



Blossom Park Public School
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OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Blossom Park School Council Minutes Wednesday, October 16, 2019

In Attendance:

Susan Fattal (Co-Chair), Naoko Nakamura (Co-Chair), Ashleigh Calberry (Treasurer/Secretary), Caroline Thériault (Principal), Colin Halsall (Vice Principal), Jessica Bokhout, Mokoka Limakatso, Rana Nour Eddine, Yewande Adelaja

Review of Minutes from September 18, 2019. Approval of the minutes was moved by Susan Fattal and seconded by Ashleigh Calberry. Approved.

Chair's Report:

- Meet the Teacher night - information table and flyers
 - at least 3 parents told Susan that they weren't aware that it was Meet the Teacher night, despite emailed reminders from School Messenger
 - turnout was good, we talked to about 90% of the parents who came to the school, told them about School Council and School Cash Online
 - School Cash Online information is overwhelming, even for English speakers. Susan is going to create English/Arabic shortened version that is easy to read and understand.
- Staff appreciation breakfast (Fri. Oct. 11) went well - thanks for help
- 2019-2020 Parent Conference and School Council Training Day
 - Susan attended last year and really enjoyed it and learned a lot
 - Saturday, November 9, 2019, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm at Longfields-Davidson Heights SS
 - beginning of the day: keynote speaker Dr. Laura Markham, founder of Aha! Parenting
 - after keynote, parent-focused workshops and some for school councils
 - after 12pm this year, round table discussions for school councils
 - more info: https://ocdsb.ca/parent_services/parent_conference
 - need to register with child's OEN

Principal's Report:

- Staffing update: two classes missing regular teachers - gr 6/7 class (Matt Blundell taking over to at least end of Dec.), BIP (new hire starts Monday). Hoping those classes will be able to settle now.
- Many secure schools lately, parents worried about safety. Secure School is the safety protocol that keeps the students safe and eliminates risk of injury to other students.
 - Progressive discipline: give children a chance to correct and improve behaviour. Understand that we have a behaviour unit within the school - specialized

- program for students who present with behaviour concerns. Part of the reason the behaviour has been heightened is the lack of stable teacher for 5 weeks.
 - School staff have also addressed their procedures for improvement
- EQAO
 - board told Caroline that hard work paid off
 - grade 3: most student reading/writing meeting expectations (level 3), math mostly level 2
 - grade 6: high levels in reading and writing, math had significant improvement, bulk at level 2 and 3
 - Caroline met with data analysis person at the board last week. Data shows grade 6 students are doing ok with basic questions, but as soon as they are presented a different situation, they're not as confident. Working this year on application of knowledge to new situations. Grade 3 students struggling with multi-step problems. Will be looking more purposefully at that this year.
- Caroline showed math games for primary students that can be done at home (Make 10 and Make 20). Helps with "subitizing," the ability to instantly see how many there are without having to count.
 - <https://mamapapabubba.com/2016/06/28/make-ten-an-easy-card-game-for-kids/>
- French language support website available through the board, called Voila!
 - <http://voilalearning.com/en/>

Staff Requests:

- Staff wondering if we're able to generously provide funds for requests from last time
- \$450 for Ottawa 67s trips - Ashleigh sees in books we've provided in the \$450-500 range in the past, so it seems fitting to do the same. Moved by Susan and seconded by Ashleigh. Approved.
- \$900 for Luv 2 Groove. This is happening next week and includes assessment of the students by the teachers - important as well as fun. Moved by Susan and seconded by Jess. Approved.

Treasurer's Report:

- The account stands at \$4337.82 currently. Between School Cash Online funds that we are owed and money we owe to BPPS for Sept. and Oct. pizza orders, actual amount is \$3472.58 (of which \$2309.33 is cash currently available).
- Will try to build up account further before approving more expenditures.

Other Business:

- kindergarten class size changes and transitions
 - Jess: emailed the board about our school's situation with many families new to Canada and little or no English; MLO is only here one day a week instead of two in the past; vice principal is only half time position here
 - Given that our school has been given all these labels by the board, how can we go about asking for more support from the board?
 - Discussion about figuring out specific problems that we need to work on and then addressing those
 - Caroline says that Susan Al-Riffai has been approved for "as needed" basis here as well
- Parent says her son (gr 4) is not being assigned homework and she'd like more sent home so they can support him in what he's learning

- Caroline mentioned studies that show homework in elementary school generally doesn't affect outcomes. Different in high school, where there is a stronger correlation between homework completion and outcomes. Can have that conversation with your child's teachers about what they're working on and how you can help them.
- Parent knows lots of mothers here go to ESL classes and would like more support in kindergarten to help their students
- discussion about private vs public schools, Fraser institute rankings - based on EQAO results only
- special events/activities for Halloween
 - Naoko: Can we ask Luv 2 Groove next year for Halloween theme, since they usually come in October? Ask parents to donate baked goods to have a bake sale during the show?
 - Caroline and Colin new to school so not sure why Halloween isn't a big thing here usually. Some parents don't participate in Halloween for religious reasons.
 - Suggestion about costume donations/swap for students who can't afford costumes and costume parade around school.
- fundraising ideas:
 - FundScrip - gift cards purchased at face value from FundScrip, Council could earn percent on each gift card. Over 200 retailers involved, lots of places to choose from - gas, groceries, clothing, coffee, etc. FundScrip suggests either monthly or a big holiday campaign. Online options may be a problem with our community, so paper orders are likely the way to go. Naoko aware of it being successful in other schools/programs. With lots of advertisement about the fundraiser, it may go well.
 - <https://www.fundscrip.com/>
 - suggestion from parent about fun fair for fundraiser - but we actually lose money on it; t's been for fun and not profit
 - suggestion for something in December before holidays possibly
 - Book Fair/Sale - books donated by families and sold
 - we tried a book sale 2 years ago at Fun Fair - lots of work but no real profit (Jess with check with Mme. Shohdy about how it went)
 - Book Fair run through the school library usually does well
 - need new ideas - pizza is probably at max. at this point
 - pies suggested last meeting - would need more research to see if they could be purchased from somewhere for resale or parents bake. Naoko has not heard back from parents from last meeting about trying to organize baking.
- possible date for school Fun Fair:
 - Apr 28-May 29 fasting for Ramadan; PA day June 5
 - June 4 suggested, with rain date June 11
- School Cash Online problems for many families - no credit cards, unsure about security, unsure about setup

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 5:00 pm in the library