

# Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

## Attendance:

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

**Council Members absent:** Noor Al-Shaikh, Karen Mitas, Pamela Nitert, Karyn Toon, Ruchi Vij, Jodi Wilson

**Teacher Reps present:** Elizabeth Dyer

**Guests present:** Diane Loveys, Elaine Essery, Taylor Essery (student), Haley Prentice (student)

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## A. Welcome

## B. Meeting Minutes – Earlene Worrall – Feb 2009

- Motion for approval of the February minutes made by JP Gagnon and seconded by Hilary Seppanen. Minutes approved.

## C. Financials – Gary Crosby – Feb 2009

- Gary reviewed the latest financial statement, noting the total of \$7798 now available for investment, once the reserves for playground repairs and operating expense carry-forward are deducted.
- Silent auction figures have not yet been finalized, but profit is estimated at just over \$19,000 based upon revenue of \$26,700 less estimated expenses of \$7,400. Silent auction costs include the full run of posters, the remainder of which will be sold at Arts Night, generating additional revenue. Gary will provide a full reconciliation of the Silent Auction results at the April meeting.
- Motion for approval of the February financial statement made by Catherine Hankins and seconded by Lorrie-Anne Lauder. Financials approved.

## D. Principal's Report – Debbie Donsky

- Report follows, with discussion points inserted:

## Principal's Report—School Council, UPSAC

Tuesday March 24, 2009

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### 1. Volunteering at UPS

- We have formed a committee and will be meeting in a couple of weeks to examine how to move forward in this area.
- Survey Results indicate the following:

Question	Item	Percentage
I am interested in volunteering at school.	Yes	78.3%
	No	21.7%
I have done the following volunteering at UPS in the past (answer all that apply).	Library	22.0%
	My child's classroom	85.4%
	Sporting events	22.0%
	School Council	31.7%
	Field Trips	82.9%
	Skating	63.4%
Earth Day	17.1%	

# Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

	House Colours	22.0%
	Maintain Gardens	26.8%
I have supported the reading program in my child's classroom by doing the following	Reading with at risk readers	44.7%
	Filling book bags for home reading	84.2%
	Tracking student ability to read a text	34.2%
	Donating books to the classroom	36.8%
I have supported teachers in classrooms by doing the following: I have supported teachers in classrooms by doing the following:	Reading with students	100.0%
	Bulletin boards	5.9%
	Photocopying	52.9%
	Supporting centres in the classroom	29.4%
	Reading to the class	11.8%
	Sharing an area of expertise with the students in the classroom	14.7%

- Debbie will create a volunteer policy, using survey results as input, and bring the policy to Council for feedback.
- Survey sought to understand the depth and breadth of volunteering at this school.
- A committee has been formed, comprised of Debbie and six parents.

## 2. Tentative School Organization

JK/SK am	Grade 3/4
JK/SK pm	Grade 4/5
JK/SK T/Th Alt Fri	Grade 5
JK/SK ASD am	Grade 6
JK/SK ASD pm	Grade 6/7
Grade 1	Grade 7/8
Grade 1	Grade 8
Grade 2	J/I ASD
Grade 2/3	J/I MID
Grade 2/3	

School organizations are determined based on the following criteria:

- JK to Grade 3 Capped at 20 (10% of all primary classes in the region can go over the 20 cap with a "hard cap at 23—*Primary Class Size Reduction*)
- Grade 3/4 Capped at 23
- Grade 4 to 6 Regional Average at 25.5
- Junior Classes 25 +/- 5
- Intermediate Classes 27 +/- 5
- We are allocated staffing for regular classrooms based on these numbers and our projected enrolment.
- We are allocated prep time based on a percentage that equals 200 minutes of prep time for each full time teacher in a 1500 minute week.

As a result of the primary class size reduction we must create organizations that offer maximum flexibility for student placement. This results in an increased number of split grades.

If this organization is in place next year, grade 6-8 will be on rotary.

- The tentative school organization for 2009/2010 contains even more split classes.
- There will be no 5/6 split next year (as exists this year) given instrumental music in grade 6.
- 3/4 split also poses a challenge since French instruction begins in grade 4.
- UPS is considering rotary for grades 6/7/8 next year.
- It was noted that several grades have no straight class, rather all splits.
- Parents expressed concern about the lack of balance in some split classes, a recurring theme from last year but with no apparent solution. Some

# Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

grades are split among three classes (ie. grades 2 and 3 for next year), resulting in very small peer groups for some students within their own classroom. Debbie stated that the school is unable to compensate for disadvantageous placements this year by placing the affected students into a class with a larger peer group for next year.

- Debbie agreed that straight grades would be preferred, then split classes that are as balanced as possible by grade, but maintained that the numbers dictate this organization. An effort has been made to best meet the needs of students across the school, while adhering to Board requirements re maximum class sizes.
- Debbie recommended that parents discuss any specific concerns and/or placement considerations with their child's current teacher. This will ensure that these factors are incorporated into the placement discussion.

### 3. Community Outreach and Student Leadership

Expanding community outreach projects to include an aspect of student leadership and authenticity in our approach to meaningful projects to our community and beyond...

Please welcome two our grade 7 leaders, Taylor Essery and Haley Prentice.

- Students Haley Prentice and Taylor Essery presented a proposal re support for SPCA (Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). They wish to place a bin in the school lobby for pet-related donations (noting that used are fine – leashes, pet toys, old towels, etc.) plus pet food. Families wishing to make cash donations will be referred to the SPCA website.
- The girls propose to speak to classes about the cause, with potential for a speaker from SPCA at a future assembly.
- Initiative approved by Council. Debbie will work with the students to plan execution, including communication home.
- Taylor and Haley will report back to Council in May regarding results.

### 4. Touchstone

Many of our teachers have worked with their students to brainstorm various ideas around what we value and want to include in our school touchstone.

The Touchstone integrates with Character Education.

Some of the ideas generated by our students include:

1. Making lasting friendships
2. A lively, exciting atmosphere (a lot of activities/action, extracurricular activities, happy students, lots of interaction)
3. We respect each others differences
4. We should treat people as we want to be treated
5. We should be playing as a community, together, no matter the age.
6. We believe technology helps us learn.
7. Learn from your mistakes and turn mistakes into something positive
8. Be responsible for your work the words you choose to use and the way you choose to behave
9. School wide knowledge and understanding about Autism and other special needs
10. Provide a learning environment that accommodates different learning styles
11. We take responsibility for our actions
12. We put a lot of effort into our work

Moving forward, we will see the following actions:

1. Invite a YRDSB staff who implements Touchstones to work with our school

# Unionville Public School Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

2. Work with staff at ensuring that all ideas are heard
  3. Summarize the various ideas
  4. Communicate these ideas in May PawPrints so that parents can discuss the ideas with their children
  5. Put together a survey and share it with community and school for feedback
  6. Review data
  7. Develop several statements from the data and community feedback
  8. Re-survey the school and community to determine our final touchstone
  9. Develop a way to have a display at our school to bring the Touchstone to life
- The Touchstone initiative is moving forward gradually, toward the goal of being in place by September.
  - Approximately 1/3 of teachers have contributed ideas so far.
  - A survey will be issued, for completion by teachers with their students in class, and by parents with their children at home. Members of the school community will be able to vote for the final statement.
  - Communication will be included in May Pawprints.
  - Moving forward, the idea is to recognize at school assemblies those students who particularly exemplify touchstone values.
  - Important to draw linkage between words and actions, to show how to live the touchstone.
  - Regarding placement of the touchstone display, Council parents recommended the hallway that is most used by all students, ie. the central hall between the office and the gym, perhaps in place of the under-utilized bulletin board.

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

- No report issued, discussion re Silent Auction deferred. Pamela will lead a debrief of the Silent Auction at the next meeting.

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

- Nothing to report.
- Debbie noted that the school is marking Earth Hour on March 27<sup>th</sup> by turning off the lights and using as little power as possible. Earth Rangers will visit UPS on April 2 per Carol.

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

- Mr. Hawco will serve as school liaison for the Legacy Run, with proceeds going to the Maternity ward of Markham Stouffville Hospital.
- Date is May 11, with May 12 as the rain date.
- Tess noted that there will be increased security around the pond this year, particularly along Carlton, to ensure that students remain on the path.

## **H. House Colours – Karen Mitas**

- No report.

## **I. Meeting Adjourned 8:30 p.m.**

**Next meeting April 21.**