

Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 20, 2007

Attendance:

Council Members present: JP Gagnon, Steve Gardner (Principal), Christine Gowe, Karen Harvey, Connie Prentice, Jeffrey Smith, Tara Tomlinson, Earlene Worrall, Andrew Yip

Council Members absent: Gary Crosby, Barbara Hockin, Kelly Smyth, Karyn Toon, Carol Takagi (Vice Principal)

Teacher Reps present: Paul Yip

Guests present: Tracey Burton, Deb Kline

A. Meeting Minutes – January 2007

- Motion for approval of the January minutes made by Connie Prentice and seconded by Tara Tomlinson. Minutes approved.

B. Financials – Gary Crosby (as pre-issued) - January 2007

- Motion for approval of the Jan 31 financial statement made by JP Gagnon and seconded by Jeffrey Smith. Financial statement approved.

C. Moodle Learning Platform – Mr. Yip

- Used by universities. Currently being tested by 20 elementary classes prior to broader roll-out.
- Used for chatting (ie. about homework) but more importantly for forums to generate discussion about issues.
- Full accountability since history of exchanges is recorded.
- Can also use for tests. Benefits: can shuffle answers so more challenging to copy, can offer clues for incorrect answer with second chance for partial marks, plus graded automatically. Limited to multiple choice, but can still be quite challenging.
- Council showed great support for the tool. Some concern about multi-tasking on the computer as a distraction (ie. if on MSN at the same time) and about conflicting computer needs in the home. But recognition that this is the way of the future, and that our students have an advantage with such great exposure to technology. Plus, it harnesses their passion and generates enthusiasm for learning.
- Intention is for all classrooms in York Region to have access next year. Roll-out will be dependent in part upon individual teacher receptiveness.
- May be worthwhile to investigate a buying pool for UPS families, both to provide technical advice as to the ideal laptop purchase and for potential bulk purchasing discounts.

D. Action Teams - Status

a) Environmental Committee Update – Connie Prentice

- Report attached.
- Letter prepared for the Fundraising with Flowers initiative. UPS will receive 50% of every dollar spent on flower orders. In addition, we will get free bulbs for every \$150 spent, to be used as prizes or for planting at the school.
- Suggestion to delay order deadline until after Easter, if possible.

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- Suggestion to modify heading of letter to position the program as a service first, with a secondary fundraising benefit.
- Deb Kline will investigate the idea of a Parenting the Net information session for parents.

b) House Colours – Karyn Toon

- No update.

E. UPS Constitution: Appendix E – Financial Policies

- Deferred again.

F. School Update – Steve Gardner

a) SPCI

- Further to our discussion last meeting re clarifying calculation of the target, decision to itemize target as 80% for each measure of EQAO, PM/DRA and report cards.
- Re enhancing family involvement, current measures (parent focus) do not seem to tie to indicators of success (improvement in student learning). Perhaps add a second indicator around improved communication/ understanding and add additional measures re student performance.
- Re family involvement and homework completion, request that all teachers utilize e-mail as one means of communication with parents. At minimum, ensure that teachers make clear their preferred method of communication and then get back to parents promptly.
- Re creating a positive learning environment by promoting positive character traits, ensure that all teachers (both regular and supply) model the desired behaviour.
- Idea for kids and parents to have the opportunity to formally recognize the exceptional work of particular teachers. UPSAC could sponsor an award for overall contribution to the school each year. Have a nomination process and a vote of some kind. Or could feature a deserving teacher in Pawprints each month. Agreed to reconnect to further develop this idea next meeting.

b) Administrator's Report

- Report follows, with discussion points inserted:

Administrator's Report – February 20th, 2007

1. School Organization 2007-2008 (PCSR) –

The Board is currently in year three of a four-year Ministry mandated requirements to reduce primary class size. This process has allowed us to make great gains in creating primary classes that maximize teacher time with students in support of their learning.

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As principal, I am working with my superintendent and Board staff to plan for the upcoming school year. Each school board in the province will have to meet Ministry expectations. In general, on a board-wide basis, 90% of primary classes must have 20 or fewer students, and only 10% may have up to 23. In addition, while classes in grades 4-8 will not have a hard cap, each school board will be required to demonstrate a regional average of approximately 26 students to one teacher.

As we proceed through the planning process, I will be sure to keep you informed as to how our school will be meeting with Ministry requirements.

2. We are in the midst of planning for 2007-2008
 - a. Kindergarten program – please refer to Board Procedure NP 109 (attached)
 - b. Will have some split grade classes
 - c. Possibility of 1.5 JK/SK, 5 Primary, 9 Junior/Intermediate
- Hard cap of 20 students per class next year. Will result in more split classes, likely including a 1 / 2 split. Concern raised since grade 1 is such a critical year.
- 431 students now, -34 vs year ago and decline is expected to continue.
- Potential for full day kindergarten if any parents are unable to accommodate half day. Space does not permit offering both options. TBD.

3. “On behalf of the Ontario Band Association I would like to congratulate Mr. Stokes and the Concert Band on a brilliant performance at the OBA Concert Band Festival” “I am very pleased to announce that the Unionville Public school Concert Band has received a Gold Award for their exceptional performance at the OBA festival. This is a remarkable achievement as very few gold awards are presented!” The work that Will is doing with the music students at your school is excellent, and his commitment to the teaching profession should be commended” President of the Ontario Band Association.

4. Electives – Received much positive feedback regarding electives
 - Revisit options for grade 6-8 students (beyond skiing, snowboarding)
 - Cross Country skiing
 - Tubing
 - Snow-shoeing

 - Challenge finding science providers

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- 140 grade 6-8 students participated, while 31 did not (19% non-participation). Alternatives are needed, perhaps even beyond outdoor snow-based activities (ie. indoor rock climbing, etc.) Safety concerns around tubing.

- 5. Chinese New Year celebrations – a wonderful afternoon with the Yellow River Ensemble. Thank you to our parent committee and Ms. Wong for organizing the day and decorations. Thank you for the fabulous Chinese New Year bags that each student received.

- 6. Boys Literacy Morning – On Friday, February 23rd. 25 Grade 9 and 10 Markville SS male students will be reading to and with our K-4 boys. They have collected over 100 books that will be donated to our school library. Our partnership continues.

G. Meeting Planning – March to June

- Various subjects remain to be addressed before the end of the year.
- Elizabeth Richardson, Trustee, attending in April re new highschool. No catchment area, by application only.
- Need to reconnect re Barbecue for Sept.
- Also items like dress code, code of conduct. Intended that we formally discuss these items at some point during the year.
- Administrator profile.

H. Meeting Adjourned 9:45 p.m.

Next meeting March 20.