

McKee Public School

School Advisory Council

Tue Jan 19, 2016

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Nidhi Mahajan
Bonnie Yu
Sara Biglari
Nancy Ng-Charron
Katia Robles

Domenic Giorgi
Ada Zhu
Wendy Teo
Eman Khairallah
Charles Yang

Ravi Kumar
Zahra (Afsaneh) Shasavar
Jeff Kwong
Hengameh Vahabi

1. Call to order: 6:35 pm.
2. Motion raised by Afsaneh Shasavar to approve the November Minutes, seconded by Bonnie Yu.
3. Council warmly welcomed the new vice principal Katia Robles from RJ Lang. We wish her success at the school and support to carry on the great work by Gary McGilvray.

Special Business:

4. **Upgrade of Playground:** Jennifer Schmidt, who coordinated the initiative to redesign the McKee Playground and play structures in 2009/2010, provided an overview of the initial plan and the progress.
 - a) McKee has been selected for an upgrade of the playing field surface to artificial turf in 2017/2018. A suggestion was made to get in touch with Claude Watson to understand their experience with artificial turf and the challenges with maintenance.
 - b) Council to identify the remaining upgrades in the plan and prioritize the critical upgrades, to be supported by Council and/or the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).
 - c) Council to form a sub-committee to analyze the plan and support the execution over the next few academic years.
 - d) The prior experience in 2009 shows the planning process for making any improvements takes about 12-18 months. Any improvements require coordination between TDSB's Facilities and Planning departments, McKee McKids, and representatives of staff, parents, and students.
 - e) **Principal Response:** The addition of additional portables in the parking lot/asphalt area to accommodate enrollment pressures could impact any plans for improvement in 2016/2017. Construction of the new Avondale PS in the next couple of years should reduce the enrollment pressures at McKee and we could potentially revisit the need for portables in 2017/2018.
 - f) Lesson Learned: The Ontario Ministry of Education has strict guidelines on fund allocation to schools and the purpose of the budget allocated. With McKee being in an area with higher socioeconomic status and the already improved infrastructure, we could face challenges in getting MoE approval for any non-critical changes to the school infrastructure.
 - g) Suggestion: Council could approach corporations for grants that could help build the funds required for improvements.

Principal's Report (Domenic Giorgi):

5. **Enrollment Numbers for 2016:**
 - a) Meeting with TDSB staff to discuss the enrollment pressure in the school and should have a projection for September 2017 at the February SAC meeting. Though there could be ongoing enrollment throughout the year, the projection numbers from the planners are close to actuals with +/- 6 students by February.
 - b) The schools receive the staffing numbers in March for their 2016 planning.
 - c) The April meeting is critical for Council to understand the staffing numbers and placement of classes.

- d) **Jeff:** if there are 8 JK classes now, won't they move up to higher classes in the next years and be over the projections? **Principal Response:** Usually we lose the equivalent of 1 class due to students moving to French Immersion or Claude Watson or gifted programs. So, it's not a linear growth of the classes from JK to Grade 5.
6. **Winter Policy:** As per TDSB policy, it is considered cold when the temperature is -28C with wind chill. So, if the temperature is below -28C then the school has indoor recess and lunch sessions. If the temperature is between -20C and -28C it's the school's discretion to have an indoor recess or lunch time. It's critical for the parents to understand the winter policy and prepare the children appropriately. Unfortunately, it's a logistical challenge, if there are discrete requests from parents to keep their children indoors due to weather or health conditions. The school has to enforce the recess and lunch schedules as per TDSB policy.
7. **Report Cards and Parent-Teacher Meetings:** Report cards will go out on Feb 8th and Parent-Teacher meetings will be scheduled during the week.
8. **Registrations for Kindergarten classes:** Registrations open for kindergarten classes in February (8th to 12th) for 1 week. **Wendy:** Is the registration open only for 1 week? **Principal Response:** the registration is open all through the year, but this 1 week is exclusively for kindergarten.
9. **Dance-a-thon:** it is scheduled to happen on March 4th, 2016, supported and coordinated by staff. This is an important fundraising activity for the school. Parents are encouraged to donate and there are raffle prizes. The funds are used to support the school's technology, music and Physical Education enhancement programs. The goal for this year is to use the funds to increase the number of chrome books and tablets.
10. **Extra-curricular activities:** A new Awari club has been added by the school. This traditional African game is being introduced Grade 5 students, to be subsequently expanded to cover other classes. Request to Council to approve \$364 to cover the expenses of the materials for the Awari game. **Council:** Nidhi raised a motion approve the cost of the game, seconded by Afsaneh.
11. **Parent Concerns raised by Afsaneh:**
- a) **Surveillance Cameras:** Afsaneh: can the school install surveillance cameras to monitor and ensure the safety of kids? **Principal Response:** There are a couple of cameras already installed and monitored by TDSB. Given the non-incident history from the last 5+ years that the cameras have been in operation, there is no immediate need to add additional cameras.
- b) **Admission to school clubs:** there is a general concern that the admission to the school clubs are restrictive and not all students are given the opportunity to participate. **Principal Response:** It is very important to work with the individual teachers to address those concerns and it wouldn't be appropriate for Council to discuss in isolation.
12. **Usage of recording devices during School Programs:** there is a general concern about the usage of mobile or other recording devices by parents during assemblies or other programs, blocking the view or other parents behind them. Council suggests to the school to explore the option of capturing videos by the school and make a DVD available for sale to all parents, so they don't focus on recording the program and actually get to enjoy the wonderful performances by the children.
13. **T-shirt sales:** Eman suggested setting up a table during the Parent-Teacher interviews to sell T-shirts and communicate through the newsletter. There are 500 T-shirts available and Council will discuss a potential new supplier for a fresh supply, considering the challenges coordinating with the previous supplier.
14. **Upcoming Events / Important Dates**
- a) **Report Cards: Feb 8th**
- b) **PA Day: Feb 12th**
- c) **Lunar New Year Celebrations: Feb 11th**
- d) **Dance-a-thon: Mar 4th**
- e) **Spirit Week: Mar 8th to Mar 12th**

- f) **March Break: Mar 14th to Mar 18th**
- g) **Persian New Year: Mar 23rd**

Financial Report (Charles)

- 15. **Term Deposit:** there is a term deposit maturing in June 2016. Council to plan for the future utilization of the funds.
- 16. **Surplus from last year:** there is a \$2000 surplus from last year's operations. Correlated to the previous discussion on playground improvements, Council has to put together a long-term plan for fundraising and allocations.

Chair Report:

- 17. **Approval for Nov Meeting minutes:** Jennifer raised the motion and Daniel seconded to approve the minutes from Oct meeting.
- 18. **Fund Raising Opportunities:** Council received an offer from Rain Sprouts an organization selling coupon books for \$30, with discounts available at wide range of restaurants and food chains worth \$2500.
 - a) **Principal Response:** Council should be conscious of the frequency of the fundraising activities and ensure they don't conflict with other major fundraising activities.
 - b) **Charles:** would there be a logistical challenge to the school if they have to manage the selling of the coupon books and manage the proceeds from each class? Also, a communication challenge is involved to communicate about the coupon books to the parent community.
 - c) **Charles:** what is the objective of the fund raising activities? Currently there is a lack of planning for the long-term goal, Council has to strategize to help the allocation of funds to long-term plans like Capital Spending for playground improvement.
 - d) Council agreed to defer the discussion on the coupon book to next year, so it is planned to be delivered by November 2016, for parents interested to purchase them.
- 19. **Report of inappropriate access to SAC Gmail account:** Ravi received an email from "The Source" electronics store, mentioning that a shopper accessed the Council account from their store and forgot to log out. Council decided to change the password for the Gmail account to avoid any future access using those credentials.

New Business / Open Questions:

- 20. **Pizza Lunch:** the pre-order program for pizza lunch helped streamline the process of handling and distribution of pizzas. Suggestion to continue the pre-order for next year.
- 21. **An additional gate near the baseball diamond:** Eman asked if it is possible to add an additional gate near the baseball diamond to facilitate access for dropping children off during the morning and reduce traffic at the main door. **Principal Response:** it could be a potential safety issue and the school would prefer to maintain status quo on the current facility options.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm

Important Decisions and Action Items:

- 1. **Action:** Get in touch with Claude Watson regarding artificial turf upgrade experience.
- 2. **Action:** Form a Sub-Committee for Play Area Improvements & Management.
- 3. **Decision:** Council approved November Minutes.
- 4. **Action:** Discuss Staffing and Placements at April Council meeting.
- 5. **Decision:** Council approved the purchase of game materials costing \$364 for the Owari Club.
- 6. **Action:** Discuss the option of making a policy on school program participation.

7. **Decision:** Deferred the discussion on coupon books to Sep 2016 meeting.
8. **Action:** Council to discuss the long-term plan for fundraising initiatives and goals.
9. **Action:** Change the password for the Council Gmail account.
10. **Action:** Plan for the funds maturing from the term deposit.
11. **Decision:** School to continue the pre-order method for pizza ordering.

Future Meeting Schedule:

1. Tuesday February 16, 2016 at 6:30 pm
2. Tuesday April 5, 2016 at 6:30 pm
3. Tuesday May 17, 2016 at 6:30 pm
4. June Schedule TBD