

North Star Community School / Atikokan High School

2019-20 School Council Annual Report

The School Council is comprised of parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, community members and the principal. The Council's role is to provide an advisory forum to promote school growth, successful learning and increase parents/guardians' participation in the education of their child. The members bring individual strengths to the table and work together to identify and support the needs of our school community. New parents and community members are welcome and encouraged to join our Council.

2019-20 School Council Members:

Joanne Spencer – Co-chair and parent
Mellisa Gallagher – Co-chair and parent
Paige Gascoigne – parent and secretary
Nancy Pitura – parent
Julie Slack – parent
Brooke Caul – parent
Amy Sodtke – parent
Lorraine Gauthier Stromberg – community representative – KRRCFCS
Erica Lantin – elementary teacher rep
Sylvie Cyr – secondary teacher rep
Beth Fairfield – Principal
Carly Skrenski – Vice Principal

2019-20 Meeting Dates:

October 2, 2019
November 12, 2019
January 28, 2020
June 2, 2020

Highlights from the Year:

North Star and AHS felt that in moving toward a potential K-12 school in the future, a combined School Council was logical and assisted both schools in meeting quorum with an adequate number of participating parents.

Our School Council continues to feel that they can best support our students and families in the Community, Culture, and Caring Goals of both School Improvement Plans. North Star's goal states: "If all students have what they need to be successful in their learning, then students will develop the confidence and grit to work through social and academic challenges." Atikokan High School's goal states the school's desire to: "Provide a safe, equitable and inclusive environment with a focus on student learning and achievement." Council realized the importance of school involvement, student/teacher relationships, and school connectedness.

Difficult and Unprecedented Circumstances

Council acknowledged that this year presented with some incredible challenges, between labour disruptions and the COVID-19 global pandemic. Family engagement was uniquely problematic during periods of job action and while the school was closed to students and staff, and Council was unable to coordinate a Family Engagement Night. Council was able to conduct the final meeting of the year virtually. With support of the Board level Parent Involvement Committee, two parent engagement sessions were promoted to families at both Atikokan 7-12 and North Star schools. As a result of the global pandemic, both sessions, featuring Dr. Greg Wells, were offered virtually. One session highlighted how small changes can improve your overall health and wellness; the second was on the importance of focus and unplugging from a world of constant distraction.

During the pandemic every effort was made, where possible, to continue school traditions. Successful virtual parent/student transition meetings for students transitioning from North Star to Atikokan High elementary took place, as well as meetings for Kindergarten students and their parents transitioning to grade 1. Non-traditional graduation activities are planned for students in Kindergarten, grade 8 and grade 12.

As a result of the challenging nature of the school year, Council did not spend any of their budget.

Looking Ahead to 2020-2021

1. School Council would like to maintain a consistent level of parent membership
2. School Council will continue with single K-12 Council, with an effort toward combined family engagement
3. School Council will focus on wellness, both physical and mental, for students, staff, parents, and the greater school community, particularly after the events of the 2019-2020 school year.
4. Council will continue to provide input and feedback on school based fundraising activities and Special Event Days.