Rocky Lake Elementary School Advisory Council (SAC) — Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Ivan Skeete, Heather Day, Suzanne Rohland, Kyla Burry, Lia MacDonald, Laura Holland, Jennifer Schnare, Inbel Vichansky, Pam MacPherson

Regrets: Heather Collins

Date: September 28, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM – 7:15 PM

Location: Rocky Lake Elementary School

1. Call to Order & Welcome

Principal Ivan Skeete opened the meeting and outlined the scope of the SAC. He noted that while SAC meetings are relatively informal, specific leadership roles and administrative positions need to be filled for the school year.

2. SAC Executive & Committee Appointments

The committee discussed operational roles, responsibilities, and correspondence duties expected from provincial and HRCE leadership. The following appointments were made for the 2026–2027 school year:

- **SAC Chair & Vice Chair:** Laura and Jen (Co-Chairs/Vice-Chairs)
- **SAC Committee Members:** Laura, Jen, Lia, Megan, and Inbel.
- **Secretary / Documentation:** Heather Day confirmed she will continue processing transcripts and meeting notes.

3. Financial Overview & Grant Allocations

Mr. Skeete detailed the annual funding structure provided to the school. The school receives three distinct annual provincial grants totaling $15,000:

1. **SAC Advisory Grant:** $5,000 base funding plus $1 per student (decided in partnership with the SAC).
2. **Student Support Grant:** $5,000 allocated toward extracurricular and co-curricular initiatives.
3. **Healthy Schools Grant:** $5,000 designated for student well-being and physical activity initiatives.

Budget Strategy & Guidelines

- **Spending Requirement:** Funds are required to be spent within the current school year to directly benefit current students rather than accumulated.
- **Prior Year Surplus:** Carryover funds from prior successful grant usage and corporate donations (RBC) remain available.
- **Staff Requests:** Mr. Skeete will issue a Google Form to teachers to compile equipment and classroom enhancement requests, allowing the SAC to review and co-fund high-impact projects.

4. School Grounds & Facilities Discussion

Lockers & Student Gear

A parent raised concerns regarding students carrying heavy backpacks filled with supplies, winter gear, and footwear between classrooms.

- **Current Setup:** Students utilize portable supply tubs between classrooms.
- **Resolution:** Teachers will ensure students know designated classroom storage spots so heavy gear does not need to be transported daily back and forth from home.
- **Locker Feasibility:** Installing new lockers is cost-prohibitive (estimated over $5,000 and requiring external corporate sponsorship) and not feasible for the current school structure.

Playground Infrastructure vs. Student Clubs

- **Playground Context:** As a former junior high/high school facility, the campus lacks formal playground structures. Building a new playground is extremely costly, takes years to complete, and is not practical given shifting feeder-school enrollment demographics.
- **Emphasis on Clubs & Field Use:** The school prioritizes active clubs (Chess, Dungeons & Dragons, Drama, Science, Art) and outdoor field sports (soccer, baseball, cricket, tag, woods exploration) over playground fundraising.
- **Outdoor Seating & Facilities:** The committee agreed to explore adding outdoor seating, such as additional sealed wooden benches and picnic tables, to enhance outdoor learning and socialization.

5. Inclusive Programs & Student Accessibility

- **Learning Centre Growth:** Discussion focused on supporting an influx of Learning Centre students.
- **Accessible Equipment:** Funds will be allocated toward inclusive sensory and sports items (e.g., adaptive balls with bells).
- **Accessibility Efforts:** Ensure physical accommodations (e.g., accessible transit or sledges) are provided for school outings like the annual Halifax Oval trip so that students in wheelchairs or with visual impairments participate fully.

6. Whole-School Events & Guest Presenters

The committee reviewed options for school-wide assembly programs using grant funds:

- **Domino Man:** Interactive, full-day gym installation and assembly ($250–500 range).
- **Q-mac Performance:** High-energy, inspirational acrobatics/juggling assembly focusing on positive character traits and sportsmanship.
- **Skating Trip:** Annual winter trip to the Halifax Oval scheduled for late January or early February.

7. Home & School / Parent Committee Initiatives

Volunteer-Led Activities

While Rocky Lake Elementary does not operate a formal separate Home & School Association, parent volunteers drive key community activities:

- **Monthly Popcorn Days:** Requires a lead parent coordinator and a team of approximately 8 volunteers. Target start date is late October.

- **Halloween Dance:** Scheduled for **Thursday, October 29, 2026** (6:30 PM – 8:00 PM). Parent volunteers are needed for canteen setup, chaperones, and decorations.

8. End-of-Year Grade 6 Graduation Ceremony Discussion

- **Logistical Challenges:** Mr.Skeete explained that running a formal graduation ceremony for 315 Grade 6 students (the size of a high school graduating class) presents significant space, parking, and scheduling constraints.
- **Student Experience vs. Formalities:** The school prioritizes experiences in terms of student enjoyment and memories—such as the end-of-year dance, Atlantic Splash trip, Arts Night, and Field Day—over a long formal stage walk.
- **Keepsakes & Alternatives:** Students receive school t-shirts in October to wear throughout the year and sign at the end of term, along with free yearbooks.
- **Proposed Alternatives:** The committee discussed options like classroom-level recognition, photo booths (with "Class of 2027" backdrops), and an arch for family photos during the final weeks.
- **Final Assembly & Farewell:** The school concludes the year with a student-focused "Remarkable Ravens" assembly featuring games, music bingo, and peer awards on the final day.

Next Steps & Action Items

- **Mr. Skeete:** Issue parent email calls for Popcorn Day leads, Halloween Dance volunteers, and canteen donations.
- **Mr. Skeete:** Circulate the teacher request form to gather classroom resource requests.
- **SAC Members:** Spread awareness regarding SAC funding priorities and assist in recruitments for upcoming volunteer initiatives.