

Meeting Minutes of Virtual Blossom Park School Council Meeting Wednesday March 17, 2021 at 5pm

1. In attendance

- Susan Fattal: Chair
- Naoko Nakamura: Treasurer
- Caroline Theriault: The Principal
- Colin Halsall: Vice Principal
- Mrs. Kirsty Vince: Teacher's Representative
- Andi Kinnear: Student
- 3 other parents

2. Approval of Agenda and Last Meeting's Minutes

Approved by everyone and seconded by Naoko

3. Teachers Update by Mrs. Vince

- The librarian is wondering if the school council could help purchase specific books that are being requested by some students. 11 books are requested and the total is \$210.06.
→ Susan said that council members will discuss and decide.
- Ms. Jehan told Mrs. Vince that the school council can decide whether to go ahead and host the fun event with a magician.
- The headphones that the school council purchased are very good and are being used; teachers are very grateful for that.
- A wagon was offered instead of headphones for the teachers who preferred that. Only Mrs. Cavaciutti came forward and requested it. Naoko has purchased the wagon (\$79.09 - reimbursed) and delivered it to school last week.

4. Chair's Update

- Susan contacted Yewande to ask if she was still interested in becoming member and learnt that Yewande has moved to another house and is no longer a member. Currently we have four parent members.
- Headphones - 15 teachers requested a total of 269 headphones. The school council decided to purchase the same headphones as the ones originally purchased for Mrs. Hoekstra's class. The total for the headphones was

\$2488.78. Our council covered half of the total cost (\$1,244.39), and the school paid the other half. All headphones have been distributed to those classes and teachers are happy with them. The extra 11 headphones are kept in the administration office in case any replacement is needed.

- Noteflight Learn - a music program's subscription was requested by Mrs. Dineen last month. It is a web-based music notation software that works on Chromebooks and that can be easily integrated into Google Classroom. The requested subscription is intended to be used by 15-20 intermediate students for a cost of about \$100-\$120. Currently, the Intermediate Music Council, which Mrs. Dineen is part of, is trying to get it approved by the OCDSB. She has not signed up yet but is still interested in signing up. School council is to cover the cost.
- Susan sent out the first wellness newsletter last week. Two copies were sent to parents; one in English and one in Arabic. Another copy was sent to G7-8 students. Susan shared the newsletter for G7-8 with Andi and Safa first to receive their feedback. Safa suggested adding more information about the recommended sugar and caffeine intake and screen time limit, and Andi suggested that school could mention it in their morning announcement. Susan edited the students' copy adding the suggested information, and forwarded Andi's request to Mrs. Theriault.
- A magic show - Naoko found a magician that is affordable and we could offer to hold one to three shows at school as a fun event. We need teachers' input on this event.
 - Is it an issue to have some students whose parents did not submit the picture/video approval form if they are to be on the camera to interact with the magician?
 - The principal said that there are only a few families that did not submit the form. She believes that it is OK to have each class team up and interact with the magician as a group.
 - Andi believes that if they are not allowed to be on the camera or do not want to be on the camera, we could angle the camera not to include them but they could still participate and it should not be a problem.
- OCDSB's PRO Grant registration was supposed to start on Mon, Mar 15th and was postponed until Monday Mar 22. Councils are offered the option of picking one of the speakers from a centrally selected list, picking their own speakers or choosing Family Science Night. Spots are limited.
- We should try to come up with a possible fundraiser for this year. Susan found out that some schools are using pizza coupons and family pizza nights as an alternative to their pizza program. Susan has contacted First Avenue school council to learn about their experience in that regard; she hasn't heard back from them yet!

5. Students Update - by Andi

One key thing that he noticed recently is that many students started not taking the pandemic so seriously; they tend not to wear a mask properly and not to practice social distancing while being on the yard.

Vice Principal – The school has placed some rules to ensure safety at all times. School gives the students not following the rules a warning; they need to wear their masks, otherwise they will receive another warning and parents will be notified their kids will not be allowed to come to school without masks.

Principal - It is important for students to communicate with their parents if they feel unsafe and concerned about going to school. Staff is to communicate with the board if they feel unsafe and not comfortable to keep working at school, too.

Susan - Some parents at Kiss n' Ride continue not to wear a mask at their pick-up time. She suggests that school could give them a friendly reminder letter in an envelope to be handed by a volunteer staff member to those parents who are not wearing a mask. Principal asked Susan to translate the letter to Arabic as well and agreed to implement.

Naoko - She agrees to the idea. She sees regular offenders and the warning has to come from school. They will hopefully get it after receiving several reminders.

6. Treasurer's Update

The actual current balance should be: **\$4,825.89**. The school administration is still holding the cheque for the headphones (\$1,244.39) and the current balance is showing \$6,070.28.

7. Principal's Update

- G1 - 3 students are now mandated to wear a mask at school. Health Ontario came to check. Most of them have made it a habit and it has been successful.
- Some students are not following the mask rule well and need to strictly follow.
- One Symptom Protocol kicked in.
 - If a student/ a staff member is showing even just one symptom of COVID-19 (for example: a sore throat), the school sends the person home.
 - The individual is recommended to get tested. If a negative result is received, she/he can come back to school,
 - Without taking a test, the individual has to stay at home for 10 days before coming back to school.
- More virtual speakers were invited to school.

- Grade 8 had a high school of choice presentation.
 - A number of families are leaving for Catholic School Board for their high school choice.
- Staff Professional Development - attended a presentation about having a gender-friendly school.
- Next year's course selection was sent out to families: 37 students are staying virtual.
- School yard is flooded and a crew of cleaning staff came on last Friday to drain the water.
- OCDSB Human Rights Policy Consultation survey will be sent out. Parents will be asked to participate in developing a policy to place standards of practice and a program to re-enforce anti-racism, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment.

Vice Principal's Update

As a result of the field being closed to allow for the melt water to drain, there has been new yard assignments. Barriers have been installed to keep everyone safe and separated to maintain the cohorts.

The students moved to these new yard assignments with ease and were able to stay on their yards effectively. When the field has dried, we will return to giving the students the use of the yard as well as the field.

8. Matters for Discussion

- PRO Grant Speaker Night topic choice has been offered by OCDSB:
 - a. Virtual Speaker Night - from the selections by the board.
 - b. Virtual Science Family Night
 - c. A choice of our own speaker - we are responsible for organizing everything.

→ Issues:

- The speakers speak English only. Some of Arabic-speaking families will not be able to participate.
- Science Nights could host only up to 60 families.

Susan:

- The choices of Virtual Speakers are:
 - * Mental Health *Social Networking *Equity in Education *Media Smarts
 - *Self Regulation *The Parent-Child Connection
- sent out Google form to ask families what their speaker's choice would be.

→ only 3 parents responded. A fun movie night was also suggested by one of the parents.

- Susan contacted a remote simultaneous Arabic interpreter professional to explore the possibility of having that service integrated into the speaker night. She hasn't received the quote estimate yet.
 - Two interpreters would be needed for 60 minutes.
 - Zoom Pro Account must be used as the platform. → Susan contacted OCDSB regarding the platform, the board could possibly lend us their corporate webinar Zoom account for it.
 - Susan is to receive a quote for the interpretation service.
- Sawmill Creek's school council chair has contacted Susan to ask if we would be interested in the topic they are thinking of registering for, which is Equity in Education. If we decided on the same topic, we would be able to work together and book the same session. It is an important topic, but we don't think families in our school might be interested.
- Science Night's issue: 60 families cap
 - Susan asked if we should offer another night at school council's cost or pay for those families who could not make it to the list of 60. (The additional family costs \$320)
 - Naoko believes that it is too expensive to cover additional families' cost. Also, there could likely be less than 60 families who would sign up. There are 293 families in Blossom Park. Unfortunately, most likely, not all people who register would show up. We need to inform them that the spots will be available on a first come first served basis.
 - Principal thinks that a first come first served basis would be good. If children talk to their parents about the venue and encourage their involvement, more families would join the event. We could give the limit (60 families) and offer a waitlist. If more families are interested, we could hold it next year, too.
 - Vice Principal also believes that children soliciting their family would help and agrees to prioritize Science Night over Speakers Night.
 - Susan agrees to just offer one Science Night that hosts up to 60 people. She is going to contact OCDSB and will try to get the spot as soon as the registration link is open. The Science Night has 2 sessions. It covers kids from k-grade 6. The possible date to select would be after Ramadan in May.
 - Principal suggested the first choice of the Science Night would be a Wednesday night in May, if possible. For the second choice, she suggested that the Speaker of which dates available into June (Media Smarts) would be a good choice for us due to Ramadan. Also, one of the parents has requested that in the Form Susan sent.

- As for a possible Arabic Speaker's Night, our MLO has suggested holding a parenting workshop in Arabic.

- The possible fun activity for the whole school: a virtual magic show
 - A local magician offered an affordable virtual magic show and the school council is considering offering 1 or 2 shows to students.
 - The magic show price: a 30-min show: \$250 and a 45-min show: \$350 → Naoko will try to negotiate the price.
 - Principal believes that a long show would not be good for younger students and the group could be separated from up to G3 and G4 and up.
 - The date has to be either before April 10 or after mid May, due to Ramadan. We will consult with the teachers to see what they prefer.

9. Next Meeting

Susan suggested that we could get in touch on April 8th or 9th with any important issues to discuss and decide on whether we will hold the next council meeting on Wednesday of April 21st at 5pm. It will be during Ramadan. In case we decided a meeting was not necessary, Susan will collect update reports from the members and make them into one document to be distributed to parents and members.

The meeting was adjourned about 6:30pm.