

**Blossom Park School Council**  
**Meeting Minutes – June 15, 2022**

**In Attendance:**

Susan Fattal: Chair

Ayan Haji Egeh: Secretary

Nabi Habibi: Treasurer

Caroline Theriault: Principal

Caroline Rassi: New Principal

Carmelina Falcucci: Vice Principal

Seynab Hersi, Zeina Hosny, Masa Alfarawati, and Sedra Alrajab: Student Representatives

**Absent:** Tammy Draper: Teacher Representative

**1. Welcome and Approval of Agenda and Minutes:**

- Susan welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Susan welcomed the new principal Caroline Rassi.
- The agenda and minutes from the last meeting were approved.

**2. Chair's Update**

- Family Science Night: Out of the 60 spots, only 24 families joined the event with a total of 40 kids. As a result, Susan had to cancel two sessions but was able to offer some spots to Sawmill Creek students and their families. We had positive reviews from students and families. It was a successful event.
- The school pizza program was first resumed in June following the COVID-19 pandemic. The pizza is served on Tuesdays. According to the school safety protocol, we have a split-second nutrition break, where some students have lunch at 12:50 PM and other groups have lunch at 1:15 PM. The pizza program went very well with the help of the student representatives.
- Tree grant: The School Council applied for the City of Ottawa tree grant to plant seven trees in the school yard in the spring of 2023. The City confirmed receiving the tree grant application. The City will schedule a visit to the school in late summer or the beginning of September.
- Regarding the OCDSB financial audit, all papers and documents requested were dropped off at the OCDSB Finance Department on April 7<sup>th</sup>. The OCDSB financial audit company (KPMG) sent the accounting book and all the other receipts and documentation back to the school. There were no reports or feedback received from the Board.
- The school website is working now, and Susan was able to upload the minutes.

- Gardening club initiative: Students were engaged in sprucing up the front school garden bed. Ms. Jihan and two School Council parent members supervised the students. A parent donated some perennials, which the club participants planted in front of the school entrance.
- Social media: Susan mentioned that we need to be on social media to connect better with the families. Our Council already has two accounts created by previous School Council members. Unfortunately, we have no access to those accounts. Susan has been trying to reach out to former School Council members to deactivate the old accounts before creating new ones.
- Susan will be representing the school council in the school assembly on Friday and the upcoming grade 8 graduation ceremony on June 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **3. Treasurer' Update**

- Susan deposited \$1,124.60 from the school pizza sale to bring the total balance to \$5,956.04.
- The school council owes the school approximately \$600.40. We'll report the exact amount after the school's consolidation.
- The estimated profit from the pizza sale is around \$524.20. The expected balance following the school consolidation is \$5,355.64.
- The School Council wants to help families who can't afford to pay for the pizza program. Susan suggested that the school provides a list of students' names whose families can't afford to pay for the pizza lunch program.

### **4. Vice Principal's Update**

- Gardening Club update: Students from grades five to eight signed up to participate in the gardening activities. Students from ELD are learning to plant from Ms Jihan and about different types of plants. The gardening project will be extended to next week.  
Carmelina, Ms. Jihan and School Council parent members will continue to supervise the students.
- The gardening group will be brought to light during Friday's school assembly to thank them for their participation and accomplishments. The Girls on the Run will also be brought to light during the ceremony and any other groups who contributed to school activities.
- Girls on the Run is wrapping up tomorrow, and their finale is the 5k run. Unfortunately, the run has to be held indoors in the gym and not outside because of the weather forecast, unless the rain holds back and the girls can run outside. The school applied for the program to come back in the fall, so we hope to have another 20 female students participate in this program. The program benefited the girls significantly.
- The school will hold their first assembly since the pandemic on Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup>. It will be a short assembly to thank students, recognize their contributions and to say goodbye to some school staff.

- The grade eight ceremony will be on June 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 AM. The ceremony will be for only one hour according to the Board's guidelines. There will be two tickets per student for family members. Parliament member Mr. McGuinty will come to the ceremony to present his award. Susan will deliver a speech on behalf of the School Council in addition to the Character Award.
- Carmelina suggested that student representatives visit grade 7 classes to talk about their roles in the School Council and the great leadership opportunity that could be offered to students.
- Social media: Carmelina suggested considering the differences between the platforms such as Twitter vs Facebook and how to keep the privacy of the students and families. It is also important to translate messages on social media for our families.

Susan consulted with other school councils and learned that some schools use both platforms. However, Twitter is easier to access, and we can gain more followers. In addition, other schools used the closed group to give the administration more control. There will be rules for parents and students to follow in case we decided to go with a closed group. We can start with Twitter for this school year, and for next year we can create a closed group on Facebook.

#### **5. Principal's update**

- Caroline, the school principal, will be reassigned to a different school next year. Caroline Rassi will be the new school principal. Ms. Rassi was present at the School Council meeting and provided a brief introduction.
- There is more staff moving to other opportunities. The school was able to hire one of the two educational assistants.
- We have an ECE who is leaving, and Caroline will confirm a replacement tomorrow.
- The school is in the process of finding four teachers for the French Immersion program.
- Caroline will send a memo to parents about the staff changes by the end of next week.
- The school assembly is back, and we will continue to do more activities in-person, such as sports and field trips.
- Grade 8 field trip is happening tomorrow, and grades one, two and three were on a field trip to the farm recently. The teachers are more comfortable providing this opportunity to students.
- To allow more students to participate in the school field trips, the school looked for funds that could be used, such as outdoor education funding and student success money for intermediate students.
- There was some storm damage to the school property and properties around the school. The houses backing onto the school had lost a lot of trees. The trees fell on the schoolyard; as a result, the school fencing got damaged. The kindergarten backyard had to close for some time while the trees got cleared to avoid any risks of the trees falling on the students. All trees are cleared up, and things are now back to normal.

- The school is working with the central department to confirm summer school registration. There are three summer school programs – one for grades six, seven and eight, which is based on teachers' recommendations. In addition, there are two additional programs – one for literacy and numeracy for lower grades and one for an intensive reading program for students who are significantly behind in their reading level.
- A program will be offered for students who may have anxiety and other diagnoses that will support students' transition successfully back to school.
- Caroline mentioned that students' enrollment in the health and sexual health curriculum dropped significantly. Many families opted out and took their children out of school. There was some confusion, and not all teachers understood that they had to send letters 20 days ahead of the first day of instruction. The letters have been sent out to families now for the last two weeks for the school to implement those lessons.

#### **6. Teacher's Update**

- Tammy couldn't join the meeting.

#### **7. Student representative**

- Susan thanked the student representatives for their engagement and valuable contributions to the council.

#### **8. Important matters for discussion:**

- Susan took a moment to reflect on the school council contributions in the past school year and set goals for next school year. The focus was on communication and the wellbeing and safety of students and staff. The followings are some of the highlights from this year:
  - The School Council engaged Parkdale Food Centre and connected them to our school. They provided a garden tower and delivered healthy eating workshops.
  - The council set up a donation page under the OCDSB. We started with Charitable Impact but the Board asked to move to Micharity. The link is available on school website and the School Council's website as well.
  - We started an initiative for graphic novel book drive and asked school families to donate gently used graphic novels. We may bring this initiative next school year.
  - Susan participated in a video on behalf of the School Council. The video was sent to Indigo grant and our school received the grant.
  - We had a Teacher's Appreciation Day where we created an appreciation board, thank you cards for the teachers, played kahoot and held virtual assembly including a presentation and a fun video by the student representatives.
  - We received two grants this year – the \$500 grant and the PRO Grant. We still have the \$500 grant from last year as well. We will use this amount to host

activities that would involve students with their families at the school. The PRO grant was presented in the form of a Family Science Night with Scientists in School.

- The Council provided feedback to the Board regarding the safe use of technology at schools.
- We applied to the tree grant and a committee will visit the school to evaluate the project.
- We collaborated with Sawmill Creek School on several school events such as the Family Science Night. We also helped their school to promote their E waste fundraising program in our school.
- Next year's vision is to possibly have a hybrid model for School Council meetings: virtual and in-person meetings. The virtual meeting is very effective for discussions and for exchanging ideas and it increased participation. Besides, the virtual meeting is very convenient to parents and families. Carmelina will reserve the school library for possible in-person council meetings as a back up. The meeting will be on the third week of the month on Wednesdays at 5 pm.
- Tree grant: if we receive the approval, we need to reserve some funds to purchase buckets, water hoses, and snow fencing for the trees.

For next school year, we will start an awareness campaign about the importance of taking care of trees and be part of the watering and the tree maintenance.

Carmelina suggested requesting donations from RONA and other garden places.

- Once the school library resumes the pre-pandemic routines, Susan will work with the librarian on an initiative to support book care and book returns addressing both parents and students.

## **9. Questions/Concerns/Suggestion**

**10. Next meeting** is scheduled for Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> 2022, at 5:00 pm. Date and time are to be confirmed by email in September.

**11.** The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm.