

Elmdale School Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday March 22, 2023
Held in Person and Online (Hybrid Google Meet)

1. Welcome and Opening of Meeting

The sixth Elmdale School Council for the 2022/2023 Academic Year was called to order by the Council Co-Chairs, Andrea Anastassiades and Kimberly Patriquin, at 1807 hrs. following individuals were present for the meeting:

Andrea Anastassiades, Co-Chair	Karin Kincaid (Vice-Principal)
Kimberly Patriquin, Co-Chair	Pete Laughton
Tammy Barratt	Mildred Leung
Jenny Becker	Shilav Mayo
Natasha Beg	Sofia Ribchinsky
Siân Clark	Danica Rogers
Alison Clegg	Catherine Rossiter
Joanna Dymont Carrasco	Nadine Saikaley (Principal)
Sherine El-Medani	Larry Shamash
Amanda Ethier	Kouka Sawadogo-Lewis
David Froom	Elizabeth Shouldice
Stephen Froom	Vanessa Sikora
Teresa Hanna	Lesley Taylor
Robin Hay	Grace

2. Approval of February 15, 2023 Minutes

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

3. Treasurers' Report (September 2022) – Vanessa Sikora

- Total available funds about \$97K after playground funds accounted for.
- Q for Nadine: Has it been confirmed that we have no owing on the playground? A: Yes, it has – this means a larger balance in our playground fund (for future use).
- Q from Council member: Can Bookfest wish list items be put forward for funding? There were about three bigger ticket items needed for next year: carpets for gym floor protection to replace those lost in the move; larger signage items; and a safe.
- Kim: are there totals for these costs?
- Council member (Teresa): carpets would likely be \$1k; Safe – Costco item about \$300; banners/signage - \$75 each, could be re-used each year, would be for the fencing.
- Agreed that this would be looked-into – Teresa will bring costs to the next meeting for approval.
- Council member mentioned that rental of carpeting is also an option (particularly if storage and management of cleaning etc. an issue)

- Nadine: confirm that there is capacity for storage.
- Council member asked if the Board would have runners we could borrow?
- Nadine: We do get tables on loan from the board, but not sure about runners. Could look into this.

4. Due to scheduling juggling, Mr. Pete was invited to provide the teacher update at this time:

- Mr. Pete – due to technical difficulties, teacher comments were deleted from the shared doc.
- Kelley: small update from Kindergarten team – plans for an Experimental Farm visit, kale is growing in grow towers; reptiles visit planned; welcoming secret readers into classrooms (parent volunteer); tapping trees on kinder yard for syrup.
- Kelley – Budget Request: Kinder team would like funds for duck eggs – \$330 and two heat lamps, food etc. – for all classes to enjoy.
- Moved that the funds be approved for ducklings.
- Seconded; approved.

5. Additional item put forward for discussion: \$750 grant from the province (PRO Grant) – for engagement with parent community (Co-Chairs)

- Co-chairs acknowledged Katie and Kristin for the work on this.
- Application was approved on the basis of a workshop for parents with the Parkdale Food Centre. Co-chair explained that the proposal had to respect certain parameters: involve equity, diversity, inclusion, something related to food security – approach leaves flex to co-create with the Food Centre.
- Next phase is to initiate the delivery – open to what committee would be in charge. Ideas include educational session on food insecurity; workshop on local food production.
- Teresa – noted she has some connections there – happy to make connections.
- Question from Council member – could Elmdale Cares be part of this? Co-Chairs clarified that focus is more on the parent community.
- Alison (for Healthy Earth): we had hoped to partner with the Food Centre for our gardening/and Kelley's connection via the grow towers – could also connect with them on Healthy Earth agenda.
- Andrea asked that others contact her if anyone else is wanting to be involved.

6. Principal's Report and Update (Nadine Saikaley)

- Field: with milder weather, the field is becoming a problem – very muddy. Have reached out to the Board to come within the next 2-3 weeks to re-assess the field. All options are expensive, but hoping to get board to fund this because the sod never took.
- Planning for next year: for next 6-8 weeks, administration is planning for next year. All community members should be encouraged to register asap (kindergarten etc.). Have also asked for handwritten notes on input regarding class placement.
- April is dedicated to staffing and prep for next year. Teachers are preparing class profiles focusing on student strengths/areas for growth.

- April/May – working with Special Ed team, younger grades, to start on class lists – trying to balance student interests, needs, learning styles and ensure that there is a strong peer group. Not necessarily trying to match best friends.
- May – staffing allocation and grade distribution – tentative, then presented to teachers to try and find best allocation (respecting caps, minimize split grades etc.). Finally, determine teacher assignments.
- For children with Special Education needs – will be invited to visit in August to transition in.
- Class lists will be shared at end of August. Everything subject to change until end of September.
- Council member comment: Is there any way all the class placements could be put out at same time to reduce anxiety – last year it was almost a day delay between first and last classes to be informed.
- Nadine: Normally it is supposed to go between 12 and 4pm Friday. Feedback noted – will look at this.
- Council member comment: Regarding twins – if emails could specify the child's name it would be helpful.
- Nadine: online program doesn't allow for this. Also can't share class lists – due to privacy. Can look into options (individualized emails etc.)
- Changes to school operating budget: fiscal restraints across the Board – including that they freeze our budget if we bypass a certain percentage spent by a certain time. Means we are going to have to adjust our procedures next year as we had our budget frozen this year. Right now, we approve spending from the teachers' Wishlist – this is spending that is to be reimbursed by School Council. Then it's approved by Nadine, with a copy to Council Treasurers, followed by reimbursement of the school by the Council. This can take a while and appears to the Board that Elmdale is overshooting its budget (planned reimbursements are not taken into account).
- Senior financial analyst at the board has recommended a more common approach is that Council would set a spending allowance, give amount to the school at beginning of the year – still accountability in terms of school reporting back to Council, but creates less paperwork for the office and less risk of budget being frozen. Also allows principal to work with kindergarten division, junior division etc. to prioritize within the team.
- Nadine has spoken with Kim and Andrea about this – will require planning for next year.
- Council member comment: the Council account is not interest bearing, so no difference between spending at time.
- Council question: Means planning up front – does this mean less flex (e.g., to do the ducks)? Nadine: no, can still address this either with some built in flex or ad hoc funds. It could generally force us to collaborate and plan a bit more, though.
- Council member comment: we will know at end of this year what pot of money will be available for next year.
- Council member comment: This Board policy sounds very challenging to manage – if last 10 % is not unlocked until last 10% of year, could be difficult to spend this. Do you forfeit unused funds if not used?
- Council member question: What if we allocate \$3K to the kindergarteners for this and they only spend 1.8K, do we need to send back?

- Nadine: Don't think this will be an issue – likely it will be done in accordance with Wishlist.
- Nadine (Further clarification on the current procedure): every school has a school operating budget – about 37K – from the board, but what we were doing was ordering merchandise and submitting these to the School Council for reimbursement. On paper – looks like school has spent the money of their budget, does not take into account the reimbursement by the council.
- Council member comment on two budget items: Motor on one grow tower is broken – needs to be replaced. About \$200 for this. Mr. Renault has also asked for line painting for foursquare/hopscotch etc. Quoted in Dec. about \$975 for this painting.
- Kim: apparently we have the stencils that were used last time in our possession.
- Nadine: cautioned that spray painting ourselves is more difficult. All other schools I have talked to have hired a company to come with a specialized machine and paint.
- Kim: Experiences in the past is we should hire a company. Could it be done on the weekend? Can contact the company from before the pandemic to see if they can come back and give us new costs.
- Fundraiser for earthquake raised over \$1100.
- Transportation: No update on transport and OSTA in regard to the bus that delivered a child home after 5 pm. Also engaging the School Trustee.
- Field trips/activities: Scientist in the school – most classes booked. MASC workshops booked. Kinders will visit the Agriculture Museum/ Experimental Farm soon. Buses are harder to get now for field trips.
- Alison Clegg (for Healthy Earth) – grow tower – quotes underway for these repairs or replacements.
- Council member question: clarification that the visit night at Fisher is for future grade 7s, rather than future grade 6s. Nadine confirmed, yes, for outgoing students.

7. Committee Updates & Discussion

a) Safe Travel: Elizabeth Shouldice

- Working on ongoing OSTA issues. No phone service an issue – OSTA phone lines were down on the day the child was missing and for several days after. Want a postmortem on that situation – a trainer training a new driver was apparently on the bus, but it is unclear what happened.
- Council member comment: Some Boards provide a GPS tracker on the bus so parents can monitor.
- Liz: OSTA can see the buses, but this information is not provided to parents. Further, using emails rather than text notifications for late buses – technology not being used effectively. OSTA budget is large – unclear why dismal situation.
- Organizing a spring Walk to School Day.
- Kim: Have also worked on bike safety. Hoping to organize something along the lines of a bike rodeo/safety course for kids.

- Council member comment: Any communication about the Champlain bridge work that is happening? The impact on our community is already palpable – people cutting through to not want to use Island Park. Could we look at extra signage or at least a heads up to parents?
- Liz: Traffic is a problem – will reach out to Jeff Leiper's office and send out a Facebook message.

b) Truth & Reconciliation: Alison Clegg

- Having lots of conversations – encourage people to reach out to Alison with ideas. Will be talking to Nadine this week about next steps.
- Event coming up this weekend – A New Dawn – reconciliation event – open to families and kids. Can consult Jeff Leiper's email.

c) Healthy Earth: Alison Clegg,

- Working on a newsletter – Branko and Shannon working on this and may reach out to teachers for contributions.
- Will reach out to teachers that worked on the gardens last year to do more this year.
- Seedling fundraiser connected to Healthy Earth coming up.
- Nadine has shared a list of possible future activities with teachers to seek feedback.

d) Education: Jenny Becker

- Pass to David on calendar. David: will be meeting to discuss a strategy on the calendar and process for getting timely info – will also need process to help with goal of better coordinating council activities.
- Looking at options for a sexual health workshop – will potentially aim for early part of next year.
- Gr 5s and 6s – if they are still on their sexual and reproductive health unit - have found a good online resource about the curriculum. Andrea will share around.

e) Equity, Diversity & Inclusion: Stephen Froom

- Still hoping to put on a workshop – have a budget of \$800 for a workshop for a parent workshop on resources to have equity conversations with their children. Would need to be someone local.
- Library: still hoping to secure additional resources for library.
- Nadine: Looking into update of a list of resources that Board has. Also suggest that we perhaps narrow it down – could look at, for example, inclusion and focus in on one topic like bullying. Then Nadine could go to the Conference group and ask for recommendations.
- Council member: knows of a person that visited Churchill (Indigenous Elder/poet). Could look into this.
- Kim: must avoid June for Council activities given full calendar that month.

f) Fundraising: Amanda Ethier

- Final tally for Bookfest is amazing – previous record was \$16K, this year we raised \$23K at bookfest. Lots of great debrief meetings as a Committee. Teresa has agreed to run with the Bookfest torch next year, taking over from Traceylynn.
- Hotlunches: Subway has discontinued the roast beef option – if no alternative chosen, will get same toppings but with turkey.
- Coffee and tea orders open until Sunday evening,

- Seedling sale open. A few new items. Pick up on May 27th is planned. Trying to be coordinated with Bike Rodeo.
- Bike Rodeo: hoping for May 27th. Teresa coordinating. Focus on bike safety and coordinate with Ottawa Community Housing for their annual bike drive – people can plan to donate bikes.
- Fun Fair – targeting June 22nd (Thursday). Planning underway.
- Next meeting – will update on totals raised this year.
- Looking for volunteers for bike tune-ups at the Rodeo.

g) Arts: Natasha Beg

- Two MASC workshops underway– Métis dance workshop in May and an Afro-Caribbean series.
- Will be covering all grades with these.

h) OCASC:

- (Stephen) – bulk of meeting was spent on the PRO Grant and problems of administration of PRO grant.

i) Teacher Representatives: Mr. Pete

- No update (technical difficulties).
- Basketball program was great.
- Will look to next meeting for update from staff.

j) External Communications: David Froom

- Working on calendar.
- Circulated some draft rules for the Facebook group – not that there has been an issue but would be ideal to have this in case of future issues (safer approach). Will aim for final guidelines to be presented next month.
- Happy to help with promotion of events.

k) Elmdale Cares: Catherine Rossiter

- Tote bags were a huge success – sold out of the 100 tote bags. Kids were very proud of their work - rewarding. Sold at a cost of \$7 each, had over 860\$ to donate to sister school after additional donations.
- Noted that it added to Bookfest atmosphere to have Grade 6s there.

l) Community Representative: Susie Munro - Not available tonight.

8. Round Table/Other business: Nil.

Co-Chairs adjourned the meeting at 1941hrs. Next meeting to be held April 19, 2023.