

Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

Attendance:

Council Members present: Gary Crosby, Debbie Donsky (Principal), Tess Georgakopoulos, Karen Harvey, Barbara Hockin, Noelle Hunt, Lorrie-Anne Lauder, Zia McGarry, Pamela Nitert, Connie Prentice, Lesley Ruttan, Hilary Seppanen, Carol Takagi (Vice Principal), Earlene Worrall

Council Members absent: JP Gagnon, Cyrus Mavalwala, Jeffrey Smith, Wendy Wang

Teacher Reps present:

Guests present: Elizabeth Richardson (trustee), Deb Kline, Heather Baker, Diane Loveys, Elizabeth Dyer, Karen Ingram-Mak, Laura Chapman

A. Welcome

- Karen chairing in JP's absence.

B. Meeting Minutes – February 2008

- Motion for approval of the February minutes made by Gary Crosby and seconded by Connie Prentice. Minutes approved.

C. Financials – Gary Crosby – February 2008

- Debbie will connect with Brent Scagnetti about getting quotes for new jerseys.
- Per Gary, lower revenue generation from lunches will be ongoing. This resulted from L&D Fun Foods reducing the money allocated to Council per lunch (now \$0.30 vs \$1.00 in past) because they were not making money from the program. Council expressed interest in investigating other lunch providers. Evidently there is no contract (if so, L&D has violated the terms by changing the amount Council receives). Gary will check into other options (ie. Kids Kitchen as used at Berczy) and report back next meeting.
- Objection by Barbara to showing a negative balance on the statement, however temporarily. Debbie confirmed that Classroom Allocation can be eliminated entirely. Since Yearly Operating Expenses are noted as under review, with full payment not expected, the recommendation is to instead suspend this amount at this point, then add back the revised amount later, once agreed, and once Dance-a-thon money is available as an offset.
- Gary will revise the financial statement and bring for approval next meeting.

D. Trustee Visit – Elizabeth Richardson

- Bureaucrats (Superintendents) run the system. Trustees are involved in policy decisions, student assessment principles, school opening/closure decisions, and work on committees (ie. parent advisory committee – to

Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

enhance communication between the Board and parents; program planning – bussing, length of school year, etc.)

- Trustees have no individual authority, but rather act as part of the School Board.
- Policies are posted on the website when in draft stage, and parental input is welcome. It is recommended to check the website proactively and raise concerns at this stage rather than waiting until a policy has been set.
- Trustees work to influence change for the benefit of students (ie. lower prices for student theatre tickets, more accessible rates to use Markham Theatre for graduation ceremonies, etc.)
- Important to know not only about this jurisdiction, but also other jurisdictions across Canada and worldwide to learn about and consider adopting other Boards' best practices.
- Regarding the new "sports school", Bill Crothers Secondary, the school year will run from August 5 to the end of June. This has been approved by the Board.
- There will be no bussing from other areas.
- Most of the kids who applied were accepted, since numbers worked (approximately 240 are enrolled so far vs initial year objective of 400).
- Regarding the crosswalk at Kennedy, Elizabeth is aware of the issue and has been in discussion with the Town of Markham. She has no influence over this issue as Trustee. However, she advocates lobbying the Town as parents. Petitions can be effective. The contact is our Councillor, Joe Virgilio. Need to get this subject added to a Town of Markham Council meeting.
- Suggestion made to implement a policy change giving the Board some influence within such issues, as part of Safe Schools. Elizabeth agreed to add this to her "to do" list.
- Debbie will provide Elizabeth with the name of the person at the Town with whom she's been dealing. Elizabeth wants to follow-up regarding some of the inappropriate responses (ie. suggesting that school staff handle crossing guard duty "if they truly care about the safety of students").
- Elizabeth also agreed to follow-up with Joe Virgilio on our behalf, not formally in her capacity as Trustee but in order to help UPS, given her experience. JP and Cyrus will need to connect with Elizabeth first to provide an update regarding steps taken to date. She also needs to know status of petitions, etc.
- Elizabeth invited Council and all parents to call or e-mail her with questions or concerns. As she says, she is here for us.

E. Fundraising Committee Update – Pamela Nitert

- Announcements being made re Dance-a-thon this week and a written reminder (with pledge form) will also be distributed tomorrow.
- For next meeting, Debbie and Carol agreed to revisit electronic communication with parents.

Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

F. Environmental Committee Update – Connie Prentice

- Per Carol, applying for status as an Eco-School next year. Will also plan something for March 29 in recognition of Earth Hour.

G. Community Outreach Initiatives – Tess Georgakopoulos

- Re fundraising for grade 8 graduation, Tess wondered if donors could get a tax receipt. Gary advised that it would be possible as long as they do not receive anything in return (ie. no ad in the yearbook), and as long as a directed donation comes through Council. However, this raises the question of Council's responsibility to review all expenditures. Instead, agreed to sell advertising and provide receipts for money received (not charitable tax receipts).

H. House Colours Update – Lesley Ruttan

- Will mention dancing in beach wear on posters for Beach Day, as tie-in to Dance-a-thon.

I. Principal's Report – Debbie Donsky

- Report follows, with discussion points inserted:

Principal's Report—School Council, UPSAC

Tuesday March 18, 2008

1. Grade 8 Graduation

The Grade 8 Graduation will be on Wednesday June 25th. The ceremony will begin at 5:30 pm at Markville Secondary School and the reception will be at Pickle Barrel at the Markville Mall beginning at 7:30 pm. The reception will end by 10:30 pm.

For fundraising this year, students (2 per class), with several parents with Brent Scagnetti, Bonnie Bos, Joanna Kattis, and Scott Chin, have organized Freezie Fridays and Cookie Dough sales. Both items will be nut and peanut free.

The parents have formed sub-committees in the following areas including: Decorating (Markville and Pickle Barrel), Fundraising, Yearbook and Catering.

Awards at graduation are determined based on criteria established by the intermediate division or by the agency providing the award such as the Ontario Principal's Council.

Throughout the year, students work to earn points to get the school letter. These points can be earned through prefect duties, library prefect, sports teams, music participation, the AV team and other opportunities for leadership.

- Question around cost of graduation and the need to balance tradition with cost-effectiveness and effective fundraising.

2. Lunch Supervision and Lunch Programs

Our current supervision falls below budget. We would ideally like to have two assistants in the primary hallway and two in the junior hallway each day in addition to an assistant in the M/W Alt. Friday JK/SK. We have advertised in the newsletter, on the board outside the school and at local community buildings and merchants with no response.

Our prefects have been given a new schedule and we have done one monthly meeting and will be holding another in March. These meetings are opportunity to bring together the group and discuss their role, the

Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

strategies they can use and how to get the support they need. This process will require parental approval for next year and will continue to develop to ensure clarity of the role.

There is an opportunity to bring outside service providers into the school at lunch time such as the Karate Kids. These programs offer parents an alternative during the lunch hour and will have better supervision but they do have a charge associated with them.

As always, if your child(ren) can go home at lunch time, they should. This will alleviate the numbers in the classrooms and ensure a better ratio for supervision.

- Need more lunch supervision. Cannot require staff to do this as it would be in violation of their collective agreement.
- Currently there are prefects, some more qualified than others (ie. babysitting courses and experience), and perhaps that program could be optimized (ie. an interview process, an ongoing commitment by classroom, back-up planned during field trips, etc.) In combination with the supervision in the primary hallway from 12:50 to 1:05, this would be sufficient. Prefect program will be optimized for next year, and meantime training is being offered monthly to prefects.
- Given the shortage of supervision in the hallway and outside, agreed to put out the call for volunteers to see us through this year.

3. *Staffing*

Our staffing allocation for next year is down due to decreased enrolment. We had a surplus of several teachers but will have the first right of recall if other teachers transfer out. We have also been allocated an additional JK/SK Autism Community Class.

- This school has a declining population, so we will continue to see our newer teachers being designated surplus.

4. *Thank you*

I would like to formally thank the Unionville School community and UPSAC for their generous donations to the school including the playground, the second iMac for our music program, and further donations to our library.

J. Meeting Adjourned 9:45 p.m.

Next meeting April 15th.