

**Sept 27, 2023**

**School Council Meeting Minutes**

**Duke of Connaught Junior and Senior Public School**

**Location: School Library - in person**

**Last Meeting: June 19, 2023**

**Council Members Present:** Jill Hollingsworth, Jason Davie, Jeffrey Hackett, Chris Hazard, Natalie Chinsam, J.P. Casino, Sarah Lasch, Sonya Velez

**Election Officer:** Christina Jackson

**Parent Attendees:** Laura Byers, Sheri Sampedro, Namin Ahmed, Nassim Nodouzi, Melissa Kluger, Marilyn Lacroix, Alana Pearlman, Jessica Dolmer, Marisa, Ryan Dixon, Susan Munn, Robin Switzer, Jennifer Huang, Marie Snyder, (+ one name illegible on attendance sheet)

**Community Partners:** Emily Angl (Duke Parent) for SH Armstrong

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

**Welcome, Land Acknowledgment 6:40pm**

(Chair: Jill Hollingsworth)

Asks that everyone be respectful, reminder of hard stop at 8pm, asks that we be conscious that a variety of people speak (ask 1 question at a time if others have questions too).

Always reach SC at [dukeschoolcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:dukeschoolcouncil@gmail.com) (and/or check info on website: dukesac.ca)

**Call for any other business to discuss** - (Hot lunch already on agenda) with caveat at the end if time permits. No items. 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.

**Approval of May and June Minutes**

Motion moved by: Jason Davie, Seconded by: J.P. Casino

**Community Partners News 6:45pm**

Informational, no vote required.

**Applegrove** rep not present but has passed along info. After school program has been expanded at Duke - few spots still available. Shared 2 documents (afterschool program and free Youth programs):



Emily Angl (Duke Parent), Community liaison for **S.H. Armstrong Board** present.

Says fall registration is open. Reports still lots of space open for programs, some which could close if there are not enough numbers. Suggests checking out S.H. Armstrong site directly rather than navigating through city programs site.

**Fitness TO**, their gym membership has re-jigged itself. Now non-specific to site, gives you access to all sites, but with different levels of access. Call for more info, or get in touch with Emily.

### **Dismantling Inequities Committee** Update 6:48pm

Itzel passed on info re Cultural Sharing project for Jill to share. The committee will continue. Once a new council is chosen, will have open invitation for new members once arrange a space for that to happen.

2 upcoming projects include the Positivity Campaign, and the Cultural Sharing project. Committed to supporting an inclusive environment - DEI work is part of the work of SC.

Chair notes that if anyone wants to join any of the committees, please reach out via email, and can help out.

### **Treasurer's Report**, 6:50pm

Jeff H.

Last year - 2022 - raised over \$24,000 - mostly through pizza lunches and the letter writing campaign.

Other events that raised funds were the Halloween event, movie nights, and grants.

About \$21,000 spent this year for graduation, morning coffees, appreciation lunch, council expenses, movie licences, drama performances, buses for track and grad, \$4000 on library requests, new gym uniforms, Duke Cares, Jungle Sports and the year end event.

There is still a balance of \$18,000 in account, plus \$6000 from the School Line account. (after accounting assessment there were some additional funds found in the school line that were for SC).

Chair: **The Student Participatory Budget** group put together a budget, and the school matched it. Students asked all grades K-8 about what students wanted to spend funds on, and came up with an age appropriate voting system.

Recess Bags, and Books within classrooms were priorities. \$1500 was available.

Earmarked funds:

Quick vote consensus taken from all members that members agree to earmark those funds, as they have not been spent yet to pay for those expenses as they occur this school year.

Student Participatory Budget \$1500 and DI Comm \$2500

(Unanimous vote to earmark these funds)

### **Funding Request from Admin:**

Since there are funds left over, the school has asked for assistance paying for:

\$1500 Robotics Program, \$4000 Digital Subscriptions, Kindergarten supplies \$2400

SC voted in favour of funding these expenses (unanimous)

Digital subscriptions - Staff want to supplement programs that they use for teaching.

Parent Question: What's the process for approving use of an app?

Principal: There are recommended apps, but we also look into it ourselves

Kindergarten expenses include a water table, easel, toys, games for kids

Motion to approve funds: all approved.

Question: Will students from last year's student budget council carry the torch, and fulfil last year's items?

Chair: Spoke with some of the kids and they are already working on it. Things will be more laid out in October.

### **Hot Lunch Question 7:pm**

-Concerns around speed of lineups during hot lunch. There were concerns about a long line up, some kids leaving the line without getting lunch, spending the whole lunch in line.

Some concerns around communication about how hot lunch works, practices that assist the younger kids in the hot lunch.

Parent Question: Parent has 2 kids in hot lunch, reporting that area is too chaotic for some, one kid is skipping lunch due to this. Feels that this may be due to cuts to supervisors.

Chair: We do want to put kids first. Kids who eat their lunch are happier kids. We did some advocacy work last year around staffing issues (cuts to staffing levels for this school year). The lunch staff are trying very hard, but there are just not enough staff there. Not to let the gov't off the hook, but we do need a stop gap measure. We are a bigger population than projected, which is impacting this.

Parent: It's always been noisy. But having his older brother walk him through the process helped. Asks if pairing older with younger kids is possible, perhaps until November as part of the **Pals program**.

### **Principal's Report, 7:10pm**

Informational, no vote required.

**Hot lunch** - Principal spoke with Maureen this morning about it. There can be logistical improvements, which they are looking at. The reality is it's noisy.

VP and Principal have been on lunch duty every day since the start of the year. Principal is by Door 7, VP is in back. Principal can tell some are skipping. Says we should enforce a message to kids to have more patience.

VP: We had a quiet room last year, but we don't have capacity to have that room this year.

Parent: Is the basement only space for lunch?

Principal: Hot lunch is in the basement, older kids can use the gym.

Parent: Not many schools have a hot lunch option - it is a great program.

Principal continues that it's been a smooth start to the school year, positive climate.

Enrollment was projected at 701 students, now at 742. If projections are wrong, the system does not take this into account, says TDSB.

**Reorganization** will take place next week. In FI, class of 27. Cap is 23. Had to remove 4 students and spread out;

Gifted - had 121 students, able to meet cap, but had to go down one class, and redistributed a class among existing classes. The 6th teacher is surplus and she was a great teacher by all accounts who was making great progress with the students in her class.

**Extra Curriculars** - Cross Country has started, soccer is going on, student council has started, as well as robotics, choir, and drama.

Other programs in the background are happening.

TSM led the **Terry Fox** run last week. We paired grades 6-7-8 with 1-2 classes. Kids were happy with it.

**Construction** - Tree deck is complete. But the gravel which is joined with the composite resin glue over gravel has deteriorated. It's supposed to last for 5 years.

Contractor came in, will re-do it. Will clean up gravel. The rep which makes the material will re-apply it themselves. There is a 5 year warranty.

Wooden fence will be replaced. Benches will be placed around the deck.

Second part of the project - basketball court. Contractor says it will happen this school year, hopefully fall, but could be later.

Some pieces will need to be finalized. Upper tree deck will need guards.

Parent notes some guards are removable.

Bill says he feels it is a done deal. The basketball court was supposed to be done over summer, but there was a delay.

Wanted to rip everything out to have proper drainage.

Plan is to have sports courts shrunk, with 8 square and 4 square around the perimeter, 1 ball hockey court. But these plans can change.

**Curriculum Night** - Will take place 6 - 7pm, Oct 5. There will be 2 sessions. No big group session in the gym. Always great to have parents meet teachers.

**Truth and Reconciliation:** Event happening Friday at the school. Some teachers have taken the lead, giving lesson plans, books, websites.

'Every Child Matters' words re-created in ribbons outdoors. Students taking part in this following lead up/learning activities with individual teachers.

Question: What is happening with band and strings?

Strings teacher has not come in yet - on a leave. Schedule is ready, just waiting for things to happen. For Grades 6-7-8, more info will go into parent update. The lessons are during school and class hours.

Question: Pool closed today? Technician coming to fix part that is damaged.

Full day kindergarten - was possible in the second week of school.

### **Overview of School Council**

-Council is mandated by the government - regulation 612 of the Education Act (all the info is on the TDSB website). TDSB makes the policy council runs under. Duke Bylaws must be followed. Work in partnership with staff - Principal is a non voting member of SC. 2 teachers are voting members (sharing 1 vote).

-Many other ways to get involved, if council is not your thing. We need parent volunteers to run events. If parents don't volunteer, less things happen.

-This year's council put out 38 NTRs, 8 coffee mornings, 2 workshops, 8 pizza lunches, halloween event, skate library, bbq, 2 movie nights and more!

-School Council mandate is to build bridge between families and the school/board, to enhance accountability of the school system to families/students, to advocate on student behalf, to improve the academic outcomes and mental well being of students - the mandate is not fundraising and events, though we do that for the school to build community. Try to limit fundraising to what we need - there are limits on what School Council can pay for (it's all on the TDSB website) - can't pay for academic supplies or workshops for staff.

-Appreciation was expressed for outgoing council.

### **Election of this years council - Christina Jackson**

Prior to election, shared the Ethics Code the new School Council will be asked to adopt at the next meeting.

-Everyone acclaimed, as we have less than 12 members. (New SC Parent Members: Jeffrey Hackett, Marilyn Lacroix, Robyn Switzer, Jason Davie, Chris Hazard, Jill Hollingsworth, Nassim Nodouzi, Nat Chinsam)

Staff Position: to be shared by Maria Oliveira and Ray McIntyre

SC Parent Groups selects from the elected (acclaimed) group of members for 3 positions, Chair, Treasurer, and Communications Lead.

3 positions acclaimed. Jill elected Chair, Jeff elected Treasurer, and Marilyn elected Comms.

Chair reiterated that no special skills needed for council, but attendance is required at meetings as quorum must be met.

Parent Question from Melissa: Have an idea for a seminar on kids travelling alone on TTC.

**Safety awareness**, who to go to etc. Thought it would be a good seminar, or workshop. Could include Morse, TTC etc.

This is a topic that many agree should be explored this year, with many ideas and angles on safety brought up including traffic safety with TPS, self-defence classes/workshop, city scouts program. Melissa and Principal will connect after the meeting via email.

**Meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm**