



Meeting – March 21st, 2019

Attendance: Holly Boileau, Sarah Tobey, Alex Musten, Kim MacFarlane, Natalie Dennis, Dale McIntosh, Mike Candeloro, Cadence Wade, Evan Saskin, Dan Taylor, Daniel Salerno (grade 6 teacher)

1. Motion to pass the minutes from the January 22nd meeting

Mike Candeloro – passed, Natalie Dennis – seconded

2. Any items added to the agenda?

One parent requested to add “Technology in the Classroom”

3. School Update from Principal Taylor

- *School Fencing*

- *gate enclosure now installed at the Shaw entrance near Artscape, side fencing and post chains at the Shaw entrance to the walkway is completed, side fencing and posts installed at the Givins entrance to the walkway installed.*
- *Next steps of process involves the north courtyard – higher fence (same height as the Argyle street fence closest to Artscape) to enclose the north courtyard – we are in the queue for construction --- also have contacted our FTL and submitted application for gate to be installed on the Givins St. side for the kindergarten entrance (near room 2/salt box) – this has been submitted to safe school in order to expedite the process*

- *Sports Update*

- *Spring Sports teams – Badminton (co-ed) Grade 5 and Grade 6*
- *Track and Field – Grade 2 and up co-ed*
- *Boys Slo-pitch*
- *Girls Slo-pitch*
- *Co-ed ultimate Frisbee*

- *Safety reinforcement at school*

- *Reviewed yard duty coverage with teaching and lunch staff at last staff meeting*
- *Safety gate enclosures, entrances, dismissals, head counts,*
- *Arranging for TPS to come and do a spring street safety talk with our classes*

- *Vigilance*
- *Indoor recesses/Inclement weather/field access*
 - *Severe weather fluctuations this winter – severe cold, above zero, rain, extreme freezing, etc.*
 - *Lead to the TDSB's first 'snow day' in a decade and the cancellation of TDSB transportation roughly half a dozen times*
 - *TDSB expectation with regards to snow/ice removal during the winter is that the sidewalks and entrances are to be cleared, salted, etc., and that a walk path should be cleared and available around the grounds – no expectation of clearing the entire playground as we do not have the machinery*
 - *We only have one caretaker on site during the day and for weeks Robert was basically either clearing snow, salting, shovelling, or doing the lunch set up and take down*
 - *We reached out to the TDSB facilities a few times for additional caretaking support and we did receive some extra support a couple of times but every school was also asking for the same help at the same time*
 - *This winter proved particularly challenging as we had heavy snow followed by melting and then a deep freeze leaving our playgrounds and yard covered in jagged ice with only a cleared walkway around the building –*
 - *In interest of student safety I had to call many indoor days and informed the community as frequently as I could*
 - *This is never an easy decision to make as our community knows that we value outdoor learning at our school but safety needs of all the students need to take priority*
 - *When emails were sent out informing the community of the school day being indoors I received the vast majority of families supported the decision*
 - *During our string of indoor days we did have a very nice sunny winter's day after a snowfall and we went outside because the ice was sufficiently covered – within minutes one of the students was in the office with a bump on his head saying to Suzie, "Why did Mr. Taylor say it was Ok to go outside when it's not?"*
 - *Our last massive snowfall allowed for the students to get back outside on a regular basis and we have been outside since – we have made some sections of our field out of bounds (now the whole field is due to the mud and ice) but we are now running our regular programs*
 - *With regards to planning for next year, I'm not sure we can do anything differently accept adjust to the surroundings that present themselves – inclement weather protocol by TDSB standards says that students are to remain indoors at minus 20 to 25 depending upon the wind chill – safety status of the grounds themselves is more of a observational call – we had many nice winter days this winter but needed to remain indoors due to the state of the grounds – Many individual classes went for community walks or walks around the grounds but there was not enough open safe space for all our students and staff to go out at the same time*

Discussion followed:

Some comments / questions arose about getting outside:

- Could we encourage more teachers to take even a few minutes to go outside for fresh air? Dan isn't able to enforce but can encourage.
- Could we get more supervision? We can only have a certain number on "staff" but the school would gladly welcome more lunch supervisors to be on the roster (the absenteeism rate is very very high) or to have volunteers (police check required) to be available to support. Currently we have 4 staff at each AM / PM recess on duty but at lunch only 3 staff scheduled (typically more like 2).
- Becoming on the list as a lunch supervisor is helpful b/c there are many days where the full staff are not available – on those days you would get paid and otherwise if you still want to help you would be adding great value as a volunteer

From Dan:

It would be preferable for people who wish to volunteer to go through the Lunch Room Supervisor position because any parent 'volunteer' is supposed to always be with a permanent staff member and not supervise children on their own whereas a vetted lunch room supervisor does not. The goal? More supervision for our children.

Here is the link and applications can be submitted on an ongoing basis.

Once you click on the link you just need to scroll down to the 'on call/supply lunch room supervisor' application, click on it, and follow the steps.

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Employment/Support-Staff>

Then we discussed more about indoor recess:

- What are the alternatives to watching a movie in the gym (often what takes place for the primary) – ideally getting them back into their classroom as managing a room of 20 is much easier. We would need more supervisors or volunteers to do this. Could we have bingo, more board games, card club, intramural sports, social circles, open the library and rotate rooms getting to use this space on indoor days, bringing the Chess Institute back in to teach the kids chess so this can happen more regularly (chess boards were purchased for all classrooms a couple of years ago) etc ...
ACTION: Natalie to ask primary teachers Grades 1 – 3 what board games they would like and to purchase a couple for each room. If you have any new games / puzzles please bring them in and direct to Ms. Halton.
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Ministry of Education News:

- *many announcements of late and the TDSB is doing everything it can to ensure a smooth upcoming school year for students*
- *250 students who have been receiving ASD support in different programs are expected to return to TDSB schools in April*
- *junior class average is going up by one student for the 2019/20 school year – this should not have a massive impact on G/S but will have a more pronounced impact on middle school and the increase in average by 5 students will have a much more dramatic impact on high school*
- *we will be receiving our 2019/20 staffing allocation tomorrow morning – this starts the process for school organization and I will be sharing the received information with council executive on Monday morning*
- *our current projection for next year is almost identical to what we have this year which might mean that a portable is not necessary for the 2019/20 school year – we shall see*

School Cash On line

- *we are going to be fully on-line by September with regards to online purchasing as a school – field trips, etc.*
- *we are set up now but will be looking to pilot it this spring so we can work out any glitches prior to going full-school in September – more information to come*

Spring clean-Up

- *Prior to March break we did some initial cleaning of our cubby areas – we asked for, and received, more caretaking support during the break and the school was given a more thorough cleaning*
- *Next step is for the library to be cleaned out so construction can begin this spring*
- *Earth day is going to be Tuesday, April 23 and we will be moving materials to our new outdoor learning environment in the north courtyard so that can be established for the spring*

4. Education Cuts & WEPPE – Alex Musten

Alex shared with the group her experience attending the West End Parents for Public Education event a few weeks ago. It's a group that developed out of the Dovercourt P.S. Social Justice Committee. She asked if there would be any interest having a similar committee at Givins Shaw - they write letters to gov't that state amounts raised through fundraising events, and what that money will be used for, framed in a way that asks that public schools be adequately funded to meet basic education needs and stability for our kids. She also presented a template letter to be sent by the Student Advisory Committee/School Council (SAC) that states growing concern

about the government's cuts to our education, and shifts in priorities. Co-chairs asked to follow-up on this separately as SAC is represented by both parents and staff.

This is the flyer from the inaugural meeting. For more information or looking to get involved - please feel free to email Alex at Alex Musten alexandra.musten@gmail.com

YOU ARE INVITED TO

The Inaugural Meeting of the West End Parents for Public Education

JOIN ACTIVIST PARENTS/GUARDIANS & GROUPS FROM COMMUNITIES IN WEST END TORONTO AS WE FIGHT FOR FULLY-FUNDED, EQUITABLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR OUR KIDS IN ADVANCE OF THE 2019 PROVINCIAL BUDGET!

Wednesday, February 13th, 2019, 6-8 pm
New Horizons Tower, 1140 Bloor St W
RSVP to DovercourtSJC@gmail.com

Child Minding Available
Light Refreshments

Backgrounder:

For the past two decades, public schools in Ontario have faced a steady attrition of funding under neoliberalism, by governments of all stripes. In 2019, it is facing another ideologically-driven attack by the Ford government.

The Conservatives are preparing their 2019 budget. \$125 million has already been stripped from schools. We can anticipate further cuts to programs, attacks on education workers when contracts expire in August, and possibly, a push towards privatization via school vouchers and the establishment of a Charter school system.

The Dovercourt Social Justice Group, a group of activist parents & guardians, recognizes that parent/guardian advocacy is a powerful tool to create pressure on a government for education issues.

Short-term, we seek connections with other activist parents/guardians and groups in Toronto for direct actions, and to make a submission to the government for the 2019 budget. Long-term, we would like to be part of a parent/guardian network across Ontario that advocates for a fully-funded, equitable, public education system.

5. School Council Update

- a. Treasurer's Report – no update at this time
- b. Nutrition Committee Update – Jen Barratt had no new news
- c. Upcoming Workshops
 - i. Screening of Screenagers – April 17th
 - ii. Healthy Eating – date tbc
- d. Upcoming Fundraisers
 - i. Cookbook – details to come
 - ii. Bingo Night – date being confirmed
 - iii. Movie Night – April 4th – WANT TO HELP OUT? Email kathymile@hotmail.com
 - iv. Dance-a-thon / Eco-Hop – April 26th – pledge forms to go out early April
 - v. Yard Clean up – proposing April 27th – awaiting confirmation
 - vi. GS Clothing – website open for orders between April 1st and April 22nd
<http://gsjps.topuniforms.store/>

- vii. Parent Social @ Cadillac Lounge – May 9th – WANT TO GET INVOLVED? Email jeanecalleja@gmail.com
- viii. Fun Fair – May 25th - WANT TO GET INVOLVED? Email dale_mcintosh@sympatico.ca
- ix. Used Children's Book Sale – June (date tbc)

Any other business:

A parent raised the question regarding how much time was spent on the ipads in the classroom and what programs are being used.

While each teacher is at a different level in their understanding and capabilities using technology in the classroom the ipads and other robotics are meant to add value to the curriculum and not replace other tools. There are many positive examples including classroom projects, literacy apps, research opportunities etc ... As the question was quite specific it was recommended that this parent speak to Dan offline to discuss further. Another note was that it was identified that Adam Smith is our teacher leading technology and innovation – he runs lunch and learns and dedicates time with teachers to demonstrate various apps, programs and best practice useage. He is open to chat further if anyone has questions about the apps loaded on the ipads. Further discussion followed around what the Junior students are doing as Daniel Solerno was present to speak from the point of view of a grade 6 classroom. He said his concern is more about what happens online between Friday evening and Monday morning and the aftermath of those events come the start of each week. He feels that in the classroom he has good control of time spent and what they are doing online.

We discussed the excitement of “Screenagers” coming to our school for the screening and the interesting discussion that should lead to.

Meeting was terminated just after 8 PM.

Next meeting is on April 18th @ 6:15 PM