

Minutes for Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Time: 6:30pm

Attendees: 16 virtual participants: Beverly F, Delia J, Shawn, G, Charlotte B, Tuyen K, Katelynn B, Melvin, Ivana L-M, Kin I, Elena, Odiljon A, Alissa P, Debebe, Lyn, Sylvia, Aliyah H

1. Welcome and Introductions

Delia welcomed everyone and asked the School Advisory Committee introduce themselves. Delia set up a poll to find out if parents are new at the meeting or have come before. New parents had the opportunity to introduce themselves.

2. Review of the School Council Code of Ethics

The review is a reminder about respect for all members of council and to ensure everyone is aware disrespect of any individual will not be tolerated. The first warning will be the member gets muted. If the inappropriate behaviour is continued, either during virtual meetings and while members are collaborating on tasks outside of meetings, they will be banned for the duration of that meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes from January 25, 2022, meeting

Motion – Kate Borg, seconded – Ivana L-M. All in Favour - Approved. The minutes were approved and will be posted on the Rockford website.

4. Principal and Vice-Principal's Report

a. Report Cards and Interviews

Mr. Gauthier started off by thanking the teachers and support staff for their continued amazing work they are doing. Report cards and interviews went well. It is not mandatory to have an interview, if there are no concerns with your child. Teachers will request interviews if needed. At any time if you need to request an interview with any of your child's teachers (drama, music, gym) that can always be arranged. Anybody who has children in virtual would have received the reports cards on the same day they were sent home in person.

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b. Facility Upgrades

Just so parents are aware that there is a process for getting things done. The facility team comes into the school to see what upgrades are needed. When a request is put in, the process can take some time for the work to get started. All the wash basins, urinals, toilet bowls will be upgraded throughout the school. The work began 2 weeks ago, and work will continue over the March Break as well as once school resumes after the break. Over the last summer they upgraded the air circulating system. They are planning to provide more Hepa filters to the school. We are very fortunate that we have enough. We requested for our portables, gym, library, the office. All classrooms and large spaces now have Hepa filters.

c. Safety Protocols Around Covid

Announcements are made every day about safety protocols and what we are expected to do in the school to maintain safety and following the expectations of Toronto Public Health and TDSB. Wearing masks properly, washing hands, when necessary, social distancing, staying in zones. Some of the students have a challenging time with the zones, but the students overall have been great. We are fortunate we have had very few cases. Some parents may have received letters indicating there has been a positive case, but your child is not a direct contact. The policies were changed in January. Were pleased with how we are managing this ongoing pandemic. Medical masks are available in the office. Another shipment of rapid antigen tests was received; however, they are not going to be distributed to everyone. In the documentation form the board, there would be rapid tests available and only available to individuals with symptoms. It is a limited number; they need to be de-kitted but will be done on an as-needed basis. We also have the PCR saliva test aligned with SickKids.

d. Weather and Recess

We have not had to have too many indoor days due to the weather, but we are faced with the icy conditions outside and have been managing that. We are strong supporters of recess and we do not want to take recess away from our students, it's important, it's an integral part of their learning and well-being. If it is -23° colder, the student will have an indoor day. If it is close, we will modify the time outside if it's close to that. Students will be going outside if it is -16° or -17° , and we encourage students to dress appropriately for the weather and we always have extra gloves and winter accessories in the office if needed.

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e. Switch

Today was switch day for students going from in-person to virtual and vice-versa. We had 12 students re-enter Rockford today and 4 students went from in-person to virtual. There hasn't been any formal information on offering virtual for the next school year.

f. Security

There have been some drifters that come on to the school property creating havoc and inconveniences for not only the school but for the community. We have done our best to monitor and it has gone down (though that can be due to the weather). A request has been put in for surveillance - what will happen is the principal has to put in a request in the morning and the same evening security will come and patrol the area.

g. Staffing Update

Last month our resource teacher Ms. Russell retired. We have some staff on leave that are scheduled to come back in the next couple of months. We received preliminary projections for next year and they are very similar to this year. This means the number of staff we get assigned to our school, which will impact the number of classes and the way our classes are set up. French immersion will start in JK, that will also impact how many classes we have. We are fortunate to have our caretaker, Omar. We are really hoping to keep him.

5. Rockford Community Safety Issues Update

a. Parking Officer

The parking officer was at Rockford and ticketed quite a few cars. A police cruiser drove by last week and told people they had to keep moving and could not stop in front of the school.

b. Sinkhole in the back of school

Outside door number 6 at the back of the school, the sinkhole is filled with mud, slush and water. When it isn't filled with anything, it is a tripping hazard and it is several inches deep and continues to get bigger. A work order has been put in for repair, but no date has been specified.

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6. School Council Update

a. Spirit Wear

We ran the Spirit Wear campaign; emails were sent out to parents, and staff were communicated to post the link to google classroom. The Spirit Wear campaign was announced on the morning announcements and a display of the clothing/items were set up at the main entrance of the school. It was also posted on the sign outside of the school. There was a total of 47 orders.

b. Online Safety Presentation

Online presentations must be carefully vetted by the school and then must be vetted by another administrator. Mr. Gauthier will follow up. **The online safety presentation is a one-day online presentation for our children during the day on online safety and what to look for online and how to keep safe. The presentation talks about how children can expose can themselves and what they need to look for when online. There is an evening presentation for parents.

- Operational Procedure PR589 (Interim)

This is a nine-page document of vetting external presentation. In this document parent council is exempt. Mr. Gauthier will get clarification.

c. Graduation Plans

In past years the school has had a graduation committee, which Ms. Russell was heavily involved in. Mr. Gauthier reached out to a grade six teacher that has been a part of the planning in the past. The dates for graduation photos have been set for the 3rd week in March. Still in the preliminary stages of planning. SK grad photos will also be taking place; however, a date has not been set. Last year the grads received grad sweatshirts as a gift to every graduating student.

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7. Slido Questions & Answers

Q: When will extra-curricular activities like choir begin?

A: Singing cannot be done with masks on, and they must be socially distanced. We also need to have staff that are going to supervise. Maybe when masks are no longer required. However, there is not a clear answer, so at this point all extra-curricular are still on pause. Part of this is because of cohorts as well. As time goes on there will be changes to the processes. We understand the importance of extra-curricular, however safety is the number one priority right now.

Q: The back of the school was all ice last Thursday before PA Day. Why wasn't it cleared when the snow first came down? Parents and kids were not safe after school.

A: This is an ongoing concern every year during the winter months. The salters do not come any more, due to expense; we do however get salt delivered. However, because of the large area we often run out. We (Mr. Gauthier, caretaking staff) are usually out there putting salt down to eliminate the ice. Other than putting down salt where we can, there is not much that can be done. The walkways do take precedent over the other areas.

Q: There have been antisemitic and other hate crimes in elementary and middle schools recently, do the teachers talk about them in class to kids? what is Rockford doing to be proactive so that these types of crimes do not happen here at our children's school?

A: In our community we address anti oppression and anti-black racism, anti-indigenous racism, homophobia, transphobia. We have these discussions in an age sensitive way. Sometimes we have students who fall victim to horrible situations. So, we address it when it comes up. We must be sensitive to the students. It is not mandatory that the teachers talk about it. But we ask the teachers to adapt an anti-oppressive lens to their curriculum. We try to promote an anti-oppressive inclusive environment. On January 27th we had World Holocaust Day. We had presentations through the TDSB, we encouraged our teachers to participate. A lot of that is individual teacher choice, if they want to participate in those activities or discussions. We try to create an environment where everyone in the school feels welcome and included. Students have a voice and create an environment where we celebrate everyone's differences. We have presentations from different speakers on various diverse topics, from different cultures to different religions.

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Q: I did not know there was a PA Day on Friday. Can teachers please inform parents in the future of upcoming PA days.

A: Yes.

Q: Now that restrictions have been lifted will parents be allowed in the school again?

A: At this point they are still not allowed unless it's an emergency, if parents do come into the building, they still need to wear a mask and follow all the protocols. As of now parents and volunteers are still not allowed in the building. **Just a reminder parents, should not be walking around the building. Start your visit at the office.

Q: The pandemic is not over. Covid cases are high, hospitals are full. How can our school protect our kids from the families who want to reduce restrictions?

A: We are still enforcing our protocols. Our expectations are the same and expected by all students and staff in the building. Staff are screened with a screener everyday as well as supply teachers and any workers coming into the building. So, we are doing what we have always done. We want to ensure people are safe. If a child has symptoms, we call and ask them to be picked up.

Q: Can the teachers, please remind the students and their parents about any special wear days (e.g., pink shirt day) a few days in advance? Thank you.

A: We have a social committee and part of their responsibility is to produce a spirit day or to honour a national day or month we are celebrating. Ms Russell was the chair of that committee. We will work on making sure that there is a significant amount of time so families can prepare.

Q: When is there going to be a school newsletter emailed out again? We used to know what is happening in the classes and school and I feel like we do not know.

A: Mr. Gauthier was sending out a newsletter earlier in the school year. Parents started to complain that too many emails were being sent out (school, TDSB, everything with covid) The goal is to do a newsletter once a month. It is difficult when there is not much happening on a school level. We do encourage teachers to send updates on what is happening in the classrooms. It is recognized that the newsletter is an important way to keep parents informed, so we will work on improving that.

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Q: Why are principals never seen? Disappointed for new principal this year no seen just hiding in office why is this?***

A: Both Mr. Gauthier, the previous VP and Ms. Irving are at the school at everyday from 7am-7pm. Both are visible on duty every single day, visiting the classrooms, interacting with students at class level. It is disappointing an individual feels as if the principals are hiding. Parents can email or call to make appointment if they would like to speak to Mr. Gauthier or Ms. Irving.

There was a discussion about whether the admin team could be outside before or after school, where parents can see and approach them. However, the mornings and end of day are extremely busy times for the admin staff, and it is very difficult for them to be outside during this time.

Everybody is working hard, and we all are doing the best we can with the resources we have. Parents please, this is a public forum, we need to show mutual respect and compassion for everyone. It was decided that Delia will add in a reminder that the rules of the Code of Conduct apply to questions on Slido the same way that they do for all other School Council interactions – there can be dissent, but it has to be done in a respectful manner without any personal attacks.

8. Other Business

Tamar J, a student in grade 5, raised the issue of fire alarms not being heard in the portables. Mr. Gauthier responded and said that they are aware of this, the portables are not connected to the fire alarm systems, and but they do have the phones hooked up in there. The protocol when an alarm goes off is that the office will call the portables or someone will go and knock on the door to inform the teachers that the alarm has gone off, and the students are then to exit the portables and go to their designated meeting place.

Meeting adjourned: 8:55pm

Next meeting will be held Tuesday, March 29th at 6:30pm over Zoom.