

# **Michaëlle Jean Public School**

## **Council Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**7:00pm**

### **In attendance:**

**Council members:** Ashley Bebbington, Corrine F, Deep Swaroop, Elnaz Golestani, Kim Sato, Moiz Mohamedali, Patton Su, Sushma Kavikondala, Bryan Wright.

**School Staff:** Nora Mazlounian, Christine Chin

**Members-at-large:** Julie, Carman Lam, Claudia de Oro, Varinder Bhabra, Sepideh Amiri, Shahram Jamal -Zadeh, Afsaan, David Yu, Melissa Wallace, Karima, Karen Hung.

### **Regrets:**

#### ***1. Welcome & Introductions***

Kim welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for joining the meeting. She suggested everyone to introduce themselves. Introductions are carried out and completed.

Kim shared the agenda and put forth the regulations on introducing new ideas and the procedure governing the approval of these ideas including putting forth a motion and seconding it.

#### ***2. Approval of November Meeting Minutes***

Kim asked if everyone has seen the November minutes, and these were reviewed. Corrine moved to accept the minutes, Moiz seconded it and the minutes are approved.

#### ***3. Approval of Budget***

Nora addressed the budget and an amount of \$17,178.79 was carried over from last year. The budget for student agendas for this year was approved previously. Parent engagement activities are part of Program-Program including an online parent engagement presentation by Sraah Westbrook on March 29<sup>th</sup>. A budget of \$4000 was set aside for modern learning room with

technology. These three items are budgeted to cost \$7367.62. The student activities and resources such as grade 3 transition and year books with a budget of \$3000, presentations for students at \$2000, the angel fund for students (financial aid to participate in activities) budgeted at \$1000, Tumble book subscription and Plan Canada are also budgeted for. All the budgeted items would bring the expenditure to \$14,667 and leave a balance of \$2,511.16.

Kim briefed us about 'Plan Canada', which is like a pen pal program and the school will sponsor a child in a third world country and students will write in French and the letters will be translated by a translator and those kids will write back. Advantages include kids engaging in French and getting to know another child in other parts of the world.

Elnaz inquired about tumble books. Nora explained that every year the school subscribes for Tumble books, but this year the teachers were interested in getting a subscription for 'Je Lis, Je Lis' and Tumble books has both English and French books. On tumble books the kids get to pick the books they want to read and not necessarily one assigned by the teachers. The subscription will be available for all students for a year. Christine said that this was very much supported by the teachers, as due to COVID-19, kids are unable to use the library, and this is a good alternative. This also allows students to get access to a variety of different books while being at home and this is much appreciated by the teachers.

Next, Julie asked if 'Plan Canada' would be replacing the 'Support Haiti' projects that were carried out by MJPS community. Nora explained that 'Support Haiti' was carried out through a company that facilitated building a school or other project's in Haiti or Honduras. But over the years this has become harder because of lack of manpower to support the activities that are needed such as translation of documents etc. and so 'Plan Canada' is another way to give back to the community. Kim also added that with 'Plan Canada', MJPS students would engage on different topics with kids in other parts of the world, while learning and improving their French. Sepideh expressed her support for both the Tumble books and 'Plan Canada' programs.

Elnaz asked about the modern learning classrooms. Nora explained that this was briefly spoken about at the previous meeting and the school already purchased some interactive boards and

other technology so that the students can have access modern learning spaces in the school. She also explained that all purchases were made with the school money and the school council has yet to approve the budget for the modern learning spaces.

Patton moved to approve the proposed budget and Sushma seconded it, and the budget is approved.

#### **4. *Principal Report***

Nora said that while the school was waiting to find out if kids will be returning to face to face, regulations on mask wearing have changed and all students will be required to wear a mask at all times, except when eating and this will be a transition for all (families, teachers, school and the kids). The school has ordered extra masks to help provide to kids when they lose them or the masks fall down etc. The school and teachers will be encouraging the students to always keep their masks on, and the school will inform the parents about these changes. The teachers will be wearing masks and shields, supplied by the board, at all times.

Moiz asked if students who come to school without a mask will be provided one and Nora confirmed that the school will be providing masks to students who do not have them. Also, in cold weather when kids play outside, their masks may get wet and so the school will be providing kids with extra masks. Sushma asked if a three-layered mask is being recommended and whether this recommendation would be passed along to the parents via the newsletter or email communication. Nora replied that the letter that was sent out on 2<sup>nd</sup> February had some information pertaining to this recommendation, but the board will also be sending out an email with more updated information on preventive regulations to the parents soon. Elnaz asked if masks could be replaced by face shields and if any students would be exempted from wearing masks. Nora confirmed that all students would need to wear masks., except if they have a doctor's note informing the school that the student cannot wear a mask due to medical reasons. Students cannot replace masks with shields, but they can wear both. Julie wanted to know if school would be providing the kids with an orientation to help them understand the best practices of wearing masks. Nora confirmed that the school has asked the Superintendent for google slides, such as those provided in September, explaining to the students how to wear a mask, how

to store a mask, where to put the mask and then how often to change it and will be sharing with the students. Elnaz was concerned about kids dropping their masks and wearing them again. Nora suggested that parents could send a lanyard to hold the masks and keep them around the necks, so that kids do not drop their masks.

Nora also informed us that the model change requests were sent to parents and she clarified that if a child is in face to face and they choose to move to virtual school, they will not be with the same teacher as elementary virtual is a separate entity. Deep inquired about the hybrid model and if both virtual and face to face kids would be with the same teacher. Nora clarified that this option it is not available for us. Ashley commented that hybrid model would be against the teachers' collective agreement and she also does not feel the hybrid model would not work very well.

Nora told us that the model change will take effect on February 16<sup>th</sup>, based on the original timelines given by the ministry. Based on the number of students that will switch from face to face to virtual schooling and vice versa, there would be an impact on class sizes at school and on the number of teachers at school. The classes might be smaller and may have to split classes. The school may also have to reorganize and some of the students might end up with new teachers in new classes. All of this would depend on the number of kids choosing face to face and virtual schooling. One of the parents asked Nora about the minimum number within each class to retain their teacher. Nora explained that each class would need 15 kids but if another class has much fewer students, then they would be redistributed and may end up with split classes of grade 2-3 etc. If a split class becomes necessary, a minimum of five students of one grade will be needed in that class. The class numbers would be based on the total number of students returning and from each class. Nora reassured that the school would be doing everything to keep this disruption to the minimum. Ashley wondered if, because of COVID-19, this year the reshuffling would be taking place in the middle of the school year, while during the previous years the reshuffling would not happen after a certain period like a month into the school year. Nora confirmed that this year was an exception. Ashley also wondered if during the last model change the school gained students or lost students and Nora replied that the school lost students as many

transferred to virtual learning. And this time around Nora anticipates that more students would opt for virtual learning.

Elnaz asked Nora about an estimate of the number of kids wearing masks to school and Nora thought that in the mornings, almost all students had their masks on, but by lunch time probably 50% had their masks. Julie wondered if this would be hard to police. Christine thought this would be an added job but like in September, she anticipates a learning curve and that everyone would be wearing the mask in the first month, but as the year progresses the kids tend to slack off and the best way to reinforce good mask wearing practices was through a partnership between teachers and parents, and reiterating the importance of proper mask wearing etc. Sushma wondered about the reasoning behind requiring student reshuffling and/or split classes. Nora explained that the school is allocated staff based on the number of students and if there are fewer students then there are fewer teachers allocated and this may mean that students will need to be reassigned to other classes. Nora also explained that in French immersion there is no grade 1-2 split but sometimes we may have a 2-3 split. Sushma was concerned about the uncertainty this poses to teachers, and she hoped that enough students would return, and that teachers and students could go back to their original classes. Deep expressed her appreciation to the school and teachers for everything that they were doing for students and families.

Deep excused herself as she had to leave the meeting early. Before she left, she updated the council on the FAST program and that 2<sup>nd</sup> February was the first day of the program and that Kim is a parent partner for the program and would update the council in detail later.

Nora continued with her report and told the council that since the break, the school has given out about 55 Chromebooks to students. In September around 96 Chromebooks were given out and so, in total the school has distributed around 151 Chromebooks.

##### **5. *Teacher's Report***

Christine, on behalf of all staff, thanked the parents for their support for online teaching. She said she thinks the kids have done very well with shifting to online learning and have coped well

with a steep learning curve on navigating the online learning. Teachers are also hoping to get back to face to face in a safe and timely manner.

#### 6. *Treasurer's Report*

Bryan told the council that there was no change since the last budget was presented.

#### 7. *Committee Chair Reports*

- **Communications Officer (Corinne)**

Corinne updated the council that she was getting the next issue parent council letter ready for the second week of February and she would be happy to include other suggestion or information into the letter.

- **Parent & Community Involvement (Moiz)**

Moiz thanked everyone who participated in the food drive and contributed to its huge success. 360 kids informed Moiz that the MJPS food drive was probably in the top five contributions they have received this year. He is looking for a sports figure to virtually have a pep talk with the students towards the end of the years, reminding them to stay fit during summer and be active.

- **School Climate (Elnaz)**

Elnaz was wondering if the winter carnival would take place as kids may not be back in school long enough to coordinate for it. Further, without volunteers it would be hard for teachers to run the carnival, so this may not be possible this year. Nora felt that with the new restriction and sanitization policies and kids being in cohorts, the winter carnival may not be possible. But some activities to welcome spring, such as bingo, virtual shows etc. would be good. Julie suggested a button activity that kids usually participate in and, this year the volunteers could take the material off-site and help make the buttons.

- **Student Success (Deep)**

Kim stepped in for Deep and updated us on the FAST (Families and Schools Together) program. It is an inclusive program and about 16 families were involved in it. The program is running on Tuesday evenings, jointly with a school in Newmarket, and on Wednesday evenings, exclusively for MJPS families. Each week the kids get an activity bag, and they have a leader guide the kids through a craft/drawing and the parents have

some coaching/parenting tips, to promote networking and build relationships. Kim felt that this program fostered a sense of community and that it sounded like a good program.

#### **8. *Yearbooks (Julie)***

Julie updated the council on the grade 3 yearbook project. She put forth the idea to invite grade 3 students to share their artwork to be included in the yearbook. For pictures, she said that the parents would be asked to submit the pictures of their kids online, through a direct link from the company, taking into consideration all the privacy issues. Kids can also include information on their favourite hobbies, what do they want to be when they grow up and a couple of other things. Pictures of staff, principle's message etc. will also be included in the yearbook. She said the logistics on how the yearbooks will be sent out to kids in virtual learning will need to be worked out. Moiz asked if in the previous years the pictures were taken by teachers or parent volunteers or students in class. Nora replied that usually it is the teachers and the principle who take these pictures. Moiz suggested that it may be an opportunity for the students to get familiar with cameras and other equipment while familiarizing themselves with the whole picture taking process and contribute to the yearbook, possibly something to consider next year.

Carman wondered if the yearbook, this year, would have a class photo and if the pictures sent in by the parents could be combined. But Nora felt that this may not be possible as not all parents may send in pictures and some students may be left out. Julie noted that the budgeted \$3000 was going towards the yearbook this year, as the year end, half-day, trip to Beverly Acres would not be happening and the graduation party would also not be possible. Kim wondered if Beverly Acres would be having a virtual school tour for the grade 3 students, and council parents suggested that they would raise it at the upcoming Beverly Acres school council meeting.

Elnaz excused herself as she needed to log off.

#### **9. *Adjournment***

Kim motioned to adjourn the meeting and Bryan seconded it. Meeting adjourned at 8.30pm.  
Final byes!