

HENDERSON AVENUE PUBLIC SCHOOL
School Council Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2023
7:00-9:00 P.M.

In attendance: Heather Zaitlin (Principal), Agnes Hwang, Donya Abasiliasi, Shooka Sherif, Sogol Alaei, Azi Sanai, Roxana Balescu, Parisa Rahmani, Bardia Ansari, Zahra Parhizani, Hossein Ahmadi, Maryam Izadifar, Amir Kamalie, Shiva Petersoo, Sami Sanai, Grant Fawthrop (Superintendent), Angela Buk, Katie Moore (teacher)

Chair - Azi

- Opening meeting - 3rd meeting of the school year
- Introductions - attending parents, Music teacher, Principal, and Superintendent
- Approving and moving minutes of last meeting - 1st Zahra, 2nd Parisa
- Azi mentioned the list of Clubs running in the school

Ongoing council concerns

- Procedures and norms pertaining to Council meetings
 - Azi discussed observations of the Meeting norms previously shared by Heather, first pertaining to durations of meetings: 1 hour and a half, is not sufficient since we always had 2 hours on the agenda
 - Heather mentioned that she would agree with the requested duration, but would prefer to be respected the time limit
 - Azi raised the point about mentioning community members within meetings
 - Azi raised the point of feedback, and even if it's negative, it's a representation of an issue that would still need to be addressed and a solution be found
 - Heather agreed that we can come up with an idea, and share it respectfully, come together and discuss it within our common interests
 - Zahra added that the issues brought forward are expected to be resolved
 - Grant intervened and he acknowledged that the schools might have norms and they could defer; it's important to have involvement within a school, and the voices to be heard
 - Sami added that there used to be Board translators for more accessibility, which Grant acknowledged that they are available, if announced ahead of time
 - Azi mentioned that the school used to have parents volunteering to translate to newcomers
 - Azi raised the point of inclusivity, that we could bring up an issue about a group or class; there is also the issue of bullying, without sharing particular names, the Council would still like to see plans how it's being addressed
 - Grant mentioned that bullying is a big topic, and they are bound by privacy laws, regulations, protocols; he understands that it's important to understand what it's done comprehensively as a school; they are still bound not to talk

about the specifics of a case; they cannot even say that a child was suspended, or that they've been on detention; social media is a big influencer, students communicate with each other differently nowadays, and they could be bullied this way; the School Board tries to educate on the safe use of social media, as it can be a very difficult environment these days impacting the mood of children; the boundaries of the school are way more different with issues going home and coming back to school, as many more students might be involved through social media; they try to organise training for parents on cyber security and internet safety

- Fundraising for curriculum night; Individual versus Community matters
 - Azi raised the point that the fundraising didn't happen this year, although requested approximately 20 days ahead of time
 - At the last Council meeting an issue related to a grade 2/3 class was seen as an individual problem, when it was a community issue as seen by Council
 - Heather mentioned that when an issue pertains to a teacher, she is not allowed to share many details to the community due to privacy, it cannot always be discussed
 - Azi added that we didn't know how this matter was supposed to be handled, the parents representing the class were pulled aside and not let to talk during the meeting, which felt disrespectful
 - Parisa mentioned that we had such discussions in the past, as a class was seen as part of the community
 - Grant intervened saying that he participated to many School Councils meetings, and he is very cognizant that some sides might be missed in a meeting; when it's a larger group, a Principal feels the need of a certain formality; he feels that venting sessions are more efficient when heard individually than as a collective
 - Zahra asked do define what is a community issue vs. an individual issue
 - Grant mentioned that there are circumstances pertaining to the learning of multiple children, like Grade 8 trip or fundraising, which is a community issue
 - Sami added that parents bump into each other after school and chat, might share stories that would be better to be clarified by an official source, like the Principal; we should try to work together and find a solution for the kids, not with the purpose to condone a teacher or other individuals
 - Grant agreed that certain events create insecurities, so we have to be bound by protocols and rules; he considers that it can be a more productive conversation sometimes if it's done privately, as the issues are more clear
 - Azi mentioned that it was not clearly communicated in the past meeting that the 2/3 class issue could not be discussed publicly, although she would be aware of the situation through other parents
 - Heather added that there are some parameters within which they can work, protocols to follow; if a parent raises an individual issue, it's best to discuss separately, as there is no resolution to be shared publicly

- Grant added that they look at delivering the very best in the classrooms; parents can reach out and have a conversation any time with him; he cannot explain all rules during a Council meeting as they are very extensive, but they are bound by all of them, and it can become very challenging
- Sami doesn't see an issue with discussing certain topics, like a problem of a whole class, collectively, instead of privately
- Heather is always open to receive a call and have a conversation
- Agnes suggested that with future council meetings, it is important to allow community members from individual classes to raise their concerns to encourage community engagement. This doesn't necessarily mean that a solution will be discussed during the meeting. Except with those who have been attending council meetings regularly, it is rare for community members to be familiar with the kind of issues that can be raised in these meetings. By providing the community an opportunity to be heard, we build trust and understanding.
- Handling Grade 8 trip
 - Azi mentioned that the survey was biased the way it was presented, and still the parents voted in favour to the trip; the request is to ensure the trip happens next year, and we don't lose the deposit; part of the fundraising efforts are to be inclusive and support the children that might not afford
 - Parisa enquired further about the sequence of events with the survey and plans for the trip
 - Grant mentioned that it has been a very challenging year for the School Board in terms of overnight trips - issues around supervision due to health concerns and rules on supervision; frequency of absenteeism increased significantly; the cost of the trip is of concern; the location in the QC province, still the Board decided to not rule out the trips to Quebec, right before the Holidays; due to the Board's late decision, it's very challenging to organise at this time a trip on short notice
 - Sami added that it's a disappointment overall for the students and the community due to all known reasons, and the community always supported the low income families
 - Grant added that the available staff is a big issue as well, as it needs to be adequate supervision, and he could not guarantee that it can happen this year; only 38 schools have overnight trips this year; if the planning starts now, a future trip has a chance to happen
 - Heather mentioned that she had picked a date as required by the travel agency Brightspark in order to extend the expiry date of our remainder funds (\$) to the following year

Principals update

- Grad Ceremony - confirmed on June 20, it will be held at a great location in Concord
- School planned events

- Heather presented activities that have happened or that would happen: a play in March 1-4 students; Kindness assembly; there are 2 extra curricular clubs including Dance club for grad 2-3, Drama club for grades 6-8; Volleyball, Basketball, Robotics club for grades 4-6 and 7-8; Primary Choir club; Yearbook planning; Reach for the Top; Poetry club; school Band
- Over 20 extracurricular activities are being offered to the students this school year
- Most of the teachers are involved in a club or activity
- Railway safety presentation
- Registration for families interested in FI program - opened
- Winter concert on Feb. 22, in the evening
- Other items
- Heather made a request for \$500 to assist Grade 7 families that couldn't pay for Lake Saint George overnight trip

- Ms. Moore - music program
 - the classes have been practising at various instruments
 - she is organising the Primary choir, and Jr. intermediate choir
 - the band is starting their practice, so the students will be able to take the instruments home
 - ukulele - used by grade 2 to grade 5 students
 - music is only 40 min per week, so she is advocating for a better timetable
 - swap with the Thornhill Secondary School music teacher so our school band could play in May at their location, and the high school band to play at Henderson

Fundraising

- Graduation fundraising committee - Azi mentions that it is ongoing - cookies sale
- Bingo night - volunteers are needed
- Mom's Pantry - <https://momspantry.ca/> - new initiative suggested by Heather, if there are interested volunteers

Activity planning

- Community skate with GARA - Zahra indicated that it could be organised on Sunday, before the Family Day - Feb. 19
- Chess with Ms. S. (Azi) - update next meeting
- Lice (Jan/Feb) - Agnes advised that there are not currently too many options, the cost is \$2.25 + tax per kid; the Council did not agree to pay for 1-time check only
- Teacher appreciation - Agnes mentioned that the planning is expected in May; tentative date is June 13th
- End of year BBQ/Carnival (Volunteers) - TBD

Budget:

- Treasurer report - Sheree was absent, TBD

Pro Grant:

- Zahra asked for suggestions, and volunteers could lead a presentations, if available
- Ideas: healthy nutrition habits - Dora suggested she would know a nutritionist she could enquire with; Agnes suggested a presentation on executive functioning, self regulation for kids; Grant suggested online cyber bullying and prevention (Paul Davis was the suggested presenter); a person in Police services could also be an options

Other Business:

- Parking traffic and safety - Parisa raised a few issues related to cars parking in the wrong spots or driving the wrong way
- Library hours

Next Meeting: Feb 23rd

Review of:

- Principal profile
- Constitution

Meeting Adjournment: 9PM