



2021-2022 Wilkinson School Community Council

April 4, 2022

Meeting Minutes - Approved

The 2021-2022 Co-Chair, Lisa Zivontsis called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

Agenda

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|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Land Acknowledgement | 5. Committee Updates | 7. Equity and Inclusion |
| 2. Approval of April Agenda | - ARE | 8. Adjournment of Council Meeting |
| 3. Approval of February Minutes | - Greening and Grounds | |
| 4. Principal's Update | 6. New Business | |
| | - Constitution | |
| | - Trivia Night | |
| | - Silent Auction | |
| | - Cookbook | |
| | - Wilky Move & Groove | |
| | - Spring Fair | |
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Attendance

Present:

Liz Albrecht-Bisset (Principal)
Lisa Zivontsis (Co-Chair)
Dayna Tekatch (Co-Chair)
Vince Chan (Treasurer)
Shanna Breslin (Secretary)
Anthea Moreau (Dandylion)
Kostas Kotsampouikidis (Staff)
Amy Cole
Stephanie Lamb
Beth Martin

Brenda Ohngemach
Deborah Shub
Chantal Sweeting
Jennifer Stiff

Guests:

Regrets:

Muneerah Chohan
Emily Davidson
Rob Jefferson
Parsa Khandaker

Absent:

Nicki Keenlside (VP)

1. Land Acknowledgement

2. Approval of April Agenda

- Dayna and Beth approved.



3. Approval of February Minutes

- Steph and Dayna approved.

4. Principal's Update: Liz Albrecht-Bisset

- Each day we will send out an email about the new COVID cases in our school. Parents will see notifications for all classes, not just their own.
 - Our cases are going up, as they are in most schools in Toronto.
 - Before March Break, we averaged about 27 absences per day, today we had 66 > 16%, which is under the 30% threshold set by the government.
 - About 60% of our students and most staff are still masking.
 - We are moving ahead with some outdoor extracurricular sports.
 - We are being cautious and are starting a few indoor activities that are safe: Silver Birch in the library and Orff (music) with small groups. Social distancing is present. Unfortunately, reading buddies may be put on hold.
 - We will continue lunch as it is > students will not move into lunchrooms.
 - Students who are fasting for Ramadan can gather in alternate spaces while their classmates are eating.
 - Uschool: It will begin in-person at the school in the fall, but this year's program will stay as is.
 - As we can have guests in the school again, Melanie Doane may come later in the spring to do a presentation for the Grade 3s.
 - We continue to host our Friday gatherings.
- Reading: More students than normal are struggling, likely due to the pandemic. The gap also seems to have widened for older kids who were struggling before.
 - The Ontario Human Rights Commission released a [Right to Read](#) inquiry report in February that found that by not using evidence-based approaches to teach reading, the public education system is failing students. Recommendations were made.
 - Significant aspects of early reading will be changed to be in-line with scientific basis. Our SLPs have been recommending this for a while.
 - As part of this, the primary and junior staff are participating in internal training. Next year we may be able to train parents to help as volunteers.
- Graduation: Our staff grad committee is meeting this week and will then ask for feedback from Grade 5 and 6 parents.
 - We know there has not been the fundraising this year that there was in the past and understand that the Council may not be able to contribute as much as before.



- Yard Update: The TDSB is still sending tenders to companies, so construction may not begin until late summer or fall.
 - We were supposed to get costing for add-ons by the end of January and have not seen that. They are expected to come when the tender process is complete as the cost of labour and supplies may change.
- School Improvement Plan (SIP): Liz discussed half of it, and we will discuss the second half next month to give people time to think and ask questions. The plan will be sent to Council members ahead of the next meeting.
 - Our plan was set up before Liz arrived. The pandemic has changed things, so some items may no longer make sense or be incomplete and some professional learning sessions could not take place.
 - Normally the plan is presented to the Council in the phase between staff input and submission to the superintendent. We hope to be able to do this with next year's plan > parents can always email Liz questions.
 - Certain aspects of the plan are required by the board and Ministry.
 - The plan can change partway through the year and is supposed to be collaborative.
 - We aim to make changes and set goals that impact all areas of learning.
- Some highlights from the plan:
 - Our staff completed their training re: the province's new math curriculum, but the rest of the rollout was consumed by COVID. We did get the MathUp online resources that teachers could use in-person and online.
 - Special Education: Most kids are now integrated into regular classrooms (instead of HSP). They may be taken out for short periods of instruction. The teachers work in collaboration with classroom teachers. This change is connected to de-streaming and trying to correct the over-representation of black students in these programs. The downside with the integrated model is that it sometimes leaves teachers feeling like they are spread a little thin.
 - There is an emphasis on tracking learning gaps due to COVID and social and racial inequity. Students do not learn well if they are stressed and uncomfortable (e.g., due to hunger, feeling out of place culturally, difficulty at home, ADHD)
 - We bring in programs and ideas related to mental health, social skills, and anger management. We're noticing that many kids are lacking in social skills due to online learning and isolating.
 - We're constantly gathering data and information to determine if what we're doing is working. This can involve IEPs to help measure student progress.



- We purge our resources regularly > removing things that are no longer appropriate and buying new resources that speak to equity and diversity.
- We've started several initiatives to make sure all our students have a voice > student newspaper and (junior) student council.
- Joy-filled June: The student council will help us to run activities throughout the month.
- We have a teacher book club discussing themes of antiracism and equity.
- We are working to ensure indigenous education is appropriately implemented at every grade level as part of the curriculum. This involves learning to be Treaty People.
- We are also looking at accessibility since our school is not currently accessible. There are ways to correct this within our current constraints. Portions of the railings on the main steps were removed to accommodate the flagpole > we'd like to move the flagpole and replace the railings.
- We are now looking at developing our plan for next year.
- We plan to survey the parent population to determine how best to reach everyone > which forms of communication would they like from both the school and Council?
- *The new plan will be sent out to Council members. As you read it, please think about achievement, equity, and well-being, and come up with some ideas that would be helpful. Keep in mind that these areas are interconnected. What should we know about our community and students? What issues arose because of the pandemic that now need to be addressed?*

5. Committee Reports

Committee members provided an update of upcoming and ongoing initiatives.

ARE Committee: Dayna Tekatch

- Ramadan: Meetings during the month of Ramadan are difficult for Muslim parents. Families are busy preparing in the early evenings.
 - We usually skip meetings in March and December because the breaks result in lower attendance. Perhaps we could meet in March and skip the meeting during the month of Ramadan. We will do some research to propose solutions.
- Classroom Funding: A teacher approached us about funding a classroom visit from Luana Shirt (the speaker with our 3-part series with other east-end Councils). She mentioned that while Scientists in School is wonderful and fun, the program doesn't involve anything she can't teach herself. However, Luna is bringing her unique



perspective and story.

- We can't offer funds to one classroom and not all others.
- In discussing options, we wondered if perhaps the teachers could be given the option to choose how they use their portion of the Scientists in School budget?
- Isn't there board funding for this kind of speaker? Not for individual classrooms. The staff can get some funding, and when available, we can join other opportunities, like attending the Wandering Spirit pow wow.
- We also have a parent, Crystal Basi, who is TDSB approved. She can provide expertise and talks combining science and indigenous learning.
- Scientists in School works better in some grades than others because of differing curricula. Some themes are difficult for teachers to do on their own.
- Maybe we should adjust this budget item to be for science and social studies?
- There are two questions here:
 - For this year, should we allow teachers to use their portion of the budget for programs other than Scientists in School?
 - Going forward, do we want to adjust this budget category to include other things and continue to let teachers decide how to spend their portion? *We will think about this and discuss it in September/October when working on our budget.*
- Would the Council be required to approve each teacher's program choice? Yes.
- Motion to approve allowing teachers to use their portion of this year's Scientists in School budget for other programs. *Motion carried.*
- Crosswalk: Paula Fletcher is working on connecting this to other initiatives to make it happen.
- Signs: Using the remaining Parent Outreach Grant funds, we were able to purchase wood for new signs. It's very expensive now, but Home Depot in Gerrard Square gave us \$350 worth of wood for \$84!
 - Interested classes will be given paint and supplies to create their signs. We're looking at working with DeSerres to source this. Our superintendent said she will cover the difference if we are short.
- PRO Grant: The antiracism workshop with Alexis Dawson was great ("Racism isn't the shark, it's the water"). We had a turnout of about 13 people (including Liz – thank you for coming!), so not a great turnout, but still a valuable event for those in attendance.
- Translation: We worked with community members to translate the cookbook invitation and put the translations up around the yard. It was a significant effort to find people able to help. We were advised that Google Translate often makes confusing mistakes.



- We consider this a launching point for translating information into other languages spoken within our community.
- After the translations, was there an increase in submissions? We had about two or three during that last week – some success!

Greening and Grounds Committee: Beth Martin

- We have partnered with Clean Toronto to do a schoolyard cleanup on Sunday, April 24 at 10 am.
- On the Friday before, all classes are doing some sort of activity for Earth Day. Some will be collecting trash, but there is always a lot left in the yard over the weekend. *Beth will connect with Mme. Garzon, who is running these activities.*
- Seedlings: We are working with interested teachers about planting seedlings in the Learning Garden with their classes.
- Pollinate TO: The City of Toronto told us that there will be construction over the summer, and we may not have access to the garden. We're awaiting more information.
- Rain Barrels: We'll be running a fundraiser soon, offering barrels for the discounted price of \$60. We should earn about \$10 from each sale for the Council. We believe they can be delivered directly to people's homes.
- Do the funds we earn from this belong to the committee or are they for the Council as a whole? Any funds raised through Council initiatives are to be used by the Council as a whole, split up according to our approved budget and any approved funding requests.
- EcoSchools: Is there a teacher lead right now? Mme. Jim and Mme. Garzon.
- FYI, if you have any spare mulch, it can be dropped in the Learning Garden.

6. New Business

Constitution Approval: Shanna Breslin

- This was introduced in February. As a reminder, the TDSB has created a school council bylaws template that all councils must use to update or create their bylaws. Our bylaws are in our constitution which resides on the [council page](#) of our website.
- By May, we are to compare the template with our constitution and ensure that our bylaws comply with and contain all mandatory articles from the template.
- A draft of changes has been created and circulated.
- What are the major differences? A lot of extra wording has been added, but we were in agreement with most items.
- A few new things to note:



- Committees must not only include at least one Council member, but also be chaired by a Council member. We've had committees that did not include Council members.
- They've added a social media policy and a new responsibility for the secretary – being responsible for the upkeep of all Council social media and communications. Our secretary has been doing this for the last seven years, but it's now required and is something to consider going forward.
- Motion to approve the updated constitution. *Motion carried.*

Trivia Night: Brenda Ohngemach

- We have another trivia night coming Up on April 26th. Yay!

Silent Auction: Lisa Zivontsis

- We're still working to bring in great items. If any students want to offer services (e.g., snow removal), we will give the winner the parent's contact information. Please reach out if you or your children can contribute something.
- In previous years, we've had principals and teachers offer lunches or "principal for a day". *Liz is happy to offer this and will write something up. Liz and Kostas will bring this to the staff as well.*
- I'm adding items to auction website and plan to make it available early so people can look through the items and plan their bids.

Cookbook: Shanna Breslin

- The cookbook is complete and will be on sale shortly!
- We ended up with 52 recipes, which is fewer than I had hoped for, but they make a nice book. Every recipe that was submitted made me say, "Oooh, I'm excited to try that!"
- The price is based on the total number of pages. We aren't at the maximum quantity in our price bracket, so we can accept new recipes up the end of the sales period. We have fewer recipes in the appetizers and sides categories, but all are welcome.
- We are not spending money on this project. After we sell the book to the community, we'll order exactly the number sold from Brightpics. As a result, we can't accommodate late orders (i.e., we're not ordering extra or keeping an inventory).
- We will be offering the option to buy a book for another family. This is an anonymous donation so more families can participate. The teachers will decide where these books will be appreciated.
- Big thank you to Mr. Wong, Ms. Di Iorio, and Mme. Butler for running the cover contest.



- Brightpics sends a full hard copy proof, which will be given to the library.

Wilky Move & Groove: Shanna Breslin

- Back in November, we discussed fundraising ideas, one of which was a dance/move-a-thon. I've been working with Mr. Kasaval and Mme. Garzon, and we finally have a date! It will take place from May 16 to 20th during gym class (outside as much as possible).
- A big thank you to the two of them – not only are they helping to plan it, but they will be implementing it as well.
- The purpose of the event is to promote physical fitness and mental health by getting kids moving and having fun.
- This is also a fundraiser and we'll be asking parents to sponsor their child's participation the way we do for Jump Rope for Heart, except the charity is us.
- We want this to be special and exciting, so activities will be very much directed by our students – they will have choice in how they participate. Kids can look forward to requesting songs and playing DJ, playing games, teaching each other cool moves, and doing freestyle dance and creative movement (including sports-based movement, like bouncing a ball to music).
- Stay tuned for further details!

Spring Fair: Lisa Zivontsis

- Are events allowed. Could we run a spring fair?
- Outdoor events are allowed. Liz will check with colleagues – if things are going on at other schools, we can do them too. Indoor stuff might be more problematic, but we should be able to permit the outside and washrooms.
- If we can do this, we're looking for someone to take the lead.
- Lisa does not have the capacity to lead it but can support and help. There are several others willing to support as well.
- It doesn't need to be like past fun fairs, but it would be nice to do something and get the community together. It could be closer in size to Fall Fest, depending on how many can help and what the lead's capacity is.
- This usually takes place in May or in June, working around religious holidays.
- *Please think about this while we await confirmation that it's possible.*



Other: All

- At the beginning of the year, we had a parent approach us about making a sizeable contribution to our outdoor education program.
- Categories for OPAL and schoolyard revitalization were supposed to be added to the system but are still not there. Can we get those added?
- *Liz is speaking with our financial officer to have them added.*

7. Equity and Inclusion

- This is a space for people to share stories or incidents related to equity and inclusion.
- There were no comments this evening.
- If you experience something or hear about something in the yard, please know that you can bring it to a meeting or email Dayna (daynatekatch@hotmail.com).

8. Council meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm

**The next meeting of the 2021-2022 Council will be held on
Monday, May 9th, 2022, at 6:30pm via Zoom Video Conference.**