

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 9, 2023 (6:30 PM – 7:45 PM)
In Person



ZION HEIGHTS MS
SCHOOL COUNCIL

ATTENDANCE:

School Staff: Principal Le, Ms. O

Elected School Council Members (13 Voting Members): Aaron Iravani (Co-Chair), Key Kasravi (Co-Chair), Carrie (Treasurer), May Mark (Vice-Treasurer), Total SC & Parent/guardian attendees: 19. Attendance TBC

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: “We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and the Inuit peoples”.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: October 9, 2023 – Motion to approve Minutes by Key Kasravi; Seconded by Aaron Iravani; no objections, motion approved.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Principal’s Report** – Mr. Le:

- The challenges with staffing continue to exist. Most occasional teachers are retired teachers and have 50 days available to substitute. Over the last 2 years the province allowed for a longer period per year, we do not know if this will continue for the current school year.
 - Current head count: 473 students
- Based on resourcing from the Board, we lost our afternoon **Office Assistant** (“OA”) #2. There’s currently a new software program being rolled out called “Power School”, which all the OAs are trying to learn. Ms. Barlas goes to lunch at 130pm and currently Ms. O is covering that position for Ms. Barlas’ lunch break.
- We do have updates to the curriculum. Math was rolled out a couple of years ago, but English has new elements.
- We are bringing in coaching resources for teachers over a 6 week period:
 - Q from parent? What is the purpose of the coaching?
 - Some teachers have come forward and asked for support in certain subjects that they had not taught before.
 - Q from parent? Is this because of the change away from the rotary model?
 - Q from parent? Are the teachers being pulled out of class for this coaching?
 - The teachers are getting a “release” to get the coaching. They are pulled out of the class.
 - Q from parent? Are the teachers volunteering?
 - Admin determines who needs the coaching.
 - Q from parent: Is this why we need supply teachers mentioned earlier?
 - Comment from parent: Zion teachers did not have this need prior to this year and the only change has been to move away from the rotary model.
 - Q from parent? Why would you not consult with the teachers and understand the needs for training prior to making a change to the rotary model?
 - Comment: This is exactly the reason why the consultation with parents and school council is part of the fabric of how the school should run. Because these questions would be asked

during a consultation meeting and we would have better planning. As it stands, you're telling us that for several weeks now, some students, in some classes have not been receiving a consistent level of teaching from those teacher who had not previously taught the subject which they are now asked to teach. This is poor planning and it has undoubtedly impacted learning for some.

- Facilities –
 - **Science Lab counter tops update:** Met with Mr. McPhearson – **Facilities Team Lead (FTL) for LN08.** The replacement should start shortly.
 - **Lockers:** We have an order number for some lockers, but no timeline.
 - **Compost Bin:** we now have a large one for outside.
 - **HVAC issue:** Some classrooms are running hotter. We have facilities looking into the problem.
- Q from parent: will the vendor for lunch program be available again this year, for purchasing lunch? What about the lunch lady offering?
 - The vendor is not available – we've asked but we don't know
 - This is the food vendor with the contract for our school
- Q from parent? What is the status of overnight trips for grade 8 students?
 - Ms. O is working on options. We have planned to take 160 grade 8 students to Halliburton (May 27th-29th) – Camp Kilcoo
 - The pricing is \$100/night/student + bussing cost
 - We need 5 buses for 160 kids, the total cost quoted was \$12k, which would make is \$80/student
 - Planning for 3 days and 2 nights
 - We have a negotiated cost of \$230/student
 - Q from parent? What about supervision, do we need teacher volunteers?
 - The Board requires a ratio of two teachers per class.
 - The cost of adult supervisors is covered in the overall cost
 - All grade 8s will be going together as a group.
- Q from parent? What about Science Fair this year?
 - Science Fair is being done at the individual class level
 - Mr. Tong did it for his class last year
- Q from parent? Can you please provide an update on the Music program?
 - Mr. Vaughn is running a "string's club" Tuesdays at lunch. About 70 kids showed up for the meeting
 - There's also a karaoke club Fridays at lunch
- Q from parent? Are we utilizing the "shop class"
 - The Design and Tech room will be used by science classes for STEM extension
 - Is the equipment connected to power and working? Yes.
- Q from parent? Will there be a grad trip this year?
- Q from parent? What about class trips for grade 6 and grade 7 students?
 - We have booked time on the school calendar for Mono Cliffs. The Board has made grade 6 a priority.
 - Is Mono Cliffs the only option? Can the grade 7s go somewhere else?
 - Are we booking our trip requests early enough?
 - There are subsidies provided to Model Schools and TDSB prioritizes those schools

2. Letter from School Council regarding Rotary Model change – discussion

- Q from parent? Regarding the engagement with students to learn about student preference, who was asked to be in the meeting and/or surveyed?
 - About 40 students showed up grade 6/7 [school improvement plan club]
 - They were asked: how many of you have extra-curricular activities?

- Was this meeting prior to the consultation with teachers? Yes
- What was the composition of the students that attended?
 - The students self selected and it was mostly gifted students
- What was the weight given to the “student club” content? Compare to teachers’ recommendation? Parents’ input? How long was the meeting? Were there meeting minutes kept?
- What else happened at the meeting? Who facilitated the meeting?
 - We did not base our staffing model only based on this data. No minutes were kept, because it was not a formal meeting. It was intended to bring joy because of the pandemic and we wanted to know how kids are doing.
- How long were the meetings? How many meetings?
 - It was over several meetings with prepared questions to cue discussion.
 - The data was brought to the teachers: coordination of conflicts with too many tests in one day
 - Mr. Le has a slide deck from the data that was collected and presented to the Superintendent
- Parent comment: It is important to listen to the kids
 - Ms. O responded: we want the kids to be kids and not have 3 hours of homework
- Parent comment: we all understand the need to support kids and coordinating between teachers can solve conflicts as it’s done in high schools and other settings. But why make a drastic change to the rotary model of the entire school to address an issue that has other solutions?
- Parent comment: Mr. Le, last year you replied to the Class Parent Reps and told them there’s no change to rotary, why make a change like this?
- Parent comment: why can’t the teachers communicate and coordinate?
- Parent comment: why did we not look at other ways of supporting kids if there are mental health support needs, instead of changing the rotary model?
- Parent comment: My son says that some of his classmates cannot focus on class. Seems like the 30 minute class periods are too short.
- Q from parent? What plans are in place this year to collect information from students? How do we capture the data better? Should other information come of parents and teachers to determine the best model for our school?
 - Parent comment: we are an engaged group of parents and we did not know what’s going on.
 - Parent comment: I have a daughter at a different school and they have projects and tests due on the same day. We want kids to speak up and advocate for themselves.
 - Parent comment: If the kids are asking for less homework and to have things simplified for them, we are lowering education standards and not helping them by not teaching them resilience and time management.
 - Parent comment: When kids move from middle school to high school the change is a big step up; looking at kids at AY, which Zion is the feeder school, the kids need to work hard to succeed.
 - Parent comment: If the kids need support for time management and note taking, please ask and discuss with parents and ask school council for support.
- Q from parent? What metrics are we using to assess this program model change away from rotary to determine if it is better?
 - Our lead teachers have devised a survey for teachers and students to determine what is working and what should be done different.
- Q from parent? Why are parents not being informed of any of this? Or that surveys are being done by their kids? Why are these things not included in the Friday email?
- Q from parent? Can you share the survey questions? Yes.
 - If the question is are things falling through the cracks, the answer is no. The feedback from teachers is that the kids are more settled. Coming back from the pandemic we wanted to meet certain needs.
- Q from parent? Can we have a December meeting?
- Q from parent? Is this current model in place for next year?
 - “no, nothing is forever”
 - We will ask the teacher and start the process sooner

3. SSON – (Key)

- We need to form a committee to update the SSON, or Statement of School Needs, any volunteers?
 - Ken Ng
 - Vince To
 - Key Kasravi
 - Aaron Iravani

4. Admin Item – (Key)

- Aarthi Visva has volunteered to be School council Secretary, but she is not here today
 - Key motions to appoint Aarthi as Secretary
 - Aaron seconds the motion
 - No objections, motion carries

5. Class Parent Rep discussion – (Christine)

- Can we get an update on this matter?
- Mr. Le: Teachers were asked and the response was not in favor of it. So parents can do this if they choose.
- Parent asked that we go ahead and establish it, so that parents can stay connected. We already have a few parents volunteering.
- Parent comment: We can ask parents to sign up during teacher-parent interviews
 - Motion from Carrie to establish the class parent rep;
 - Motion seconded by Ken
 - No objection, motion carried

6. Other items (Jenny)

- The Innovation Grant was submitted by SC team
- Q from parent? What about the President's Choice Grant?

[well over the allotted time]

Motion to adjourn: Motioned by Aaron, seconded by Key