

Blossom Park School Council
Minutes of Meeting-February 15, 2023, at 5:00 P.M.

Present:

Susan Fattal: Chair
Tracy-Ann Johnson-Myers: Secretary
Fatma Mahmoud: Parent Member
Caroline Rassi: Principal
Carmelina Falcucci: Vice Principal
Tammy Draper: Teacher Representative
Wateen Zaila: Parent

Absent:

Phebe Oyetoran: Student Representative
Dina Edrees Said: Student Representative
Fatema Al-Hasan: Student Representative
Malak Saleh: Student Representative
Nabi Habibi: Parent Member

1. Welcome

- The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by the Chair.
- Susan welcomed the new parent to the meeting.
- Nabi Habibi has missed several meetings and is not responding to the chair's communication. Therefore, he is no more a member of the council, as attendance is one of the requirements to be a member. Susan wished him all the best and thanked him for contributing to the Council.

2. Approval of agenda and minutes

- The agenda and minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Chair's Report

- Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant: This grant is offered to the School Council by the OCDSB. This year we received information that they are changing the grant format.
- Susan and Tracy attended Blossom Park Kindergarten information night on behalf of the School Council.
- The OCDSB invited the School Council to attend a professional development webinar. Susan and Tracy attended. The webinar was divided into two sessions: a keynote speaker (Lisa Anna Palmer) and a panel discussion (working with school administrators, school gardens and their positive impact and recruiting diverse school council).

- Among other things, they highlighted the importance of parent engagement in School Councils. They also noted that parental involvement fell after COVID. The language barrier also proved an issue for parents.
- Winter Carnival was discussed at the last meeting, but the date still needed to be determined. Carmelina suggested asking around for anyone willing to donate some hot chocolate for the Carnival.
- Tim-Hortons (Bank Street) will donate an insulated container of 70 cups of hot chocolate for free. Susan asked if they would offer another container at a discounted price (\$70 instead of \$140) should we purchase an extra one, and they agreed.
- Carmelina explained that plans are still in place for the winter carnival, and everything is ready to go. Ultimately, it depends on the weather conditions being very wet and slippery at different times of the day. The school hopes the event can go on in another two weeks.
- Susan wondered how many containers of hot chocolate would be needed for the event.
- Caroline suggested that in addition to the 70 cups of hot chocolate from Tim Horton's, we purchase or borrow additional containers, purchase powdered hot chocolate and make them ourselves. She also suggested we consider purchasing containers for the school to keep should we decide to have the Winter Carnival yearly.
- The School Council was invited to the School's STEAM Day. Unfortunately, none of the members was able to attend.
- Maple Syrup Fundraiser: The message will go out to families and staff by next week. Payment will be available only through School Cash Online for families.

4. Financial Report:

- Susan shared the financial report document with the members: [February Financial Report](#)

5. Principal and Vice Principal's Report

Activities Debrief

- The grade 8 students visited Ottawa Technical Secondary School (OTSS) on January 26 was a great success.
- Thank you to the executive members of the School Council for attending the Kindergarten Information Night on January 31 at 7:00 pm. We had a tiny but mighty turn out :)

- Artshine for select primary students (6-week program offered on Fridays)
 - Thank you to the Education Foundation for subsidizing this program for our students
- Art club is happening on Thursdays for Junior students thanks to Mme. Chivot and Mme. Shohdy.
- Leadership and Anti-Bullying presentation (Gr.1-8) by Scott Graham on February 6
 - <https://kids4kids.ca/scott-graham-media-kids/about-scott-graham-oakville/>
- Visit from a Carleton University basketball player on Monday, Feb 13.
 - Provided a presentation to the grade 4/5 MFI class and donated a brand-new basketball to each student in the class.
- OYAP (Ontario Youth Apprentice Program) to provide workshops on trades to grades 2-4 students, on February 13 and 14. Presentation by a chef from Parliament Hill followed by baking brownies and building kits.
- Ottawa Public Health Nurse provided a presentation to the grade 5/6 MFI class on February 14th. The engaging healthy transitions topic was focused on thoughts, feelings, and actions. The message is if you change one, you can change them all.
- Candy grams were delivered on Valentine's Day.

Upcoming Engaging Activities at BPPS

- R3A and R2/3A are going to the Science and Tech Museum on Feb 23rd
- Ms. Dykes is working on a Winter Carnival plan which includes indoor and outdoor activities. We will run it after we have a good snowfall to maximize student enjoyment. Date to be determined.
- Looking forward to having local author, Timm Holmes, work with Primary and Junior students. Mr. Holmes will work with us on March 7th, where grades 1-5 students will participate in a Start a Story workshop.
- Pathways to Exploration (Formerly Enrichment Mini Courses) offered to selected Grade 8 students May 1-5, 2023 (Ottawa University or Carleton University)
- Girls on the Run will start again in the Spring.

6. Teacher Representative: Tammy Draper

- Winter Carnival: Grades 1-8 will be participating. Carnival will end at 1:00.

- The winter Carnival will start at 8:30-9:00 in the gym and then everyone gets divided into teams based on their assigned schedules. Kids will go in at different times throughout the day.
- The carnival will end at 1:00
- If the Carnival falls on a Thursday, pizza will go as planned. There will only be a 10 minutes change in the schedule.

7. Matters for Discussion

- In the past two years, PRO Grant took the format of pre-approved workshops, speaker nights and family events that were pre-approved by the Board. Last year and the year before, parental engagement events were pre-approved. We could choose one activity which needed to be done at a certain date set by the Board.
- This year it will be different. The activity aims to support innovative projects/activities that engage parents/caregivers and build their capability in anti-racism, equity/anti-oppression, and food sovereignty.
- The amount is up to \$750 per School Council.
- We will be awarded funding based on the selected activity, which must align with the eligibility criteria.
- Projects should be centred around anti-racism, anti-Semitism, anti-indigenous racism, or activities that raise awareness around local food production. We can apply for workshops, training sessions, round-table discussions, artistic expressions, etc.
- Susan had shared the information with the council members before the meeting, seeking feedback and ideas.
- Susan noted that the eligibility criteria have made it hard for our school to choose an activity that works for our parent community. Based on experience, parents are not interested in seminars, speaker sessions, or anything, just giving information. They are more interested in interactive workshops involving them and their kids.
- Last year and the year before, the Council picked a family science night run by Scientists in School. The turnout was okay, but not all spots were taken; we shared the extra spots with Sawmill Creek School families.
- On the OCDSB website, there is a page that contains recorded webinars. Susan will include a link in the weekly update Caroline sends out to parents, so parents can access and watch in their own time.
- Tracy expressed concern that changing the OCDSB eligibility criteria might disadvantage the people it should benefit. For example, the PRO Grant is geared towards parental involvement, but the eligibility criteria make it difficult for us to find activities that parents will want to be involved in.
- Susan welcomed any suggestions from the members before the deadline.

Teachers' preferences: Field Trip to Museum vs Scientists in School

- In our last meeting, we discussed the two possible activities for our primary students: a field trip to the museum vs Scientists in School. The discussion made us think that some teachers might prefer a field trip outdoors to a virtual science workshop.
- Scientists in school offered us three workshops, a maximum of 30 students per workshop, if we paid for three workshops ourselves. The cost of each workshop is \$235.
- Caroline approached the primary teachers with both options. The grades 2/3 and 3A students will visit the Science Museum next week. The museum will cover the entry cost of the workshop (total: \$195 per class). The school will have to cover the cost of the bus (\$350.30). The bus would take both classes.
- Grades 1A and 1/2A: Ms. Anand (Ms. Hoekstra's class) would like to do Scientists in School, if possible, while Miss Sow would like to go on a field trip to the museum. This might prove costly as the bus costs the same, no matter how many students go on the field trip.

Caroline will discuss with both teachers if they might be willing to have Scientists in Schools this term and then a field trip next term.

- Kinder Classes aren't considering going on a field trip, so they will happily accept Scientists in Schools.
- Caroline asked if the Council would cover the field trip bus cost, or part of it. She will see what portion of the bus cost can be covered by the school.
- For the grades 2/3A and 3A trip to the museum, Carmelina suggested asking parents for a suggested minimal fee of \$1.50 towards the field trip. It would be a good idea to introduce this practice and ask the parents to contribute instead of just asking the council to cover the whole amount.
- The Council has approved a payment of up to \$235 towards the bus if the school can cover \$115.30. the exact amount will be determined based on the money collected from the parents.
- The Council also committed to paying for 3 Scientists in School workshops for \$705. We will pay for three and get three free, making it 6 workshops.
- Susan will establish initial contact with Scientists in School. Moving forward, the teachers will coordinate the activities, selection of workshops and scheduling.

Tree Grant

- We have been approved for a City of Ottawa tree grant. Six trees will be planted in the schoolyard by the end of April.
- The school Council is responsible for watering and protecting the trees. Susan is of the idea that we could purchase buckets and a garden wagon to water the trees. The City of Ottawa will provide a free gator bags per tree; we must fill them up once a week in summer or twice a week during the hot season like August.
- Anita (the Chief Custodian) suggested using a rain barrel which must be driven around in an SUV, with a water hose to water the trees.
- Susan doesn't believe this is a good idea as it restricts the parents/volunteers who water the trees.
- Susan asked Anita about the possibility of contacting Facilities to ask about a wagon that would be assigned to our school. Anita will email Facilities and let us know.
- Tree protection: The City of Ottawa and Sawmill Creek School advised using steel T-posts around each tree and adding plastic fencing or wooden sticks to protect each tree. They used three 7 feet posts per tree. Wooden stakes would also work.
- One post at Home Depot with taxes costs \$11.84. Therefore, to cover all six trees would cost approximately \$213.12.
- Plastic safety fencing: one bundle would cover three trees, so that we would need two bundles for all 6 trees. The estimated cost per bundle is \$62.43. Two bundles would cost \$124.86.
- We also need zip ties to attach the fencing to the posts. We also need buckets or so to put on the wagon that will be used to water the tree.
- Carmelina suggested having at least two pegs of wood or T-posts around each tree to protect them from strong winds. But each tree should have a strong post next to it, with a piece of cut tubing or wire clasp against the pole or wood to prevent it from snapping during a wind or snowstorm.
- The estimated cost of protecting all trees (T-posts, zip ties, buckets etc.) is \$374. If we purchase a wagon, the price will go up to around \$534.
- Carmelina suggested asking staff members to see if anyone might have a wagon etc., to donate towards the cause.
- The council approved upwards the amount of \$350 for items to protect and water the newly acquired trees. The amount does not include the wagon. We will wait for Anita's update.

- Susan will seek donations from places like Home Depot before she makes any purchases.
- There will be no School Council meeting in the month of March. In place of a Minutes of Meeting, the school will send a document containing the Chair and Principal/Vice Principal's reports.

8. Questions/Concerns/Suggestions

9. Suggested date for the next meeting: The proposed date for our next meeting is April 26th, 2023, at 5:00 pm via Google Meet.

10. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:28 pm.