

**Elmdale School Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday September 28, 2022
Held in Person**

1. Welcome and Opening of Meeting

The first Elmdale School Council for the 2022/2023 Academic Year was called to order by the outgoing Co-Chairs, Erin Hetherington and Robert Near, at 1805hrs. The following individuals were present for the meeting – total: 42 participants, including:

Erin Hetherington, Outgoing Co-Chair	Holly Kardish	Elizabeth Shouldice
Robert Near, Outgoing Co-Chair	Pete Laughton	Vanessa Sikora
Andrea Anastassiades	Mildred Leung	Amber Steeves
Saruul Ayurzana	Shilhav Mayo	Lesley Taylor
Natasha Beg	Rae-Anne Moss	Kelley Voros
Branko Boskovic	Katie Muldoon	Traceylyn Watchorn
Alison Clegg	Susie Munro	Alison Zinni
Kirk Dunlap	Kimberly Patriquin	
Joanna Dymont Carrasco	Jenny Payne	
Sherine El-Medani	Sofia Ribchinsky	
Amanda Ethier	Catherine Rossiter	
Stephen Froom	Nadine Saikaley (Principal)	
Teresa Hanna	Kouka Sawadogo-Lewis	
Caroline Hatton	Larry Shamash	

2. Approval of May 18, 2022 Minutes.

Council member moved that the minutes be approved. Seconded; minutes approved with no changes.

3. Principal's Introduction, Report and Supdate (Nadine Saikaley)

- Nadine introduced herself as the new principal of the school.
- Busy month of September – focus on connecting with children and setting foundation for year. Educators getting to know children, doing some diagnostic testing, developing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for relevant students.
- Extracurriculars re-introduced; clubs and sports underway.
- Newsletter introduced to share ongoing updates.
- Overall, principals in district are focusing on recovery and rejuvenation from past few years. Removing barriers to access; championing academic achievement and prioritizing dignity and wellbeing of students.

4. Chairs' Report: End of Year update from Council Co-Chairs Rob Near and Erin Hetherington

- In 2021-22 Elmdale returned to its original building – expanded and improved school, safety and accessibility improved, portables eliminated. Renovations would not have been possible without cooperation of board, staff, parent and student community. Acknowledged several members of council and the building team, as well as many past parents that contributed to earlier phases.
- Two previous years were not easy – construction setbacks, staying at Century for an extra year, and COVID challenges. Return to in person learning welcomed in 2021 – kids able to stay for most of year.

School Council Committees made important contributions:

- Safe Travel: community welcomed us back, but many transportation challenges. Recognized Liz Shouldice's advocacy for buses.
- Diversity and Equity: Liette and Kristin worked on a new funding strategy and application of diversity lens to school activities. Rebecca and Holly hosted an unconscious bias.
- Arts and Healthy Earth: Many members began work on a Reconciliation garden, brought in a Bollywood dance group, and organized an Earth day scavenger hunt, yard clean up and planting day.
- Fundraising team: very busy – while COVID made it impossible to host all activities, the team hosted Dance-a-Thon, pizza and sub days returned, etc. Funds raised allowed for fully funded teacher wish list again.
- Good work by people on internal and external coms teams to keep the community aware of Council and school events and issues.
- Constitution was updated to modernize it to reflect current work and environment.
- This is the final meeting for Council Co-Chairs Rob and Erin.
- Special thanks to Principal Isabelle Flannigan for all her work and a welcome to new Principal Nadine Saikaley.

5. Treasurers' Report (End of August 2022) –

- Starting balance about \$84K. This includes the Playground Fund of \$34K. Remaining total funds of about 50K.
- Reminder that every year, Council sets aside 10% for playground (around \$5K). Total remaining amount for teachers' wish list will therefore be about \$40 – \$45K.
- Funds that we raise this year will go towards next years' activities/list. (Last year we had about \$50K at beginning of year, but we set aside \$25K in order to kickstart this year with more funds in anticipation that COVID restrictions would lessen.)
- Council member: Question about source of funds and what fundraised last year.
- Response: \$15K fundraised, \$25K carry forward, about \$7K of unused funds last year.
- Council member: Request for Treasurers to explain more about the Playground Fund.
- Response: Total amount of Playground Fund is currently \$34K, with another \$12K in a GIC. But, we have about \$34K to be paid out still for the current playground. So about \$12K is our current balance, and then we add 10% each year, so that we have the funds in the future for the next significant outlay (and avoid a burden on one cohort to raise all the funds for a playground). Overall objective is to disburse funds we fundraise, with the exception of the Playground Funds.

- Further explanation regarding budgeting/recent events: Last year was unusual – because of COVID, serious effects on fundraising. Idea was to be prudent and set half aside to better fund this year rather than disbursing all amounts.
- Council Committee budgets are established after the Elmdale Teachers/Staff wish list is determined. Arts and healthy earth are assigned fixed percentages of wish list. Allocations to other Committees happen afterwards. A general spending bucket is also provided (for items that can be voted on by Council). Some categories of spending are not attached to a particular Committee – physical education, literacy etc. (not one-for-one so that multiple Committees could make proposals to enhance these activities).
- Question from Council: around fundraising goals – what would a successful year look like?
- Response: In past, Book Fest generated around \$16K (max), Fun Fair (\$8K), Dance-a-Thon \$12K, Pizza around \$10K, Coffee \$5K – total of around \$68K.
- Question from Parent: Can we sponsor another school given our financial position?
- Co-Chair: This is a complex question - some hesitancy to become an unbalanced arrangement (have vs have-not school). New Council can discuss options.
- Council Member: In past years, we have picked a particular initiative to support (Fisher Library, Syrian Refugee settlement etc.)
- Elmdale Cares is also run by Grade 6s – the purpose of the Committee is to have students choose something meaningful to them to address.
- Nadine: Principals also can be tapped into if they have information via their channels regarding areas of need.
- Council: Typically the principal presents to council what the teachers would like to have. Last year, focus was on Chromebooks due to remote/digital learning importance. We also gave more to teachers to bolster the tools teachers were purchasing.

6. Other business

- a) **School start time.** Liz Shouldice – Due to the shift in the school start time to 9:10 am, a number of families have been negatively affected, including now needing before-school care and being unable to be at work for 9 am. Issue has been raised with OSTA (school transportation authority) which had taken the decision to shift the bell time ahead in hopes of resolving school bus scheduling issues. Issue is that bus remains unreliable – so a new problem has been created by a solution that has not solved the bussing issue.
 - Council question: Were we consulted on the shift?
 - Response: Last Spring OSTA says a document was circulated – not many concerns raised. (Noted that results weren't transparent.)
 - Nadine: Has called OSTA – apparently they don't need to consult community for under 10 minute change, i.e., OSTA can change a bell time by up to 10 minutes if it can improve efficiency of transportation.
 - Council question: What percentage of students serviced by buses?
 - Response: End of day – we have 3 busses (but not full). Many families were reluctant to use transport in pandemic so a large number qualify but may not be using it – but OSTA planning needs to take this into account in terms of having service capacity if eligible families decide to take the bus. Families always have the right to re-engage the right to transportation. One issue is that no opt-out option available, even though many families do not use a bus and will not change their approach throughout the year.

- Liz: This is going to require ongoing advocacy because the routes are not working, nor is the start time (lose-lose situation).
- Council question: Could we use some polling to inform the decisions around busses? Could we also do a general polling of parents to gauge impacts?
- Nadine: Could also look at contacting the school trustee to raise these concerns.
- Parent comment: Can we organize more walking school buses?
- Liz: Formal OSTA Walking school bus only services some area and some people have neither bus nor walking school bus.
- Probably need at least 2 – 3 walking school buses. Options could involve school or parent volunteers – or maybe using students (gr 5 and 6).
- Robert – Elmdale Parents' Facebook group a place to potentially work through solutions.
- Parent (comment from later in the meeting): Also noted that Fisher starts at 8:45 – this is a 25 minute window that is difficult for families to manage.

b) Policies around school pick-up.

- Council member: Pre-COVID – parents allowed in the school yard at pick up and drop off times, why not now? Noted crowding on sidewalks an issue.
- Response (Nadine):
 - We want families to be part of the day to day experience – but we did learn some things about operation of school dismissal and arrival – before had some upsides, but we were also uncomfortable with the chaos that this created with adults, kids, people in the mix. Difficult to tell who was a safe adult. Staff had raised concerns here and across district where parents not on school grounds is now the norm. Releasing students in a more regulated fashion allows for concerns to be addressed.
 - Educators are available and responsive. Educators are bringing students out to meet parents when there are issues.
 - Other issue is that Mothercraft has the lease for the yard after school – was this blurring lines with supervision, causing concern there as well.
- Parent comment: Seconded concerns about issue of gate protocols etc.
- Elmdale staff member: Confirmed teachers were facing issues with tracking down children. Further, when we used to have parents in yard that was pre-addition. Sidewalk issue can't be resolved because outdoor gym goes right to end of day.
- Parent: Could we try something like cones set up on the field – parents need to stay in a specific corral or something like that?
- Nadine: This is something to raise with teachers.
- Comment: Unclear why all families gravitating to Java – can use other Iona side as well.
- Susie/Mothercraft: Due to smaller size of kinder yard, cannot accommodate more families circulating in there at end of day.
- Decided this item would be returned to at a later meeting (Nadine to consult with Teachers/Mothercraft).

c) Question about class allocations (from parent): How was this done, noting that kids coming from one feeder nursery school were split up.

- Response (Nadine): Typically we want to balance classes with strengths and needs, as well as peer groups. Harder for new students as we don't have information about their peer groups etc. This year we will reach out to the parents

for input on class making, but friend requests will not be the top of the list – teachers will look at relationships and then see what is best for academic needs of kids.

- Idea from parent: Maybe feeder daycares could provide a list of who is working well together.
- Nadine: Interesting, but may be concerns with daycares sharing personal info.
- Another parent noted that it was possible on the forms that they filled out for registration to indicate what daycare child was coming from and if there were requests. May wish to clarify what info we can obtain.
- Comment from Elmdale Staff: worked last year at a school offered to honor friend requests was very difficult – would not suggest trying to accommodate this.

7. Elections for the 2022-23 Elmdale School Council

Co-Chairs Erin/Rob: Typically positions elected by consensus or acclamation – co-chairs for Committees are also possible.

Nomination/Voting process took place, with results as follows:

Position	Member Name
Co-Chair (2-year term)	Andrea Anastasiades
Co-Chair (2-year term)	Kimberly Patriquin
Co-Treasurer	Tammy Barratt
Co-Treasurer	Vanessa Sikora
Internal Communications	Lesley Taylor
External Communications	David Froom
Co-Fundraising Chair	Traceylyn Watchorn
Co-Fundraising Chair	Shilhav Mayo
Co-Fundraising Chair	Amanda Ethier
Education	NOT YET FILLED
Heathy Earth Co-Chair	Branko Boskovic
Heathy Earth Co-Chair	Alison Clegg
OCASC Representative	NOT YET FILLED
Diversity and Equity	Stephen Froom
Community Representative	Susie Munro
School Travel Planning Representative	Elizabeth Shouldice
Teacher Representative	Pete Laughton
Teacher Representative	Kelley Voros
Arts Co-Chair	Erin Hetherington
Arts Co-Chair	Natasha Beg
Elmdale Cares (Gr. 6 Committee)	Catherine Rossiter
Subway Pick-Up	Robert Near
Council Meeting Night Coordinator (Pizza/Baby Sitting)	Sherine El-Medani

Notes: Volunteer Coordinator positions to be left empty (responsibilities part of Fundraising Committee); Non-teacher representative not filled - consistent with last year.

Erin/Rob: Committee also consists of **Members at Large** – these individuals have voting rights, encouraged to assist committees with mandates. The following individuals put themselves forward for **Members at Large positions**:

- 1 Caroline Hatton
- 2 Rae-Anne Moss
- 3 Larry Shamash
- 4 Joanna Dymont Carrasco
- 5 Katie Muldoon
- 6 Saruul Ayurzana
- 7 Amber Steeves
- 8 Mildred Leung
- 9 Sofia Ribchinsky
- 10 Teresa Hanna
- 11 Holly Kardish
- 12 Kouka Sawadogo-Lewis
- 13 Alison Zinni
- 14 Jenny Payne
- 15 Kirk Dunlap
- 16 Robert Near
- 17 Sherine El-Medani

List of Chairs and Members at Large was proposed by Erin – no objections, positions acclaimed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm by outgoing Co-Chair Robert Near.

Next meeting to be held on October 19, 2022, in person format.