

## Bowmore School Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

6:00pm to 7:30pm - Staffroom (2nd Floor, Junior Building)

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:05 PM**

**MEETING ADJOURNED: 7:57 PM**

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Jenn Engels	Erika Stoffer	Amanda Jaeger
Andrew Honor	Earl Cabaluna	Andrea Blanco
Andrea Maugham	Katie Worndl	Audrey Lupke
Maria Kollias	Grace Deursen	Nicole White
Vasoula Vasilopoulos	Tina Gepdani	Jessica Christensen
Nic Sentzer	Hooman Ebrahim	Shera Nezon
Hanna Finley	Lisa Perelman	Susheela Willis
Kyle Vojdani	Claire Deveale	Imelda Falco
Leah Anderson Vojdani	Jody Sadofsky	Shannon Elliot
Dhivya Subramanian	Jackie Hawke	Taylor Simpson
Veronica Wong	Kim Cudmor	Patrick Allcock
Siobhan Flanagan	Erin Worndl	Janet Rivetski
Tarek Lehrinak	Shauna Peck	Megan Hudson
Cynthia Peuter	Amanda Li	Kristen Miller
Leane Farchment	Victoria Blue	Rasha Mourtada
Robyn Elbaum	Katie Maxwell	Erin Church
Shaileen Casimiro	Christina Hawkins	Barb Moran
Leah Jarvis	Alyssa Robertson	Raffi Sekdorian
Kelly Glover	Grace Pastidio	Natalie Poissant
Orjan Lundberg	Alyssa Robertson	Bob Comendador
Emily Hughes	Geetika Jaura	Deniese
Taylor Graham	Grace Pastidio	Masters-McKenney
Briana Un Li	Anil Wijesooriya	Kosta Flegas
Sonja Tyson	Dorrett White	Jacque Neveu
Nadine Dunk	Zahida Sheikh	Andrey Padmore
Melissa Stapley-Ham	Meredith Briglio	
Emily Bird	Emily Boffa	
Mary Ellen Armstrong		



## 1. WELCOME AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

## 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the October 8, 2025 School Council Meeting Minutes

Moved by: Orjan Lundberg

Seconded by: Emily Harris

Result: Motion carried

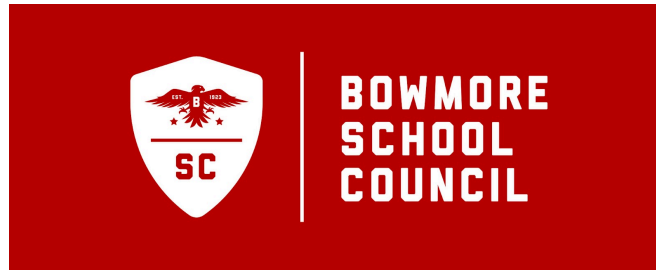
**3. PRESENTATION ON THE BOWMORE CARES FUND** Presenter: Vasoula Vasilopoulos  
Vasoula Vasilopoulos presented an update on the Bowmore Cares Fund, which provides support to families in the school community facing financial challenges. The fund has been operating charitable work at Bowmore for many years, with a focus on supporting families in kindergarten ECEs for 8+ years. Many supported families are newcomers to Canada and require various resources including clothing, interpreters, childcare, and assistance with field trips and educational materials.

**Current Support:** The fund currently supports 45 children on the Bowmore Cares list, with families able to approach the Bowmore Cares Fund directly for assistance with dignity. The fund currently has \$9,940 in Bowmore Cares funds – not enough but a great way to start the school year.

**Community Partnerships and Donations:** The Bowmore Cares Fund has successfully identified free apparel resources in the community and secured donations from companies across Toronto. Recent donations include Champion sweaters and hoodies, shoes from Operation Warmth, over 1,000 pairs of socks from Operation Warmth, and 30 brand new coats, snowpants, hats and gloves from Blue Jays Care. Students are able to select coat colors of their choice. The Bowmore Cares Fund plans to repeat these donation efforts next year with earlier timing.

**Storage and Distribution:** A storage area has been established at Bowmore Cares for extra items including backpacks and boots. The Bowmore Cares Fund is seeking additional resources for boots and other winter items.

**Recent Activities:** Parent council supports Bowmore Cares students via pizza lunch, providing two slices of pizza for each of the 45 students every pizza lunch. Last week, 45 food bags/hampers were received from the TDSB Food Bank and will be delivered to



another department with liaison support from the food bank. Each student on the Bowmore list will receive a coat, food hamper, and bag with hat, socks and gloves.

#### **How the Community Can Help:**

- Volunteer to help collect and distribute packages, ensuring families can access support without needing to take items home themselves
- Donate through School Cash Online using the QR code that provides direct access - funds support students who cannot afford field trips. Information will also be shared in the newsletter, and donations can be made specifically for Bowmore Cares, which will flag the amount to go into the account
- **Sponsorship opportunities:** The fund is seeking sponsors to provide larger-scale support. Anyone who can connect the fund with potential sponsors is encouraged to reach out. Companies interested in advertising support for families in need are welcome to contact Vasoula at [vasoula.vasilopoulos@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:vasoula.vasilopoulos@tdsb.on.ca)
- Families needing support can contact Vasoula Vasilopoulos or Principal Flegas
- Consider donating clothing items to support the program

#### **Clarifications and Additional Information:**

- **Field Trip Funding:** For TDSB trips, costs depend on the specific trip. Some trips are free and board-covered, while others require families to pay. The Bowmore Cares Fund covers costs for students who cannot afford to participate. Admin covers these costs through Bowmore Cares because the budget works on a model where any amount needs to be assigned to an expense line and these trips are assigned under Bowmore Cares
- **School Budget:** The school has a budget of \$160K to cover all Bowmore expenses including office supplies, home room supplies, phones, paper, professional development, computers/technology. This is why the Bowmore Cares Fund makes a difference.
- **Fund Structure:** The Bowmore Cares account is not a non-profit organization; it is a school account attached to the budget of the school and is only used to support families. Funds in this account are in safe keeping for the Bowmore Cares requirements only. A spreadsheet tracks where funds have been requested and allocated. Note that if Bowmore Cares lists don't show up, this is noted for the administrators of the funds.
- **TDSB Commitment:** TDSB has a commitment to have no student left behind, but budgets do have limitations. It's necessary to have Bowmore Cares to cover gaps.



#### **4. UPDATES FROM THE LIBRARY** Presenter: Leah Jarvis Time

**Book Fair:** The book fair raised \$1,900, which will be used to purchase new titles and augment novel sets. This year's book fair was with Ella Minnow; last year was with Scholastic. Ms. Jarvis is seeking feedback on which vendor people preferred.

**Used Book Sale:** The library will hold a used book sale in June. Families are invited to donate any used books, games, and puzzles. Donations can be brought into the library anytime. Funds raised from the book sale will be used to purchase additional library items such as soft chairs, games, and math resources.

**Drag Queen Story Time:** The drag queen story time event was a huge success, and there is hope to hold more events in the future. A thank you card from our storyteller was shared with attendees.

**Forest of Reading Program:** Forest of Reading is starting – a great program started in Ontario. The book clubs are for grades 4-6 and 7 to 8; primary and kindie classes run the program in the classroom.

**Read a Thon:** Read a Thon will take place in February. The library is looking for feedback from parents who want to be involved and will provide more information in a week or two.

#### **5. GRADE 8 TRANSITIONS** Presenter: Geetika Jaura (Ms Gupta)

Ms. Gupta introduced herself to the council and welcomed questions from families. Ms. Gupta provides guidance assistance regarding transition to high school, including information on special interest programs. She created a Google Classroom where students can access information about specialized programs, deadlines, and virtual information sessions. Information will be added to the newsletter and a direct message will be sent this week to all grade 8 families.

#### **6. GRADE 8 GRAD COMMITTEE UPDATE** Presenters: Andrea Maugham and Lisa Perelman

**Committee Formation:** Andrea noted there is not much to say about grade 8 grad yet, but the first parent committee meeting for grad planning will be December 2 at NSK on Gerrard. After that meeting, a plan will be put together and presented to the school with a request for volunteers.



**Yearbook:** There will be a grade 7/8 yearbook only this year. Families with notes or anything to send along are encouraged to do so. Teachers have been asked to gather photos of students.

**Carnival:** Lisa Perelman and Jessica Dexter have run carnival for the last 3 years and are stepping down, looking for someone to chair or co-chair carnival. There is lots of information to support whoever takes over and the main vendor is already booked for next year. Interested folks should email [bowmoreesc@gmail.com](mailto:bowmoreesc@gmail.com).

## **7. COMMUNITY CONCERN: CHANGES TO THE FRENCH IMMERSION DECES**

**Background:** There was a question/concern for changes to the FI kindergarten rooms related to the DECEs (Designated Early Childhood Educator). Leah explained that a question was brought to school council by a number of families concerned over learning last week that the DECEs were to be transferred out of Bowmore at the end of the month and there wouldn't be French replacement coming in because French staffing is tricky. In fact, one of the classes already doesn't have a French DECE at the moment.

### **Three Issues Identified:**

1. Changes being made to the classroom mid year (classroom routines are in place)
2. Loss of the French instruction (meant to be immersed in French, hard if your educator doesn't speak French)
3. Lack of communication from the school to the families, not being properly informed as to what is going on

### **Clarifications from Principal Flegas:**

- How support staff are placed in schools: DECEs, lunch room supervisors; all support staff are placed through employee services (called People and Culture)
- Concerns were shared to Principal Flegas about the French DECEs and he connected with the People and Culture department to confirm that no changes were planned. All the DECEs that are currently at Bowmore will remain
- There is one EDP class that has an afternoon opening for a DECE. Once that position has been filled, Bowmore administration will communicate with families
- All communications must come from the Board's People & Culture Department to School Administration before they can be shared more broadly with the School community



- As of later in the day on Monday, families were informed that the transfer wasn't happening; staff will continue to address communication and the lack of French instruction in the one class.

**8. INFORMATION SHARING ON BILL 33 AND RELATED ISSUES** Presenter: Jenn Engels **Bill 33 Update:** Bill 33 passed at Queens Park and will soon become law. Education Minister has expanded power to sideline trustees across the province and replace them with government appointed supervisors (currently replaced 22 trustees with one person with no education experience).

**Risk of Increased Class Sizes:** Risk of increased class sizes, canceling programs, requiring police in schools whether or not the community wants it.

**Brings in a Family Support Office:** Brings in a Student and Family Support Office (call centre) with roll out in January 2026 but no information about what it will look like.

**Community Advocacy:** What can be done? Many people organizing in our community – advocacy in the community to work and share information with parents.

**Legislation Context:** Not immediately. Government has walked back legislation that is unpopular. But requires organization from parents in the province.

**Presentation on Current Events:** Presentation has information on what's happening currently in the community (train the trainer session on Dec. 3).

**New Council Role:** New role in our council – provincial advocacy liaison – will be filled by Mercedes Lee. She will be liaising and trying to get other information from communities on how we can turn this around.

**9. SAFE & CARING SCHOOLS COMMITTEE** Presenters: Kosta Flegas and Leah Vojdani

**Committee Overview:** Principal Flegas stated "we are going above and beyond other schools" and noted they have several committees starting this year, school council members and parents and staff to work together on issues like equity, staffing.

**Last Meeting Topic:** Last meeting happened – discussion on progressive discipline (how do we work on safety).



**Office Referral Form Update:** One thing we'll do moving forward is update our office referral form. It will be a google form (because it will allow us to collect data and understand patterns).

**Key Questions for the Form:**

- What time are incidents happening? Area of school
- Will collect data to let us address issues better
- Committee will look at this tomorrow to update and make changes (staff feedback, parent feedback) – new tool to help us streamline what the process looks like, so we're addressing issues in a timely manner

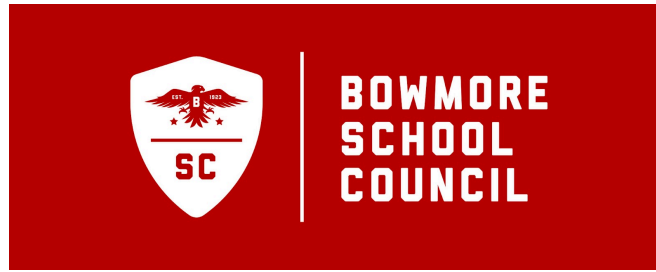
**Administration Response to Incidents:** Office Referral – we focus on the discipline too much, so we want to focus on the restorative piece

- If a child makes a bad decision, we will address safety; but also an opportunity for restorative
- Want to shift culture and increase transparency and include a culture shift so student can reflect on incidents "all about learning"

**Training and Support:**

- Parent asked about the teaching and restorative pieces – Caring and Safe Schools is a department that supports the schools and asked what kind of training we can do around the work on progressive discipline
- Administrators, teachers, support staff will be getting training in restorative practices- addressing issues, helps with classroom management

**Discussion: What are restorative practices?** Principal Flegas explained that when there is an incident and harm is caused (emotional/physical), the goal is to restore the relationship. For example, students may be playing or roughhousing outside and get carried away and hurt. Often the focus is only on the negative feelings of the incident. The restorative approach uses a specific process with questions in the conversation to unpack what happened and then give an opportunity for all people involved in the situation to resolve it. The goal is to bring the students back together to restore the relationship. Without closure, they still focus on the negative incident.



**Discussion: Does that work with a child that is a repeat aggressor?** The committee noted that you see growth over time and emphasized the need for consistency to shift the culture. The goal is to have consistency to shift the culture for everyone.

**Discussion: Upcoming Training for School Staff** An experienced principal from Caring and Safe Schools will run the training session on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday of next week, one full day in December. Teachers and DECEs will participate first in the first five days. The training will release 10-15 staff members per day. Office and support staff will do it on January 16 (the PA day in January). There is a scenario and specific process that participants will go through, which helps set up a framework for discussion and will let teachers address with consistency in their classroom. Restorative circles in the classroom will be implemented.

**Discussion: How do we support children who feel unsafe**

Principal Flegas responded that the restorative practice training doesn't take away existing policies and procedures. Families with children who feel unsafe should reach out to Principal Flegas to identify what support can be offered. When the administration receives an incident report from staff or witnesses an incident, they follow TDSB policies and code of conduct, and there are always consequences. As a public school, the Education Act has specific categories or criteria on when a suspension or expulsion would be justified. When a serious incident report is received, the team follows a specific process consulting with Caring and Safe schools, superintendents, and other areas for guidance to decide whether suspension/expulsion is required. The school is trying to shift culture and educate students while still abiding by the school process.

**Recommendation: Brave Education Program**

A recommendation from school council member, Andrea Maugham, was shared about a company called "Brave Education." This recommendation had already been shared by school council with the Safe and Caring Schools Committee and received positive parent and staff feedback.

**Program Overview:** Brave Education comes into schools across Ontario with instructors experienced in social justice and mental health. They talk to every student and go into classrooms for 45-60 mins from K-8 (with adapted approach for the year). The program provides video resources and case studies for teachers.



**Program Focus:** The program is called Healthy Boundaries and helps students empower themselves to let them know how to deal with situations. It gives them in the moment strategies, helps recognize what's okay and what is not, teaches practical skills, and shows how to interact in all situations. The program includes a parent workshop and teacher workshop so everyone uses the same language and understanding.

**Costs:** There are 41 classrooms at the school. The cost is \$155 per class for their session. Workshop for parents and teachers are \$600 each. The whole school would be \$7500 plus HST.

**Discussion:** Budget Coverage for “Brave Education”: Council will engage in direct fundraising campaign to bring the program to the school. Looking to schedule the program for available dates in January.

\*\*\*This section of the meeting closed with a suggestion to schedule a safety focused meeting again as there is still much to cover/

## **10. Community Questions/Concerns**

- i) While the teachers of grades 7&8 take much-needed time to transition to teaching a full curriculum, what are ways that the school board and admin can support a full extra curricular experience for graduating students to build their leadership skills?
- ii) What steps are being taken to restore relationships with staff and collaborate with them to bring back the ski trips for our grade 4-8 students and Muskoka Woods trip for our grade 7 students?

### **Administration Response to Questions:**

Principal Flegas noted that extracurricular activities are teacher driven and voluntary. Sports teams are currently running. He will reach out about the Muskoka Woods trip as the deadline was missed and will explore options. A conversation will be held at the next staff meeting about professional development opportunities, leadership program opportunities, extracurriculars, and field trips. An update will be provided afterwards.

### **Comments from Teacher in attendance:**

Bob Comendador expressed frustration about the strain of balancing teaching responsibilities with extracurricular activities. While teachers love coaching and it benefits kids, the workload has become unsustainable under the current model. Coaching used to be 4 days a week but is now barely 2 days. Classroom education remains the number one



priority, but teachers are stretched thin and the new educational model makes it difficult to do both without compromising student learning. The speaker shared personal impact, noting hospitalizations last year and the toll on their own family. Despite loving the school and the phenomenal work done over the years, hearing requests for additional activities is painful when teachers are already stretched. They indicated that the atmosphere of the school is getting hurt. The speaker emphasized they were speaking only for themselves about these personal limits.

**Principal Flegas Response:**

The administration is committed to ongoing support for the teachers including resources and professional development, and they have provided common prep periods to allow collaboration on curriculum development. The change to the core teaching model has been in planning since last year. This decision was made to support student achievement and well being, and in support of structures that were not meeting ministry expectations on language instruction. Principal Flegas emphasized his belief in the model and his support of the decision. This model is followed by other schools, and change takes time to implement. A community member noted that for K-8, 6-8 or 7-8 schools in our Family of School (FOS 15), 7 of 11 have some form of rotary, co-teaching, team-teaching, instead of the core model for their 7-8 classes. Bowmore is not in the majority for using the core model.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:57 without addressing all questions from the community. Next meeting set for Wednesday, January 14th.