

# Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

## **Attendance:**

**Council Members present:** Debbie Donsky (Principal), JP Gagnon, Tess Georgakopoulos, Catherine Hankins, Karen Harvey, Noelle Hunt, Lorrie-Anne Lauder, Karen Mitas, Pamela Nitert, Hilary Seppanen, Carol Takagi (Vice Principal), Karyn Toon, Ruchi Vij, Earlene Worrall

**Council Members absent:** Noor Al-Shaikh, Gary Crosby, Connie Prentice, Jodi Wilson

**Teacher Reps present:** Elizabeth Dyer

**Guests present:**

---

## **A. Welcome**

## **B. Meeting Minutes – Earlene Worrall – Jan 2009**

- Motion for approval of the January minutes made by JP Gagnon and seconded by Karen Harvey. Minutes approved.

## **C. Financials – Gary Crosby – Jan 2009**

- Motion for approval of the January financial statement made by Catherine Hankins and seconded by Tess Georgakopoulos. Financials approved.
- Pamela wondered why the 125 tickets sold for the auction are not yet showing in financials. Gary was not present, but other Council members hypothesized that it was simply a timing issue. Pamela will follow-up with Gary.

## **D. Hilary Report – Hilary Seppanen**

- Did not receive PRO grant because UPS failed to submit a separate application, rather included information on Parkview's form regarding a joint initiative. Parkview will share the \$1000 in funds to create shared welcome packages for parents new to our school community.
- Voted to approve the revised Principal's Profile.

## **E. Principal's Report – Debbie Donsky**

- Report follows, with discussion points inserted:

## **Principal's Report—School Council, UPSAC**

---

Tuesday February 17, 2008

### **1. Volunteer Committee**

- We are seeking community involvement in setting a school policy around volunteering

### **2. Communication**

- Class Newsletters
  - Websites
  - School Website
  - Community Emails
  - PawPrints
- Several initiatives are underway to improve communication between school and home. Debbie's objective is to have standard formats for class

# Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

newsletters by September. Class websites are also in development, with suggestion to share best practices from teachers who are currently utilizing websites very effectively.

### 3. Car Safety Issues

- i. Disabled Parking Spot
- ii. Driveway
- iii. Main Street

### 4. Community Outreach and Student Leadership

- The streamlining of Fundraising and Community Outreach initiatives has reduced the number and spontaneity of community outreach programs. Students who are passionate about particular societal issues now have fewer opportunities to exhibit leadership. Debbie wondered if we may want to reconsider and invited discussion.
- Council agreed that student-initiated programs should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Suggestion to have interested students develop a proposal and present it to Council.

### 5. Bully Prevention (Carol)

- i. Presentation to Parents
  - ii. Playground Partners
- Carol reminded Council of the bullying presentation to parents on Thursday from 6:30 until roughly 7:30. A Playground Partners program is also being implemented. Grade 6/7/8 students will be partnered with primary classes to lead cooperative games at recess.

### 6. Touchstone

**What is Culture?** "It is the relational glue of the learning community. It is the hidden power within a school that is often not consciously directed toward a common vision."

*~Adapted from the work of Fullan & Hargreaves*

#### A touchstone:

- Is a shared creed or "way"
- Guides the daily decision-making of students and staff
- Is the "glue" that holds successful organizations together and keeps them focused even during difficult times
- Helps members of the organization feel connected to each other because they are joined by common values
- Inspires critical thinking and ethical judgment (e.g. What does it mean to 'take the high road' in various situations?)

*~From BUILDING A CULTURE of CHARACTER Creating a School-wide Touchstone*

#### What is the process?

- i. The school will be brought together in an assembly to discuss what we stand for at UPS

# Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

- ii. Teachers will be sharing the idea with students to understand what is important to them in terms of our school culture
- iii. Students will work in small groups in their classrooms with their teachers to come up with ideas that are important to them relating to character and values
- iv. We will, as a school, generate a list of ideas that vote as a school and community as what are our top messages we want to include in our TOUCHSTONE.

- Debbie distributed a package entitled “Building a Culture of Character”. She would like to explore the idea of boundaries and whether some existing boundaries are necessary/appropriate, ie. precluding students from playing with children from different grades during recess.
- Idea is to develop common beliefs. Students will work with teachers to provide input into the character and values that will, over time, define UPS. Students will be encouraged to have the discussion at home, as well. Ultimately the school and community will vote on the top message to include in our touchstone.
- A school-wide touchstone will be developed, ie. a shared creed or “way”, incorporating core school values. The touchstone is credited as being the foundation of an ethical learning community.

## **F. Fundraising Committee – Pamela Nitert**

- 125 tickets sold to date for upcoming Silent Auction.
- Discussion about whether we should permit bids by proxy in order to maximize value for auction items. Pamela plans to issue an electronic listing, and will invite those unable to attend in person to submit an “upper limit” bid. JP volunteered to serve as proxy bidder.
- Council considered the opportunity to have a SmartBoard display set up. Not viable given difficulty transporting and requirement to secure it over the weekend.

## **G. Environmental Committee – Connie Prentice**

- Nothing to report.

## **H. Community Outreach Initiatives – Tess Georgakopoulos**

- Nothing to report.

## **I. House Colours – Karen Mitas**

- Black house continues to lead.
- Next event is Beach Day March 6.

## **J. Other Matters**

- Karyn shared a resource concerning differentiated learning, following up on a discussion from last Council meeting. The book is entitled Your Child’s Strengths: Discover Them, Develop Them, Use Them by Jenifer Fox, M.Ed.

## **K. Meeting Adjourned 9:00 p.m.**

**Next meeting March 24<sup>th</sup> (given March Break).**