**LCI Council Meeting**

**May 20, 2021**

**Attendance**: Carole Haggie, Morag Asquith, Tyler Demers, Gordon Vatcher, Nancy Bly, Wayne Pallett, Rebecca Ash, Kristina Zemp, Maria Thomson, Kara Goth, Annae Jones, Dillon, Shelley, Parker L, Hannah, Tobi, Alex, Lindy, Hayden T, Cooks, Kyle McKenzie, Lows, Michele, Sarah, Faith Heggie, Dan Johnson, Kara Goth, Ryan and Heather Wolfe, Cheryl Gilmore, Gary Spartans, Allison Purcell, Mary Lou Monahan, Annette Siemens, Janice, Katrina Hurdle, Eric Sogah, Ryan Thomson, Josh Sherwood, Katie, Kristi, BJ Martin, Rebecca, Hunter Heggie, Austin Sheen, S. Leavitt, Bradley Pike, Nobles, Greg, Tiffany Hill, Bridget, Janice Wong, Ammon, Joan Smith, Calgary Spartans, Faith Heggie, Ash Ash, Alex Ash and William Ash (55 people)

**Parent Concern:** Will there be three-hour classes in the fall? This will be discussed in June at the School Council meeting. The goal is to have a five-period day however it is early to say for certain if this will be possible.

**Becky Ash’s Motion:**  *Motion: Becky will draft a letter that will oppose the decision to have the weighting of 15% final assessment and propose 15% final assessment with “no harm” clause added.*

**Seconded**: Tobi McLeod.

**DISCUSSION**:

**Becky Ash:** Shared background and research around motion.

**Comments**:

* I think it is reasonable to follow what other schools are doing in the province so our kids aren’t at a disadvantage.
* I wonder why the decision regarding finals is left to school divisions instead of being a Provincial decision where the recommendation would be the same for all students around Alberta?

**Cheryl Gilmore:**

* Concern that if there is no harm policy for exams students feel they are done and disengage in the learning.
* Cheryl shared a number of division final assessment weightings in Southern Alberta including Livingston Range – between 20 – 30%, no change from course syllabus, Holy Spirit – 20%
* Varies across the province, some have done the “no harm” piece (marks can’t go down). Some have set the 5%, 10% rule so marks can only go down by these percentages.
* We have looked at what is the best for our students and how do we make decisions based on what is grounded in what is best for our students.
* Assessments can take different forms – projects, papers, exams,
* We do care and have been diligent in trying to provide a summative form of assessment of some kind.

**Questions:**

@**Cheryl**: Why would you wait until this meeting is called to survey other school districts? After the LSD already made a decision?

* Cheryl has monitored this all semester but followed up with divisions this week to see if there were any changes.

Whose decision was this? School principals or administration?

What was the rationale for the decision?

Are the students given the opportunity to choose between the different assessments? For example, one may not test well so can choose a non ”exam” option.

There are lots of conversations ongoing with managing the Pandemic with Superintendents many responses from schools and school divisions are responding to stressors/pressures that present daily, let alone weekly/monthly.

Sounds like a FOIP request needs to be submitted to get more context and rationale for the decision.

I wonder what criteria the Calgary zone has used to support their decision to eliminate finals and why would those criteria and outcome from this assessment would not apply to our kids in the south zone?

**Wayne**:

* We did a lot of homework looking at what other divisions are doing.
* We’ve provided alternatives to staff such as reducing the size of an exam with less questions, allowing students to bring in a knowledge sheet during their test, projects, etc.

**Questions**:

@**Wayne**: can you confidently state that teachers are prepping students for a comprehensive final exam, as they would in the past? Regardless of the exam weighting?

* It is up to the teacher to decide what is best for their students. We have talked to staff and asked them to reflect on what they are going to do. Some courses lend themselves better to essays and projects. For example, math does not. Exams are to be only on things that they have prepared for.
* Staff have professional autonomy to determine how they will assess their students.

**COMMENTS:**

- I appreciate what the science department did to help the students.

- I didn't see as much of lowering criteria with English this semester or perhaps I am seeing how much was lost from last year and we are now seeing the effects. I think all the teachers are working incredibly hard, I am just saying as a parent I am starting to see where my own daughter is lacking from what happened this year to the current state.

- We always have students who struggle with tests...we support those students with the needs they present.

- My understanding is that all teachers do not feel they have the autonomy you speak of and have been told that it’s by department. Wayne can you clarify that?

**Becky**: Who are we motioning to appeal?

**Cheryl**: The first channel is to write the Superintendent a letter. It can be from School Council, several people or an individual. The Superintendent has one week to respond. If dissatisfied with response then an appeal to the Board can be made.

What criteria are other Zones using to determine final assessment weighting? Why is there a discrepancy between Zones?

**Cheryl**: Every school jurisdiction through the school education act has autonomy to decide what assessment will look like in their school division. We have had parents unhappy with us not keeping it at 30% and we have parent unhappy that we are not making it lower. I have high regard for the principals and teaching staff and what they believe is best for our students. I believe our students will be well served. We feel it would be a disservice to our students to not have some summative assessment that allows them to articulate what they know and have learned in their courses. There was deep dialog that has gone on between all the principals. I trust the principal and teachers experience and what they feel is best for students. We came together collectively as a division.

**Wayne:** In first semester there was a 1.9% difference between the class averages and final exams. We had some outliers that were looked at however overall class averages were very close to final exam averages.

**Morag**: I think it is important to share that students who are struggling and encountering significant issues that would impact test performance would have opportunities to work with staff and receive supports necessary with regard to final assessments.

Motion was made.

**Becky Ash’s Motion:**  *Motion: Becky will draft a letter that will oppose the decision to have the weighting of 15% final assessment and propose 15% final assessment with “no harm” clause added.*

**Seconded**: Tobi McLeod.

**Question**: Are we appealing this for LCI or for the whole division?

* We are appealing this for LCI only.

**Cheryl**: The principals were brought together to reach consensus to make a school jurisdiction decision. The appeal would be for the jurisdiction decision that was made for final assessment.

**Question**: Are you hoping for a 0% weighting?

**Becky**: I like the no harm option. Overall, I want to see equality across the province for the exam weighting. For students that are applying to competitive university programs 2% decrease in marks can mean they will not get into the University while other students in the province aren’t being assessed in this way and having their marks go down due to final assessments.

**Question**: Can we talk to our student’s individual teachers to see what their plan is to make sure their kid’s marks doing go down?

Becky read Westwind letter. Several expressed support for their letter.

**Concern:** If there isn’t a “no harm” clause and some teachers work students hard in the final then what?

**Gordon Vatcher:** The impact might be different from class to class and school to school depending on what content was covered. We have tried to let teachers have the professional autonomy to determine what is the best way to assess their student based on what they were able to do this semester. The teachers know best how much students’ learning has been impacted this semester and what assessment will be best.

**Board Comment:** I recommend the letter be as specific as you can for what outcome you want.

**VOTE:**

**VOTE: 26 in favour, 25 abstained**

**Adjourned: 8:25PM**

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