

November 23, 2022
School Council Meeting Minutes,
6:30pm
Duke of Connaught Junior and
Senior Public School

Location: School Library - in person

Council Members Present: Jill Hollingsworth, Sarah Lasch, Jason Davie, Jeffrey Hacket, Sonya Velez, Meghan Cox, Itzel Sanchez

Absent with regrets: Chris Hazard, JP Casino

Parent Attendees: Adene Kuchera, Laura Byers, Sian Suokonautio, Norine Williamson, Joanne Tsianos, Sheri Davie, Ellie Arscott, Cara Murphy, Mika Suokonautio

Community Partners: Mark Mead

Staff: Konstantinos Flegas (VP), Ray McIntyre (SC Rep), Maria Oliveira (SC Rep), Delphine Rule (VP), Bill Vatzolas (P)

Agenda Items:

Welcome, Land Acknowledgment 6:30pm

(Chair: J.Hollingsworth)

The Chair started with a participatory demonstration recognising the importance of communication, and listening. Communication is a partnership - SC puts together NTR, school Friday update ... Parents/Guardians role is to read those communications, provide feedback.

Other Business - No additions.

Previous meeting, Approval of October minutes

Motion moved by: Megan C. Seconded by: Jason D.

Community Partners News 6:40pm - Mark Mead was present representing SH Armstrong, Woodgreen and Applegrove.

SH Armstong - Reported that birthday party permits are up at SH Armstrong. Also wanted to remind that winter registration starts Dec 6.

He also indicated that the open gym every Saturday is a success and he thanks parents for that. There is some movement towards starting an SH Armstrong council, and Duke parents would be invited to join. But this is still in the early stages, so stay tuned for further information on this

in the future. SH Armstrong is one of few centres in the city maintaining numbers from before covid. But notes, ball hockey numbers are down, so send kids if interested.

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Treasurer's Report, 6:40pm

(Jeffrey Hackett)

Halloween was a success - brought in \$3300 - with profits to be calculated once all expenses factored in.

The original hope was that the event would break even, so this was great news.

Pizza lunches so far have received over \$20,000 in funds, which should profit around \$7600 once expenses factored in.

Dec 1st will be the first movie night of the year, for which \$180 has already been spent.

A total of \$37,000 is current bank. Some money earmarked already - for ipads, pool equipment, etc - and we are on track to spend money we have budgeted for this year.

Dismantling Inequities Committee update

(Meghan C.)

First meeting was held last week and was designed to review what has been done and brainstorm ideas and how to focus efforts.

'Day of Dead' altar was set up by Itzel - and it was a great opportunity to connect with the community on a cultural level. The committee would like to build on that.

Would like to invite anyone who would like to set up a display to do so.

Also discussing ways to bring those cultural experiences into the classroom as well.

Last year Raina Mugammar - an anti-oppression speaker - was brought into the school and received positive reviews. Hoping to bring her back to continue that conversation in our school community. Will also do a workshop focused on LGBTQ2S++ this year.

Looking at issues within our community. Also looking at a powwow experience potentially.

And also looking at a community positivity campaign, tying back to being inclusive. The aim being to build a sense of Duke identity, looking at what it means to be a part of Duke. Stay tuned for more info on that.

Question: Parent asked about divisions between streams at school, disconnect. Saying it would be worth thinking about doing cross-program work.

Comment: Another parent said they experienced this at another school and is doubtful this can be bridged.

Comment: Another parent says the Island school was great at doing that. But it took until grade 6 for that. Also asked what kind of push back there has been to gender bathrooms - and to clarify - a teacher mentioned the concern was around the number of bathrooms available over all, particularly on the 3rd floor, and not about the use or existence of a gender neutral bathroom.

Question: Is there a fund for those who can't afford trips?

Answer: We do have a 'Duke Cares' fund. Admin is building relationships with those interested and Mr. Vatzolas confirms no student will be denied access to a trip due to cost. That fund can be accessed at any time. Mr. McIntyre also says the students are aware of fund as it is repeated when trips announced.

The Chair ended this section with another exercise designed to make participants aware of their own unconscious biases.

Grade 8 graduation

(Jill H.)

The Chair began with a overview of what has been done in previous years. This included a 3-night stay in Camp Wahanowin, a boat cruise, teachers planned movie nights, sometimes includes a Riverdale ceremony. Council currently has \$2500 committed to grade 8 grad.

Grade 8 committee is available to join, and will decide how that money will get spent.

Ms. Oliveira says that Camp Wahanowin is booked for June - indicating the cost is about 400 per student. This is cheaper than city trips that other schools take (Montreal, Ottawa) which can cost up to 1000 per student. The students went on a boat cruise as well last year. Council paid for buses.

On the last day - there is a clap out, and the boat cruise is a 4 hour trip (10-2). Open to exploring other options.

The Chair asked the community to speak about what they're interested in, concerns etc.

Comment: A parent says camping sounds great and better than a city trip.

Mr. McIntyre says kids are keen to go on this trip.

Comment: A parent asks if there is an opportunity for the kids to earn or fundraise to pay for part of trip. Mr. Vatzolas says this can be examined - and no one would be

denied the experience due to costs. Mr. McIntyre asked if there are still restrictions on how many days we can have bake sales - sugar days. This can be looked into.

Mr. Vatzolas says that graduation will be happening on June 27th at Riverdale in the evening.

Comment: Parent - thinks if you can fund for those who need it, the kids should get both events. Also likes the idea of getting kids involved in fundraising.

The Chair points out that kids who are involved in sports are also asked to pay for things, fundraise - and it's important to be mindful that some families are repeatedly asked for funds to support these extras.

Comment: Parent in grade 8 - suggests that kids could 'earn' the funds but not necessarily directly. The school could do clean-up day at the beach, or read-a-thon, and the hours could go towards the funds. Lots of agreement about this, and many thought this was a great idea.

Comment: Parent said that a fun fair/play day was a great way to get the community involved. Jill says council is looking to some sort of end of year event that invites the community to attend.

Principal's Report, 7:pm

Principal Bill Vatzolas - thanks everyone for coming to the meeting. Says hockey is starting and there is lots of positive energy at school and hoping to build on that.

School Budget: (Budget chart at the end of the minutes)

Went over the school budget. Says every year the TDSB provides document for budget, and that the budget is tied to enrollment (projected 736 students) (Total \$122,587). There are about 715 kids at Duke this year.

Mr. Vatzolas indicated that the aim was to keep the budget similar to last year given Principal is new to the school and still learning what the needs are. However, there is also a goal of bumping up the number of chrome books and carts (\$9000). And to ensure teachers are not using their own computers to do their work. \$18,000 available for outdoor improvements (e.g. painted lines for basketball courts).

The librarian will be doing book buying this week (\$4000), with a lens towards reflecting the identities of our students. This budget is also outside of a separate book budget from SC for classroom libraries.

Question - Is LGBTQ item free of charge? Mr. Vatzolas says the TDSB recommends some groups which work best - and other programming was suggested. But it comes at a cost.

Question - Can funds be moved around or are they committed to specific items? Mr. Vatzolas says funds can be moved around and the budget serves as a guide.

Question - Math textbooks used by kids are dated - some from the 70s. Is there money for that? Mr. Vatzolas says there is money for that, but the school is trying to move away from textbooks. Also have a new curriculum - so waiting to see what is best out there.

Question- Grade 7 math *workbooks* - will those be available? Ms. Rule indicates that these have to be repurchased every year, and are not used in their entirety, so it's often more economical to use some sections from certain books. Also don't want to purchase before the curriculum is fully developed, ready.

Cellphone policy (Link to [Slides](#))

(Ms. Rule)

During academic time, we want students focused on school, so school has been working to develop a policy that can be used throughout school.

The hope is it will allow students to use devices appropriately and responsibly, helping students focus on learning.

The policy will propose that devices not be used during instructional day. Except - when being used as a tool during learning, educational purposes.

This closely resembles the Ministry's policy on cell phones.

In terms of process, students should leave devices (cell phones, earbuds) in locker, bags as decided by staff.

Recess should also be tech free time. But students can use devices during lunch.

Texting, calls, social media are NOT permitted during instructional time and this includes all areas of school (hallways, band, gym etc).

Taking photos, videos, or live streams are not permitted at any time during the school day.

If a student is found to be using a device without permission, a first request is made. If a second request is needed, the student hands device to staff who made request. If a third request is needed, admin is contacted (Principal, V.P. etc).

****if at any time a student is using a device inappropriately, the device may be confiscated immediately by staff

Some parents want to ban phones entirely. The ministry does not allow a full-outright ban.

Closing comments: Invite everyone to Coffee Morning on Friday Nov 25 and Movie Night on Dec 1, next SC Meeting Mon Jan 23 - might have a Dec meeting if need it - will post.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm

School Budget Document on the next page.

