

School Council Meeting Minutes – December 1, 2020

A. **Call to Order:**

Time: 5:32pm

B. **Roll Call:**

Attendees: Carolyn Brndiar
Colleen Luan (Welcome to your first meeting!)
Jason Ho
Karima Jiwani
Katie Sears
Lisa Zografos
Mina Wong
Pouneh Biazarikari
Winnie Ng
Jen Chan
Simone Francis
Frank Lu
Lisa Zhou

C. **Approval of Minutes from last meeting:**

- Motion to approve by: Lisa Zografos
- Seconded by: Winnie Ng

D. **Principal's Report:** Update from principal

- Report cards were sent home with students in November.
- This year's community initiative for the Student Council is the Toy Mountain Drive which entails collecting new toys. School will collect and drop off in a box located at Markville mall.
- Email sent regarding Virtual Book Fair to be held next week for both in class as well as EVS students. Shopping can be done online and shipping is free if purchase is over \$35. There is one day between specific hours, if ordered, whereby free shipping is being offered.
- Last week was Safety Week at SJAM. This included a COVID-19 Fire Drill, Lockdown and Hold & Secure with coats and boots on. It was stressed that safety comes first in the case of a fire.

E. **Survey Update:** Update on Survey results (Winnie, Lisa & survey sub-committee)

- Survey just sent out to parents of both in-class as well as EVS students/ parents. Email addresses were requested in the survey in the event that the school has to reach out to the families who require assistance.
- Jen, Mina, Winnie and Lisa worked on the survey together and gave the school council members an opportunity to provide feedback. The due date for the survey is Monday, December 7, 2020.
- There were several things considered when creating the survey including if separate surveys should be sent to in-school and EVS parents or if EVS teachers would better be able to answer the survey.
- Separate surveys sent to EVS teachers in order to determine the best way to support the students in terms of learning tools that may be required. This survey was due on November 27, 2020.
- Some of the results from the teacher survey included more hands-on materials for math as well as microphones for in-school teachers. This may be more of a school bought item rather than a school council one and to be dealt with accordingly.
- Once the survey results are received, Ms. Brndiar will share and then next steps can be determined accordingly.

F. **Newsletter:** Newsletter for virtual students (Jen & Mina)

- Jen and Mina reached out to a few parents to get some feedback. A big concern among parents for EVS students is that there is no connection between the community and EVS students.
- Instead of a survey for EVS students, a better idea maybe a newsletter to be able to share what is happening in the school. This can be a section added to the existing newsletter. A newsletter has been drafted by Jen & Mina that includes sections including Upcoming Events – In school and Virtual, combined. Mental Health and Physical Health. Perhaps some mental health articles can be shared from the school board publications. We can perhaps get the gym teacher at SJAM (Nancy Lewis) involved in physical health activities. Another great idea is an SJAM Spirit Digital Book (either one time or ongoing depending on popularity). It may include activities or community projects that everyone can get involved in. Both in-school as well as EVS can contribute to the virtual book by submitting drawings, poems, photos, stories, etc. A google slideshow can be created to display these submissions.
- There is a concern regarding a security policy that may be in place by the board which has to be looked into due to the presence of links. It may be a good idea to include more content and limit the links. We should also check the Board's guidelines regarding subject matter. The key is to keep it simple and not overwhelm the readers.

- It may be a good idea to introduce the school council in the email, either in the body or in the newsletter itself. Perhaps a school council message in the body of the email would work. Pdf is preferred rather than jpeg which will make it easier for the readers to click on individual links. We have to decide on the frequency of the newsletter i.e, monthly or quarterly etc. This may depend on interest level among the readers. The content has to be reviewed by the school prior to posting.
- Since this is a community project, perhaps we can consider an incentive for participation such as gift cards for both in-school as well as EVS. Keep in mind that there is a list of students who do not want their photos published, hence we have to be careful about that.
- Some examples of incentives may include gift cards to Chapters or various places such as local businesses within the neighbourhood (restaurants) to encourage supporting the community during this difficult time. We can create hype by offering more gift cards initially. We have to determine whether we want to offer more gift cards for lesser amounts or less gift cards with higher amounts.
- There are some new restaurants that opened in and around the neighbourhood during Covid that we could consider supporting.
- The target date for the newsletter to be published is January 2021 which gives us some time to research various options.
- A sub-committee has been formed to assist with the newsletter. This includes Jen, Katie, Lisa, Mina and Pouneh.

G. **General Topics:** Areas where the council can help (food collection etc.)

- Another issue discussed is the recent email regarding inclement weather conditions/ snow days and cancelation of school buses resulting in schools being closed. The reason for this is that teachers usually have the option to go to other schools that may be closer to them and easier to get to during these times and students may be put together in groups from different classes, depending on shortage of teachers. This cannot be done during Covid and hence the decision to close schools when buses are canceled came about.
- Some concerns were raised about how in-class students would be affected by inclement weather days. It was explained by Ms. Brndiar that since in-class students are on Google Classroom, there will be asynchronous activities posted and the teachers will be available to answer questions, however there will not be any face-to-face time. Also, there will be no mandatory work assigned.
- Another topic discussed is a possible food drive such as has been done in past years. It has been suggested that since we are doing the toy drive, we

can perhaps postpone the food drive until February 2021. There are many food drives during the holiday season so perhaps we can focus on the toy drive initiative for now. Food such as canned good donations were dropped off in the past to the Markham Food Bank. This may be an idea for in or around Valentine's Day as a timeline.

- A second sub-committee has been formed to assist with the food drive.
- It has been suggested that perhaps it is not very clear whether virtual families can also donate to the toy drive. Perhaps this can be made more clear. Parents can drop off toys to the school, ring the bell and mention that it is for a toy drop off and someone from the office will open the door and collect the item.
- Covid Testing was a topic of discussion in relation to the email sent by the board. SJAM is currently not one of the 23 pilot schools selected, the reason may be that the criteria based on which schools were selected involved the high number of Covid cases in those schools.
- Some questions were raised regarding when another switchover may happen again, whether in-class to virtual or vice versa. Ms. Brndiar advised that Feb 2 is when the 2nd Term begins and that is when the next switchover will take place. A survey will likely be sent in January 2021 to advise parents.

H. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn: Winnie Ng
- Seconded: Lisa Zografos
- Time: 6:30pm