

Fairbank Public School Council Meeting  
Minutes  
Thursday, February 28th, 2013

In attendance: Cassandra Alviani Alvarez (principal), Michael Moore (vice principal), Julie McFayden (chair), Bernadette Ryan-Phillips, Tamara Ortas (secretary), Safia Ahmed (model schools rep), Isabel Masters, Samantha Brabant, Tira Clayton, Loida Gamboa

Meeting opened at 6:00

1. General introductions were made.
2. Review and Approval of the Minutes.
  - a) A correction was made to point 8 a) – all teachers are *encouraged* to use the board website. More training is still to be done
  - b) Mr. Moore requested a copy of the minutes and it was suggested that the minutes be posted to the website.
3. Treasurer's report – Ms. Alvarez is almost finished with the audit. A few papers still need to be signed. A new school council account will be opened and the account balance will be transferred.
4. Model Schools Report – Safia Ahmed
  - a) Safia gave an update of the Social Insurance Clinic that was held on January 31<sup>st</sup>. Parents and students were able to get Social Insurance cards and information about education grants.
  - b) There will be a vision clinic on April 15<sup>th</sup> for students in grades 5 and 7. Students will be bused to Amesbury Middle School. Student names can be put forward for a test and glasses will be provided to those in need.
  - c) About 38 parent surveys have been collected so far. This is a big increase over last year. Safia suggests a model schools booth with the survey at the potluck dinner. The results have not yet been collated as Safia is hoping to get more responses.
  - d) March break camps and childcare are available at Fairbank Community Centre. The Vaughan Road Community Centre camps are full.
  - e) The guide for summer programs at the community centers is now available and Safia brought a few.
  - f) Maria A. Shchuka Library also has a number of programs running.
  - g) There is a free Income Tax Clinic at the North York Women's Centre.
  - h) Safia also suggested the possibility of inviting workers from the North York Women's Centre to offer workshops at the school.
5. Fundraising Update – Julie explained that the movie night had been changed to a potluck due to the high cost of screening a movie at the school. (the high cost of the permit) The permit is obtained by paying an annual fee. If we were to get the permit for the year and ran screenings monthly, it might be feasible.
6. Playground Update – Ms. Alvarez and Mr. Moore
  - a) Play zones are still being considered, but the field of play has been opened because of the snow and ice. The children have been told to "be safe and play anywhere" and this has been working.
  - b) The climber has been closed because it is too slippery
  - c) The teachers and support staff outside have been using bells. Mr. Moore pointed out that we have more people on duty outside than at most other schools.

## 7. School Website

- a) Mr. Moore explained that the school website is up and running. Mr. Moore also said that students should have information about the website in their agendas. He reminded us of how to find the website and reminded us that Fairbank Public School is now on Twitter. The website and Twitter are good ways to stay informed about school activities and issues.

8. Questions were raised about Pink Shirt Day and Black History Month. One parent was concerned that her child had not had any special assignments related to Black History Month. Ms. Alvarez explained that it is in the curriculum and it is up to the individual teachers to incorporate it. Ms. Alvarez agreed to discuss it further.

9. Julie raised the concern that parents might not be willing to buy extra things for special theme days like Pink Shirt Day. Mr. Moore explained that it is a Canada-wide theme event, not an event specific to our school.

## 10. Parent Volunteers

- a) Ms. Alvarez explained that in order to have parent volunteers in the school, she has to show that it is for a usual, natural event. Police checks and insurance are required. It is a difficult and expensive process.
- b) Julie suggested that the grade 8 students could organize a sports activity. Ms. Alvarez explained that they would require teacher supervision, but that they could organize anything they wanted to outside, at recess.
- c) Ms. Alvarez will supervise the chess club.
- d) Someone asked about the possibility of a link with the Senior's Centre for activities. Bernadette explained that this had happened through the Fairbank Community Centre in the past and we would still require staff supervision for that kind of an activity.
- e) Samantha recommended the Boys and Girls Club.

## 11. School Council Survey- We reviewed and discussed several elements of the survey.

- a) We identified the key roles of the School Council as: improving student achievement, communication and the school improvement plan. (Ms. Alvarez will talk more about the school improvement plan at the next meeting.)
- b) We talked about one of the things that we spend time on as being parent ambassadors to get the word out to everyone about issues and events. The potluck was agreed on as a good networking activity. Mr. Moore said that a lot of Robocalls are still not getting through due to a lack of accurate contact information.
- c) Safia told us that there is a website about the Parent Involvement Committee, but we have not been receiving information about it.
- d) We discussed funding. We are not aware of grants and have not applied for any. At the next council meeting, we will look into applying for grants for the May deadline. There may be a grant to help with communications. There is the possibility of a meeting or group for newcomers. Safia mentioned that the People for Education run good workshops and that we might consider bringing them in.
- e) Samantha requested more information about the Aboriginal History element of the curriculum
- f) Julie asked that we email her with any additional comments.

## 12. Multi Cultural Night

We discussed how it would be set up, the need for volunteers and the fact that all were welcome to come with or without food, but that all children in attendance should be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Ms. Alvarez reminded us that all offerings should be nut free. Mr. Moore suggested that information about the potluck go into the agendas.

We discussed the need for supplies: plates, napkins and cutlery.

The school will supply the drinks.

Drink tickets will be given out to limit the amount served.

### 13. Uniform/Dress Code Update

We may need to repeat the survey because some students were filling them in without a parent/caregiver's consent. We need to add a parent signature line. As it stands, the results were:

In favour of uniforms – 29

In favour of street clothes – 25

In favour of a dress code – 11

### 14. Fun Fair/Grand Opening

- a) The time was agreed upon as 5:30 – 7:30.
- b) We must solicit sponsorship
- c) We may have a corn roaster and a barbecue on site. We need an order of 150 burgers to get them to come.
- d) Possible activities include a family photographer, button making, bouncy castle, jar of “something” for sale games, face painting, a nail salon, jewelry station, cookie making, a visit from Toronto Fire and Police, etc.
- e) The Boys and Girls Club may be able to help.
- f) Julie has a list of donors and Ms. Alvarez will write the letters.
- g) We need to come up with two lists: activities and donations.

### 15. Principal' Report

- a) Full day kindergarten will begin at Fairbank Public School in September 2013.
- b) Based on projected enrollment, we need to grow the school from the bottom, up. The school board is losing students and teachers as people are moving to the suburbs. In March, there will be a principals' meeting and Ms. Alvarez will report on teacher numbers and class numbers. Our projected enrollment is 200. Our current enrollment is 250. The school can accommodate 300 plus.
- c) The turnout for the EQAO night was disappointing. We need more outreach for the EQAO. Assistance available includes, how to write the test, vocabulary for the test and how to answer test questions.
- d) What are we doing now to improve the EQAO scores? Model schools' coaches are coming to help grade 3 and 6 teachers. Professional development is back.
- e) The tests are at the end of May/early June. Practice sheets are available at EQAO.com.
- f) There is a mathematics PD on March 4<sup>th</sup>. Teachers will be learning about technology and math.
- g) Five teachers on our staff are involved in an e-learning project – Empowering Student Voice in Education and Social Justice. This will be launched on March 6<sup>th</sup> at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre.
- h) Teachers are interested in co-teaching. Ms. Alvarez and Mr. Moore will join classes once every 2 or 3 weeks to observe and provide feedback. Teachers will plan together in order to increase communication and “de-privatize” the classrooms.

### 16. Any Other Business

- a) In response to a question about the school's music program, Ms. Alvarez shared with us that vocal music is available to grades JK – 6 and instrumental instruction is for grades 7 and 8. It is a strong music program.
- b) In response to a concern that there are not enough activities going on at the school, Mr. Moore assured us that this is only a result of the work/strike action.
- c) In response to a question about snow removal in the parking lot and the drop off/pick up area, it was explained that the board hires a contractor for this and it is not the responsibility of the school caretaker.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 at 6:00pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm