
- Bi weekly program where each group could go once a month.
- This way all kids will have equal opportunity to volunteer.
- Suggested to implement mandatory volunteering for Tahfeeth students.
- Acknowledge volunteering efforts through incentives such as free hot lunch.
- It would be a great learning experience and help students in their career paths.

Nadia:

- Shows an example of a sign in sheet which will track students volunteering organization and hours completed and have it signed after completion.

Abdullah:

- Appreciated School Council into looking for volunteer opportunities for OBK Students.
- Great way to earn volunteer hours towards university admission.
- In some universities in Ontario, around 300-400 volunteering hours are a prerequisite for admission.
- Come up with a policy regarding volunteering outside of school during enrollment time, i.e. at the beginning of the school year.

Raiha:

- Sister Rasha and I have spoken regarding this and we need to discuss the issue deeper.
- It becomes a liability issue if students are transported outside of the school campus for volunteering events organized by the school/ staff etc.
- It is a great learning opportunity and requires more planning and organization.

Fatema:

- Suggested that we start this year and by the beginning of next school year we will have a solid schedule.

Ahlam:

- Suggested a leadership program called “Amana Leadership” that we can use.
- Discussing important points from the Palliser meeting that took place at the Akram Jomaa Campus on Thursday, January 26th 2017.

- In other Palliser schools, their Society pay for the students' field trips. In our School field trip costs are covered by parents.
- Palliser is selling busses for \$6000 (discounted price) to its other schools in order to transport students to the field trips.
- Our campus needs a bus or two which could reduce field trip costs.
- School Council would like the Society to purchase a bus from Palliser for such reason.
- School Council can also share this cost with the Society.
- In the past, once teachers had to pay out of their pockets for the Mustard Seed Initiative trip since the transportation part was not covered under the field trip cost.
- Other schools that collaborate with Palliser get funding for their field trips.
- Inquired Palliser regarding setting the budget of \$172000 for FY 2016 – 2017 in contrast to setting a budget of \$177000 for FY 2015 – 2016.
- Considering the anticipated increase in the enrolment this year, the budget should be higher for this year than the previous year.
- Response received was that Palliser paid off the Society's debt which was approximately \$15000 - \$20000 for the cost of Islamic resources like books, which they gave to us as a one-time gesture which is why FY 2016-2017 was set lower than FY 2015-2016 by \$5000.
- Mentioned that it is unfair that we don't get funding for sports programs.
- Most Palliser schools are supported by their societies, which pay for much of their school costs considering the tuition fee.
- Can we propose this to MCFC and perhaps they can take it into consideration?

Raiha:

- Prepared and presented a tight budget of \$210000, but Palliser came back with \$172000.
- Maybe in spring we can have recommendations and re-allocate our funds for next year.

Nada:

- Regarding cricket, we are still awaiting responses from the suppliers, after which we can decide on the best options.

Ahlam:

- Some proceeds from our upcoming bake sale can be utilised towards basketball equipment purchase.
- School Council generated \$500 through the "Night at the Musallah" event.
- Of the \$500 collected at the "Night at the Musallah event, \$250 have been allocated to be utilised towards the purchase of a tablet to be gifted as a prize for the Quran Competition event.

- A Bake Sale can be conducted in March / April to generate funds which will be utilised to assist in all the three graduation events (Kindergarten, Grade 6 and Tahfeeth 9 in May 2017).
- Provincial Assessment Tests (PATs) fall during Ramadan.
- Palliser will have to be informed for rescheduling PATs.
- Tentatively the Sports day event is scheduled to take place one week before Ramadan.
- Need to schedule a day for decorating brown bags.

Nada:

- Food will be made in school kitchen on March 15th 2017 and perhaps we can have the brown bags decorated the same day also.

Raiha:

- Have a representative come in and talk about the program and give insight to the students.
- How many bags will be made?

Nada:

- Suggested to include one grade at a time. For example, 70 brown bags for Grade 3.

Ahlam:

- Decision made to reschedule School Council monthly meetings from first Thursday of the month to first Tuesday of the month to accommodate Dr. Abdullah Omar's schedule.

Raiha:

- Reviews principals' report.
- This year OBK will not have a traditional one on one parent teacher conference.
- This year we are having student led conferences where students will have an opportunity to show their parents the skills they have accomplished at the various learning stations set up by their teachers.
- Staff took a visit to Edmonton school where the "Writing Pathways" program is being implemented.
- Palliser staff came in and performed a PD for our staff on how to implement the program, kits were purchased for KGs, Grades 2, 6, and 9.
- Second group of students are now being identified for LILY program, students will have a dialogue with teacher, strategies will be set and we will see what works best.
- Kids are constantly given one on one instructional support, then new students will rotate.
- Palliser has a better program from Columbia University where kids are encouraged to build

the love of literacy and take ownership in writing.

Nick:

- It is a very good program that will make a big difference in students' writing pathways.
- Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 will be introduced to this program.
- This year we will start with Grade 6 and Tahfeeth.
- Four staff members have signed up for its training.
- It will be implemented after the training.
- There was a workshop on assessing traditional spelling program.
- Due to the limited budget, volunteers are needed.
- Lots of cutting and printing is required. It would be easier if it is done before hand.

Fatema:

- Include Tahfeeth students for the cutting and printing job afterschool.

Raiha:

- Assesses where students are with their spelling ability like Fontanas and Pinnell (F&P).
- This program helps improve.
- Books need to be ordered.
- If Palliser offers concession, we will work toward achieving that.
- Due to limited resources and tight budget only some students will be included.

Discussion regarding outcome of Arabic Language:

Raiha:

- On February 23rd and 24th 2017, Dr. Abdullah and I will be working with Arabic and Islamic staff to revisit the program and come up with the outcomes that we want to work towards.
- Arabic textbooks cannot define Arabic curriculum.
- Need a common understanding of the objectives that we are looking for.
- Defining the Arabic Language objective is important for us as well in order to evaluate if the students are meeting the expected outcomes.
- We want to research other institutions.

Fatema:

- Had a discussion with a staff member.
Students are learning Arabic but more emphasis should be paid toward Islamic teachings.

Raiha:

- We have to have our priorities set then we can implement them.
- In March, Palliser is introducing the 7 healthy habits program.
- Conference will be held in Edmonton. Once we return, our objective is to implement it with the Islamic perspective, in April, we can present it and in September we will introduce it.

Fatema:

Discussion regarding Quran

- Last year Quran translation and meaning wasn't provided for the students.
- Implementing improved Tahfeeth Quran for kids. Looking into giving kids an expected level of Tahfeeth.
- Reiterate how we can teach Quran with meaning to improve memorization.
- We don't publicize anything regarding Tahfeeth.
- Needs to be revised then we can really achieve memorization of the whole Quran.

Raiha:

- We will have to look at it at a management perspective.

Closing Duaa Br Abdullah @ 8:43

Minutes Approved by:

Principal
Raiha Idrees

Chairperson
Ahlam Sadden

Secretary
Huda Birani



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