

**Sir Wilfrid Laurier Public School  
Parent Council Meeting #03 Minutes  
December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 @ 7pm, School Library**

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| Loralea Carruthers (Board Chair)    | Sufia Khan-Hussaini (Secretary) | Linda Wong      | Wanda Lee     |
| Billy Pang (Trustee)                | Diana Yau*                      | Charline Grant  | Jared Persaud |
| Peter Tse (Superintendent)          | Sadaf Siddiqui*                 | Garth Bob       | Peter Wang    |
| Debbie Williams (Interim-Principal) | Charity Stappas*                | Degen Lisi      | Elisa Lau     |
| Kathryn Gravill (Vice Principal)    | Nazish Hussain*                 | Gianluca Arcari | Frances Ng    |
| Lena Sadaka (Teacher Rep)           | Wendy Cheung*                   | Shernett Martin | Iris Woo      |
| Mymi Huynh (Chair)                  | Jerrica Lin*(proxy)             | Syed Hussaini   | Sam Saif      |
| Joyce Alimonos (Treasurer)          |                                 |                 |               |

|    | <b>Items</b>  | <b>Minute Notes</b>  |
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| 1. | Welcome   | Mymi's Welcome and Introduction  |
| 2. | Principals Report – March 29 <sup>th</sup><br>Parents Symposium | <p>Ms. Debbie Williams introduced herself as the Interim Principal. She welcomed everyone and introduced Mr. Billy Pang, School Trustee, Mrs. Lorelea Carruthers, the YRDSB Board Chair, and Mr. Peter Tse, our school Superintendent.</p> <p>Ms. Williams provided a brief bio: she is a retired principal and on contract for this interim position. She has been with the board for 27 years, and has experience working in many highly diverse and multicultural communities. She expressed how open and welcoming the students, staff, parents, and everyone have been. She discussed that she is here to support the work of the school and thanked Mrs. Kathryn Gravill for her support and help to get things going.</p> <p>Mrs. Gravill provided the School Council Administration Report – December 2016 (Full report included at the end of the minutes). She discussed Curriculum Implementation and Professional Learning as an ongoing initiative– looking at creating authentic tasks with real world learning, further developing understanding of assessment through a comprehensive math lens in French Immersion and looking at implementing Modern Learning (in Jan. and Feb.) which will mean applying assessment as learning through inquiry. She discussed that the way to define academic success could be different for different students and that these initiatives take that into consideration.</p> <p>Mrs. Gravill also spoke to the School Council Forum that took place on November 21<sup>st</sup>. She explained that the meeting and workshops had vast information that the organizers tried to make more accessible through the QR Code (included in attached document).</p> <p>Events and initiatives that have taken place or will be taking place were also discussed. For example, the Book Fair, which was a great success. Mymi mentioned that the first Book Fair by EDUCO was promoting local Canadian authors which was very nice as well. Moving forward, Ms. Williams also added that Jungle Sport was a great success</p> |

with students and that they were very accommodating and arranged activities that were developmentally appropriate so had different activities from Gr. 2-4 and then from Gr. 5-8, suggested getting them again next year. Mrs. Gravill, also reminded parents that they could purchase Spalding Basketballs for a great discounted price and reassured parents that the school was ready for the influx of basketballs on the tarmac.

Furthermore, upcoming field trips were discussed. It was asked if there would be a Ski Trip for 2017. Mrs.Gravill explained that it is difficult to plan trips that are dependent on weather and that there were many disappointed students last year when the planned ski trip had to be cancelled.

Mrs. Gravill thanked parents and students for their generosity towards the Holiday Heros, York Region Police Program, and described the excitement of students when they added their ornament on the tree after making a contribution. Students are proud of the work being done for the community.

Please note: An extra-curricular activity not mentioned on the handout/attachment is the Intermediate Girls basketball that will also be starting.

Jerrica added insight about the SJAM Letter Box initiative in which she invited students to write a letter to give thanks in French to their previous teachers, or administrators at SJAM and provided a letter box for them to place their letters in, to be delivered. This initiative was so well received by students that the box is now overflowing and she has to replace the box with a larger one. Many students also thanked her for the opportunity. She mentioned that perhaps this initiative could be expanded further in the future. Due to its success, it could be rolled out each year and possibly expanded to be included as a class activity? This would be up to the Administration and the teachers who will definitely consider it.

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| 3. | Fundraising Update<br>-Pizza & Subs -<br>Online Cash donations<br>- Holiday Cookies | <p>Nazish raised a question of why the Chair of the Board, was a part of the council meeting but not a part of the agenda and had not addressed school council.</p> <p>Mrs. Carruthers stated that she is usually allocated time at the beginning of a school council meeting agenda so that she, and perhaps the trustee and superintendent could leave following their part of the discussion but she was informed that the agenda was quite full and that she could speak to parents who wished to remain after the end of the meeting.</p> <p>Discussion arose around why these board officials were sitting through SWL's fundraising initiatives and why issues surrounding our school and community that they were there to discuss were not included as items on the agenda. Perceived conflicts which led to changes within the school council executive team were also discussed. Some parents wanted discussion around the issues surrounding council dynamic that was making them feel uncomfortable. A few parents questioned the safety of their children at the school in such a climate, especially due to the lack of communication coming from the school about negative press headlines. Many parents voiced that they only came to the meeting to hear only the items on the agenda and did not want to discuss other issues. Majority of the parents agreed to move forward with the original agenda and discuss all other matters unrelated to fundraising and local school initiatives afterwards for those who were interested. Everyone is welcome to stay after the meeting to discuss unrelated matters.</p> <p>Joyce spoke to the Treasurer's Report that was a print-out and was provided to members. She summarized that we were on track with our fundraising projections.</p> |
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| 4. | Student Council Update                  | <p>Ms. Lena Sadaka elaborated on the Holiday Hero’s program that was well received by the students. She said that the students exhibited pure joy as they placed their ornaments on the Christmas tree after making a donation. This initiative was student led and students really enjoyed stepping up and taking responsibility. She advised us that the Intermediate division needed more gift card donations. Students have been encouraged to donate \$10 or up. There have been eight Student Council Executives taking the lead with this initiative. Students have also been writing announcements coached by teachers mentoring the Student Council.</p> <p>An attendee suggested that instead of asking students to make monetary contributions, the school could reach out to different establishments and ask for donations. Vaughan Mills, Markville Mall, Harvey’s and McDonalds are extremely gracious when presented with letters on the school letter head asking for donations for needy families. It is a lot of leg work, but instead of making a child feel uneasy, who may not be able to make a donation this may be another option.</p> <p>Ms. Lena Sadaka explained that it was a great suggestion and would be taken back to the student council for further consideration.</p> <p>A parent raised the question if schools could solicit for a needy cause and it was agreed that as long as the money was being collected and flowing through it should be fine.</p> |
| 5. | Pro Grant \$1000, on Math Related Event | <p>Elisa discussed the different options she had researched for the \$1000 Pro-Grant she presented three different options, had researched five, but two did not get back to her. She said the program for Math Night could be run on an evening between the hours of maybe 6-8pm or 7-9pm. She contacted George Foster to speak and Jump 2 Math (6-10pm) which catered to different grades and set up 15 stations. Elisa mentioned that maybe that night small businesses (i.e. tutoring companies/individuals) could come out to advertise their services.</p> <p>The council voted for Jump 2 Math after discussion that it seemed to be educational and interactive, including parents to join in the math fun with their children, as well as informational and creative. This was in line with the math initiative which strived to make math more comprehensive, engaging and fun where students can be active and involved with their peers. We may want to use volunteers looking for volunteer hours and well as parents on school council.</p>   |

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| 6. | <p>Pajama Movie Night Fundraising Proposal</p> <p>-Good Idea? Bad Idea? -Vote and finalize on the date</p>     | <p>Mymi discussed Pajama Movie Night as a possible option of fundraising. She discussed subcommittees being assigned tasks (e.g. this movie night) that they work out best day, time and place and bring those decisions/options back to council. There needs to be a lot of man power with movie night, more parent involvement from council members so that some parents are not over-burdened. A lot of work goes into it: organizing timings, set up, movie rights, etc. We are learning as we go, getting best practice from SJAM who have run Movie Night quite successfully last year and plan to do so again, so taking their lead.</p> <p>There was discussion around dates with the decision having to be made fairly quickly as the next school council meeting would not be until February 3<sup>rd</sup> and that we couldn't wait until the end of the year with the fun fair which is June 1<sup>st</sup> and will require a lot of vendor research and volunteers. End of January was too soon after returning from holidays and it was decided that February was a good time. The council unanimously voted for February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017.</p>  |
| 7. | <p>Other Events we want to coordinate? Vote so we can proceed with coordinating efforts for implementation</p> | <p>Parent Jerrica Lin brought up the idea of celebrating Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday, with a Canada Day birthday theme, she had many ideas which included: creating a celebratory sign, having the students sing the anthem in diff languages, sharing Canadian food, students dress in red and white. Many council members agreed that this was an awesome idea. It was discussed that SWL had a Canada Day assembly where students wore red and white but this year to make it big for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>Iris Woo is a parent that owns a pottery painting studio. She brought in different items to be considered for fundraising initiatives. Such as ordering ornaments to paint, creating a tile wall for students to paint for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration, graduating students to paint a tile to leave a memento of their time at SWL. She discussed that this would be a way for the school to fundraise and for students to leave a memory here. She suggested that she could run painting workshops (e.g. coffee mugs) which could be sold at a silent auction at the Fun Fair. She provided examples of other schools that have used her business to fundraise successfully, e.g. Lillian PS who used canvas painting to incorporate arts and fundraising.</p> <p>Parents asked about cost and time. Workshops could run for 1 hour at lunch or 2 hours in the gym and it takes a week to glaze items. Timing is flexible, lunch time or after school. Iris was also open to pottery night. The cost generally for students is \$7 and the school could charge \$10. Tiles cost \$5 which is a little less. Iris provided an example from another school that had an evening for pottery painting, a bake sale, karaoke, a photo booth which helped other schools off set costs. She may only need student volunteers and maybe school council volunteers.</p> |

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| 8. | <p>-Closing remarks/Sub committee<br/>Sign-ups<br/>-Meeting<br/>Adjourned</p> | <p>Parents were requested to sign up for the different subcommittees, as one subcommittee was not effective for all council initiatives.</p> <p>A parent requested involvement in planning the graduation as last year it was run by the teachers and students supported their efforts but if possible parents would like to be involved. It was discussed that a Graduation Subcommittee be formed so that parents may be more involved. For example, last year the Grades 7/8 went to Quebec City but this year maybe the grades could be split up. Discussion formed around parents being permitted to accompany their children on the end of year trip and there was some consensus that generally Grade 8 students do not want parents to chaperone.</p> <p>Jerrica brought up the idea of recognizing International Women’s Day and the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination Day by bringing the world to the students. Time and place to be determined but perhaps involving drummers, dancers, and showcasing students’ diverse backgrounds and cultural diversity. One idea would be to invite First Nations members to do presentations. School council members and other parents would need to get involved and volunteer to bring it all together. This idea was very well received and was immediately approved however, it is a School initiative and must receive support from the Administration. Jerrica volunteered to coordinate and work with the school to support the initiative.</p> <p>Projects Approved by Council for implementation by sub-committees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Movie Night Feb 24, (Mymi to lead)</li> <li>2. Math Night via Pro Grant Support (Elisa to lead)</li> <li>3. International Day for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination (Jerrica to work with Administration)</li> <li>4. Fun Fair June 1 (approved from last year) (Joyce to lead)</li> </ol> <p>Everyone was encouraged to sign up for Subcommittees under the above headings that was written on the Board by Joyce.</p> |
| 9. | <p>Mrs. Lorealea Carruthers address to School Council</p>                     | <p>Mrs. Lorealea Carruthers introduced herself and provided a brief bio starting with her background in school council, her experiences being a part of quite a few councils as a parent and the school council handbook as being her first piece of work. She has been a Trustee for 13 years and a Chair for two days.</p> <p>She discussed the importance of school councils being child focused and keeping in mind their purpose which is to make a difference for our kids. She suggested that School Councils are one way for parents to get engaged in their children’s learning. She referenced research she had read as a part of her M.Ed. on the ways to be engaged in your children’s learning – help with homework, involvement in scouts, hockey teams etc. and it was found that the least effective way was on school councils. The purpose of school councils is to encourage other types of parental involvement – not as an end in itself.</p> <p>She spoke of the YRDSB being a leading board on school councils. There needs to be agreed upon processes and procedures (i.e. how minutes are approved, how people can add items to</p>  |

the agenda, which should be open where the group makes the agenda what the group wants it to be, by informing the chair in advance, how subcommittee work is divided). Mrs. Carruthers suggested that our school council come up with personalized SWL school council norms.

There was discussion around the difference between norms and the constitution. Mrs. Carruthers explained that norms speak to the “getting along piece” whereas the constitution is more legalise. Some school council members stated that the agenda for this meeting was created, finalized and posted without consultation from school council members and that in previous years, it was a norm to ask all members for their thoughts on matters which should be included on the agenda. There was some consensus that the tone and culture of our school council needed to be more positive and inclusive.

Mrs. Carruthers stated that it sounded like our school council needed to provide a more comfortable space for open discussion. She suggested allotting a portion on the agenda for open discussion and dialogue. A parent recommended using Robert’s Rules of Order to make motions, which would help in opening up the conversation so people feel more included. Mrs. Carruthers suggested that all members refocus and remember that we are all here to support all of our kids. She also suggested that our school council norms state that members take social and emotional well being of others into consideration as there should be no disrespect. Her suggestion included creating structural and inter personal norms, but that the bottom line is that members deal with respect which includes, no put downs, no sarcastic remarks, and respecting difference of opinions.

Mymi stated that her purpose for being on council was to implement procedures and a structure. The intent is to create a council where you see more faces and more engagement; that although she does not have previous council experience she is working with Ms. Williams for coaching and mentoring. She stated that she was not trying to be pushy and maybe in hindsight she was trying to do too much too soon. There didn’t seem to be enough meetings, everyone has busy schedules so she began to do a lot of work over emails and conference calls. She appreciated the mentoring and great advice from Ms. Williams.

There was discussion about feelings of hurt among some members of the community and that the school community needed time to heal and deal with this hurt in order to move on from this for the sake of the school and our children. It was echoed that our school has outstanding teachers and a great support network but the feelings of isolation and anxiety have to be talked about openly and honestly to begin the forgiveness and healing process and move past this respectfully and with honour.

Parents shared that their children’s spirit is alive and they are always excited about going to school and the amazing initiatives that take place and the changes that they have recently seen at the school. There was discussion about being mindful of the words that we use and the vehicles by which messages are transmitted.

Mrs. Carruther’s stated that we all need to work towards ensuring that everyone at our school feels safe. That the best way to begin the new year would be by addressing the issues that are happening at our school and respecting other people’s experiences.

A parent questioned whether the cultural awareness event would help bring the school community together and there was consensus that it would be a wonderful opportunity and way to show the community and our students how we appreciate everyone. It would be a way to involve and engage parents and continue the legacy that SWL is an awesome school.

Mrs. Carruthers stated that such initiatives remind us all that school council is about our children and the school and not the parents. She reminded that we all share a common purpose of having a school with the best reputation as possible so we continue to attract the best teachers. She agreed that issues need to be dealt with but in a way that will not jeopardize the school.

Mrs. Carruthers acknowledged that we need to focus on moving forward. She questioned what we are going to do to ensure the school attracts the best staff and stay positive. She said don't sweep issues under the carpet or try to deal with them through the media. She recommended that the best way forward would be to internally deal with the issues at hand, off line. She suggested not going to the media which uses sensationalized headlines to sell papers. She urged parents and the school council members to do what they can for their school, through the proper channels, which protect the reputation of the school.

Moving forward. Mrs. Carruther's stated that as learning organizations, mistakes are made and it is how we deal with them that matters. She reiterated that the school councils focus should be on how to make this school great again in order to best support all students.

Action Items (suggested by Mrs. Carruther's): Create a Climate Sub-committee that looks at norms which will help return the climate at the school to a healthy one. Ms. Williams offered her support and guidance for this subcommittee, with her experience in opening schools and examining processes and procedures. She said that she has lots of ideas and can work towards shaping the norms to fit the context of SWL school council.

Mr. Billy Pang concluded the meeting by saying that he is available to our school community at any time and if you try to call him and he doesn't answer just leave him a message and he will get back to you. Thank you.

Meeting Adjourned 9:40pm