MRHS School Advisory Council

Meeting Notes – October 28, 2026

Attendance: Pat McCurdy, Angela MacKenzie, Meghan Butler, Sharon Arsenault, Erinn Smith, Anne Warburton, Emma Horne, Cindy Steele, Ernest Paddock, Percilla MacPhee

1. Call to Order and Agenda

The meeting was called to order by Percilla MacPhee. The meeting agenda was approved.

2. Principal's Report

Ernest Paddock provided an overview of school priorities and activities for the year.

- Safety and security are a significant focus this year. The school has updated its workplace violence prevention and emergency management planning, added emergency contact information throughout the building, and continues to reinforce respectful communication and the Code of Conduct. Required emergency drills have been completed successfully to date.
- The school reviewed its emergency relocation procedures. If the school must leave the site, the first relocation location is MVEC, with the Bicentennial Theatre identified as an alternate if both school sites are affected.
- Cindy reported that the school continues to feel supported by the RCMP, although limited staffing and the large geographic area served by the detachment remain concerns.

3. O2 / Student Programming

An update provided by Martha Baker was shared with the group.

- The Grade 10 O2 program is going well, with several student trips and first aid training planned.
- NSCC has changed math prerequisites for Trades programs, with Math at Work becoming important for future applicants. Changes have also been made to the timing of applications for skilled trades programs.
- Co-op placements are progressing well, with only one student remaining to be placed at the time of the meeting.
- The process allowing former students to document co-op hours toward apprenticeship requirements is working well.

4. Student Success Plan and Well-Being

The school continues to focus on literacy, mathematics and student well-being under the Student Success Plan.

Current areas of focus include:

- strengthening reading comprehension, annotation and the use of evidence in written responses;
- encouraging collaborative problem-solving and "productive struggle" in mathematics;
- strengthening communication and engagement with parents; and
- surveying students about safety, security and overall well-being and reviewing common areas of the school for comfort and accessibility.

The SAC also discussed ways to make social-emotional and mental-health information available more broadly to all students, including students who may not seek out formal supports or groups. The school will explore additional ways of communicating available supports directly to students.

5. Cultural and Inclusive Programming

Cindy provided an update on efforts to strengthen Indigenous and African Nova Scotian learning and cultural experiences in the school.

- A five-week Indigenous learning initiative has been arranged, including work with students to develop a locally relevant land acknowledgement.
- Indigenous, African Nova Scotian and inclusion flags have been purchased and are expected to be displayed in the school foyer.
- Additional cultural programming is planned throughout the year, including African Nova Scotian programming in February.

Anne Warburton suggested sharing the completed land acknowledgement with the Musquodoboit Valley Community Association for possible use on the community website.

6. SAC Finances and Priorities

SAC and student-support funding had not yet been received at the time of the meeting. The school is therefore being cautious with spending.

A significant accounting issue was discussed. A large payment previously sent to HRCE to clear school accounts was deposited, but the corresponding accounts were not cleared. Ernest Paddock and the school's administrative assistant, Janice, are working to have the discrepancy resolved. If it remains unresolved by the next SAC meeting, a financial package will be prepared so the SAC can assist in raising the matter with HRCE.

Potential spending priorities include continuation of the holiday meal and other existing SAC-supported initiatives, outdoor furniture, and school equipment needs. Further decisions will be made once funding is received and the amount available is confirmed.

7. SAC Membership

Two Grade 7 parents, Katy Strickland and Candace Weston, have expressed interest in joining the SAC. Ernest Paddock will contact them, provide SAC information and invite them to the next meeting. The importance of succession planning for SAC membership was noted.

8. Upcoming Meetings and Holiday Dinner

The SAC agreed to maintain the option of Zoom participation, particularly during the winter. Upcoming dates discussed and agreed to were:

- November 18 at 3:30pm
- December 10 at 3:30 p.m.
- February 3 at 3:30pm
- March 2 at 3:30pm
- April 28 at 3:30pm

The holiday dinner is planned for December 15, with December 16 identified as the storm date.

Action Items

- Ernest Paddock to contact Katy Strickland and Candace Weston regarding SAC membership and orientation.
- Cindy to locate and distribute the student well-being survey.
- Share the completed local land acknowledgement with the Musquodoboit Valley Community Association for potential use on its website.

- Erinn Smith to ask the Family Resource Centre about possible support for the holiday dinner and whether a formal request letter is required.
- Ernest Paddock/Janice to continue pursuing resolution of the accounting discrepancy and prepare a financial package for the next SAC meeting if it remains unresolved.
- Calendar invitations/Zoom links to be circulated for upcoming SAC meetings.