

HENDERSON AVENUE PUBLIC SCHOOL
School Council Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2023
7:00-9:00 P.M.

In attendance: Heather Zaitlin (Principal), Alexandra Lucarelli (teacher), Catherine Green (teacher), Katherine Moore (teacher), Craig Watterworth (teacher), Elisa Tibollo (teacher), Azi Sanai, Sami Sanai, Parisa Rahmani, Azita Moaref, Dorna Kiani, Zahra Parhizani, Agnes Hwang, Roxana Balescu, Monireh Ataei, Shiva Petersoo, Fiona, Sara Jane, Alaae Sogol, Pnina Klotz (teacher), Christina Collini, Grant Fawthrop (Superintendent)

- Opening meeting - Azi (Chair)

- Approving and moving minutes of last meeting - Zahra moved the last meeting minutes, and Parisa seconded her.

- HAPS Council Constitution revision - Zahra presented the amendments brought to the Constitution:
 - ❖ Article 6 - Election and Voting: 14 days notice to the community
 - ❖ Article 9 - Executives/ Officers: information could be posted on the website or other online repository
 - ❖ Article 12 - Finances: forecast to be added to annual budget; actual funds raised and spent be summarized at the end of the year; up to \$200 in expenses can be approved by the executives.
 - ❖ Article 13 - Agendas and Minutes: agenda items to involve a group or students or families

The Constitution amendments were voted and passed by the Council members present at the meeting unanimously.

- Principal Profile - Parisa presented the amendments to the document, which were passed by Council members unanimously again.

- Principal's Updates
 - Jungle Sports - Heather explained that the company had advised her that there would be a Board Memo about "Purchasing Services" that indicates the fact that Fun Fair/Amusement equipment rentals are not permitted, so the company cancelled, as they were advised by a person at the School Board; however, later on it had been discovered that this was not the case and the activity could have gone ahead.

- Heather will provide the name of the person at the School Board
- Azi brought to the attendees attention the situation about the temporary Power outage, the solution to purchase a generator, and the lack of communication from the School
- EQAO

Heather mentioned that the results were shared in November 2022.

Azi interjected that only the Ontario-wide results were shared in Nov, not specifically the HAPS results, and we also haven't seen an interpretation of these numbers and what the school has done to address any learning gaps.

Sami made some comments in regards to the challenging communication with the school administration.

Heather posted in the meeting chat the following results, which had been shared already with the school's community through email - Grade 3: Reading 85%, Writing 77%, Math 69%; Grade 6: Reading 94%, Writing 94%, Math 88%.

Heather left the meeting after trying to speak several times and being interrupted, mentioning she felt "stabbed" by the Council.

- Grant has joined the meeting.

Azi indicated that we kept mentioning communication problems with the Principal, and updated Grant on the details from the conversation prior to him joining the meeting.

- Teachers updates

Mr. Craig Watterworth - Robotics - was able to buy 4 sets of Lego Robotics and 2 extension kits, and the students are engaged playing in teams and competitions; Basketball and Intermediate Badminton clubs are running.

Ms. Moore - new instruments came on time, and even cheaper than expected; the band is fully running, they are looking forward to the Concert this spring.

Grant mentions he doesn't take things on a personal level, but he would prefer to not discuss personalised conversations, and focus on the school issues.

- Parisa brought forward an entire list of issues in relation to the school administration, approximately 20 in total, namely:
 - Last school year, the Council was not taking minutes, as it used to do, but the Principal was handling them, so this year she was requested to hand them back, as it's under the Council's responsibility.

- We lost maybe the School biggest fundraiser, the BBQ in the fall at Curriculum night; there was instead an icecream truck brought to school, but the parents were not encouraged to have the kids with them during the in-person presentations, which made no sense.
 - After firing the best Lunch supervisor the school ever had, which the Council tried to support in bringing back, the Principal brought in the next Council meeting a set of Norms, and called gossiping when talking about a person not present, even if that person would give their consent.
 - Banquet hall was not booked at the end of the previous School year, and without the Council intervention, the grade 8 wouldn't have had a venue.
 - Jungle Sports activity was cancelled and little reasoning was shared with the parents.
 - Quebec trip was never agreed upon, and the Council still doesn't know what has happened with the parents money, and the Principal gave the silent treatment.
 - School Improvement Plan - there always was one in place, and we are now told that other extracurricular activities are part of it.
 - EQAO was never addressed with an analysis, or what is the plan to improve results.
 - Lack of technologies - in relation to the number of computers the students need, the Principal did not have proper knowledge.
 - The Music teacher did not get information about the credit the School had for instruments, and only the Council brought it to their attention.
 - The School Council asked for a hybrid meeting, and pushed for it, but we are still getting a virtual one.
- Grant thanked us for the participation and for the staff taking the time to join in.

Grant explained the fact that the Board only recently approved getting things up to speed, post pandemic. In relation to overnight trips, they need educators, even if there are volunteers present, as supervision is an important reality. There is a requirement to have OCT certified educators. There were only 2 schools in the Board who had managed to organise a trip in Quebec.

Parisa interjected that back in February we managed to demonstrate that we were able to remove some of the barriers previously invoked by the Principal.

Grant said that they were not in a position to put the trip in place this school year. More so, Henderson was also one of a few schools going on a grad trip. There are couple main points to consider when organising such trip:

- Equitable opportunity for all students to go
- Sufficient staff supervision, as it's a huge commitment and responsibility

Azi interrupted that the School is trying to plan for the next school year, not this year, as we would need to start planning as early as May the prior year.

Mr. Watterwoth said that they had conversations about possible locations and times for next year, and looked into having the cost reduced through these, being at the same time educational and engaging.

Sami mentioned that the Council was previously informed that a day had been booked, although it wasn't shared, so maybe the staff might have more knowledge.

Mrs. Green mentioned that they only have a spectrum of time, without a day being decided for now.

Azi commented that the Council heard so much mismatching communication this school year, that we are unsure about things. Previously the Principal had said that she "had pulled a date out of the hat and it has been booked" although the exact date has ever been shared. As a Council, we've never been faced with this type of issues and are getting frustrated.

Grant added that the communication about the power outage came from the Board, as it's expected to happen in this situation. The Principal's first order of business is to ensure the safety of the school. He was in the school at the time the incident occurred, and the Principal took care of the good order of things in the school. The instructions about overnight trips came from the Board, and they were supposed to be communicated by the Principal.

Dorna intervened and mentioned that she had walked to the school the day of the power outage, and saw the doors were not locked, and the kids were coming in and out freely.

Grant said that there was some missed messaging and misinformation circling with the Board, and only the Director can cancel school for a certain day. They followed in the school certain protocols to ensure the safety is guaranteed.

Agnes had a question about the Council minutes that were not uploaded to the School website since October 2022.

Grant said that it depends on the capabilities and limited office staff possibilities to be able to cover these types of issues.

Zahra mentioned that there have been a lot of issues this School year, for example lack of resources being brought up to the Principal's attention, and they are not even aware of them.

Sami asked again what can we do as we are not happy this school year.

Grant had lots of very positive feedback from other sources who have had other perspectives in relation to the school administration.

Azi interjected that we always took pride in the community and worked for the best of the kids, but this year has been different. We only compare Henderson to the school that used to be, which is not anymore.

Azi asked for change and action instead of just words.

Grant added that in a school there are many stakeholders and voices that they need to listen to, and there are efforts made to keep Henderson a wonderful school.

Sami added that she has heard from many unhappy parents, crying even about what's been happening at the school, and they were not really presented with a solution for their issues.

Grant said that he would be very solution-oriented, and he would continue to have a dialogue with those involved. He assured that the staff are supported.

Azi questioned if the Principal leaving the meeting and not communicating with the Council is normal. She has been thrown under the bus multiple times, and the Principal not directly reaching out to her as Chair, and only doing what she wanted unilaterally.

Grant acknowledged that there were a lot of frustrations, and the grade 8 trip was probably a major contributor.

Azi interjected that we cannot hide the other 20 issues behind only one issue, which is the grade 8 trip.

Ms. Moore commented that the pandemic has impacted a lot the school life and the course of many activities.

Azi added that miscommunication and not being upfront about things should not be excused.

- Fundraising activities - Sami mentioned she was unable to lead an activity, unfortunately, nobody else offered to take over.
- Pro Grant - Agnes indicated that the Principal had connected her with School Council at Johnsvie to deliver a presentation as a shared event, so the schools could have double the funds, and she is currently waiting to hear back.
- Mr. Watterworth - he attended an event where over 100 kids participated in Cross Country, and it's something to look into, as the school used to have participation in the past; he is going to look into pricing that the School Council could support.

Azi asked Grant to assist in obtaining the recording of the meeting, if possible.

Meeting Adjournment: 9 PM