

MINUTES FROM WILLOWBROOK SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING
March 25th, 2015

Present: Petra Nobel, Anushka Grant, Paula Lipkus, Danille Williams, Lucy Giannotta, Aileen Matrakoukas, Rozanne Treger, Kim Armstrong, Ci Ci Chen, K.C. Yeung, Jaso Nareshkumar, Yasmine Mawani

1. Minutes from last meeting

The minutes from last meeting were approved.

2. Report from our Community Facilitator from YRDSB- Yasmine Mawani

Yasmine's role is to support the school in bringing in programming to help students succeed in school. Examples include Cyber Bullying programs, Learning Disability community supports, etc. This is her first year working in the Markham area. One of their major roles is to help schools engage their parent community more in school life.

The Ministry of Education has created a grant called "Parents Reaching Out". This grant is aimed at engaging parents who may not usually come into the school or become involved in school life for a number of different reasons. The grant provides up to \$1000 per school to put towards engaging their parent community. This fund is available every year to every elementary school. There is an application process that has to be complete by the School Council in order to be considered for this money. The guidelines are available online. Some brainstorming took place between meeting attendees regarding what some possible barriers may be to parent school involvement. For example, parents may not know what the School Council is or what we do, parents may not have been educated through the Canadian school system and may not be accustomed to parent involvement in their child's school, parents may not realize the positive impact on their child's learning when they are involved in school life. Some suggestions included doing a presentation at the Kindergarten Orientation in the spring to explain what the School Council does and how parents can become more involved. Also, as council members, it's important to get to know our neighbors more and introduce ourselves and ask them to the next meeting. There seems to be a need to de-mystify what the School Council does and doesn't do.

THE "PARENTS REACHING OUT" GRANT IS DUE BY MAY 19TH, 2015. THE COUNCIL CHAIRS WILL MEET TO GET THIS STARTED.

Successful applications will be approved by the end of this school year, and if successful, we would use these funds for the 2015 – 2016 school year. A report must be sent to the Ministry by July 1st, 2016 to give an update on the project we would run at our school in the 2015 – 2016 school year, provided we are granted these funds.

3. Principal's Report

* Yasmine Mawani helped to facilitate a presentation at our school by the York Region Learning Disabilities Association. The presentation received positive feedback. The York Region Learning Disabilities Association will return to our school on April 13th to talk to the students and staff about building an understanding around what it's like for a child to cope with a learning disability.

* The School Council at Stornaway P.S. contributed to transportation costs for their students in order for their students to be involved in the arts program performances happening at Willowbrook. Lucy thanks the council for our contribution as well.

* Willowbrook has purchased \$750 worth of books that support the First Nations and Inuit/Metis cultures.

* This is the time of year when Willowbrook administration starts to plan for next school year. Kindergarten registration has taken place, numbers of students are being monitored, staffing allocations are being considered, and the school is projecting their student numbers for next school year. In addition, French Immersion enrolment is being monitored.

* Teachers from Bakersfield P. S. and Willowbrook P. S. were at Stornaway on March 25th to focus on how to best implement math lesson planning. This was part of a professional learning activity.

* There have been a lot of celebrations at Willowbrook: the 100th day of school, the Character Matters assembly, the Valentines day dance, bake sales, the steel drumming performance and the Fashion Show (that takes place tomorrow). Also, the Book Fair was a huge success; in fact, it's reported to be Willowbrook's most successful book fair to date!

*The EQAO preparation has started, especially around test taking skills. The preparation is embedded in the curriculum. Next year, the EQAO test is going to be digital. For this year, the format of the book is going to be collated into one booklet, as opposed to a number of different booklets that the students would have to use.

4. Vice Principal's Report.

* The Breakfast Program started today, and Yasmine Mawana was instrumental in helping our school secure the \$6000 to run this program, as well as help us implement this program. This program offers a daily breakfast to all Willowbrook students for free, from 8:15 – 8:30am at the school. All students are eligible. The program is currently being run by Ms. Matrakoukas as well as by some of the Willowbrook staff and parent volunteers. Currently, breakfasts mainly consist of cereal, milk and fruit. Once the program is more established, hot breakfast options will also be served. It is intended that this program will be ongoing in the school. The Safety Training for the Breakfast Program will take place on April 9th.

* Volunteers for the Breakfast Program require a VSS through the York Region Police in order for them to be left alone with students. The screen is good for a period of one year. Parents should be alerted in June 2015 to begin the process of applying for the VSS as a way to have this organized for the following school

year. It was discussed that it might be helpful to provide the police forms to parents for them to fill out at home. This package should also include a letter from the school explaining the intent to volunteer. Perhaps the school could peak the interest of more parents / families by including food in the program that is from their culture.

- * There was some discussion about moving away from a monthly newsletter and moving towards weekly update emails. These weekly newsletters could also include a sample breakfast menu for the upcoming week.

- * Dress Code: this is outlined on page 6 of the student agenda. The School Council and the Student Council can make changes together if need be. Lucy said she would like to avoid "policing" the outfits the students wear to school by having them share their input on this topic, so they feel their ideas are also being heard. It was felt that it would be positive for the intermediate students to be apart of this discussion.

5. Treasurers Report

- * \$435.74 was made from Movie Night

- * \$4177.39 was made from Pizza Lunch (from Sept. to Dec. 2014)

- * \$839.00 was made from Sub Lunch (from Sept. to Dec. 2014)

- * 13 more teachers have now claimed the \$100 we allocated for classroom resources, with a total of 15 teachers utilizing this support so far.

- * Agenda cost of \$1104.85 came out of our accounts, original budgeted to be around \$1300.

- * Gr 8 Grad of \$500 came out of our accounts.

- * Computer co-share of \$2134.46 for last term and \$2006.96 for this term, a total of \$4141.42 came out of our accounts. The number communicated at last meeting was \$4134.46 a difference of \$6.96 was approved by council.

- * Library books of \$3000 came out of our accounts.

- * Arts performance throughout the year of \$2000 came out of our accounts.

- * Jerseys of \$1605.73 came out of our accounts with comments saying it is for Music. There were some errors made last year where the school music account was used to pay for the jerseys. This transaction will reimburse the music account. Our original budget was \$1300. A difference of \$305.73 was approved by council.

- * Refresh Program (Technology) proposed through the School Board whereby schools with older technology can replace this with newer technology with the School Board covering 60% of this cost, and the school covering 40% of this cost. **This is not offered yearly!** The school has over 68 older computers / lap tops. The School Council had originally allocated \$10,000 for technology. The council will now donate \$8000 to this program, and another \$3000 will be taken from the Donation account for this program. This will allow the school to "refresh" 30 computers. The school will then use their \$3000 budget towards Mini Loads for the Kindergarten students. Therefore, the council agreed to a total of \$11,000, with \$8000 coming out of council funds and \$3000 out of the donation accounts. This leaves us with \$2433.08 unallocated money.

- * We are still waiting for the following to come out of our accounts;
- Lice checks for this term
- Gym equipment
- Agenda deposit for next year
- Social media fitness

As of the beginning of the council meeting on March 25, we have \$ \$10,550.62 to be allocated

6. Fundraising Report

- * International Potluck event proposed to be May 14, 2015 as interest for the original March date was lacking.
- * Spring Fling Dance scheduled for April 9 @ 6.30pm. We discussed inviting the grade 6's from Stornaway P.S. who will be coming here to grade 7 next year. There are only six boys.
- * Staff appreciation lunch - May 22, 2015. Adrienne is willing to organize this event again. It usually lasts until 2 or 2.30pm so the lunch monitors can join either before or after lunch. Last year the lunch monitors were not included.
- * Media presentation - April 29 at 7pm. Does it make sense to open this event up to others schools (the one in the evening that is for the parents only). A decision was made to invite Stornaway P.S, Woodland P.S. and Johnsvieview P.S.

Confidentiality agreements were handed out at the last meeting and returned. Anyone who hasn't submitted/received one, please email Lucy and she will send it home with your child.