

Elmdale School Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 15, 2023
Hybrid Meeting

In attendance:

In Person

Kimberly Patriquin
Andrea Anastassiades
Firas Nasser
David Froom
Ashley Mullin
Amanda Ethier
Sherine El-Medani
Danica Rogers
Kouka Sawadogo-Lewis
Sofia Ribchinsky
Lynne Belanger
Nadine Saikaley

Megan Hamilton
Katie Muldoon
Jenny Becker
Heather Pysklywec
Meghan McLaren
Liz Shouldice
Holly Kardish
Tanya Christidis
Kat Hoysted
Branko Boskovic
Stephen Froom

Virtual

Kristin Honshorst
Teresa Hanna
Mark Keeping
Liz Majic
Traceylyn Watchorn
Richard Stephens
Natasha Beg
Mildred Leung
Erin Hetherington

WELCOME

Co-Charis welcomed all members to the meeting.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Progress Reports and Interviews – November progress reports are complete and will be sent out tomorrow, November 16th. Emails will also be sent with details on how to book parent/caregiver-teacher interviews. Translation services will be provided to support families who require it.

Professional Activity Day – The November 24th PA Day focussed on effective practices in French as a Language (FSL) and high impact math strategies, which are applicable across all subjects. Staff are also centering indigenous perspectives throughout curriculum.

Holiday Fundraiser – Information will go home this Friday, November 17th, about the fundraiser to purchase gifts for isolated seniors through holiday season.

New Clubs – Two new clubs are starting: chess club (gr 3-6) on Fridays; and book club (Gr 2-3) on Tues/Thurs which is currently reading The Wild Robot.

Winter Performance – Concert is still in the early planning stages. Rehearsal day is planned for December 13th and students will present to their own division. The concert will take place on Friday, December 15th. Each division will present to their families with a maximum of 2 guests per child. More info to follow.

Mark Seabrook – Mme Kelley shares that the kinders are very grateful and looking forward to the presentation by Mark Seabrook next week!

Love to Groove – Mme Belanger shared that Love to Groove was a BIG success. Thanks council for making it possible!!

TREASURER'S REPORT

Firas provided an overview of the Elmdale School Council 2023-2024 committed versus available funds:

- Available funds for 2023-24 school year: \$87,647.68 to spend
- Discussion: Do we want to donate portion to sister school? If so, how much (ie a set percentage of each fundraising event?). For further discussion at January meeting.
- Question: Are the consumables in the budget this year higher than usual or on par with previous years?
 - Principal response: they are higher than last year because teachers were more organized earlier in the year and took full stock of wishes; this happened to coincide with end of two unusual years of fundraising/saving
- Policy to spend in-year: it was noted that we do want to adhere to spirit of policy, but we should have a conversation about reasonableness given the amount of funds to spend.
- Question: Can we invest leftover fundraising in GICs to use in future years?
 - Response: That's not in line with board policy
- It was agreed that the council will review the wish list and overall spending in March following the major fundraising events planned for this year.

COMMITTEES ROUND TABLE:

Safe travel – requesting \$400 for two walk to school days (winter and spring).

- Amanda moved and Jenny seconded. All in favour. Motion passed.

Education – requesting \$500 for planned parenthood info session for parents (learn about curriculum, how to field questions from kids); requesting \$640 for Mental health day workshop (plus extra for refreshments if in person). All total \$1000 (\$500 previously approved).

- Liz moved and Holly seconded. All in favour. Motion passed.

Arts – Proposed creating a Mural art installation. Initiative would be student-lead and in-house artist guided from a community organization. Committee is looking at cohorts to start with. Potentially could be indoor/outdoor murals and themes (could crossover with other committees such as environment/healthy earth). It also has potential to continue year over year.

- Organizations in community can lead activity with students
 - Question: Is installation permanent? Do we need any approvals? Response: Yes, permanent, tied to diff committees
 - Question: Is there an opportunity to include tactile component for students with low vision/sight loss? Response: Yes, part of conversation was to make it as inclusive as possible
- Ashley moved and Amanda seconded. All in favour. Motion passed.

Healthy earth – Proposed that the committed help “green” school events; the first one is fun fair. Requesting the following spending:

- \$500 for cutlery/composting at fun fair (need to coordinate with food vendors)
- \$6K for workshops/fieldtrips to get students in touch with nature
- \$300 for native plants/trees/shrubs for students to plant on property areas with no plants
- \$1000 to sister school
- \$1K grant (whole hearts foundation) left for this year to cover grow tower (not included in total being requested for approval)
- \$560 Terra cycle box
- It was also noted that the field trip last year to Champlain park gardens was very well received and was free.
- Amanda moved to approve spending up to \$7360 (as max) and Faras seconded. All in favour. Motion passed.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – Proposing 5 workshops, to a cost of \$5000 maximum.

- Workshop on antisemitism (to coincide with Holocaust remembrance day)
- Workshop on islamophobia
- \$1000 budget for something to do in school to mark Black History Month. Staff/students to discuss and organize event.
- Teachers received training on anti-hate protocol / what to say or do when you encounter racism or discrimination; now have more fulsome toolkit that staff are starting to have access to;
- Books for diversity (aligns with teachers wish list); align with librarian theme each month
 - Parent community can help identify books to include in list
- Question: When do school pride events happen? Response: Pride is weaved in year round and there was a pride club last year. Pride month is June with OCDSB and the focus of learning is June.
- Discussion: There is appetite to have events with free attendance from an equity perspective;
 - Are there any virtual workshops be open to other schools? Extra money can be shared with OCAS to facilitate sharing with schools that need it.
 - Fun fair has never tried to be a fundraiser (cost \$20K last year and we didn't cover cost), council would need to look to other ways to cover those funds.
- Committee is getting quotes from designers/companies to look at addition of accessible components or features (Rick Hansen Foundation, Holland Bloorview, ODA act). Could we potentially tap into playground fund? For future discussion.
- It was noted that there are issues ongoing at Fisher Park PS, with social media amplifying negativity/bullying. Elmdale is feeder school to Fisher Park and it was discussed if there was a way to help address some issues early, especially for current grade 6s. Potential options that committee will look into:
 - Paul Davis social media guru (talk to kids re social media, online privacy; also workshop with parents)
 - Look into options/cost; can we coordinate with other feeder schools?
 - Consider in person for kids, virtual for parents?
 - General support, can we get email approval once we have sense of cost
 - "Dare to Care" is another option
- Firas moved and Jenny seconded. All in favour. Motion passed.

Fundraising – committee noted that they need to order mats for Bookfest and are looking into cost. They will bring back this item to the January meeting.

Staff wish-list funding - Approve everything except Library Maker Space

- Amanda moved and Heather seconded. All in favour. Motion passed.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION / ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Winter social** – interest to be gauged in holding a winter social on the day we would usually have our December meeting. More information to follow.
- Set up Calendar so we can start blocking off dates for internal workshops, coordinate with curriculum and teacher planning.
- **Forward agenda items:**
 - Amount/percentage to be shared with sister school
 - Accessibility upgrades for playground
 - Cost of mats for Bookfest

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned 8:05 p.m.