

Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

Attendance:

Council Members present: Gary Crosby, Debbie Donsky (Principal), JP Gagnon, Tess Georgakopoulos, Karen Harvey, Noelle Hunt, Lorrie-Anne Lauder, Pamela Nitert, Connie Prentice, Hilary Seppanen, Jeffrey Smith, Wendy Wang, Earlene Worrall

Council Members absent: Barbara Hockin, Cyrus Mavalwala, Zia McGarry, Lesley Ruttan, Carol Takagi (Vice Principal)

Teacher Reps present: Will Stokes

Guests present: Karen Wilson Moore, Karen Mitas, Elizabeth Dyer

A. Welcome

B. Meeting Minutes – January 2008

- Motion for approval of the January minutes made by Gary Crosby and seconded by Lorrie-Anne Lauder. Minutes approved.

C. Financials – Gary Crosby – January 2008

- Gary is following-up with L&D Foods to see why income is so low.
- Pamela will follow-up with Kim Pryor re magazine revenue total.
- Question regarding the purchases made to date with the money approved for Literacy Initiatives, wondering if it had gone toward classroom books rather than levelled readers. Led to discussion about parental access to the Book Room for levelled readers, in order to encourage our own children in their reading. Debbie suggested that reading for interest and then discussing the text is most appropriate for parents. She assured all parents in attendance that an increased amount of guided reading will be done in class during this school year (ie. this is not a change that will be delayed until September). Debbie concluded that it is best to leave UPS's levelled resources to trained educators.
- Motion for approval of the January 31 financial statement made by Karen Harvey and seconded by Hilary Seppanen. Financial statement approved.

D. Music Retreat – Will Stokes

- Retreat Feb 27-29 involves three local schools, 150 students, who will learn and perform new music during the retreat. These same students will be playing together in the band once they transition to high school.
- Will demonstrated the iMac purchased by Council for the music room. Stressing that music is about performance and technology, Will demonstrated the ease with which effects can be added to a recording (ie. reverb) or a composition can be created by combining existing complementary loops.
- Will noted that grade 8 performance tests are being submitted on CD, the creation of which is easily accomplished with the iMac.

Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

- UPS currently has 77 instruments for 162 grade 6/7/8 students, or just over 1:2. 20 MacBooks gives a ratio of 1:8, but the single iMac is strongly preferred at a ratio of 1:162. Will noted that MacBooks are useful for other music work but cumbersome for performance tests.
- Recommendation from Will: fill out high woodwind and low brass instruments, and invest in another iMac for the second practice room.
- In response to a question, Will mentioned that consideration is being given to introducing primary students to music technology.

E. Fundraising Committee Update – Pamela Nitert

- Lorrie-Anne explained the idea of having students make buttons about the Dance-a-thon in advance of the event in order to create excitement. Idea met with widespread support.
- Noelle offered to Photoshop a poster if the committee takes group photos of the buttons created by each class.
- Debbie will attach a Dance-a-thon pledge form to the next newsletter, to reinforce the copy already distributed. Pamela will also send to Will electronically for posting to the website.

F. Environmental Committee Update – Connie Prentice

- Report distributed. No discussion.

G. Community Outreach Initiatives – Tess Georgakopoulos

- For the recent Chinese New Year celebration, there were lots of issues around preventing allergic reactions (ie. ensuring that inappropriate foods were not sent home given the number and variety of allergies within the school). Given this safety consideration, also plastic packaging that is not environmentally friendly, Tess wondered whether the tradition of “loot bags” should be reconsidered for future.
- Debbie strongly agreed that the bags should be discontinued given the safety issue, and went further by stating that UPS as a school should not distribute any food (ie. also applies to Valentine candies that were recently sold as part of grade 8 fundraising and drinks/snacks sometimes sold at events). Her goal is to change the nature of school celebrations to remove the association with food.
- Led to a broader discussion of anaphylaxis. Ultimately Debbie would like to see parents discontinue sending in cupcakes, etc. for birthdays as well, again to protect children having allergy issues. She recognizes that this cultural shift will take longer to accomplish and will not likely happen this year.

H. House Colours Update – Lesley Ruttan

- No discussion.

I. Principal’s Report – Debbie Donsky

- Report follows, with discussion points inserted:

Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

Principal's Report—School Council, UPSAC

Tuesday February 19, 2008

1. *Ontario Psychological Association Project—January 2008-August 2008*
 - Multidisciplinary Team
 - Reduce wait times for students in junior kindergarten to grade 4 requiring professional assessments
 - Enhance teacher capacity to provide effective programming for students provided with professional assessments
 - Improve literacy and numeracy for students provided with professional assessments, and
 - Sustain assessment process improvements for the long term.
 2. *Intensive Support—Ministry of Education*
 - Regular support focussed on reading instruction from a York Region District School Board Curriculum Consultant, Tammy Dillon
 - Tammy is working with all of our teachers to further develop:
 - Balanced literacy instruction
 - Assessment for learning to differentiate instruction for all students
 3. *Action Research with YRDSB*
 - Using data from both EQAO and report cards, we determined that our boys are underperforming at a greater rate than boys through the region and province
 - Focussed on integrating and understanding effective literacy instruction for our boys through out action research project
 - This will occur in three classrooms but strategies will be shared with the entire staff
 4. *Yard Duty and Lunch Duty*
 - Continued monitoring of yard duty and coverage
 - Additional staff added to monitor entry in the Intermediate Door
 - Lunch duty
 - Meeting with prefects to review expectations
 - Revised schedule
 - Meeting with Lunch Assistants to review expectations and gain feedback
 - Advertisement in Paw Prints and our sign for Lunch Assistants
 - Schedule is currently being revised but we require further support
 - Plan to alter the entry time next year so that students will have from 8:45 until 8:58 outside and will have two minutes to get ready to be in class. Teacher coverage will be outside for 13 minutes and two minutes at the doorways
 5. *Crossing Guard*
 - Contact with Town of Markham, Paul Imrie (416) 606-0901
 - We have a new crossing guard at Bridal Walk and Main Street
 - As a school, we cannot represent a group to work against the Kennedy Road expansion.
 - Parents are free to join a group outside of the School Council
 - Continued monitoring of yard duty and coverage
 - Additional staff added to monitor entry in the Intermediate Door
- Could ask Trustee Elizabeth Richardson the question about our crossing guard challenge when she attends an upcoming Council meeting. What can we do next, and can she intervene with the Town of Markham on our behalf?

Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

- As a Council, we could approach the Town about the crossing guard in addition to Debbie's follow-ups.
- We cannot approach the Town as a Council about concerns over the widening of 16th, but can lobby regarding either issue as a separate group of parents.

6. *Junior Literacy Night*

- Great to see the parents and students out for the evening
- Teachers held a variety of presentations on topics such as:
 - How to choose books from a variety of genres
 - Creating a Culture of Literacy

7. *Wish List from Staff*

- Playground repair: **\$3487.50**
 - Occasional Teacher Coverage
 - Library
- \$13,747 in bank right now, and can eliminate the classroom allocation of \$1731 per Debbie since \$25/student is already allocated by the Board and no additional classroom money should be needed.
 - Council approved spending against each of Debbie's three investment priorities. Approved:
 - Playground repairs @ \$3487
 - Occasional teacher support @ \$2177
 - Library @ \$6000.
 - Additional investment will be considered with money raised via upcoming Dance-a-thon.
 - Debbie will confirm the deadline for technology cost-sharing with the Board. If deadline is before next meeting, Gary will order an additional iMac and reduce the Library investment for now. We will then direct additional money toward the Library following the Dance-a-thon. Council approved this handling.

8. *Food at UPS*

- Issues with food at Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day

J. Meeting Adjourned 9:25 p.m.

Next meeting March 18th.