

Annette Street Public School
School Council Meeting

Date 23-Oct-13



Minutes

Chair: Behnaz Siahpustan

Minutes: Helen Clark

Council Attendees: Karen Ingram, Kelly Wells, Jos Yule, Krista Sims, Marion Smith, Netty Schut, Ward Noble, Karla Mitchell, Lisa Halverson, Juliet Palmer, Laura Syron, Carole Greenwood, Laura Noble, Erin Provost, Lindsay Viets, Regan Richardson

Regrets: Barb Taylor, Carol Denbraber

Other Attendees: Heather Wheeler (Principal), Toulia Masellas & Alice Chang (Teachers), Steve Riddle, Lorraine Holt, Denise Ing, Mac, Frances Martin, Dave Fitzpatrick, Kirstin Burgess, Laurence, Steven, Tara, Swahala, Angie, Penny McLennan

Quorum Established: yes

Two ballots were missing from ballot box for Lindsay Viets and Regan Richardson. A vote was taken to allow to these two to become new parent reps. Each received ten votes and were approved as Parent Representatives by council. Both were welcomed to the council as parent reps for 2013-2014.

Approval of Minutes – 12th June 2013

Motion: That the Council approves the Minutes of the (12th June 2013) meeting. Moved by Laura Syron; Seconded by Marion Smith

CARRIED

Approval of Agenda – 23-Oct-13

Motion: That the Council approves the Agenda for 23rd October 2013 meeting. Moved by Laura Syron; Seconded Marion Smith.

CARRIED

Principal's Report

- a) **Topic -Start up-** Start up has gone well, full day kindergarten has started well, all 3 classes are above 30. It is a possibility that there will be a new class next year as classes are so large, this is up to the board. Teachers and ECEs are all outstanding and started well.

- Playground drop off/pick up in the kindergarten yard

Daycare is contracted to utilize the kindergarten yard space before and after school time. They are not permitted to have the other children in the yard at the same time. The daycare had the children in the yard from 8.45 to 9am to allow the teacher's time to set up the classrooms. Some kindergarten parents had expressed their discontent at this. It has been negotiated with the daycare to allow them into the yard at 8.45 now. Equipment has been increased in the yard as there are more children using the kindergarten yard.

- Grade 8 Maths teacher

One teacher Ms Harajaa came last year as she was placed by the board for a maths and science placement in grade 8. She did not want to remain here as it was unsuitable and has had help to find a new placement which is more appropriate for her. There is a current opening for this grade 8 placement which is being interviewed for this week. Ms Depooter is currently on leave for a year.

- Diagnostics

Money has been invested to make sure that 3 primary diagnostic tools can be put to use within

the school across the age ranges; DRA- developmental reading assessment, ONA-Ontario numeracy assessment, and OWA- Ontario writing assessment. All children will be assessed against these diagnostic tools.

The school improvement plan and professional development of the teachers are all based on the school climate data, EQAO data and input from the safe schools committee.

b) **Topic EQAO results**

- **Grade 3**

Overall results were disappointing, but not unexpected. Grade 3 reading dropped from last year 78% to 72% at or above the board standard. Writing dropped from 75% to 62%, maths dropped 83% to 62% .

There is no one cause for this, however one contributing factor is thought to be the PAUSE last academic year. During this time there was no opportunity to have extra training for the Grade 3 teachers specifically (all who were new to EQAO last year) and also there were no after school clubs to prep for the exams.

ON a positive note, the school June report card data for whole school for reading & writing was encouraging; for reading 77% of all students are at a level A or B, 73% of all students are at an A or B level for writing

- **Grade 6, reading 78%, writing 71% up to 76%, maths 61% up to 64%**

Two parents expressed concerns about maths- Students that in general were good at maths in grade 8 and then moved to high school were found to struggle a lot- The school has identified this as an issue already. The Principal has been in contact with Humberside and Western Tech about their grade 9 maths, what is the difference between grade 8 maths to help the grade 8 maths teachers. Grade 8 curriculum is being covered at Annette and grade 9 should be a review of grade 8 once in high school. Another Parent comment -that in Grade 8 maybe there is not enough homework in maths?

Principal replied that there is a homework policy which teachers should be following (Grade 8 is 1 ½ hrs) and in addition this issue has been brought up in the family of schools discussion with regards to preparing elementary children better for high school. There is a mentor program where grade 8 students can go to the high schools and meet people and go and visit the schools.

Homework policy is on the TDSB website

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/AboutUs/Policies,ProceduresForms/Detail.aspx?docId=199>

WRT Grade 8 class without their grade 8 maths teacher- the superintendent has been asked that once we hire a new teacher, then we would like a paid by the board math tutoring program for the grade 8s. **Update next meeting**

Request from Principal that parents should feel free to share ideas and suggestions with the principal and that she welcomes comments about things parents are happy about as well as concerns.

Teachers' Report

a) **Topic Healthy mind & body**- fun & run club 90 students took part, all went well thanks to parent volunteers. 40 went to the Cross country competition, 13 went on to the semis finals, 4 to the finals.

Grade 6 classes are going to monocliff outdoor education centre in November

Grade 6 science are having an Environmental science master's student from U of T coming in to help until Mid December.

Lots of clubs taking place and in full flow, **youth action group**-would like support to collect canned and dried goods for food bank-until Nov 1st.

Kindergarten teachers-please check their websites, notes are on there from the teachers. They would like to emphasize their request for donations of old spare clothes, dramatic play stuff for playcentres, and boxes of Kleenex, soft stuff!! Also different sized pumpkins.

Primary division

Please label everything with child's name, lunch, jackets etc

Warren park, 2 classes going to visit later in the term

Pioneer Village trip for some grade 1 and 2 classes and 2/3 classes in December.

Borrow a book started- Encouragement to read to your children, not just let them read to you.

Make it enjoyable and please bring your classroom books back. Bring a new book to school for the child's birthday is a good alternative to snacks and sweets for a birthday.

Michael Davids came to present a campaign from the Bloor west Village Association- Campaign called **Save our Village**. Currently a developer that owns a couple of buildings on Bloor street are trying to put a 15 storey building on a small lot near the Runnymede library. With some protests from residents this has dropped down to 11 storeys. The ongoing concern is that if this is approved there are many other lots that may also ask for exceptions in this area and go higher. City guidelines recommends for 8 storeys. \$40K is required (\$30K has been raised) to employ a lawyer and a planner to fight this cause. Currently the city is opposed to the development being 11 storeys, however the developer can go to OMB (Ontario municipal board) and ask for 11 storeys, and they can overrule the city. There will be impact on traffic, schools. One thought is to pursue a heritage conservation district designation which is a planning designation, but possibly timing won't work to be able to stop this first large development.

Website, www.saveourvillage.ca

What can we do? Donate money, put up lawn signs, canvas the local councilor Sarah Doucette who is opposed to the development, she wants to hear from the community.

Join and use voice of residents associations.

Hearing with OMB in Feb 2014.

Ward 7 Report

First Meeting already held 2 weeks ago, more men, 25%! Irene Atkinson was back after her absence due to an accident.

Presentation about mindfulness in education, wake up schools group- this covered the use of meditation in the classroom, this is currently being used in Annette, Ms Iggers has put information on her website about this.

Current state of school infrastructure- TDSB has under-utilised schools, the province wants TDSB to sell schools off to use the capital to use to fix other schools in need.

Mr Wakefield, gave a presentation on regulation 274. This dictates how TDSB hiring works- he is starting a campaign to repeal this regulation, (top 5 teachers have to be taken, which is based on seniority) **More info available from Jos Yule**

Committee Reports

Anyone that wants to join a committee for a short period of time, please feel free, don't have to commit for the year.

- a) **Fundraising** Karla Mitchell
Lots of events during the year, Pizza lunch, acorn cards, funfair, a new social in the winter. All welcome to come for new ideas etc.
- b) **Environment/Art** Juliet Palmer
Grade 5/6 painted large people connected to the water project, would like to be placed on the exterior of the building. TDSB has to assist in placement.
Juliet has to confirm with Heather with what the artist needs to carry out the installation, so Heather can ask TDSB, **Action Juliet**
Grants for artist to come and visit classrooms are available.
Anyone that wants to bring some plants inside that won't survive the winter outside can bring them in for the kindergartens to look after-ask Heather Wheeler
- c) **Communications – Under construction**
- d) **Grants** No chair yet
Committee that help with applying for grants Music, parents reaching out grants etc
- e) **Finance-** Kelly Wells
Full budget will be brought to next meeting. Each classroom normally gets a visiting artist and scientist in the school, approx \$300 per classroom.
Motion for approval for this money for scientist and artist in the school- \$7260 Motion put forward by Kelly, seconded Juliet,
CARRIED

Motion To approve funds for the school wide performance, \$1200, motion put forward by Kelly, Behnaz seconded.
CARRIED

\$21K approx raised for the school last year, fair being the big fundraiser, and pizza lunch.

In addition to Science & artist in the school the council supported school sports teams, sports equipment for the gym, tech upgrades, leadership initiatives, Acoustic opera (school wide performance), grade 8 trip, skipping trip, repairs to musical instruments, senior library classroom books, orange door (sports equipment, outdoor activity)

- f) **Fitness-** Karen Ingram
Committee to support Ross Melzer in his pursuit of keeping the children active.
Fitness fun day in the spring for all children.

- g) **Library- No chair**
Parents books in the library were bought and maintained by this committee
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- h) **Gender committee** Laura Syron

A report was submitted to the principal last year after boys at Annette in grade 3 and 6 were testing lower in EQAO than girls, other TDSB schools, board and schools across the province. A Gender Learning Committee was struck to look at the boy's performance in Annette and how this could be improved. The Report was primarily written after looking at research in this area internationally, and was presented to the Council in February 2013. The Report called for focus in 3 areas to improve Annette boys' academic performance: building more of a relational culture; increased physical activity, and increased access to food during school time.

Report to be posted to website-**Action Laura**

Following this report, and to give more perspective on the data, a survey was carried out with girls and boys in grades 6, 7 and 8 in May 2013.

Results were shared with the council, in summary 170 students, 90% returns. **Documents available on school website – Update...documents attached below**

Comments from parents- Only boys have been done so far, would be useful to see trends for girls, could be the same for girls and the change with age, data not pulled together yet.

This has given a good solid understanding of the current situation in the school, and if we implement some or all of the action plan, it will help the whole school, not just the boys.

Relational culture was discussed as a primary indicator for boys, and teaching that was brought out of the research was used in the interviews for incoming teachers. Report has been sent to the teachers and discussed.

Each division is looking at the report from the survey and are coming back with improvements/actions they can take on this year

Relational culture was about boys having a connection with the teachers and it has been indicated that it helps boys significantly with being more successful in learning at school.

AOB

Student council wanted to bring up a play they are preparing to present; they need rehearsal time, they would like parent volunteers to help, chaperone them, 11.30am to 1.30pm once a week, Monday night 3.45pm to 4.45pm, starting in 2 weeks. **Let Carole Greenwood know if you can help.**

Silent action at the fair- Annette Artisans raised \$580 at the fair with their contributions. Parent council let them decide how they would spend the money in the school. A meeting was held along with the Principal to come up with suggestions that also fit in with the School improvement plan. This is in progress. **Update next meeting**

Music room lights don't work too well, would lights that clip onto the music stands- could parent's council pay for this? **Carole to follow up**

Suggestions from neighbourhood that school should fix the fence and the artwork on the fence on Annette street. Karen Goodfellow is looking into it. Could we have this as a family activity as a community? **Follow up next meeting**

Monica Jacob came to talk about various screenings taking place in the school- Dental, eye etc screenings going on from Monday. Parent volunteers have been involved.

HPAS fundraiser for Halloween on this Sunday, anyone from school invited.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Next Meeting: 27-Nov-13

Annette School Council
Report of Committee on Gender-Based Learning
Improving the Academic Performance of the Boys of Annette Street Public School

This Report provides a series of recommendations for the Principal of the Annette Street Public School from the Annette School Council in regards to improving the academic performance of boys at Annette.

Background

Overall, EQAO scores indicate that Grade 3 and Grade 6 Annette boys lag behind their female counterparts in all 3 areas measured: reading, writing and mathematics. Also, Annette boys often lag behind their male counterparts in writing and math compared to other boys at the Board-level and boys across the province, especially in Grade 6.

This issue was brought forward to the Annette School Council in April 2012, and there was unanimous agreement that this issue be adopted as a priority for the Council in the 2012/13 school year. It was further agreed that a time-limited Committee would be struck to address this issue. Specifically, the Committee on Gender Based Academic Performance was tasked with developing and bringing forward recommendations to the School Council with regards to improving the academic performance of the boys at Annette Street Public School.

Ultimately, the Council will present these recommendations to the Principal of Annette for her consideration and implementation.

Guiding Principles & Assumptions

The Committee discussed the broad context in which it wished to frame its Report. The following guiding principles and assumptions were identified and were used by the Committee as it developed its recommendations:

- All Report recommendations will:
 - o Have SMART goals (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time-bound)
 - o Work from, and align with, the Annette School Improvement Plan
 - o Be based on best-practice research and evidence
 - o Leverage the limited financial resources available to the school, while providing suggestions on where new funding may be available
 - o Recognize that sustainability is critical and that any tools developed must be easily accessible for Annette teachers to use
- The primary audience for the Report is the Annette School principal
- Implementation of Report recommendations will be aided if internal champions are identified, ideally from within the primary, junior and senior divisions
- The Report will help the school go from good to great for all boys at Annette
- Measures implemented to improve boys' academic performance will also aid girls' performance

Recommendations

After significant discussion, the Committee is providing recommendations to improve the academic performance of the boys at Annette that fall into 3 main areas:

1. Assessing, building and maintaining a relational culture at Annette;
2. Increasing physical activity opportunities throughout the school day, &
3. Improving access to food.

1. Assessing, building and maintaining a relational culture at Annette

Best-practice research shows that improving school culture by focusing on relational learning for boys actually improves their academic performance. More specifically, the research suggests that boys who develop strong relationships with their teachers get more engaged in their academic environment, and that engagement then leads to stronger academic performance. While this is true for girls as well, it is more strongly correlated to academic improvement for boys. Positive relationships precede engagement, effort and mastery.

If Annette decides to focus on relational culture, it will be important to develop a practical policy on professional boundaries in the context of relational commitment. There must be a sharp distinction between the goals of advancing student progress, and the development of teacher-student relationships that cross professional boundaries and which do not contribute to such advancement.

It is interesting to note that research shows that there is no difference between male and female teachers in terms of impact on boys' academic performance.

Based on this concept, the Committee recommends the following:

School-Wide:

- a. Evolved Mission Statement - The Annette Street Public School current mission statement should be evolved to include an acknowledgement of the importance of relational teaching at Annette.
- b. Job Descriptions - The Principal should consider reflecting Annette's new focus on relational teaching in job descriptions for teachers, coaches, and other staff, as feasible.
- c. Parent & community communication – This new focus must be widely communicated to Annette parents and the broader community, using existing communication tools such as the school website and homebound communication.
- d. New Teacher Hiring & Orientation – The Principal could incorporate “relational practice” and other gender-based concerns when interviewing and considering teachers for hiring. Also, the new focus on relational learning could be built into new teacher orientation at Annette.
- e. Internal Champions – The Principal should identify 3-5 teachers who would be interested in acting as internal champions at Annette for establishing and maintain a relational culture at Annette. These teachers would play leadership roles in implementing the above recommendations as well as other actions that the Principal or staff want to undertake in regards to building this relational culture.
- f. Structural Considerations – The Principal should consider the following in regards to building a relational culture: class size, teacher course loads, daily schedules, and the support and assessment of teachers, coaches and other staff.
- g. Professional Development- Additionally, the Principal should strongly consider professional development, especially for champion teachers, focused on boys' learning. This could include bringing in a person to speak at a staff meeting, or allowing for release time for teachers to go to outside seminars and/or courses.
- h. Goal Setting for Staff – To aid the nurturing of a relational culture, relational goals could be set for each teacher, with periodic assessment against these goals taking place, ideally in peer exchange or critical mentoring partnerships. The Principal could consider utilizing the Annual Learning Plan (ALP) to address relational teaching goals for each teacher.
- i. Mentoring- Master teachers could be utilized to mentor staff in the building of a relational culture.
- j. Ongoing monitoring – It will be critical to monitor and assess relational success in staff meetings and other PD time to acknowledge and measure progress.

Teacher-Specific:

Teachers invite boys into productive working alliances with them when they:

- a. Greet each student every day,
- b. Exchange words with each student every day,
- c. Learn and acknowledge boys' out-of-class interests, achievements and talents,
- d. Offer individual remedial help and personal counsel,
- e. Address boys' behavioral changes from day to day,

Teachers also enhance relationships with boys by continuing their daily assessment for learning:

- f. Note how lessons and exercises are being received from day to day,
- g. Modify lessons and methods in response to student performance and appraisals,
- h. Monitor and respond to students' incremental progress day to day,
- i. Share, when appropriate, personal experiences relating to one's own learning and growth,
- j. Communicate to students how he/she became committed to his/her scholastic subject,
- k. Acknowledge the formative influence of their own inspiring teachers and other exemplary figures in their scholastic life.

2. Increasing physical activity opportunities throughout the school day

Research indicates that providing frequent opportunities for physical activity for boys creates an environment for improved learning for them.

Based on this, the Committee recommends the following:

- a. Movement Breaks – Sanctioned movement breaks should be built into the day. Examples of these kinds of breaks include: Brain Breaks (5 minute break “game” that is easily used by the teacher and provides students an opportunity to take a physical and mental break prior to the start of the next lesson) and stretch breaks. Also, the use of general manipulatives should be considered (eg. Hand grips, squeeze balls, therabands, chin up bar.)
- b. Infuse Physical Activity into Content – Many resources currently exist to support the infusion of physical activity into the curriculum. The Committee recommends that several of these

resources be identified for Annette, ideally by the identified internal champions, and then provided to Annette teachers in an easily accessible way.

- c. **Structure Lessons** – This third approach to incorporating movement in the classroom is neither an official break from academic work like a DPA (Daily Physical Activity) nor is it using movement to deepen students’ understanding of a fact/process/concept (e.g., create a group dance/drama to apply your understanding of the water cycle). Rather, it is a way of building movement into the structure of a lesson or activity, such as rotating groups through centres, which allows for “legitimate” movement between shorter periods of academic concentration. There are many ways to do this. Writing questions/tasks on individual cards and keeping them in a central location is another strategy that allows for movement. The students need to get up and move to choose another card in order to complete the number of questions/tasks required. The Committee recommends that examples of this kind of lesson structuring be collected and made accessible to Annette teachers.

3. Improving access to food

Ensuring that boys have the opportunity to re-fuel their body on a regular basis throughout the day is an important element in creating a good learning state, particularly in the senior classes.

The Committee recommends that each teacher work to identify ways to build access to food for boys in her/his classroom, especially during the morning. For the senior classes, parents could be asked to provide a daily snack on a shared or rotating basis (like in kindergarten).

Alternatively, the Principal could assess the idea of changing the school schedule to a two nutrition-break model.

Role of Parents

In addition to the role that the School Principal and teachers play in improving the academic performance of boys, parents also play a critical role in their child's wellness and readiness for learning. Research shows that children whose parents are involved in the school and school community fare better, are more secure and feel better about themselves at school.

In regards to the broad recommendations outlined in this report, parents could play an important role in all three:

1. Assessing, building and maintaining a relational culture at Annette;
2. Increasing physical activity opportunities throughout the school day, &
3. Improving access to food.

For example, in regards to building a relational culture, teachers and parents who have strong supportive relationships with each other are more likely to nurture boys who have positive feelings about their place of learning. Similarly, parents can be involved in the physical activity or nutritional opportunities for boys at Annette.

Financial Implications

The Committee recognizes that some of these recommendations will require financial investment to develop and/or implement them. Rather than developing costs on all recommendations, the Committee suggests that costs be developed once recommendations are chosen.

It is important to recognize that there are potential sources of incremental funding for some of these recommendations. For example, there may be funding through relevant initiatives at the TDSB, or via grants. These avenues can be explored once decisions have been made on these recommendations.

Timing of Report Implementation

It is important to note that one of the key guiding principles of this Report is that each recommendation has SMART goals (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time-bound). It is highly recommended that once specific recommendations have been chosen for implementation, that each have a SMART goal developed so that progress against the issue can be measured realistically and transparently.

Next Steps

1. Once approved by the Annette School Council, the Report is presented to the Principal.
2. The time-limited Committee on Gender Based Academic Performance is disbanded via a motion from Annette School Council.
3. A new ongoing Council Sub-Committee is struck to work with the Principal to implement the recommendations of this Report and to develop an evaluation framework for measuring progress on those recommendations.

Resources Consulted

1. EQAO Results – 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 Grade 3 and Grade 6 results for Annette Street School
2. The Fraser Institute Report Card for Ontario Elementary Schools (2012)
3. *Teaching Boys: A Global Study of Effective Practices*, Reichert, Michael & Hawley, Richard (2009)
4. *For Whom the Boy Toils: The Primacy of Relationship in Boys' Learning. A report to the International Boys' School Coalition*, Reichert, Michael and Hawley, Richard (2012)
5. *Raising Boys in a New Kind of World*, Reist, Michael (2011)
6. TDSB Professional Library resources on boy-based learning
7. Consultation with Ms. Heather Wheeler (October 2012)

Committee Members

Laura Syron (Chair) – parent
Behnaz Siahpustan (Council Chair) – parent
Carol Greenwood – parent
Frances Humphreys – parent
Netty Schut – parent
David Fitzpatrick – parent
Kelly Iggers – teacher
Kimberly Liang – teacher

Glossary

EQAO (Education Quality & Accountability Office) - The EQAO oversees provincial testing instituted by the Ontario government between 1996 and 2002 for Grade 3, 6 and 9 in all schools across Ontario. The primary-division assessment tests the reading, writing and mathematics skills students are expected to have learned by the end of Grade 3. The junior-division assessment tests the reading, writing and mathematics skills students are expected to have learned by the end of Grade 6. Both assessments are based on The Ontario Curriculum.

School Improvement Plan – An annual plan, developed by the school Principal with the input of teachers and other staff that highlights key focus areas for the school. It is publicly available each year on the school website. School improvement planning is a process through which schools set goals for improvement, and make decisions about how and when these goals will be achieved. The ultimate objective of the process is to improve student achievement levels by enhancing the way curriculum is delivered, by creating a positive environment for learning, and by increasing the degree to which parents are involved in their children’s learning at school and in the home.

Relational teaching culture – The premise behind relational teaching is that when teachers can form a positive relationship with a student, beyond the context of the classroom, then the student has a greater potential to be successful in the classroom.

ALP (Annual Learning Plan) – Starting in 2007, every teacher, other than a new teacher, employed by the board has a learning plan each year that includes the teacher’s professional growth objectives, proposed action plan, and timelines for achieving those objectives.

Master teacher – A teacher who demonstrates excellence inside and outside of the classroom through consistent leadership and focused collaboration to maximize student learning.

Manipulatives – In mathematics, a manipulative is an object which is designed so that a learner can perceive some mathematical concept by manipulating it, hence its name. The use of manipulatives provides a way for children to learn concepts in a developmentally appropriate, hands-on and an experiencing way.

DPA (Daily Physical Activity) - In 2005, the Ontario Education Ministry introduced DPA into the Ontario curriculum of elementary students. Specifically, every elementary student is to have a minimum of 20 minutes of sustained moderate to vigorous physical activity each school day. This is intended to make publicly funded schools healthier places to learn and improve student achievement.