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## Parents Matter Notes

October 9, 2024

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### Introductions

Superintendent Kurt Sacher welcomed everyone and asked each representative to introduce themselves. He also referenced the meeting norms which were attached to the package. The purpose of Parents Matter is to provide a voice for parents and a sounding board for Chinook's Edge School Division. Also, we hope the committee connects school councils with each other, and connects the division with our school councils.

### Resolving conflict

A document outlining a positive approach to resolving conflict was included in the agenda, and will be attached to these notes. In summary, if there is a concern, parents are encouraged to use an in person or phone conversation rather than email. Please talk first with the teacher, and be as positive as possible. If the situation isn't resolved with the teacher, the next stop is the administrator. If there are remaining concerns, then please call the division office at 403.227.7070. We try to get back to people in 48 hours.

### Question Box

1. *Can schools be used for rental space?*  
Yes. We already do that. The funds that come from rentals, **that remain after costs to care for the facilities**, generally go to the school budgets.
2. *Since students use Chromebooks in Chinook's Edge, how prepared are they, when they graduate, to use other operating systems?*  
Learning Services is actively considering some options to address this legitimate concern.
3. *With the provincial policy of not allowing smart devices in classrooms, why wouldn't Chinook's Edge take it further and not allow devices on school buses?*  
We are currently consulting with multiple stakeholder groups to develop a policy by January 2025 in compliance with provincial expectations regarding cell phones and smart devices (watches, etc.).

Also, we shared that we are reluctant to consider extending cellphone and smart device restrictions into our transportation system. Please keep in mind that we want bus drivers to be focused on safety and fully attentive to their responsibilities. In the short term, if there is an instance where your young child is sitting by an older student on their cell phone and



you are concerned about that, please ask the bus driver for a new seating arrangement.

4. *What supports are available for classes with children who have complex needs?*

We allocate according to clear and consistent class size guidelines. In the case of medically fragile students, the funding follows the student. We move the overwhelming majority of resources into schools at the start of the year so staffing and supports can be fully in place. Our approach is not a perfect science, as some students arrive later in the school year. Our approach does provide principals with some flexibility at the school level to respond as they see fit depending on a wide variety of circumstances.

5. *What are the parameters to engage parents to volunteer?*

We leave that to our schools. Parents who wish to volunteer are encouraged to contact their school office and ask for more information. School councils also can have many opportunities for volunteering.

6. *How will the provincial cell phone initiative be implemented in Chinook's Edge?*

It has already been implemented. It may not have seemed like a change because a number of our schools were already working to limit distractions from the use of personal devices in school.

7. *What is the supervision underway in schools at lunch?*

Heavier supervision occurs in kindergarten where children are still learning routines. Once students have routines established, typically one adult supervises two classes or more as students progress from grade 1 on up. An estimated ratio of adults to students at recess is approximately one adult for every three classes of elementary students.

### **Input on CESD Admin procedures (turn and talk)**

Superintendent Kurt Sacher explained that the division always prioritizes student safety. He asked for feedback about student safety in schools, using [AP 3-26 \(Welcoming, Safe and Inclusive Schools\)](#) as a reference.

A second area of feedback was about student cell phone use in schools. The division has implemented the provincial government's decision on that, and specifically Superintendent Sacher asked the group for feedback about what the division should include in its policy that is being developed.

Meeting participants were assigned breakout rooms for discussion, and then invited to share overall insights with the large group.

### **Some overall insights about AP 3-26:**

- The AP makes sense (all groups said this)



- Two groups commented that they appreciate the mention of general conflict, and the clarification about what is bullying - that in many cases peer-to-peer conflict is mislabelled as bullying (which is more targeted and repetitive).
- Question about mention of restorative justice and what it is. Superintendent Sacher said historically justice tends to be punitive, whereas restorative justice is more about learning and restoring a positive environment.
- Parent comment that safety can become an issue when students outnumber the adults. For instance, at recess. Could parents help by volunteering? Superintendent Sacher encouraged parents to discuss this with school administrators, and also to bring up situations they are observing so administrators can help to find solutions.
- One group observed that are situations where students are having their cell phones at lunch and at breaks, when they aren't supposed to (in Kindergarten through Grade 8)
- Like that school doors are locked and there is a sign-in and sign-out
- A parent reported an instance where a door to the student parking lot is not locked. Superintendent Sacher encouraged the parent to speak to the school principal about it.
- A question about when lock-downs should be used in the case of complex needs students. Superintendent Sacher said the division has been working on supporting students with complex needs, and that there would be more communication about this later in the year.
- Question about internet access for staff. Staff have access to the internet through Chinook's Edge staff Chromebooks or desktop / laptop computers.
- Belief that our schools are safe and caring. Sometimes in the higher grades, some peer-to-peer conflict is normal and it develops resilience.

**Some overall insights about cell-phone use in schools for developing policy:**

- Seems to be working very well (every group said this)
- Already seeing better focus and grades from students
- Intramural sports is happening - and kids are playing together
- Nice to see more engagement and playing at recess
- Parents of younger children are pleased that this is happening, and that it will be a norm when their children get into higher grades.
- Question about students who might need the device for school work. Superintendent Sacher talked about the Board's approval of \$350,000 in funding to purchase Chromebooks to support students.
- Question about smart watches. Are they allowed? If not, could there be a unified front about these, so that there is not undue pressure on individual staff or a school. For the record, unless there are special considerations they are not allowed similar to cell phones.
- Parents like that social media is blocked.

One question regarding cell phones was school specific. If there is a consequence given to students for using their cell phone, and the device is taken away, that could impact them during



lunch time when they might need it. Superintendent Sacher encouraged the individual parent to speak with the school principal about this concern.

### **Sharing and stealing ideas (turn and talk)**

Participants were divided into different groups to discuss what they are excited or proud of in their school council work, so that councils can share / steal ideas from each other.

Some of the ideas that were shared:

- Fundraising for a new playground. Hoping for a grant.
- Outdoor classroom was built recently and now school council is working to build a structure over it so it can be used in a variety of weather conditions
- Halloween dance, and a family movie night in December. Trying to get families into the school and involved together.
- One school noted that their most successful fundraiser is movie night, and families are admitted by a donation (not a specified amount). A lot of the fundraising comes from the snacks that are sold.
- School council encouraging participation of new parents with a \$50 credit towards school fees or hot lunches
- Council meeting is in the morning so it works better for that group of parents
- \$500 annual grant used for speaker Paul Davis - regarding internet safety
- A grade 12 student is a representative on the school council

### **Final comments**

If you haven't already, please complete [this exit](#) survey. Your feedback helps us improve these meetings.

Parents asked Superintendent Sacher for a way of connecting with each other for the opportunity to share ideas and ask questions, in between meetings. Superintendent Sacher asked parents who are interested to please let Shanna Babb know ([sbabb@cesd73.ca](mailto:sbabb@cesd73.ca)) if they would like to be added to an email list / group, where parents can email each other. We will be forming that group shortly.

**The next Parents Matter meeting will be on January 29, 2025.** There is also a Parents Matter meeting scheduled for April 30, 2025. Meetings will continue to remain online starting at 6:30 p.m. and ending at 8:00 p.m.. If questions come up before the next meeting, please email Shanna Babb at [sbabb@cesd73.ca](mailto:sbabb@cesd73.ca). Parents can also email Kurt Sacher directly if there is a pressing concern or question, at [ksacher@cesd73.ca](mailto:ksacher@cesd73.ca).

If you are not able to attend a future meeting, could you please find someone to take your place. If you find an alternate, please let Shanna know. Thank you!