# Elmdale School Council Meeting Minutes <br> Wednesday November 16, 2022 <br> Held in Person and Online (Hybrid Google Meet) 

## 1. Welcome and Opening of Meeting

The third Elmdale School Council for the 2022/2023 Academic Year was called to order by the Council Co-Chairs at 1808hrs. The following individuals were present for the meeting:

Andrea Anastassiades (Co-Chair)
Kimberly Patriquin (Co-Chair)
Tammy Barratt
Jennifer Becker
Natasha Beg
Branko Boskovic
Jonathan Bourgeois
Alynn Casgrain
Alison Clegg
Liette Connolly-Boutin
Joanna Dyment Carrasco
Sherine El-Medani
David Froom
Stephen Froom
Caroline Hatton
Kristin Honshorst
Karin Kincaid (Vice-Principal)

Mildred Leung
Katherine Muldoon
Ashley Mullin
Suzanne Nash (OCDSB Trustee)
Danica Rogers
Catherine Rossiter
Nadine Saikaley (Principal)
Kouka Sawadogo-Lewis
Amanda Scott
Vanessa Sikora
Amber Steeves
Lesley Taylor
Traceylyn Watchorn
Colin Wong
Kelley Voros
Christie Verburgh-Post

## 2. Approval of October 192022 Minutes.

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

## 3. Welcome Trustee Suzanne Nash Zone 4 Bay and Kitchissippi Ottawa.

Co-Chairs welcomed Suzanne Nash, noted she has many strong community ties including as with the Plant Pool Recreation Association, and school councils. Kimberly also gave an overview and introduction of Elmdale School and the Council.
Suzanne proided welcoming words, noting a focus on engaging schools and students on greater involvement in civics, community. Want to see all students have a voice; happy to support your initiatives.

## 4. Principal's Report and Update (Nadine Saikaley)

a. Yard update: noted that when school was renovated, they installed a custodial storage unit to the kinder yard. When the custodians enter, children have been gathering and sometimes touching equipment. Also has created a limited visibility area in the kinder yard. As a result, have spoken to the Board and they have agreed to move the shed. Large crane coming this week to complete work.
b. Playground Issues (raised by Council member last meeting) Marketplace in kinder yard: was installed too deep - has been raised. Second, drainage on main yard - yard was supposed to be graded and sodded, but hasn't really made a difference. Board has sent someone to investigate but they need to see the pattern of pooling - will come back in spring. We also do not have a catch basin on the main yard - would need to connect to city drain - may not be an easy fix.
c. Staff have started to order items from wish list. A big thanks to Council for funds.
d. Remembrance day: services were available online, very moving. Had to divide group in two due to fire codes - 262 max capacity. This could also possibly affect future activities - e.g., fun fair, movie night.
e. Report Cards: Will be sent electronically on Nov. 17 - teachers reaching out for interviews.
f. EQUAO results: will share in the community news, but schools results have surpassed those in district and province in all areas in both grade 3 and grade 6. E.g., grade 3 math - $81 \%$ met or surpassed standard ( $20 \%$ higher than district). First task is to have the data analyst do a deeper dive - areas that are more challenging for students - will also review data with staff. Priority will be helping those students not meeting the standard. Individual student reports will also be provided to those who were in grade 3, out by this Friday. For prior grade 6 students, EQUAO reports will be sent to Fisher Park Summit Alternative or other schools.

- Question: how do results differ from before COVID? Nadine: this question will be examined - understood that we normally surpass, so that is consistent. Last year was also first totally digital test - another change factor.
- Question: is this English only? Nadine: Yes.
- Question: When does test happen? Nadine: May, last year it was delayed a little, to early June.
- Question: was it stopped for COVID? Nadine: Yes. For several years.

5. Treasurers' Report (September 2022): Vanessa Sikora

- Oct 31 balance: after outstanding cheques, will be about $\$ 101 \mathrm{~K}$. This total includes the reserved playground funds.
- Invoices from the school are starting to coming in - bus to cross country meet was about 1 K (a large number of students attended; several busses).
- Sports equipment of $70 \$$ not on wish list was also purchased, so raising for awareness.
- Question about playground funds: how does this work? Vanessa: We let it carry forward each year until we need to get a playground. We have some elements that have still to be paid for from recent renos.
- Co chair: are we in agreement of approval of the $\$ 1 \mathrm{~K}$ for cross country - yes, moved, approved. ( $70 \$$ not needed to be approved as under \$100).
- Question: how do most schools pay for bussing to attend? Response from Council members - It's a mix - some schools pay, some fundraise, some ask students to pay.


## 6. Reconciliation Item Update: Alison Clegg

- Have connected with other interested parents/Council members, including one that works with Indigenous communities and is a parent. Her advice was as we start exploring, we engage with a partner/representative from a local Indigenous community. There are groups that do this in Ottawa. Would like to plan something like this.
- Question: what is the intention? Are we trying to educate? Are we trying to engage? Response: Narrowing the area of focus would be questions we would want to discuss with an Indigenous representative.
- Question/suggestion: Other boards have itinerants that are Indigenous - would this be a good approach to ground it in the educational aspect as well as the Board's overall response to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
- Nadine - we could likely gather some preliminary information. At another school, we worked with Elders to visit the school with curriculum-relevant presentations.
- Question: how does this relate to EDI committee mandate?
- Stephen Froom: One of our EDI proposals is to facilitate two workshops for the staff/community/parents over the coming year - could work together on this.

7. Update on Survey to Elmdale Staff: Co-Chairs

- Co-Chairs: We polled staff on potential workshops and events and if they have any requests for particular activities.
- Survey has been released, 15 replies so far. Summary of results:
- Arts: art workshops - Indigenous dance received most interest, followed by Afro-Caribbean dance and poetry. Arts calendar overwhelming support, but one point made that it placed a lot of responsibility on teachers. Artist in the school - good response, but some thought a more hands-on activity would be better.
- Healthy Earth: priorities include pollinator garden, and outdoor education most popular. Also proposed that students could contribute to healthy earth newsletter. Could have a garden club. Other suggestions from teachers also provided.
- Survey is still open if teachers have more input.

8. Committee Updates \& Discussion
Andrea: Education committee will be led by Jenny - put to vote, agreed.
a) Arts: Natasha Beg

- No updates, but wanted to say thanks to teachers for completing the survey which will help with planning. Noted the calendar and potential burden on teachers. Open to suggestions on how to minimize burden. Also looking at production of calendars with an equity and sustainability lens (community orgs etc.)
b) Community Representative: Susie Munro
- N/A
c) Elmdale Cares: Catherine Rossiter
- Grade 6 teachers have been engaged, starting to look at opportunities, also talking to Kelley. Have started with a food drive, this month running a Movember
themed activity with Mr. Renault. Many small activities. Looking for a larger initiative.
- Council member noted that there could be a chance to have fundraising tables at the Fisher Park community holiday craft sale. Also could consider a bake sale at Elmdale - investigating if we can bring this back.


## d) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee: Stephen Froom

- 16 members, so lots of interest. Starting to narrow ideas into a set of initiatives:
- Budget for two workshops (similar to unconscious bias from last year) \$400/per.
- Black history month - engage with arts and school around a performance.
- Library - consult with librarian about a display of events in the EDI calendar - set aside a budget for some better, newer resources. If well received, could think about doubling up the order and sharing with another school (about $\$ 2,500$ )
- Investment in the infrastructure for permanent hybrid meeting (about \$500)
- Total seeking approval: $\mathbf{\$ 3 , 8 0 0 K}$ (rough initial estimate).
- Other ideas: Side walk art for truth and reconciliation, looking at accessibility of play structure, making Dance-A-Thon accessible.
- One thing we keep coming back to is distribution to other schools with less opportunities.
- Comment: Could reach out to Indigenous bookstores etc.
- Comment: In general we should look at who we are fundraising with, who are we giving money to in terms of suppliers?
- Questions: are there guidelines that the council has on EDI and procurement? This is what is in the proposal from last year - set up guiding principles.
- Question: Where is overlap with education committee? Discussion: This goes into issues of budget allocations - should EDI have its own bucket. Stephen: we would be supportive of this - could also help our collaborations with Arts/education.
Vanessa (Treasurer): In some ways doesn't matter as every spend needs to be approved and can be re-allocated across buckets. Can't recall if the constitution needs to be amended to provide a new specific bucket.
- Question - is there a way to have a plan where a set part is going to EDI as part of each pot, rather than amending the constitution?

Kimberly: to summarize, let's move forward with approval of the budget allocations EDI is proposing today, then examine the distribution/percentages/overall budget issue when EDI (and the treasurers) can return with a proposal. Agreed to approve in principle EDI's spending? All agreed; approved.
e) External Communications: David Froom

- Focus this month was on promotions for Dance-A-Thon, website cleanup, reiterate offer of comms help/advice to other Committees.
- Otherwise making progress on objectives for year for website. If we were to make a Council Facebook page, we could have permanent information on the school etc. might be a good option. Could then cross-post to some community
groups. We also don't have a rule set, code of conduct. Complementary to that would be membership questions.
- Other initiatives - integrating with city counselor newsletter etc. could be explored.
- Question: how are we reaching parents that don't go on Facebook? David: We have an Instagram, but less used. Managing multiple platforms challenging for one person.
- Would also reiterate a call - members at large and parent community for anyone that wants to help on comms.


## f) Fundraising: Traceylyn Watchorn

- Spirit Wear: $\$ 500$ raised,
- Dance-A-Thon: $\$ 4,300$, a lot less than what we raised in the past $(\$ 12 \mathrm{~K})$.
- Did a random draw for cupcakes - junior and senior class.
- Looked at suggestions for equity lens on Dance-A-Thon for costume sharing or exchange, but too last minute and hygiene a concern.
- Comment: Reduced fundraising for Dance-A-Thon may reflect that we used to do a backpack drop with paper pledge forms and these used to have a suggested amount to fundraise - created a bit more visibility and gave parents a target amount. Going to online only may have reduced response/\$ per child raised.
- David - QR codes could be used for door to door collections.
- Comment: could be better transparency about the fundraising targets and the use of the funds.
- Fisher Park Summit Alternative doing the wreath and planter sale (not at Elmdale this year) - for this interested orders can be placed through the Fisher Park Facebook page, or sign up as a community member through Fisher Park school hot lunches.
- Now working on Kitchissippi Times articles.
- Arts survey - thinking about author readings.
- Hope for return of Book Fest this year!
g) Healthy Earth: Branko Boskovic and Alison Clegg
- Alison - Yard work day: we had a turnout of about 5 families - cleaned out raised beds, raked, planted some gardens by hydro box - neighbors asked for something more attractive there.
- Pollinator garden was a success. Met with a person on nature connections with kids, is interested in doing some kind of programing on earth education - well supported by teachers in survey, will move ahead with this. Also mental health links - could make it a focus.
- Newsletter - going to see if we can incorporate some artwork etc.
- Yard/drainage: kids use a lot of the yard, so don't want to over plant, but some plants are better for drainage - could look at doing this around the edges etc.
- Kimberly: Recall that we had a discussion about a sand box/long jump pit - dual function. Nadine: Looked into that, but cost was about $\$ 11 \mathrm{k}$, perhaps too high a cost.
h) Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC): Kristin Honshorst
- Upcoming Parent conference in November - Parent Involvement Committee: collection of people engaging on policies. Also looking for a rep. for Arts Advisory

Committee - looking at how arts programming is doing in schools. If interested, contact Kristin for contacts.

- Last element was an open conversation about issues, including traffic around schools.
- OCASC will be hybrid online for rest of year.
i) Safe Travel Committee: Liz Shouldice (remarks delivered by Co-Chairs)
- Have contacted Jeff Leiper's office - for neighbours close to school - he has access to signs for "do not block drive way" if interested.
- As snow falls, busses will be less reliable, more traffic issues - please be careful.
- Working on spring events.


## j) Teacher Representatives: Kelley Voros

- Teachers were very thrilled to have their wish list met.
- November has been hectic with progress reports, but starting with kindergarten: lettuce ready to harvest from grow towers - first lettuce party. Mme. MacLatchy - made welcome mats. Field trips for grades 4 s and 5 s with Mr. Pete to Champlain park. Grade 6 - about $95 \%$ involved in school council. Did scare hunger and now doing Santa for Seniors. Lunch room monitors up and running. Kids are also going to help with monitoring in the yard. Sports, pickle ball, borden ball, soccer etc.
- Question about clubs: how are they formed? Kelley: Sometimes its kids that form them, sometimes have been around a while, but maybe we need to put forward new ideas such as an LGTB2+ Club, etc. Will take this back to staff.

9. Other business: Proposing another Council meeting in Dec - de $21^{\text {st }}$. could think about a potluck. Council member pointed out that that week is Hanukkah 2022 (begins Sunday, December 18). Maybe could bump back to the $14^{\text {th }}$. Could be a conflict that day, though. Co-chairs/Nadine to take discussion offline, circulate proposal.

Co-Chairs adjourned the meeting at 2002hrs. Next meeting to be held date TBD (December).

