

**Blossom Park School Council**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Wednesday February 21, 2024**

**Present**

Susan Fattal: Chair and Treasurer

Mohammad Rasool Nasrat: Parent Member

Fatma Mahmoud: Parent Member

Caroline Rassi: Principal

Carmelina Falcucci: Vice Principal

Issam Adnan Hamad: Parent

Muzamil Popal: Parent

**Absent**

Tammy Draper: Teacher Representative

**1. Welcome**

- The meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM by the Chair.
- Susan welcomed everyone.

**2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

The agenda and minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**3. Chair's Report**

- **Parent Workshop**
  - We got approved for the PRO Grant. The amount of \$750 has been sent to school. The school will write us a cheque.
  - We are having our workshop on March 4<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-6:30 PM. The topic is “Effective Parenting through Positive Discipline”.

- We opened the registration for one week. So far, we have six families with eight children.
- The registration link has been shared with Sawmill Creek School. Their registration will remain open until Friday.
- Susan will share the name list so far with Caroline tomorrow.
- **\$500 Parent Involvement Funding**
  - This funding is provided by the Ministry of Education and we receive it every year.
  - \$500 has been sent to school. The school will prepare us a cheque for the amount.
  - The amount is intended to be spent at our discretion on activities that foster and enhance parent involvement.
  - Unlike the PRO Grant, no reporting of spending is required.

#### 4. Financial Report

Susan shared February financial report with the council: [February Financial Report](#)

#### 5. Principal's Report

##### Activities Debrief

- Caroline had a great time with Mrs Young's and Ms Piribauer's classes on their field trip to MacSkimming Outdoor Education Center in January.  
Caroline decided to volunteer as there were not enough volunteers for the trip. Volunteer parents must meet the ratio of 1 to 10; otherwise the trip would be cancelled.
- Grade 7/8 classes enjoyed their time with the Ottawa Police Hoopsters on January 31. The team of volunteers are members of the Ottawa Police and community partners and they encourage healthy interactions with police through basketball games.
- Ms Trotechaud's, Ms Sharma's, Ms Warland's, Ms Chivot's and Mr Sirkka's classes welcomed the Junior Medics volunteer from the University of Ottawa for a First Aid and EpiPen presentation.
- Skills Ontario gave a dynamic Skilled Trades and Technologies presentation to our Intermediate classes on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Ms Young and Ms Piribauer's classes enjoyed a great presentation on agriculture from AgeScape through the Ottawa Agriculture Museum.
- The Student Council's Candy Grams sale was successful.

- Grades 1 to 8 students enjoyed the vibrant drumming presentation today performed by Colores Andinos. This presentation features Latin American music.

### **Upcoming Engaging Activities at BPPS**

- Junior Achievers will visit the MF7/8 class on Feb 20 and 22.
- Ms Shohdy and Mme Chivot are compiling artwork from all classes to share in the Winter Art show slides on February 26.
- Ms Dykes and her team will be running a Winter Carnival on March 5th. It will be a great day of outdoor fun for all students and staff. Intermediate students will take on the role of “team leaders” for the day. Students will bring their lunches, and staff will serve hot chocolate to all. Students will have a few indoor activities set up with everyone’s favourite stop being the Hot Chocolate station.

Caroline asked if the council would be willing to contribute by offering the hot chocolate like last year.

- Junior and Intermediate students will enjoy a dynamic presentation with author Kenneth Oppel on March 19.
- STEAM activity day is scheduled on March 20th for Intermediate classes. More details will follow about this day of Experiential Learning.

Carmelina clarified that she is not sure yet how the day will unfold; probably baking cookies in the morning and building things later in the day. Unlike last year, this year families will not be invited.

### **Instructional Focus for Blossom Park PS**

- Every year, schools in the OCDSB are asked to establish a plan to help students achieve their academic and wellbeing goals. This is called the School **Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Wellbeing (SIPSAW)**.
- While we diligently work with all students to ensure that they are all progressing in their learning, we will also work more specifically with students who are Multi-Lingual Learners (MLL) who have been with us for more than 2 years. Our main inquiry will be focused on their rate of progress in their language acquisition. We will also be working closely with our grade 3 and 6 students as it relates to our EQAO scores.
- Issam asked about the possible reason why some students have not improved their language after two years, and if there are any possible issues that could be addressed.
- Caroline explained that the answer to that question is not simple. One reason could be that our students come from different backgrounds, mostly Arabic. Many students choose to speak Arabic when they talk to one another, while they practice English during the learning block. Another reason is that this improvement depends on the students themselves; some spend more time to practice and make more progress. It also depends on what support they get at home such as parents and kids reading together and talking about school.

- Susan suggested helping the parents support their kids by giving them access to helpful resources and tools suggested by ESL teachers. We could send a link to these resources to all families in the weekly update message or only to the families who need those resources through an email sent from the teacher.
- Fatma said that her daughter seems to have improved her Arabic language because most students in her class speak Arabic.
- Caroline added that more strategies need to be in place to encourage the students to speak more English. Not many teachers speak Arabic, so the students speak English in their English class and French in their French class. However, students are free to communicate in the language they choose during the snack time, and many choose to communicate in Arabic.

## **6. Matters for Discussion**

### **Mme Shohdy's Requests**

- Mme Shohdy is running an Art Contest in the last week of May and is seeking our help by funding art supply prizes for 9 winners (three in three school divisions). She is asking for \$180-\$200 (estimated \$20 per students plus HST)
- Fatma asked if the kinders are included in the contest. She suggested including everyone in the four school divisions.
- Susan agreed with Fatma and suggested increasing the amount to \$250 to include three winners from the kindergarten classes. Both Fatma and Mohammad approved the amount.
- Susan will ask Mme Shohdy to purchase the items and we will reimburse her for up to \$250.
- Mme Shohdy is also planning to have a Bulletin Board Contest in April and is asking if we can offer Freezies (about 75-80) to the three winning classes like last year.
- Susan estimated the amount to be no more than \$25.
- Both Mohammad and Fatma approved allocating that amount for the contest.

### **Parent Workshop March 4<sup>th</sup>**

- Caroline suggested having the workshop in the library. It can take up to 50 people.
- We are going to have two EA's to take care of the kids during the workshop in the gym. We will pay each one \$50 (\$25 per hour).
- Susan asked about the possibility of asking student volunteers to help. We will need someone to be standing at the door in case of any late comers.

- Caroline said unless the students' parents are attending the workshop on that day, it would be hard to ask students to volunteer.
- Fatma offered to ask her high school daughter to volunteer. She would be happy to help.
- Susan estimated that the maximum amount we need to spend on top of the PRO Grant amount is \$300. Both Fatma and Mohammad approved setting aside \$300 to cover any expenses for the workshop.
- Mohammad had suggested that both the parents and their kids eat together.
- Caroline agreed and said that we would be asking the kids to join their parents in the library for pizza. There is a space for everyone.

### **End-of-Year Fun Day: Initial Thoughts**

- Susan suggested having a Fun Fair or Fun Day in June. The last Fun Fair we had was in 2019 before the Pandemic. She asked whether holding the Fun Day indoors would be more predictable to avoid any last-minute changes due to rain. In 2019, we had two rain dates, yet we ended up changing our plans to move everything indoors due to rain on both dates. We would have a station in every class for the families to visit like face painting station or bubble activity, etc.
- Issam said he would be willing to volunteer for video editing and photography if needed.
- Susan pointed out that only the School Council members usually volunteer to help on such events; therefore, the help of staff members is crucial to run these Fun Days. She would be sending a Google Form link to parents to start soliciting volunteers.
- Carmelina agreed that having a Fun Fair this year would be great! Planning, participation and volunteering are key to have a successful event. In order to encourage staff volunteering, we need to facilitate staff members with young kids by letting them know they can bring their kids, be mindful of the start time of the event or offering them discount coupons.
- Carmelina also suggested that having the Fun Day outside would be a better option.
- Susan asked if dividing the activities to indoor and outdoor activities would be practical.
- Carmelina answered that having everyone on one location would be better.
- Caroline said she had attended several Fun Fairs both indoors and outdoors. Both experiences were equally enjoyable. She agreed with Carmelina the event needs to be all indoors or all outdoors depending on the preference of the council members.
- Susan asked Caroline to check tentative available dates in June.

## 6. Questions/Suggestions

- Issam asked if there is a way to encourage the talents that students have and support them by helping them improve their skills in the future such as playing soccer.
- Caroline explained that in Blossom Park starting next year, there will be an opportunity for grade three students to be part of the junior boy soccer team, depending on the opportunity to coach these teams.

Intermediate students in our school play both soccer and basketball. They train and go on field trips to play against other schools in championships. We currently don't have scouts here at school level. School is for learning, while sports are played for enjoyment and classmate participation.

Students will have more opportunities in high school. Grade 7/8 students can select courses that best meet their needs.

- Susan suggested to Issam looking for after-school activities to support his child's soccer interest. There are several soccer-training programs and camps in Ottawa.
- Susan asked about the amount of hot chocolate mix needed for the Winter Carnival.
- Caroline said that last year, there was a lot of leftover hot chocolate mix and suggested that 2 1.7 Kg Carnation cans, in addition to the Tim Hortons hot chocolate donation, if we can get it like last year, would be good. We need to remember to check the label to make sure it is peanut free.

## 7. Next Meeting

There will be no meeting in March. Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday April 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM.**

Susan thanked everyone for their time and participation.

The meeting was adjourned around **6:15 PM.**