



Africentric Alternative



School Council Agenda & Meeting Minutes

Wednesday April 13 /2022

6:30-7:30p.m.



Meeting start time: 6:33 pm

Welcome

- ❖ Everyone was welcomed by Maureen

Land Acknowledgement

- ❖ Read by Maureen

TDSB Land Acknowledgement

"We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and the Inuit peoples"

Principal and School Updates - Mr. Hugh Reynolds

New Superintendent Kurt McIntosh effective April 1st 2022. Kurt was in Learning Network 13 in Scarborough. The old Superintendent was Nandy Palmer who was promoted on the 1st of April 2022 and is now the System Superintendent of Special Education and Inclusion with the Board.

Staffing

All schools received on Friday the Staffing allocation and we currenting in the process of building our staffing model for the next school year. Looking at our staffing we had lost a member of staff (a teacher) but taking a closer look as to the numbers and the grades that they are suggesting, the numbers that they gave us were not appropriate. Today this was adjusted so we will not be losing any staff. Due to us being a small school we don't have the flexibility to do a staffing model, because we only have combined grades, and one of each grade. Once the staffing model is done and approved it will be shared.

As it stands right now there will be

-a JK/SK class

on paper they have a 1/2/3 split class (this is a concern and was addressed with the staffing officer today, as this is not something that we want to have. Three triple grade classes especially in the primary grades)

Split3/4 Class which is mandated

5/6 Class

7/8 Class

The model has to be sent to the Superintendent office tomorrow and it will be approved by the 20th and then the teachers will be given request forms. Based on the model the teachers will request what class they would like to teach for next year. They will have an option of choosing three and they can get any of those 3 that they choose.

Open for Questions/Suggestion:

School Council/Q: With staffing I know that we have the vice principal away and I know that we have talked about it earlier in the year, but we have not had an update. I know that last year we had a problem with staffing with the 0.5 we were not sure we would have a staff or we would be short of that hour. How does that look this year going forward?

Principal/A: Last year we got a point five VP allocation and usually when you have a point five VP allocation in any school you are expected to save the other point five to make up the staffing numbers for staffing to make up a full position. Because the VP can not be only half time at the school. So we had total 7.5 allocation last year plus the point five VP. For the next school year we have been cut the vice principal allocation, so we won't have a vice principal for next year. This is disappointing but a number of schools have also been cut. The board is done by the number of students and one of the reasons is that in the elementary grade over the TBSD we are down approximately 10 thousand students for various reasons. A number of families are moving out of Toronto and into the suburbs or other surrounding areas. As it stands we won't be having a VP allocation for next year.

School Council/Q: Once again you mentioned that this is a cut across the board because of low enrollment of students. Not specifically our school as a stand alone?

Principal/A: No, because I have been in communication with some other principals and vice principals and their numbers have been cut too for next year.

Parent/Q: If we didn't utilize that funding from this year does that mean that can go towards something else or was it just giving out a paid leave?

Principal/Q: Your speaking about the vice principal allocation?

Parent/A: Yes

Principal/A: We can not use it in the future. So once the person is assigned to the school and the allocation has been cut then we can not use it for anything else. For example, a teacher or anything else. And that was why in the beginning of the year I was on the Superintendent in terms of the need to get a replacement vice principal. But you know sometimes even though you are pushing and pushing the information I got back was our school was not the only school that needs a vice principal and right now there are none.

School Council/S: Yes, early in the year School Council Co-Chairs (Jelani & Maureen) worked on an email and sent to the superintendent regarding having an acting VP present until our VP returned. It's very sad to know that this cut has happened but going forwards whoever is on School Council in the coming

years, if needs be they will do the work to advocate the needs for our school and our children to get things back on track and a VP again at the school. If funding allows with TDSB.

Enrollment

We are in the process of pushing so that we can increase the enrollment at the school. We are hoping that in the future that we will have more students come in allowing for more staff, more classes and the opportunity to have a vice principal at the school again.

Toronto Raptor Game

On April 5, 2022 parents and students had the opportunity to attend the game. The students that attended gave feedback regarding and this was appreciated. It was very heart warming to hear them say this was an opportunity to be out with their parent to enjoy a basketball game. First priority went to the grade 8 students, who will be leaving us at the end of the school year. The tickets for the game were donated by the Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment.

Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE)

Early in the year I mentioned the MLSE is in the process of making a huge donation to the school. I'm still in communication with them and we will be working on having an assembly for them to come and do a presentation at the school. More information to follow at a closer date and parents will be invited to attend. It will be based on their timeline so they will tell us the date and time. They have also purchased a number of gym equipment for the school, document camera's that are on their way and this will be presented at the assembly.

The hope is that with equipping all the classrooms with the technology that they need the teachers will have what they need to enhance the delivery of the curriculum to the students, which will allow for the students to learn better with the support of the add/new technology. Many thanks to Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment for the support and donation(s) that they have given the school.

School Promotion

We are trying to promote the school and increase the enrollment. We recognise that we need more students in the school to keep it viable. We are in touch with the communication department in TDSB, they sent a photographer to take photos of what's happening in the school. They are in the process of developing the school flyer. A draft should be coming tomorrow and any changes will be made. Once the flyer is done it will be shared with School Council. Then the drive will start to increase enrollment by sharing it with other schools, and the community because we recognise that not many people in the community are aware of the school. It is very exciting to get the information about the school out there.

Open for Questions/Suggestion/Answers:

School Council/Q: Will this flyer be on the school website also?

Principal/A: Yes, it will also be posted to the school website.

School Council/Q: In regards to updating our presence in the community, the next phase was to do a short PowerPoint or short video later on. So, we are in Part 1 of Part 2 that is connected to the bigger picture, right?

Principal/A: Yes, right, and School Council will have an opportunity to contribute to that so it will be shared, and if School Council thinks something should be added or taken out then that conversation will happen. This is just the first part of trying to promote the school and trying to increase the enrollment.

School Council/Q: Mr. Reynolds so what are we doing in terms of promoting to get more students into the school? Are you going to be utilizing the parents to help promote as well by giving out flyers or are you doing an open house?

Principal/A: Definitely we will be asking parents to distribute flyers, and to share with their network. Usually open house is held between December/January so we are behind the eight ball with that. When I met with the communication department they mentioned that there are large groups on Facebook in Toronto with Black families or parents and sharing on that platform is possible. We are open to any other suggestions, once we have the flyers done

School Council/Q: How many students or what's the maximum needed as per each grade?

Principal/A: I am not putting a limit to it, we need more students. We currently have 5 classes at the school but we have space for 2 or more classes because we have space available. The class cap for grade 1-3 is 20, so we want to bring our primary classes up to that. We want to have 24-25 students in the junior grades, so I'm not putting any limits on it we just need to get more students.

School Council/Q: Are you going to put together a committee with the parents to help with the promotion? With parents, previous parents and /or past committee members of the school?

Principal/A: That's a great ideal. So, what I'll do once I get the flyers I will send out and email out to parents to see who wants to be on the committee to help to promote it and we can work from there.

Assessment

Two weeks ago, our grade 4 students completed the "Trends in Mathematics & Science" assessment. TDSB schools are randomly selected to complete the assessment, and it's just to see what the students are capable of doing in math and science, which is different from EQAO.

EQAO

We will be having EQAO exams for the grade 3 and 6 students in May going into June. The ministry has not sent anything as of yet, the assumption is that it will be online this year. There will not be the hard copy and paper version for the students as in the past. The school has the equipment needed to support the students, each student at the school has a device that works. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

Steel Pan

Steel Pan instruction has begun, it's been a struggle since September to get the program started. This program has started for the grade 4/5/6 and grade 7/8 classes, it's going well. On Day 1 and Day 3 the students have Steel Pan in the afternoon both grades get one hour, with the same instructor. There will be another instructor that has a partnership with the TDSB Board we are trying to secure to do the make up lessons. The first make up lesson with that person will be on April 22/ 2022.

African Drumming

The grade 1 and grade 2/3 classes will be doing African Drumming. It should have started today but there was some hiccups around the instructor having an updated Police Reference Check. The hope is that it will be done by the end of this week so that the students can start their lessons. It will be one hour and on Wednesday for eight weeks for both classes. There will be a presentation at the end of the eight weeks for the students to share what they learned.

Itah Sadu

In regards to the workshop that was arranged by School Council with Itah Sadu we had promised to purchase a book for every student enrolled in the school. The books have arrived at the school and Ms. Sullivan has sorted them out already and we are just waiting to distribute them as soon as possible.

Additional Information– from School Council

School Council has connected with Ms. Sullivan and are thankful that she has taken the lead with ordering the books and ensuring that the books selected are age appropriate. Also paying close attention to families with multiple children that each child has a book that is different from their sibling. Allowing the child to feel proud of the book that they received. Behind the scene School Council and Ms. Sullivan are discussing putting labels in each of the books before gifting them to the students. This will allow the children to feel connected to the workshop “Integrated Literacy with a focus on Black Heritage Storytelling” every time that they read or see the book. The next challenge is the distribution of the books. The goal is for the end of May 2022 for all the books to go out, the method of distribution is the current discussion and any suggestion is welcomed.

Graduation 2022 -Planning for Grade 8 Students

There was a conversation today with Mrs. Hodge and Ms. Sullivan today regarding graduation planning and they have met with the grade 7/8 class, twice already regarding graduation.

They want to make sure they include the input from the students and the date that they have selected is Thursday June 23 /2022 at 1:00pm for the graduation. The planning continues regarding what’s going to take place after the ceremony example will there be a dinner? They have also planned a meeting with parents who are interested in participating, this will take place next Thursday and the Zoom link will go out to all the parents.

Additional Information – from School Council

There are already two parents that have expressed interest in joining the Graduation Committee in a few of the past School Council meetings. Both parents attend and support School Council meetings and serve/served on the Council. School Council will forward their email information to Ms. Sullivan and Mrs. Hodge as permission to do so has already been given. An update will also be given to those parents via email as to the Graduation Committee, the lead people and also to be on the look out for the Zoom invite. There is also lots of interest from parents of children that are graduating this June, School Council has encouraged them to connect with Mr. Reynolds. Graduation is around the corner as this is a very important year for those students and this year we can actually have it in person.

Open for Questions/Suggestion/Answers:

Parent/Q: So, is it confirmed that graduation will be done in person?

Principal/A: Yes, for now the planning will be around having it in person.

School Council/Q: In past it was mentioned that the teachers have received an iPad to capture and document moments throughout the year of the students in Mrs. Hodges class? It’s also great that the

students are involved in the planning of their own graduation, and their suggestions are welcomed. That is very awesome.

Principal/A: when they met with the whole class both times, they asked who would like to be on the committee and one grade 8 student volunteered. This student will be the representative on the planning committee

School Council/Q: Going forwards this is the first year having a student representative on the planning committee, right?

Principal/A: Yes, it is.

School Council/S: That's wonderful that the students will have the opportunity to give input and also grow.

Principal/A: Yes, this is a leadership opportunity for this grade 8 student who volunteered and it's exciting to have them on board

Donation from the Community

Ms. Ramsey has been in touch with the No Frills located on Keele, and they are saying that whenever we are having events at the school that they would like to contribute. Maybe we could incorporate them with whatever we are doing for graduation if they would like to contribute. They are requesting that a minimum of one-month notice be given to them in the form of a letter. If the graduation is on June 23rd, a letter needs to be put together by the 2nd week of May to be presented to No Frills. We should have a list of stuff that we are going to need for the graduation. Danforth Food Market located on Keele would like to contribute also. Ms. Ramsey will continue to communicate with both companies but will need a letter from the school to present to them in order to request any donations. Mr. Reynolds would like this to be discussed in the meeting next week with the parents and teachers that will be on the committee for graduation. This committee would be able to figure out what will be needed and we can go from there, and get the letters out before the 2nd week of May. We appreciate Mrs. Ramsey reaching out to these companies on behalf of the school. It would be great for Mrs. Ramsey to be on this committee too.

Open for Questions/Suggestion/Answers:

School Council/S: This is wonderful news and School Council would like the school to follow up and jump on this opportunity. Thank you, Mrs. Ramsey for taking this on.

School Council/Q: Do we have a donation letter on file for the school? Have we ever reached out to the community?

Principal/A: I doubt it, I will have to check. I'm going to have to search our Google Drive to see what we have. If not, we can also reach out to parents who are on the committee to share.

Parent/A: We had them. When we used to have the school Gala. So yes, we do have donation letters and different types.

School Council/S: Will support with creating a donation letter specifically for graduation request and other needs for the current /upcoming school year.

Parent/S: My Husband has a restaurant and I think he's just trying to find out the numbers. What you're planning to do for graduation, or will it be at the school, on site? The restaurant is very large and has lots of room, so if the children want to go there afterwards or if they want he can bring food to the school.

Principal/A: That sounds amazing. When Ms. Sullivan, Mrs. Hodge and I spoke today we were thinking if there is going to be a dinner off site maybe preferable for the children. We can discuss the ceremony and the dinner at the meeting next week.

Teacher/Q: Do we know how many children are graduating this year? Will we be using gowns and hats were any decision made as yet? I ask because I can contact someone to get donations for that.

Principal/A: It's about 9 children. Ms. Sullivan and Mrs. Hodge are usually the ones that handles that and they would have more information. Please join the meeting next week so we can see what we need. But yes, definitely they will need gowns to graduate.

Model Schools Updates-Community Support Worker - Maureen B

This position is still not filled but Colleen still supporting via email our school with any important information for parent workshops and School Council the recent Workshops were an evening with Canada Revenue was on Monday April 11, 2022 it was 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Upcoming Workshops will be about Food Security - Part 2 happening April 20, 2022 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm, Raising a Reader - Part 2 April 26, 2022 at 6:30 PM. The last one for the year will be in May it's called FUN! Hip Hop Dance, Toronto Parks/Rec and Toronto Public Library summer programs, on Wednesday May 25, 2022 from 6:30 - 8:30pm. Mr. Reynold and I will continue to share these wonderful workshops with our parents as time gets closer.

School Council Updates -Maureen B.

Welcome everyone I have a few things to share.

Workshop

"Integrated Literacy with a focus on Black Heritage Storytelling with Itah Sadu"-Part 1

Thursday February 17th, 2022 1:00-2:00 pm (Part 1) with Ms. Sadu was a wonderful experience for the children and we are thankful that we had a great turnout of parents. This workshop had us all engaged and hanging on every word that Ms. Sadu spoke. The children had lots of questions and Ms. Sadu did her best to answer both theirs and the parents question within the time frame that we had. The Cost of the Workshop was \$300.00, and we are currently waiting on the Invoice from Ms. Sadu to process payment. I will follow up via email and phone again next week. Books were an extension of this workshop. The goal is to gift every student enrolled in the school with an age appropriate book by Ms. Sadu. If this is not possible we will get books focusing on Canadian Authors and/or Canadian Black History. *A Different Booklist* is the store that the books will be purchased from, Ms. Sullivan has taken the lead in this area and this would not be possible without her and the support from Mr. Reynolds. The books arrived at the school last week. Ms. Sullivan and I will work on a plan to distribute them and organise the books to go out. The goal is to have them go out before the end of next month (May 2022). The total cost for the books will be shared in next months meeting as I don't have the actual amount.

“Integrated Literacy and Art or Integrated Literacy through Art/Dance” Part 2

It was originally scheduled to happen tonight but due to lack of time and money was not able to happen. I would like to still plan a family Game night (virtual) for our last School Council meeting as this was not possible tonight.

Meeting Minutes for February 2022

I have not finished yet but will have it done before the end of this Month.

School Council TDSB email and Zoom account

My account is deactivated since early February this year. There have been several emails back and forth to get this rectified but the status remains the same. Mr. Reynolds has greatly supported me with trying to get this resolved, and continues to help with creating the zoom links for the February Workshop and our School Council meetings. I appreciate all his help.

School Sports /others

Track season starting does the school participate in this TDSB?

TTC Cards

Some school that have children that take the bus to school and look older that 12 have a form that they fill out that allows the student on the bus for free? Do we have this?

Next Meeting date(s)

◆ Wed. June 15, 2022 @ 6:30 -7:30 pm via zoom

Meeting Adjourned: 7:37pm