

**Minutes of Thorncliffe Park Public School Advisory Council
(Thorncliffe Park Committee)
held on Wednesday, March 19th 2013 at 6:30 pm in Staff Room**

Present council members:

Abdul Azeem Mohammed	FMC
Abdul Rauf Jangda	Treasurer
Maimoona Afroz	
Mariam Afzaal	Vice-chair
Nasim Damani	Community Representative
Ossama El Sarraff	Chair
Safeera Mulla	

Absent council members with notification:

Mohammed Azam	Secretary
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Absent council members without notification:

Alia Amer
Fahmida Lisa
Humair Shahid
Kamran Sedighi
Khalid Mahmood
Mohammad Arif Khan
Nusrat Azam
Rahila Haque
Shakeel Ahmed

Present members-at-large:

Erum Muqeen	Volunteer
Shafaq Farooq	

Present staff members:

Jeffrey Crane	Principal
Kurt Chin	Vice-principal

Minutes

- The meeting started at 6:45 p.m. and the chair, Ossama El Sarraff, greeted the attendees.
- After the introduction of everyone, the council members approved February 2014 meeting minutes.
- Katie, from the Moorlands programme, attended the meeting to answer any questions with regards to the letter that was sent home last month to clarify that the person who used to work with Moorlands at Thorncliffe Park Public School during 2008/2009 had no incident with any Thorncliffe Park School student, and he was an assistant at that time, and he was never alone with any child. She said that the annual police background check was clear for the previous years for this person, until he was charged with obtaining child pornography material this year.
- The principal, Jeff Crane, presented the tentative staffing model for 2014/2015 based on the TDSB projects and teacher allocations. The enrollment in 2013 reached 1350 where it was projected for 1297 by the TDSB at the beginning of 2013/2014. The project for 2014/2015 is 1336 students. He stated that the staff allocation for next year starts in May. He presented the tentative model as follows:
 - Grade 1 = 13 classes
 - Grade 1/2 (combined) = 1 class
 - Grade 2 = 13 classes
 - Grade 2/3 (combined) = 1 class
 - Grade 3 = 14 classes
 - Grade 3/4 (combined) = 1 class
 - Grade 4 = 8 classes
 - Grade 5 = 9 classes

Some parents expressed their concern for challenges of having combined classes for both the children and the teachers. The principal said that this process has been there for many years, and that teachers are trained to handle these situations. The main reason for having combined classes, which is not a favourable situation for everyone, is budgetary limits.

- Some of the parents asked about the level of French instruction at school, and whether it is competitive with other schools in the Board. The principal said that there are currently 6 teachers who teach French for grade 4 and 5 students. Some of the attending parents said that the children get enough instructions that make the children on a good stand in their French language acquisition. Some of the parents also mentioned that their children have joined Cosburn Middle School for the Late French Immersion program after graduating from Thorncliffe Park Public School because of what they acquired during their French language study at school.
- The vice-chair, Mariam Afzaal, asked about field trips and how frequent they are. The principal replied that he allocates a budget for field trips to the grade teams, and it's based on what the teachers plan. Some teachers find opportunities related to the curriculum they teach during the year, and they try to get the best deals to save money. Thorncliffe Park School has a partnership with the Ontario Science Centre, and this allows the school to organize field trips with a minimal cost.
- Improving the academic achievement at Thorncliffe Park Public School is continuing to be the focus of the current School Council this year, and the chair, Ossama El Sarraff, indicated that the school started a good initiative through introducing the "Outdoor Education" classes that exposes our children to scientific facts and also allows them to explore nature through their classes in the portable, in the Valley and in the Park. He also indicated that this the parents also

have the ambition to introduce ideas and participate in enhancing the academic achievement of our children through creating opportunities that engages them in science and technology in a simple way that attracts them. Last month, Abdul Rauf Jangda made a presentation on how we can introduce computer programming through a simple tool through a program called “Scratch” and suggested that it could be an opportunity for the teachers at Thorncliffe Park Public School to engage the students in using this simple tool as part of the computer literacy activities at school. This month, Abdul Rauf Jangda presented an example of how teaching young children about basic electronics could be simple through a project that he did with his children at home during the March Break. This project is a simple circuit that turns off the light when there is external light, and turns on light when it’s dark. He demonstrated how we can engage children in scientific explorations in a simple way to explain to them how things around us in our daily lives work. The chair, Ossama El Sarraff, suggested that an after-school science and technology club could be established with the help of Abdul Rauf Janda and other volunteer parents, and/or students from Marc Garneau who would like to gain volunteer hours. The council also discussed the importance of such a project and if there could be a “knowledge transfer” process that allows for more parents, teachers and students from Marc Garneau to expand the program to allow more children to enroll in it. Abdul Rauf Jangda also proposed the introduction of a “Web Design” after school program that can also motivate children to make a better use of their time in something useful like designing their own personalized web pages instead of wasting their times playing video games or chatting over the internet. More details were requested to prepare a complete study on how to start this program. The principal indicated that he has the discretion of permitting such programs after school between 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. during week days. Police background checks will be required for the parents who will be willing to volunteer in these programs, and the principal, Jeff Crane, indicated that the school can pay the fees for the check. It was also suggested that these programs could be charging a nominal fees for the seriousness, and it could be also one of the means for fundraising for school initiatives. Such activities would certainly improve the image of the school and adds to its profile. Also, the council members were impressed by the suggested ideas.

- The chair, Ossama El Sarraff, mentioned that he forwarded a list of 51 prospective sponsors of the Annual Fun Fair to the council members, and he is waiting for them to indicate who is willing to approach which sponsor(s) so that the effort could be shared by most of the council members. He also mentioned that time is passing, and there are other important tasks to achieve like identifying and agreeing with the vendors that will participate in the Fun Fair. The Fraser Mustard Committee chair, Abdul Azeem Mohammed, indicated that we should be contacting only the TDSB approved vendors because of insurance and liability issues.
- Parent participation has been noticed to be very low since the beginning of this year, and it was also a challenge in previous years. The chair, Ossama El Sarraff, asked the council members to suggest how to engage other parents, and how to better communicate with them. He said that he posted on poll on the school council’s website and there was no response at all! He asked the council members to come up with suggestions of questions that we can ask parents to see what prevents them from attending the school council meetings and how to get them more engaged.
- The chair, Ossama El Sarraff, indicated that the deadline for the 2014-2015 PRO Grant is May 16th, 2014. This grant is given by the Ontario Ministry of Education for up to \$1000.00 for school councils to engage parents in the school system. He asked the council members to think about ideas of events and activities where this grant could be used to get more parents involved and engaged in the school council activities.
- In the end, the chair thanked all the members for attending the meeting.

- Kindly note the following dates for the remaining meetings of the council which were accepted by all the members:
 - April 16th, 2014
 - May 21st, 2014
 - June 18th, 2014