

Thank you for the opportunity to share concerns with the minutes from the October 17, 2018 special meeting of the Park West School SAC.

Please note that meeting minutes serve as the official permanent record of proceedings and should provide a fair, balanced, and unbiased account of the meeting. Unsubstantiated, subjective, or misleading information should not be included in minutes. If opinions are included, it should be apparent it is an opinion and not a substantive fact, so the reader is able to discern between fact and personal opinion.

With this in mind, please consider the following examples:

4. Community Presentations

Ms. Ankcorn

- References to feelings, and being skeptical demotes points for which there is good supporting evidence. This is the only presenter where “feelings” were referenced – others opinions are written as statements of fact.

Questions

- “The NS School Class Size Limitations Act ... which has not passed into law”... “Ms. McLeod confirmed no law was passed” – these statements are untrue. Ms. McLeod was going to follow-up on the status of the Act.
- “...even in the draft Act that the cap sizes are a guideline” – This statement is misleading, as cap sizes are a guideline that schools in Nova Scotia are *mandated* to follow.

Examples of statements from other presenters that are written as fact, when they are indeed an opinion:

Mr. Poirer

- o “There is no negative academic impact...”
- o “Clarified that the overcapacity stats are misleading...”
- o “The school is at its highest functional level...”

Mr. Davidson

- o “Moving these students... would mathematically require almost all remaining elementary classes to be split grade...”
- o “The solution to the overcrowding is in construction...”

Mrs. Cogswell

- o “There would be an educational and social detriment to any students who moved to attend another school in another community”
- o “...parents... do have the ability to register their children to an out of bounds school and noted that there is space in nearby elementary schools to do so.” (nearby elementary schools are at capacity and registering out of bounds is often not accepted)

➔ *Recommendation to add “it is the opinion of...” or “He/She feels that...” preceding these statements or remove them altogether.*

Mrs. Cogswell: Questions

- “Ms. McLeod advised that the population of the school does drive what resources are made available, they are based on enrollment”
 - o This is misleading, Park West is not resourced differently than any other school. If we had 560 students, we would have the same resources per student as we do with 850.

5. Time for Questions from HRCE

- “There would be impacts to extracurricular activities and particularly on sports teams” (This is the structure of the sentence that makes it appear this is a fact, when it was part of the concern raised by a participant. Ms. McLeod did not foresee any impacts.)
- “... This is an option, but similar to the nearby junior high schools the elementary schools are also under pressure...” (This should read “..., but unlike the nearby junior high schools, ...”, as the Junior High schools in the area are both running under capacity)

Additional Observations:

- The women presenting are introduced in the minutes either as “parent” or “PWS Elementary Teacher”. The men presenting have introductions including their years and experience at the school. It is recommended the introductions be the same for all presenters regarding their role at the meeting (i.e. “parent”).
- None of the objective facts were included in the minutes, for example
 - o Park West School is over 140% of the schools capacity (240 children over capacity)
 - o None of the P-2 classes are meeting the hard cap of 22 and some are exceeding hard caps by up to 6 extra students.
 - o Enrollment at Park West is projected to remain at this level.

Given the examples noted above regarding how the minutes have been written, I hope the SAC will consider making changes to allow our community to have a fair, balanced, and truthful account of the meeting proceedings.