

## **December 11, 2023 – School Council Meeting Minutes**

Duke of Connaught Junior and Senior Public School

Location: School Library – in person

Last Meeting: November 6, 2023

Council Members Present: Jill Hollingsworth, Jeffrey Hackett, Natalie Chinsam, Jason Davies, Chris Hazard, Marilyn Lacroix

Council Members Absent: Robyn Switzer

Teacher Rep: Maria Oliveira, Erin O'Donnell

Parent Attendees: Emily Nicholas Angl, Sheri Sampedro, Bob Sexton, Melissa Kluger

Community Partners: Emily for S.H. Armstrong

Admin: Delphine Rule (VP), Bill Vatzolas (P)

6:38 – 7:00 pm - Welcome and Announcements

### **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement**

(Chair: Jill Hollingsworth)

Jill welcomed everyone, & Land Acknowledgement.

Jill asked everyone to be respectful, noted we have a lot to get through by 8 pm, and reminded the group that everyone has a voice, then encouraged people to share their thoughts and ask questions if they have them.

Please note: Parents can always reach SC at [dukeschoolcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:dukeschoolcouncil@gmail.com) (and/or check info on website: [dukesac.ca](http://dukesac.ca))

**Call for any other business to discuss** (with caveat at the end if time permits); no new business added.

Please note: Anytime you want something on the Agenda try to let SC know in advance so time can be set aside. Call for Agenda Items goes out in Principal Update and NTR few weeks prior to the meetings.

Changes to the 2023/24 SC:

One of our parent members has had to step away from Council for personal reasons.

Our teacher representatives will now be Maria Oliveira and Erin O'Donnell, as Mr McIntyre has stepped away for this school year.

Approval of November Minutes - This was delayed until all members of the Council had arrived.

### **Announcements:**

Kerr and Highfield Roads: This continues to be an issue. Jill asked everyone present to share this information widely. Residents on Kerr and Highfield Roads are continuing to complain about issues they've had during drop off and pick up times: parking on sidewalks, blocking driveways, ignoring rules of the road, and parking on the corners, etc. They've noted concerns for pedestrians, especially children. Bylaw enforcement was increased and apparently there have been officers out to talk about keeping everyone

safe. But - since things have not changed much, the next step for Bylaw Enforcement is to move to change the parking rules (no parking, no stopping) - and to enforce those changes using police officers.

Key takeaway: Spread the word with parents you know – keep the parking legal, drive safely, be respectful of residents, and, if someone asks you to move your car ... just do it.

Skate Library is going really well. There are a number of upcoming dates (mid to late December) to help get skates out to families before the winter break.

Jungle Sports: We've already started spending money on some of our budgeted items. Jungle Sports has been booked for the last week of school, and all classes will have a chance to go through twice. (More detail about budget below.)

Dance-a-thon: We're moving forward with the Dance-a-thon as a SC fundraiser to pay for Junglesport. It's planned for January 31, and we'll provide details after winter break. We will work with Professor Jamz (DJ), so we can set up a portal ahead of time so parents can donate, kids can request songs, etc.

Toronto Symphony Orchestra: The Music teachers have booked / will book a trip to the TSO for all classes (every kid) ... grades 1-8 will go to the symphony and the JK/SK will have a symphony experience at the school.

Food Drive: Student Council food and toiletries drive is running until December 15 if you are able to help.

Currently a standing item - creating a kinder community: To build an inclusive and kind community at Duke, we encourage everyone – kids and adults – to be kinder and more mindful of their words when on school property including the playground. Everyone at Duke has a right to be here and should feel welcome. Please keep your opinions about another person's body, dress, race, abilities (their everything, really) to yourself. Words hurt and should not be used carelessly.

Key takeaway: Everyone is welcome. We won't all be best friends, but we can be kinder and more thoughtful about what we say.

7:00 - 7:03 pm

Community Partners Update  
Informational, no vote required.

S.H. Armstrong: Emily Nicholas Angl was present from SH Board. She let us know that city programming opened last week and plans to send us an update of what is still available for registration (to include in the Need To Read. She also noted that S.H.Armstrong now has wifi.

Applegrove and Woodgreen representatives were not in attendance.

7:03 – 7:07 pm

Dismantling Inequities Committee Update

There has not yet been a formal meeting of the committee this year, but it looks like we have space that can accommodate us at S.H. Armstrong for public meetings. We'll put the call out for committee members and find a date that works.

The committee has two projects that have moved forward:

Cultural sharing project: Last year, the cultural sharing project included a parent who shared about a type of dance in Mexico (and she's still sharing in the community) through the music and dance program (thanks, Ms Pierce!). Details of how to get involved in this project will come out in the new year.

We were approved for the TDSB's School Council Innovation Grant \$1500. The Grant provides School Councils in the TDSB up to \$1,500 to use towards projects or activities that engage parents and caregivers. (Find out more about the grant:

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Grants-for-Student-Need/School-Council-Innovation-Grant>)

We are planning two workshops:

Gender Diversity: A workshop from Canvas, and Four Strategies to Mitigate Implicit Bias: A workshop from Right to Be

The workshops will cost more than the amount of the grant, so we have funds set aside in budget to cover the difference, but the grant will go a long way to offsetting the costs and make it possible to do both. We are tentatively planning the workshops for February and April (TBD).

7:07 – 7:20 pm

### **Treasurer's report**

Jeff provided an update on the SC's budget.

Since the last meeting, we've received more than \$23K and we're on track to meet our targets.

High level updates:

- Duke Cares - spent \$300
- Halloween event - netted \$1,200
- Movie night - waiting for final balance on this
- We've also paid for: sensory pathways (2), kindergarten expenses (see below), the TSO field trips, SC expenses (such as coffee morning)

**Please note:** The goal is to spend almost all of the money in any year (October 1 – September 30), with a nominal amount (e.g. \$20) left.

Questions:

Will there be more funding for Duke Cares or is there anything we can do to make our money go further?

Jill - trying to see if we can make an arrangement with a grocer to get them to sponsor some of the cost of buying grocery cards.

Jill explained the flip give app, which allows families to sign up and use the app when buying every day expenses from the LCBO, grocery stores, restaurants, etc. The SC then earns cash back - as of December 11, we had earned \$205 in cash back. Our current cycle lasts until the end of September. And when families join through the invitation, there's a bonus in cash back for a limited time.

Jeff also said that as the year goes on, we'll know where we have excess budget and we'll be able to move money into the Duke Cares account as needed.

7:20 – 7:40 pm

SC Member and Community discussion

We had a conversation about low volunteer numbers.

Jill noted that Council wants to continue to do many events a year to provide support for activities in the school. For this year, we want to do another movie night, we'd like to do a year end event and more.

Unfortunately, we have low volunteer turnout for our events - we go to the same small pool of people every time and it's becoming difficult to get. (Kudos to Mr. Ford, who took a popcorn shift and cleaned the machine at movie night!)

We need parents/caregivers who want to take the lead on projects.

We need ideas - how do we get people to volunteer?

Suggestions included:

Maybe have a rep from each class or stream?

Have a class support an event - e.g. Grade 4 French handles Movie Night, parents from that group expected to volunteer and handle everything, so parents have connections.

Put a printed page into backpacks - it gets attention.

Ask at coffee mornings — maybe put a sign on the tea/coffee urns? — although we don't want to be pushy about volunteering or advocacy, and rather focus on socializing at coffee morning.

Or maybe leave it to natural consequences ... if we don't have enough volunteers, we have to cancel an event.

For now, the plan is to move ahead despite the challenges.

Advocacy

As a follow up to the last meeting, when a parent raised the question of activism and advocacy for education ... we had asks from that (such as adding activism at coffee morning, political activism on agenda as a standing item, parents with signs on school grounds.)

Jill explained that as an SC we decided to have our focus on our school community and what's going on inside for our students. To try to build community, and nurture connection, kindness and respect. Want to

bring community together, not further divided. Our role is not to be a political activist committee in the sense of trying to replace a government. There are external political action committees (Eg. East End Parents for Education (Trustee Sara Ehrhardt and others created it last year during the budget process) that are doing that type of work and we encourage those interested to join the group.

We are active, but have to recognize what we're able to actually do, in terms of our role and also in terms of our size and focus. Last year, we did a letter writing campaign to the superintendent, but we can't take on rallies, media, and other activities.

It is overly simplistic to say Education spending (lack of!!) is solely the fault of the Doug Ford government - there are other factors at play, TDSB budget decision making and Unions/Collective bargaining. It's complex. Info about the budget process is on the SC website.

We will discuss Advocacy and Staffing Cuts as needed at meeting but not have it as a standing item unless during the Budget Process (starts in new year with TDSB required to finalize the budget by June 2024) we become aware of any additional cuts to staff for the 2024/25 school year.

We want to keep Coffee Morning social - no pressure.

We are able to keep parents up to date with information on our site (<https://dukesac.godaddysites.com/>) via the Advocacy for Education, where we provide information and links.

If you know anything you'd like to share, let us know at [dukeschoolcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:dukeschoolcouncil@gmail.com).

7:40 — 7:42 pm

We returned to opening business to accept the minutes from our previous SC meeting on November 6.

Jason Davie moved to accept the minutes, Chris Hazard seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

7:42 — 8:04 pm

### **Principal's Report**

Principal Vatzolas reviewed the school's budget.

First he walked through the TDSB's budget for Duke, as shown on the TDSB website (<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Business-Services/Budgets-and-Financial-Statements/School-Budgets>)

Then, Principal Vatzolas walked us through the school's secondary budget related to day to day operations of the school:

School Budget Allocations	Amount
Base School and Small School Allocation Elementary \$5,000; Secondary \$10,000; Alternative Schools on stand alone site \$5,000 Small School Additional Base FTE<=200 \$5,500; FTE>200<=250 \$2,750; FTE>250<=300 \$1,650	\$5,000
General Per Pupil (\$90.72/Elem, \$133.65/Sec)	\$63,595
Library Per Pupil (\$14.25/Elem,\$19.35/Sec)	\$9,989
School Office Per Pupil (\$17.57/Elem, \$23.71/Sec)	\$12,317
Middle School Supplement (\$36.1/Grade 678)	\$11,263
French Immersion/Extended Supplement (\$13.5/pupil)	\$4,631
School Council (\$1.25/pupil, min \$300 max \$1,000)	\$876
Learning Opportunities Supplement ( weighted enrollment *15/Elem; \$8/Sec)	\$2,663
Student Financial Assistance (weighted enrollment*13/Sec)	\$0
Math Manipulative (\$4/Grade 7-12)	\$888
Professional Development (\$5/pupil)	\$3,505
International Baccalaureate Secondary (Base \$24,500 plus \$500/FTE enrolled in IB Program Grade 11/12) New Secondary site \$10,000 - for Staff Training and Site Fee Costs	\$0
Technical Education Supplement (\$13.00 - \$46.50 per credit)	\$0
Arts (\$13.5/credit)	\$0
Family Studies (\$27/credit)	\$0
Instrumental Music (\$45/credit)	\$0
Special Education Teacher Supplement	\$2,220
<b>Total Preliminary School Budget 2023-2024</b>	<b>\$116,947</b>

(<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Business-Services/Budgets-and-Financial-Statements/School-Budgets>)

Expense	Amount
Rent lease photocopier	\$7,000
Telephone Voice	\$4,500
Office supplies / services	\$15,000
School Council supplement	\$1,000
Technology 9	\$9,400
Instructional supplies - consumables \$13/student	\$900
Literacy French	\$4,000
Literacy English	\$4,000
Library	\$6,500
Music	\$2,000
New Class allocation	\$2,000
Physical education	\$3,000

Special education	\$2,500
Public transit fares	\$1,247
Science / stem	\$1,000
Mathematics	\$1,000
Supply teachers PD (270 per day)	\$25,000
Textbook / ebook digital subscriptions	\$10,000
Field Trips	\$2,000
Special events / initiatives 6	\$6,000
Total	\$116,947

Questions:

1. What happens if you go over? The school can't go over, the TDSB tracks it closely and follows up with the Principal if the school is getting closer.
2. What is the music expense for - new equipment? No, it's for repairs.
3. Can we buy a copier? No, TDSB has a lease agreement for all schools (and they're incredibly expensive to buy then maintain).

Vice Principal Rule and Principal Vatzolas provided additional updates:

1. They have found an itinerant band teacher, so Band will happen on Day 3 for Grades 5-8. The previous teacher and the new teacher both did an inventory / audit to check all the instruments (and identify those that need repair.) For now, it's just band, not strings. An email has been sent out.
2. Pool will be canceled until further notice. One of the instructors has moved to a new role, so until we have a second instructor, we can't run classes.
3. Earth Rangers will be in the school this Wednesday, December 13 for Grades 1-3.
4. On Saturday, December 9, a group of students participated in a Robotics Competition at Western. They did well, scoring 180 pts.
5. Recently, kids from Grades 5-8 saw a presentation from a TTC constable about being safe in a streetcar, bus, and subway.
6. The Eco Club is doing a clothing and toy swap.
7. The Winter concert was great - students did a great job.
8. We'll have a Festive Sing-a-long in the front hall on December 20 and 21. All grades will participate, and it's organized by Ms. Pierce and Ms. Clayton.
9. On Friday, December 22 we'll have an all-school assembly in the Gym and the staff band will play.
10. Sports teams are doing well. We have five teams ranked 1st and 2nd, with four teams now in the semi finals.
11. The school musical project is up and running, and kids are auditioning.

8:04 – 8:09 pm

Questions and wrap up

A parent expressed appreciation for the work of the school administration in this difficult season.

What grade is robotics? Robotics is offered to Grades 6, 7 and 8.

Jill thanked the group for joining.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm