

# Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

## **Attendance:**

**Council Members present:** Gary Crosby, Debbie Donsky (Principal), JP Gagnon, Tess Georgakopoulos, Catherine Hankins, Karen Harvey, Lorrie-Anne Lauder, Karen Mitas, Connie Prentice, Hilary Seppanen, Carol Takagi (Vice Principal), Jodi Wilson, Earlene Worrall

**Council Members absent:** Noor Al-Shaikh, Noelle Hunt, Pamela Nitert, Karyn Toon, Ruchi Vij

**Teacher Reps present:** Elizabeth Dyer

**Guests present:** Adam Binhammer (student)

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## **A. Welcome**

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

- Motion for approval of the May minutes made by Tess Georgakopoulos and seconded by Karen Mitas. Minutes approved.

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

- As it turned out, the technology purchase deadline for Board cost share had passed before we were able to submit our order as approved last meeting. The remaining \$2,229 approved for Media Literacy & Technology will be carried forward and the order placed in September, with the hope that the same cost sharing program will remain in effect.
- Of the outstanding committed funds, a total of approximately \$7,000 will be carried forward (\$3,840 playground, \$2,220 technology, about \$1,000 of yearly operating expenses). Combined with the \$9,703 available funds per the May 31 statement, a total of over \$16,000 will be carried forward for use by Council in the 2009/2010 school year.
- Motion for approval of the May financial statement made by Karen Harvey and seconded by JP Gagnon. Financials approved.

### **D. Student Leadership Opportunity – Adam Binhammer**

- Adam spoke to Council about “Spread the Net”, a program promoting investment in nets to prevent the spread of malaria in Africa. Adam noted that malaria is the leading cause of death of children under 5 in Africa. Cost is \$10 per net.
- After learning about the program on television, Adam conducted research to learn more about it. He went barefoot for a week to understand what that would be like, but decided that he should do more. His proposal is that students undertake some sort of athletic fundraising event to raise money for “Spread the Net”.
- Adam will develop the idea further with Debbie in the fall and will then bring forward a formal proposal to Council.
- Council thanked Adam for leading this initiative.

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## **E. Hilary Report – Hilary Seppanen**

- Hilary investigated options for resurfacing the kindergarten playground. The stone surface remains a concern given safety considerations and injuries (primarily driven by tripping over the asphalt lip or slipping in stones that have been scattered onto the asphalt).
- The least expensive option, engineered wood fibre, would cost close to \$11,000.
- Soft tile costs twice as much, with the benefit that there would be zero transition between the asphalt and the playground surface, eliminating the tripping hazard and making the playground fully accessible for everyone. The tile is also less costly to maintain, having a full 10 year warranty (labour and materials).
- These options are resurfacing only. If we want to also replace the existing play structure, that would add cost of about \$15,000, for total cost of \$25,000 with wood fibre or \$38,000 with soft tile surfacing.
- All UPS playgrounds currently have stone surrounding them, so ultimately all will need to be resurfaced to improve safety and accessibility. The kindergarten playground is being prioritized given the age of the children playing there as well as the age of the existing equipment.
- A Board enhancement program exists, with funding available provided work is completed by October 31.
- Hilary will again bring forward options in the fall, for action by the 2009/2010 Council.
- Moving on to other topics, the kindergarten information package is complete.
- Markham Fair information was sent out electronically last week, rather than waiting until September to distribute hard copies as in past. This gives students more time to consider craft options for the fall fair, and permits students to achieve the June deadline for the writing categories.

## **F. Volunteers and Posters – Lorrie-Anne Lauder**

- Lorrie-Anne has developed the volunteer letter for September. Council endorsed the improvements made, and suggested a few wording revisions.
- Building on the success of the knitting club run by Heather Baker this year, Lorrie-Anne is asking for parent volunteers to run 4-week clubs encompassing various areas of interest.
- Posters sold well, but just over 40 posters remain. Council agreed to sell them one last time at grade 8 grad, then offer the remainder to staff at the end of the school year.

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

- Report follows, with discussion points inserted:

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## Principal's Report—School Council, UPSAC

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### 1. Volunteer Committee Planning for Next Year

The committee reviewed a number of items including:

- Volunteer Orientation to be held on September 25<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:00 am
  - Confidentiality agreements
  - The orientation specifically is for volunteers involved in academic support rather than events linked to UPSAC
  - This orientation will address reading programs with primary classrooms
    - Janice McGowen Young has agreed to support this program as well as the training of parents interested in participating
    - Various activities to conduct linking reading and writing with students
    - Books to include in packages may be levelled readers but also books of interest, books where there is a natural link to a particular reading comprehension strategy or skill
    - Kits will also include items such as white boards, dry erase markers, magnetic letters, highlighter tape
    - Students will have logs to indicate the reading they have done with the volunteer
    - All students will be included in the program since all students are “students on the move”
- New ideas were investigated around parental engagement
  - Parents reading with older students to support literature circles (like book clubs)
  - Clubs at lunch for a limited time (i.e. 4 week session on knitting, creative writing, poetry, gardening, etc)

### 2. SPCI

See attached SPCI to review.

- Debbie requested that Council members review SPCI and provide feedback, copying the group to permit discussion and building upon ideas. She will send it electronically so Council members can work within the document.
- In particular, Debbie would appreciate feedback regarding the communication objective.

### 3. Organization (*Deb*)

Class	Teacher	Class	Teacher
JK/SK am	Wilkinson	Grade 6	Rocha
JK/SK pm	Wilkinson	Grade 6	Norquay
JK/SK MW	TBD	Grade 7	Cheung
JK/SK T/TH	LTO for Tam	Grade 7/8	Leung
JK/SK ASD am	Wong	Grade 8	Scagnetti
JK/SK ASD pm	Wong	J/I ASD	LTO for Ragonese
Grade 1	Goldman	J/I MID	Bos
Grade 1	TBD	Primary SSC	Dyer

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Grade 2	LTO for Berdugo	Junior SSC	Osman
Grade 2/3	Milne	Intermediate SSC	Sadoff
Grade 2/3	Creelman	Physical Education and Prep Coverage	Leon
Grade 3/4	Noble	Reading Recovery and Literacy	McGowen-Young
Grade 4/5	Hawco	Library and ESL	Edwards
Grade 5	Farber	Intermediate Music	Stokes

#### 4. Fundraising and Community Outreach Proposal

I would like to propose a different model for determining fundraising efforts next year.

##### I suggest that Community Outreach:

- Be a combination of local (Legacy Run), national (Terry Fox Run) and international efforts ([www.spreadthenet.org](http://www.spreadthenet.org)).
- Continue to provide opportunity for student leadership
- Be linked to issues that are both timely and relevant to our school community (i.e. Asperger's Society of Ontario)

##### I suggest that Fundraising:

- Be aligned to the SPCI
  - Support all students in the school through access to programs (i.e. mad science, the arts, Roots of Empathy <http://www.seedsofempathy.org>, Project Give Back <http://www.projectgiveback.com>)
  - Support transitions (i.e. JKs and Welcome to Kindergarten [http://www.thelearningpartnership.ca/kwb/index\\_kwb.html](http://www.thelearningpartnership.ca/kwb/index_kwb.html), Grade 8 Graduation)
  - Have both short and long term goals focussed on school improvement
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- Debbie proposes a new approach to determining funding priorities. All investments must trace back to priorities established within SPCI.
  - Debbie is also eager to introduce new programming that will help to develop the culture of the school, such as Roots of Empathy and Project Give Back. Such programs permit kids to think beyond their own experience and explore ways they can improve their world. Rather than creating a wish list of more "things" we would like to purchase for the school, let's shift at least a portion of our investment toward supporting our beliefs, developing character, and making positive changes.
  - Many of our students are passionate about these and other causes, so their interest is really leading the paradigm shift.
  - Council discussed the importance of balance. The intent is not to abandon investment in tangible items in favour of developing soft skills through programming. For example, we need to continue upgrading our library, follow through with the approved technology investment, continue to maintain our playgrounds, etc. But other objectives have been met (ie. investing in levelled readers in support of the literacy objective), so we have the wherewithal to adopt a more balanced approach to our investments.

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- Council enthusiastically endorses the proposal to create stronger linkage between spending and objectives/strategies. Clear communication of the SPCI will be critical.

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

- For watering of the school gardens, 14 families (of 300) are needed to each cover a week of the summer.
- Looking forward, Connie proposes adding the mulch cost as a line item so approval will not be needed each year.

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

- No update this month.

## **J. House Colours – Karen Mitas**

- Karen is looking for suggestions to make House Colour events more meaningful to the students. A number of ideas were discussed. Perhaps Houses could be based upon character traits or inspiring historical figures, rather than colours. Or events could tie to community outreach events, for example wearing nets of some kind (crazy hair nets?) to build awareness of the “Spread the Net” program. Given that Canada will be hosting the Olympics in 2010, perhaps we could incorporate Olympic heroes into the program.
- The suggestion was made to involve 5/6 students in leadership of the program, rather than relying upon grade 8 students who do not seem particularly interested and who also have other leadership opportunities.

## **K. Hot Lunch Vote**

- Karen noted that Ruchi’s company is working to address the environmental concerns that led us to favour Lunch Lady. As agreed last meeting, we will re-evaluate the lunch program in November, with any agreed change to be implemented in January.
- Council members voted on the Hot Lunch program discussed last meeting. The decision was carried unanimously to proceed with My Little Pizzeria on alternating Wednesdays and Lunch Lady on Mondays/Fridays.

## **L. Other Matters**

- JP took this opportunity at this, his last meeting as Chair, to thank Council members for their commitment and strong desire to make positive changes in our school. Council also thanked JP for his leadership of UPSAC over the past two years, and Debbie noted her appreciation of his guidance on particular issues.

## **M. Meeting Adjourned 9:50 p.m.**

**Last meeting of the academic year...Thanks to all for your many contributions to Council in 2008/09 and have a great summer!**