

PARENT COUNCIL OF RIVER HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 17, 2025 @ 7:00 pm

Attendance: Wendy Weiss, Nicole Hall, Heather O'Reilly, Tara Betts, Dayna Maloy, Amanda Hobson, Jessica Schutte, Nicole Sehn, Karla Tweten, Ashley Spitz, Vanessa McVeigh, Michelle King, Raquel McNamara

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Heather O'Reilly.
2. Treaty Land Acknowledgement - Students are currently working on the land acknowledgements for 2025-2026 school year. The hope is to have them available for the next meeting.
3. Approval of Minutes - Jessica made a motion to adopt the Parent Council (PC) minutes from the meeting held on May 21, 2025. The motion was seconded by Dayna. Minutes adopted as distributed. Quorum verified.
4. Reports from school and council:
 - a. School Administration Team - Wendy Weiss and Nicole Hall
 - i. Land Acknowledgements - As mentioned above, work is underway in this area. In previous years the Admin team worked directly with students to create meaningful land acknowledgements. However, this year we are privileged to have Courtney Lagasse as part of the FNMI team. She will be working with students, in more depth, on the creation and content of land acknowledgements. The Admin team will assist with compilation of the same.
 - ii. PD Day - On Friday, as part of the PD day, teachers will be visiting Strathcona Island Park. They will be exploring curriculum items and how they could be connected to experiences at the park for future enrichment field trips with students.
 - iii. Staffing Changes - Educational Assistant (EA) Alicia Swift has taken a leave of absence. Two new EA's, Ashley Shillington and Jayden Martin, will be filling in during her absence to support different pockets of students.
 - iv. Pursuits/Academy - The Admin team has been welcoming feedback about the pursuits program from students, parents, and staff, learning and growing in the program. Students in grades 4-6 participate in the pursuits program and it runs alongside the hockey/ringette academy for students that are not participating in the same. Although pursuits are organized to deepen and enrich the curriculum, new items will not be taught during this time frame. Due to the increased enrollment in the academy programs this year, RH Admin have more flexibility with the timetable and have made several adjustments accordingly. Students will be given a sneak peek this week, with 20 minute sessions for each offering including Culinary Arts, Fine Arts, Performing Arts, STEM and Multi-Sports. The

format has changed slightly this year. Students will have the opportunity to experience all pursuits, in six week intervals and will be cohorted all year long. While some students are apprehensive about participating in pursuits outside of their comfort zones, the Admin team and teachers have been speaking to students about resilience and remaining open to new experiences.

- v. Bottle Drive - RH is hosting a bottle drive, open today and tomorrow, to help fund the purchase of new sporting equipment for students. Please bring in your bottles for donation!
 - vi. Enrollment - RH enrollment numbers are up this year! We have had a great start up and look forward to a wonderful year ahead!
 - vii. Project Commons/Music Room - Since the ELP program has now moved to Herald School, along with all of the classroom contents, new purpose has been found for the room. The new Project Commons will also double as the music room. The Admin team has submitted a grant application to the Education Foundation to help transform the space. All Parent Council and Fundraising Association meetings will be held here moving forward.
 - viii. Teacher Presentations - Beginning with the October meeting, teachers will give a brief presentation at the monthly Parent Council meetings. This is always a most welcome part of the meeting and provides a glimpse into their classroom and the learning taking place. Grade levels will present as follows: October - Grade 1, November - Grade 6, January - Grade 5, February - Grade 4, March - Grade 2 , April - Grade 3 and May - Kindergarten.
- b. Co-Chairs - Karla Tweten and Heather O'Reilly
- i. Purpose and Role of Parent Council vs. Fundraising Association - School councils and fundraising associations provide two separate and distinct contexts for parent and community involvement in the school.
 - 1. School councils provide a means for parents and community to work together with administration, staff and students to promote the well-being and overall effectiveness of the school community. The main role is advisory. School council has no legal authority, but is bound by a set of operating guidelines administered by a Chair(s). Parents are automatically members and parent council advises the principal.
 - 2. Fundraising associations provide a means for parents and community members to provide additional financial resources and support to the school. Their main role is fundraising. It is a legal entity and is bound by a set of bylaws administered by a President and Vice-President. A membership form must be completed to participate and the school principal advises the society.
 - 3. Members who serve on a school council can also serve on a fundraising association, and vice versa, unless the operating

procedures/bylaws of either organization prohibit it. Fundraising associations are responsible for reporting on their activities and fall within the statutes of the Societies Act, Alberta Corporate Registry and Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, depending on the group's fundraising activities.

- ii. Division Council of School Council Meeting (DCOSC) - The next meeting is scheduled for October 16th. DCOSC is a collection of representatives from school councils across the division. It is an opportunity for the Parent/Guardian/Parent Council voices to be heard. While the meeting is chaired by elected members of the group, it is also attended and supported by the School Superintendent or their representative. Items for discussion include: Alberta Education information and policies, School Division information and policies, etc. All are welcome to attend. See the link below for past and current agenda and/or meeting minutes:
<https://www.mhpsd.ca/division-council-of-school-councils>

5. Report from committees and council representatives:

a. RHSCA

- i. Membership - Karla Tweten and Heather O'Reilly
As a member of the school community at RH, all parents and guardians are welcome to join the River Heights School and Community Association. However, to become a voting member of the RHSCA and to receive agendas, minutes and financial documents, a membership form must be completed and renewed on a yearly basis.
- ii. Hot Lunch - Nicole Sehn and Brielle Schmolke
Thank you to Brielle who has stepped up to help Nicole with coordination of this year's hot lunch program!
 - 1. Upcoming Dates
 - a. September 18 - Pizza 73
 - b. September 26 - Taco Time
 - c. October 3 - Argo's Entrees
 - d. October 9 - Pizza 73
 - e. October 17 - McDonalds
 - 2. Lunch Breaks
 - a. Grade 4-6 lunch break will be 12:05 pm - 12:25 pm. With the new academy schedule, academy students will now eat alongside their peers prior to departure.
 - b. Grade 1-3 lunch break will be 12:25 am -12:50 pm.
 - c. Kindergarten lunch break will be 11:45 am - 12:15 pm.
 - 3. Hot Lunch Volunteers - Approximately three (3) volunteers will be required for each hot lunch. The hot lunch team will advertise available positions on the PC Facebook page at the start of each

month and will reach out through teachers if more volunteers are required. The same distribution format will be utilized this year, with tables set up inside the main foyer. The school Admin assistant provides a class list to support distribution.

4. Platform and Cut Off Dates - All hot lunch orders must be placed through Munch-A-Lunch, <https://munchalunch.com/login/>. Hot lunch orders cut off at midnight on the Wednesday prior (one week before), to allow sufficient notice to vendors. In weeks where there is a PD day scheduled, hot lunch will be on a Thursday with cut off on the Tuesday at midnight the week prior.

iii. Fundraising - Karla Tweten and Heather O'Reilly

1. General - Consensus last year was that most families were overwhelmed with fundraisers. Our hope is to reduce the same this year. One of the main challenges we have is that the RHSCA has traditionally provided a \$30 per student stipend to the each classroom in September and we are always fundraising behind to catch up. In the past, these funds were used on items that would carry forward with the classroom, i.e. books, seating, rugs, etc. However, we wanted to offer greater flexibility to the teachers and open the stipend to be used in the way that best supports their individual classroom needs, i.e. consumable supplies, field trips, etc. In addition to the stipend at the beginning of the school year, the RHSCA and fundraising efforts also provide direct funds for field trips from the casino event proceeds. This year the amount is expected to be over \$10,000. The cost of bussing has increased significantly, with a cost of \$200 in town and \$500-700 for an out of town excursion. Staff have been looking for other alternatives to reduce costs. The City of Medicine Hat has tried to support the same and provides bus cards at a rate of \$1 per student with supervisors for free. Where possible, for all fundraising efforts moving forward, PC/RHSCA will try to provide more in depth explanation of the need and associated costs so that families have a more detailed idea of what they are supporting when choosing fundraisers.
2. Scheduled Fundraisers
 - a. OPT Out Fundraiser - The idea of a cheque writing campaign has often been discussed. With the hope of reducing the number of overall fundraisers for the year, we have selected to try a more interesting version of the same to start the year off. Details will be forthcoming in the next week or two.
 - b. Kernels - Popcorn has typically been one of the most successful fundraisers. Although we do not yet have a

date, families could expect to see this one sometime during the year.

- c. Purdy's - Now that the business is local, we may consider a Purdy's fundraiser in time for Christmas.

6. New Business

- a. Halloween Dance - Heather O'Reilly

The dance has been scheduled for Friday, October 24, 2025 from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm. There will be a concession available that offers: popcorn, water, chips, bags of candy and glow-in-the-dark accessories. Lyle Woodward is on board to DJ again this year. Those present interested in assisting with this year's event include: Heather, Caitlin, Dayna, Jessica, Michelle, Raquel and Vanessa M. While not present, Vanessa B has offered to purchase candy and put together goodie bags. Jessica will assist with the same. Amy Stevens set up a fabulous photo opportunity last and will hopefully want to do the same again! Heather will either reach out to those interested in helping or schedule a separate meeting. The Admin team will organize teachers and students to create and hang decorations in the gym. It was requested that decorations be organized by class so it is easier for students to find their creations! One of the team will reach out to Kim McDowell, in the hopes of recruiting college student volunteers to help with the night of the event again. We will continue with the We Scare Hunger partnership and ask for food donations at the door.

- b. Winter Village - Tara Betts

The event has been scheduled for Thursday, December 11th. Tara will reach out to schedule a planning meeting sometime in October. Those present interested in assisting include: Tara, Dayna, Amanda, Michelle, Ashley, Jessica, Vanessa M and Raquel.

- c. Meeting Dates - All meetings will be held In-Person Meeting (Project Commons)

- i. Next Meeting Dates:

- 1. Wednesday, October 15, 2025 at 7:00 pm
 - 2. Wednesday, November 26, 2025 at 7:00 pm
 - 3. December 2025 - No Meeting
 - 4. Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 7:00 pm
 - 5. Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 7:00 pm
 - 6. Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 7:00 pm
 - 7. Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at 7:00 pm
 - 8. Wednesday, May 20, 2026 at 7:00 pm
 - 9. Wednesday, June 10, 2026 at 7:00 pm - AGM

7. Meeting Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 pm.