

Meeting Minutes of Virtual Blossom Park School Council Meeting Wednesday April 21, 2021 at 5pm

1. In attendance

- Susan Fattal: Chair
- Naoko Nakamura: Treasurer
- Caroline Theriault: The Principal
- Colin Halsall: Vice Principal
- Andi Kinnear: Student
- 3 other parents

2. Approval of Agenda and Last Meeting's Minutes

Approved by everyone and seconded by Naoko.

3. Chair's Update

- Our Council member and secretary Nejm-Eddine has missed 3 meetings in a row. He has not responded to Susan's email asking him if he was still interested in being a council member. - We have to assume that he is no longer a member, and he can let us know if he would like to join us again in the future. Susan suggested that Naoko will take on the secretary job and keep her current treasurer position as well.
- Science Night Update:
 - Scheduled for May 20th - 4 sessions: 2 sessions from 6-7pm and 2 sessions from 7:30pm-8:30pm.
 - Susan is discussing with Carol from Scientists in School logistics of the workshop and delivery of the kits.
 - Susan sent out an info letter and the registration forms both in English and Arabic.
- Arabic simultaneous interpretation service gave Susan their quote. 1 hr x 2 interpreters = \$1,107 with HST. It is too expensive but good information for the future events to consider involving as many parents as possible in the community. The information is provided to OCDSB for their information.
- Susan has been in communication with Sawmill Creek School Council Chair, and they have exchanged updates on what their and our School Councils have been doing this school year. Sawmill Creek are moving forward with a City of Ottawa grant to cover the cost of trees planted on the school yard. They also paired with the school in getting an outdoor classroom space set up.

- Susan contacted the OCDSB again to have more information about setting up an outdoor classroom, since she did not receive a response to two previous emails she sent them in that regard. She learnt that the facilities department must be involved in any installation on school property; it is important to procure items that have been vetted for safety.
- Susan also learnt from the OCDSB about the expected cost for such a project, and that there has been a standing agreement in place for some installations. We will discuss that in our next meeting.
- Magic show went well before the school shut down. Mrs. Cavaciutti's class wrote thank you letters to the School Council. We are very happy to be able to offer an event that made students so happy.
- Mrs. Natyshak was asking the council to support the purchase of 11 books that were requested by students. We learnt that the requested books are above what the school provides. Also, the librarian has been able to run only one virtual book fair this year instead of the usual two. School council members agreed to support it and Susan told Mrs. Natyshak to go ahead and purchase those 11 books of which total is \$210.06.

4. Treasurer's Update

There were two expenses since the last meeting:

1. Subscription to Noteflight for Mrs. Dineen's request - \$209.49
2. 2 Magic Shows - \$500

The current balance is: \$4,116.40

5. Principal's Update

- Mrs. Natyshak has received a staff recognition award for her work and contribution at both Blossom Park and Sawmill Creek schools.
- Virtual School:
 - Currently there are 19 homeroom classes.
 - The Board is establishing an English Literacy Development program to our school for the 2021-22 school year. There are 12 students from our community in grades 6-8 in this congregated class.
 - Working on staffing now. The number is down overall.
 - A COVID-19 test is going to be offered to Blossom Park and nearby community at Ecole Elementaire publique Gabrielle-Roy, which is across the street from Sawmill Creek P.S. next Monday and Tuesday.

- 198 Chromebooks have been distributed to students. Office administrators Christina and Kim worked very hard at it.
- Since the last lockdown in January, our Chromebook demand fell and we have some extra available if a few more families need them.

Vice Principal's Update

- OCDSB continues to update their board policies. Their policy review was shared recently. Parents are encouraged to check out the first draft of the updated Safe Schools and Code of Conduct policies and share their feedback [link](#). This helps us evaluate matters at school. The 4.0 Specific Directive is to be used by teachers to make decisions when students have difficulties.

Susan asked whether elementary school report cards will be sent by email in a way similar to high schools.

Principal's answer: No, it will be only for high school students. Many parents at our school had issues on the report card portal for the last report cards. Office got flooded with work and ended up printing out many report cards for those families.

6. Students' Update - by Andi

On-line school is going well. However, one unfortunate thing is that everyone in class turns off the camera. It would be nice if we could see each other's faces so that we would feel like we were in class together. Maybe, teachers could remind them to turn their camera on?

Vice Principal's answer: Camera could also have negative effects such as increasing anxiety level. School cannot force students to turn on their cameras for privacy concerns. Teachers could remind them, but it is not required.

Principal's answer: Not everyone has a quiet place to take their online classes. Also, girls who wear a hijab have comfort of not having to wear it and would like to keep their cameras off for their privacy.

7. Matters for Discussion

- Science Night:
 - There are slots for 60 families (30 families in each first and second time slot) - only 13 families registered so far (10 families in the first slot and 3 families in the second slot) - School administration could encourage

families to register. If the number stays the same, we might have to have only 2 sessions.

- Microsoft Teams link is to be sent for the event. - instructions are to be sent both in English and Arabic.
 - A person from the School Council will be there to welcome families once the link opens 15 minutes before the session. Administration is also welcome to attend and meet the joining families.
 - The principal said that school administration could receive and distribute the kits in a way similar to distributing Chromebooks if they receive enough notice. - Susan is to send the distribution list to Christina.
 - More details will be discussed later once the total number is clear.
- Possible Fundraising Ideas:
 - First Avenue Public School provided us info on their successful ongoing fundraising.
 1. Family Pizza Night: They collaborate with Panago Pizza on Bank Street. On the first Friday of the month, their families can get a 15% discount on their pizza order and 15% of all net sales goes to their school council. Order is preferably placed online or on the phone to avoid line ups.
 - Susan will contact Halal Pizza to see if she can work out a deal with them to do similar Family Pizza Nights. They don't have a fundraising system in place, but it is worth trying. The location is more convenient and parents can have more variety to order from.
 - Principal says that she would be happy to give it a try.
 2. First Avenue have also used pizza coupons as prizes for their dance-a-thon. All students received a coupon for a personal pizza. Top donors' names were placed in a draw for 3 family pizza nights.
 3. Maple Syrup Fundraiser: we can offer good quality maple syrup to families and staff. Cost is \$13/1 L, and we will charge \$20/L. Our main obstacle is pick-up by parents.
 - Susan thinks it is a very good idea. We'll keep it in mind until COVID restrictions are removed.
 4. Oliver's Labels: Our online fundraiser hasn't attracted our families so far. We can get 20% for each purchase. We have not withdrawn the money from the past purchases. Susan will do that in June.
 - The total so far is \$55.31 from purchases that Naoko and Susan made. We need to promote it to families again.
 - Susan will send families a message to remind them Oliver's Labels sell not only custom labels, but also custom masks, fun stickers, wall decals, etc. Shipping is free.

- Principal suggested that we could promote it to teachers as well.

- We will send out a letter to ask parents if anyone wants to become a Council member. We hope to have more parent engagement before the end of the school year.
- Is there anything that the School Council could do to help school with virtual learning in any way?
 - Principal's answer: She wonders if there is any way to engage students better.
 - School is being flexible with students during Ramadan. Some kids wake up before sunset to have a meal before their fasting, so a lot of them are tired in the morning.

Naoko: It is great that another COVID test offered for our school community and this time it is right in our community. The last test's location was too far away and it was too crowded.

The meeting was adjourned at about 5:55pm.