

Secord Elementary School Parent Council
Oct 17, 2018

Minutes taken by Yona Nestel

In Attendance

Secord Staff and Administration:

- George Vlahos, Principal
- Nigel Dance, Vice-Principal
- Aileen Burke-Tsakmakas, Vice-Principal
- Nicole Harrington, Special Education Teacher
- Ian MacPhearson
- Mdm. Jean-Gardy

Parents/Community Members:

- Rob Wallis
- Yona Nestel
- Erin Bradford
- Hermon Markos
- Yamna Benbekai
- Shahid Nadeem
- Shelly Allyene
- Kathleen Garrett
- Brad Wilson
- Fabjola Myrto
- Jen Wallis

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm

Mission of School Council

- Draft mission statement presented and consulted on, as follows: *"To jointly grow an equitable and inclusive community at Secord, by fostering an environment where of all students, parents, staff, and community members feel welcomed, safe and engaged and where student learning and well-being are prioritized."*

- Mission adopted

Results from last two council meeting

- Review of the results of the "dotmocracy" exercise from last council meeting where parents were asked to prioritize interests and concerns:

1) "What should be priorities for Council"

10 dots: Should be advocating for the rights of my child

9 dots: Should be just to get information about the school

9 dots: Should be organising information sessions / workshops for parents

8 dots: Should be organising fun events for parents to connect

3 dots: Should be focussed on student safety

Resulting goal: Convene one (preferably two) parent workshops per year. Start with one high quality workshop and see how it goes. Perhaps hold workshops instead as part of council meetings. Tap into parent academy funds but would need to include wider school communities (i.e. DA Morrison, George Webster).

2) "What are your priorities for safety"

11 dots: Facility safety – how safe is the building?

11 dots: Physical activity (DPA safety) – is my child being active enough?

10 dots: Security at school (strangers coming in)

5 dots: Vehicle safety around the school

2 dots: Sun/ weather safety

Resulting goal: Revitalize the building expansion committee. Communicate at least every 2 months with TDSB regarding building expansion and communicate outcomes to parents.

3) How would you like to be communicated with?

16 dots: Email – as many as possible please

15 dots: Notes in back pack

6 dots: Electronic bulletin board – e.g. Google calendar that I can check on

5 dots: Facebook

3 dots: Paper newsletter

2 dots: Posters at school

1 dot: School Website

Resulting Goal: communicate by email at least twice a month with relevant updates. Kathleen offered her professional expertise with communications. Parent council website is being updated and will be regularly refreshed, including an up to date calendar of events.

4) What day-time school events would you like to be invited to? (0-5 dots)

18 dots: Whole school events

14 dots: Sports days

8 dots: Cultural events

8 dots: Classroom events

1 dot: Assemblies

GOAL 4: Find opportunities for involving parents in the school. Events are already happening (i.e math night and bike rodeo) but how do we communicate and promote the events to get better turn out? An online calendar and communication approach might be what's needed. Suggestion for a school community expertise event (tap into expertise within the school community).

5) What are you most concerned about in your child's education?

11 dots: The Health Ed curriculum (1998-2010) being too outdated

9 dots: Issues with the School Building

8 dots: Issues with the Outdoor areas at school

4 dots: Daily Physical Activity (DPA)

3 dots: Nutrition

2 dots: Math scores

2 dots: Extra-curricular activities

1 dot: Screen Time

1 dot: Social time at school

1 dot: Literacy scores

1 dot: The Health Ed curriculum (2015) being too liberal

GOAL 5: Provide updates on outdoor area revitalisation every 2 months, communicated to parents (and see Goal 2).

Other Questions that were asked of parents

- What cultural events would you like to see? All cultural/ religious festivals celebrated
- What are you proud of at Secord? Diversity and friendly staff
- What are you frustrated with at Secord? Split Classes, not enough spec. Ed. classes, kids drop off / pick up when 2/more kids, garbage outside school

Group exercise: brainstorm the roles and responsibilities of key council roles:

Chair: Divide rotational duties, council upskilling

Communications: Email and follow-up, simplify communications, school calendar, newsletter production, website updates

Treasurer: Research and coordinated grant applications, reviews and manages finances

Secretary: Takes minutes, signs financial documents

Events Co-Ordinator: Put more focus on planning and delegation, parent outreach

- Discussion on council roles and nominations: George noted that a named Chair is a required regulation by the TDSB. The role of the chair with a JD will be advertised to the wider school community. Erin, brought up that a collective approach to chairing with collective responsibility would be preferable. Ian – we need to give one or two names to follow TDSB regulation but we can run a collective approach. Kathleen offered to put

her name forward to the TDSB as Chair but a ToR for a collective chairing approach should be drafted and agreed to.

- Ian provided an update on the revitalization the Council's website. Parent survey is already up. Google translate is available so parents can access info in their own language. A Google calendar of events will be available and the website will be "launched" in the next two weeks.

Principal's report:

- Email list currently being updated. First Second email blast will be sent next week. Weekly newsletter.
- Islamic Heritage month: October 23rd, parent organized, potluck, presentations and fashion show. Looking for more volunteers.
- Tea with principal and VP – good turnout, good opportunity to discuss concerns ask questions and have more informal discussions. October 31 is the next one.
- Halloween Howl: Halloween parade and then decorating the stage in the gym in spooky decor, fog machine, spooky music. Every class will have a chance to participate. Parent volunteers needed.
- Vision screening on November 15th for all
- Progress reports – Nov 13 & parent teacher interviews Nov 15 & 16
- Family math night – November 28

Event Update – Erin:

Many exciting events being planned including a "festival of lights" event and community craft fair. More resources are needed to make events successful. Erin requested approval for \$750 to support events with better equipment. Council approved the request.

Next Council meeting November 7th at 6:30pm

8pm meeting adjourned