



Humber Valley Village School Council

Council Meeting Minutes - February 11th, 2014 at 7pm in the Library

Voting Parents Present: Anika Mahmud, Marlene Yip, Karen Yan, Mary Dart, Lynn Campbell, Chris Dacyshyn, Stephanie Friis, Patti Grimes, Christine Munro, Andrea Pearson, Cheryl Thomas

Proxies Provided: Andra Barr, Heather Gordon, Katerina Muchnik, Kris Gordon, Karen Proctor

Non-Voting Parents Present: Marisa DiBattista, Kirsten Chalmers, Victoria Heppell, Christy Kim, Sonia Friedman, Rebecca Ramsay

Staff Present: Romina Barone-Pace, Nigel Dance

1. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. Anika Mahmud welcomed everyone and introduced our guest speaker.

2. Guest Speaker – Ken Jones, Ukulele Kids co-founder

Ukulele Kids was established in 2010. Ken was the head of music at Claude Watson School of the Arts. Ukulele Kids runs programs from Ottawa to Vancouver. The ukulele is a very popular instrument. It's for everyone from 8 to 80 yrs. old. The ukuleles we provide our students are from the Mahalo Factory. You can't play a sad song on the ukulele. It's a one-finger chord instrument and very portable - you can take it to the cottage on your lap.

Ukulele Kids is a parent-paid lunch or after school program for kindergarten to Gr. 8. It's \$139 for 8 lessons which includes a personalized ukulele (available in 8 colours) and a songbook. In the book, the easy chords are on the left page and the harder cords are on the right page. There's an achievement chart on the back for parents.

The instructors are experienced classroom teachers. Some are retired, faculty of education teachers. Today they had 118 ukulele students in Peel and a class of teachers and everyone went home able to play Spongebob Squarepants.

If we want a Ukulele Kids program at HVV, Ken will work with Romina to find a date and time that works. Then he'll come to an assembly and perform a ukulele show for the kids - a sing-a-long and he will provide registration flyers for all the teachers – photocopied and bundled in 20s or 25s for easy distribution by school secretaries into teachers' cubbies. All program registration is online.

Performance and presentation are part of the program so they would welcome the opportunity to have the students perform at an assembly.

3. December meeting minutes

Approved by Andrea Pearson and seconded by Stephanie Friis.

4. Principal's Report

Romina Introduced herself to parents as this is her first council meeting of the year. She is excited to be here. She looks forward to working with our children and the HVV community.

a. Facilities

A new toilet is in place in Mrs. Zaph's classroom. The tiles are fine.

Staff and a task force were called to remove unwanted/unneeded items from the stage in the junior gym. Romina will order new shelving for proper sports equipment storage.

The ceiling is leaking. The roof issues are being dealt with. On March 5 there will be an assessment – a walk through. Hope to have the roof fixed by Spring. Roof tiles will be replaced. They have been ordered. Dominic [our head caretaker] can replace the damaged tiles because they don't need to be cut.

The new dishwasher is installed in family studies. The new counter is not here yet, but the slab on it is safe, sealed and usable.

The wooden roof trim is rotting in the kinder courtyard. It will be replaced in the Spring.

Kinder Courtyard - We received information on Friday that we've been approved to update the playground. The TDSB will give us a very generous amount of money for play equipment and to re-grade, create a path for the plasma cars and plant some new trees. The courtyard will be kept natural.

We are working on beautifying the school. Painting of select walls has been approved. The front entrance will be primed hopefully during March break. Romina has someone who can paint murals. Students, parents, staff will all be invited to help decide what mural to paint at the main entrance. We want the mural to be welcoming, warm and representative of HVV. It will be painted directly on the wall (it's more permanent) and will replace the current painting that is hung at the entrance. That painting will be displayed in another part of the school. The stairwells will be painted too. Possible ideas include the Grizzlies logo, bear paw prints, Go Grizzlies.

b. Library improvement project

The library committee led by Anika, Lynn and Patti have been busy painting murals and hanging new posters. They're working with Romina and Carol on a plan to maximize the space by creating defined areas/zone for our kinders, juniors and middle school students so they know where to go when they enter the library.

Other improvements include mounting the smartboard (costs TBD), creating a separate entrance to the computer area, having one wall to feature seasonal items and creating more display areas for the little ones.

We have been waiting several months in the TDSB queue for a purge of our outdated books. The purge can only be done by TDSB. That will free up much-needed space for our books.

The library committee requested approval for an additional \$500 for paint, decorations, posters. The library budget approved in October was for \$300 and that is not enough.

A suggestion was made to increase that amount to \$5,000 and then it was reduced to \$1,000 to include costs for instant improvements - painting the cupboards red, a new rug, stenciling the character traits in the M/S area, lanterns.

All voting members present approved the additional \$1,000 for our library improvement project.

It was agreed that a total library redesign would be investigated. The library committee will be visiting local libraries and Romina and Carol will start the process now by contacting an instructional lead on library redesign. A ballpark estimate for a basic library redesign is \$10,000-15,000.

Any ideas would be welcome.

ACTION: Please forward your suggestions to the library committee. More information on the library redesign will be provided at a future meeting.

c. District Review on Nov. 12

Overall impressions and key next steps in the district process report were shared with parents (Handout distributed by Romina) We have 4 areas of focus to leverage improvement:

1. How can you increase open-ended, Higher Order Thinking skills/rich tasks to increase Level 4 EQAO results?
2. Consider Vertical PLTs with: Math Strand & Language component to create sharing of exemplary practices across the school.
3. How can you increase problem-based learning and inquiry base practice?
4. Consider increasing co-construction for purpose of learning with Learning Goals, Success Criteria & Descriptive Feedback

Romina stressed that there is "excellent teaching going on" and that it is her job to provide up-to-date resources and tools to her staff for them to continue to be effective. Some of our current resources and materials are outdated.

Q. Why did the Gr. 3 boys outperform the girls in literacy on our last EQAO test?

A. Yes, there's a huge gap. It's surprising. The same instruction was given to the girls and boys.

Our EQAO results are concerning, but HVV is doing well overall.

We're not only looking at our Gr. 3 results, but what's happening in Gr. 1. We're looking at our building blocks. We have to start from the bottom and we need to have a continuum. EQAO is a division test. Not

just a reflection of gr. 3. We have excellent teachers but they need up-to-date, readily available resources. And, students should have materials they can relate to. It's unacceptable for our young students to have readers that don't have colour images. The colour pictures help prompt the students.

The cost for leveled books for K-2 is \$4K. These will be ordered from the school budget. We are considering purchasing literary resources (Literary Place) for Gr. 1 to 4 – at a cost of \$3,000 per grade. Classes will share the set.

Q. Will the middle school students receive new classroom resources also?

A. Not at this time. We're focusing on the younger students right now.

Q. Can council help purchase new classroom resources? We have a reserve.

A. No, council cannot buy curriculum textbooks but we can provide money for other resources/supplies which would free up the school's budget for these new classroom resources.

Q. Why are students sharing social studies textbooks?

A. New textbooks haven't been ordered because they are not in line with new curriculum so teachers may be using portions of it. My push is not to focus on just one book. We don't want to miss gaps. We're working on long range plans for our students.

Q. Are FDK students reading at higher levels quicker than half-day students or has FDK been detrimental to students' reading abilities?

A. No, FDK has not been detrimental. Results at other schools that were first to introduce FDK have shown good results in student achievement.

Q. Last year, my son's class had Scientists in the School come in after they finished their unit on science because the students had to share science textbooks with another class. Why did that have to happen?

A. That sounds like it was poor planning. We will have to schedule this accordingly in future.

Romina has a strong curriculum background. We have a team of committed teachers at HVV and she wants to provide our teachers with the tools they need.

Everything needs a balance. We have technology. We need up-to-date resources. Resources for K-Gr. 2 are being ordered. These young students are our foundation.

Teachers discussed using IXL at a staff meeting. Ms. Hallett and Mrs. Dias registered for free one-month classroom trials and are encouraged by the results. Individual students can try IXL. Can do 20 free questions/day for free.

Teachers are asking for math manipulatives for the younger students. Each class should be properly equipped with their own sets –counters, cube-a-links, geoboards, fraction pieces. Classes shouldn't have to share or sign out resources.

ACTION: Romina will share more information on the cost/purchase of new classroom resources at the next meeting and council will assess if it can help with the cost of the math manipulatives for each class.

d. Safe and Caring Schools

Safety is a big concern. All supervisors now wear orange vests for easy identification outside in the schoolyard.

The children can't learn if they don't feel safe. We have rules, expectations, board policy. Everyone needs to follow them.

Our hills are very dangerous. The students can't access the hills. There is no supervision on the hills - use at your own risk after 3:42.

Students have been informed of the proper tone in the hallway. They must walk quietly and on the right side. Kids are being pushed and slammed if they're not walking on the right side. Etiquette and responsibility have been stressed. Kids are responding well.

Our entrances are concerning. We will consider having the children line up in the Spring by grade when we can see the asphalt.

We have daily anti-bullying announcements.

A character education board will go up outside the staff room. Student leaders will decorate it each month with quotes, messages related to the character trait of the month.

A request was made at the safe and caring schools committee meeting in December to consider a peer mediation program. The staff thinks there's too much going on right now and that many of the middle school students are already playing leadership roles. This idea will be revisited in the Spring if there's still interest.

e. Report Cards

Report cards went home today. Interviews are different. They are Wed. night – Feb. 12.

Q. My daughter has different teachers. How do you request a meeting with a different teacher?

A. Ask your child's homeroom teacher to set up a face-to-face meeting. You can also have a phone interview.

f. IT Update

3 new smartboards were delivered in December for Mrs. Marzocco, Mrs. Ferguson, HSP. The staff are experimenting with them. They've downloaded software. We will have professional development after March break. Teachers will attend a course to learn how to use them. The smartboards won't be used as oversized projectors.

Q. How are smartboards assigned to classes?

A. Teachers requested them in the Fall. They committed to incorporating the technology into their lessons.

We have 6 iPads – 2 for Mrs. Zaph, 2 for Ms. Resendes and 2 for HSP. They have lots of programs, support software. The students can dictate ideas. PD will come to support staff on iPads also.

Our French teachers have their media carts and laptops and they are being used.

5. Vice Principal's Report

- a. Upcoming Events
 - Middle school ski day on Feb. 13
 - Grades 1 and 1/2s (Malik, Chyczij and Ferguson) are skating on Feb. 13
 - Grades 2, 2/3 and 3 (Costas, Marzocco, Santin, Alexander) are skating on Feb. 21
 - Grades 2-5 Curling program on March 4
- b. Sports Updates
 - Senior girls volleyball placed 2nd today. They will move on to the finals.
- c. Student Council Activities
 - Valentine's Day dance on Feb. 14

6. Teacher's Report

Mrs. Marzocco is writing EQAO test questions for the Ministry of Education and will be asking for input/feedback.

7. Treasurer's Report

We spent 15,600 in the months of Dec. and Jan on Kinder packages, bus support, arts performances, music repairs, scientists in the school. We have approximately 46K in the bank and after all expenses for the year, we will have 26K to start off next year.

8. Parent Council Report

a. Volunteer Opportunities

We are looking for volunteers for the following:

- Skating Party
- Eco Club
- Babysitting Course
- Fun Fair

Andrea Pearson suggested that we send out a request via email to all families through the parent reps.

ACTION: Anika is going to draft a request and send it to Andrea for distribution.

b. Pay Per Service Programs

Anika talked about her and Marlene are trying to explore other options for pay per service programs. Ukulele is one idea. Since Mad Science Chess was cancelled due to low enrolment, perhaps we can look into Chess Institute in it's place as there is no minimum enrolment required. Also, council is looking for suggestions to other programs that we can offer the students. Please send a note to either Anika or Marlene with your suggestions.

With respect to the low enrolment in the Mad Science Chess that resulted in cancellation of the program, Andrea Pearson talked about how the registration form for this was sent out as part of the Friday Flash just before the Christmas Break and most likely not seen by parents. Last year, 2 classes had to be opened up due to high demand for the chess program. It was very disappointing that this program was cancelled by the provider and there was some discussion amongst parents about allowing hard copies for these programs to be sent home with the children. The concern is that electronic forms are not being seen by parents and also that some HVV families don't have computers to be able to register online. There is question as to how our Eco Platinum status may be affected by allowing for program providers to hand out hard copy forms through the school. Due to a shortage of time left before the end of the meeting, Anika suggested that this topic be re-visited at the next meeting when we can explore how to

effectively communicate pay per service offerings to all families and how having some paper will affect our Eco Platinum status.

c. **School Play**

Lynn Campbell communicated that rehearsals for the junior grades are going to start the week of February 24. Participation is voluntary and will always be during lunch time. A notice will be sent out to each grade as to when their day for rehearsal will be.

9. Adjourned at 8:30

NEXT MEETINGS:

- March 5
- April 2
- May 7
- June 4