



2022-2023 Wilkinson School Community Council

March 20, 2023

Meeting Minutes - Approved

The 2022-2023 Co-Chair, Dayna Tekatch called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

Agenda

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Land Acknowledgement2. Approval of March Agenda3. Approval of February Minutes4. Principal's Update | <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Committee Updates<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ARE Committee- Finance Update- Arts Committee- Movie Night- Greening and Grounds- Fun Fair | <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. New Business<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Textiles- Funding Request- Mindfulness Course- Schoolyard Add-Ons7. Equity and Inclusion8. Adjournment of Meeting |
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Attendance

Present:

Liz Albrecht-Bisset (Principal)
Dayna Tekatch (Co-Chair)
Beth Martin (Co-Chair)
Vince Chan (Treasurer)
Shanna Breslin (Secretary)
Anthea Moreau (Dandylion)
Kostas Kotsampouikidis (Staff)
Stephanie Lamb
Angeli Mehta
Brenda Ohngemach

Lindsay Reimers
Sharon Scanlon
Deborah Shub
Jennifer Stiff
Lisa Zivontsis

Guests:

Michelle Seemann

Regrets:

Zoya McGroarty
Emily Davidson
Nicholas Palmer

Absent:

Pratik Shah

1. Land Acknowledgement

2. Approval of March Agenda

- Deborah and Stephanie approved.

3. Approval of February Minutes

- Sharon and Vince approved.



4. Principal's Update: Liz Albrecht-Bisset

- March and April are very busy months as the school staff work through staffing models.
- Wilkinson is projected to have slightly more students in the English program next year (similar to 2020 numbers). One reason for this is students enrolled at Dandy Lion are now considered to be in area regardless of where the family lives. Last year, we began accepting JK students according to this process. This will continue to change our demographics > it stabilizes our population and creates stability for families.
- The school expects to have a 4th kindergarten class with an ECE and possibly a 5th class.
- The French program is expected to be 69 students total (Grades 4-6). Extended French was much more popular than Immersion, especially Middle Immersion, so our French numbers have fallen. Our Grade 4 class will be large because we have a particularly large group of Gr. 3 students this year.
- About 10-20 students would enter our Extended French program from feeder schools each year. With Middle Immersion, we're only seeing about 3-6 students coming in.
- Wilkinson's junior Intensive Support Program (ISP) will continue.
- In total, we anticipate just over 420 students at the school next year > Our JK group will be our largest cohort. This is the number used for staffing. We don't expect to lose any staff and hope to have only one reorganization in the fall instead of three like last year.
- We don't know if we will get a VP back. The Board and Ministry start with classroom teacher allocations and move on from there. More information will be provided at our next meeting.
- When deciding on the breakdown of individual classroom populations, there are certain rules that must be followed. Sometimes, this results in split classes. The academic and emotional wellbeing of our students is considered when deciding on classroom placements. Sometimes class combinations are created to distribute personalities and allow for more functional classrooms. There are teachers on the staffing committee who give input.
- Question: Is there a way parents can communicate the feelings they have about their kids to the school during reorganization processes. Could parents use a form to provide feedback to teachers about this?
 - We do speak to families and try to take feedback into account, but there are challenges that sometimes can't be avoided. For instance, over the summer teachers may retire or decide to switch positions. Sometimes families have conflicting requests that simply can't be accommodated.



- If there are big issues, students who have special needs, or preferences about how to place twins for example, the school wants to know.
- The best thing to do is email Liz with a genuine concern or need as she has the final decision on student placements. Feedback from staff and families is considered.
- Question: Considering French numbers are down, is there a scenario where the Middle Immersion class could be cancelled. No. It has to continue, but there may be split classes. In a worst case scenario, schools could merge to form bigger classes.

5. Committee Reports

Committee members provided an update of upcoming and ongoing initiatives.

Anti-Racism and Equity (ARE) Committee: Dayna Tekatch and Beth Martin

- Crosswalk Update: Dayna has been working on this project for several years. The original plan was to paint the crosswalk in progressive Pride colours. As crosswalks are expensive, the City offered us funding through a Reconciliation Toronto project if we switched to do a reconciliation theme (orange with white feathers).
- We just found out that the Reconciliation Toronto project no longer exists, so there is no funding. However, the TTC construction at Donlands requires a work extension. The City Council decided they would approve the extension if the TTC paid for our crosswalk.
- The TTC will be paying for it and expects to have it painted in the spring or summer. The plan is to switch back to the progressive Pride flag design.
- Thank you, Dayna for your tireless efforts on this!

Finance Update: Vince Chan

- Vince provided an update of our current finances.
- We received a School Council Social Planning Grant of \$2,000 but are unsure what it is (possibly for the EcoFair). We know it's not connected to the TDSB Friends of the Environment Grant > we've received \$1,855 for that.
- We're finding that everything is about twice the price it used to be now, so we will have to do some serious thinking about what we'd like to fund moving forward. We have several annual funding items, like field trip subsidies and arts performances, but our money is not going as far as it used to.
- Going forward, we'll need to figure out what we'd like to fund and how much money is needed. We may have to add in some more fundraisers. We could also do specific fundraising for the graduation.



Arts Committee: Stephanie Lamb

- The committee booked a performance for the kindergarten students and Dandylion Dandycubs (the cubs are 32 kids).
- Jamaican Canadian author and education Nadia L Hohn (Malaika series) will do a Caribbean playground presentation, reading from her first book and exploring Caribbean songs and games with the kids. She will do two sessions with two classes each on the morning of March 27.
- We're looking to bring in a Cameroonian drummer through Prologue for all Grades 4 and 5 students (bilingual presentation). The date needs to be confirmed.
- Including DO Gibson's presentation for the whole school, we will have used just over \$2,000 of the budget. We should have \$1,500 left for Portrait of a Name and the Arts Club funding request.
- The Art Committee brings presentations to the school so our students can be part of a relaxed arts experience. The plan is to add a few more presentations next year. It makes a big difference for kids to have these opportunities.

Movie Nights: All

- Our first Movie Night is scheduled for March 31!
- Usually, the licence is around \$400 for the year and teachers can use it too. This year, we have a parent who buys movie licensing for a living. She spoke to Sony to get a free license for our March movie along with three swag packages to raffle off.
- The parent will speak to multiple companies to find more free licenses for the rest of our Movie Nights this year. The downside is that the license is only for the specific movie on that night – it can't be used by teachers.
- Another parent will bring in his screen and speakers for Movie Nights and will set it all up. His child is in Grade 6, so we will not have him next year.
- Just before the pandemic, we spent \$324 on popcorn. We called the vendor today to find out about the shelf life, and they said we probably should not be selling it.
- If we order four boxes, it will last through our other Movie Nights this year, the Derby, and Fun Fair. The cost is just over \$260. We could also spend \$364 on six boxes, which would last into next year.
- *Since not much time is left this year, we've decided to go with the cheaper option.*
- We usually spend about \$200-300 on food and make back at least what we spend.
- Discussion: Should we charge an entry fee? In the past we have encouraged donations, but while some families give generously, often people do not give at all.
 - Last year, we raffled off the movie DVD to people who donated. The committee



plans on doing this with the swag packages.

- Another suggestion is to ask for a minimum donation amount per person or family. Liz feels that a pay what you can structure with a \$5 minimum per family sounds reasonable. People don't often carry cash anymore, so having a minimum ensures that people will come prepared. The school can easily spot families that we know might struggle with this, but generally, a \$5 minimum should be doable for our population.
- How about \$10 per family? We know \$5 is not onerous and people will often put in more, so perhaps we should stick to \$5 to make things inclusive. It will be easier to subsidize some families if we need to.
- Motion to approve a \$5 minimum per family. *Motion carried.*
- Does the entry fee include food? Concessions are extra. We have meal deals as well.
- In the past, we always had to pay for the permit (a few hundred dollars). Liz will attend so that we get the permit for free (thanks Liz!)
- Scheduling: We could do another one at the end of April after Eid but need to avoid the Derby on April 28. Perhaps we could do two Movie Nights in May instead?
- Note that it is important for the school's insurance for children to be accompanied by someone 16 and older. We've had issues with parents dropping off their kids in the past.
- Supplies are stored in the kitchenette and storage room. We have little IKEA tray containers to hold the food for the meal deals.
- Note: The kitchenette needs to be permitted and is shared with the snack program. We are welcome to use the big kitchen too and should let Dandyliion know if we need it.

Greening and Grounds: Beth Martin

- More volunteers are needed for the Danforth Nature & Climate Expo. Email danforthclimateaction@gmail.com if interested.
- Garbage in the Yard: Some parents have complained about litter. Beth has investigated possible solutions.
- Litter is often seasonal and increases when the snow melts and on windy days.
- Much of the garbage is not from students but from people walking through the yard. Part of the yard construction project is to create a walkway to funnel people down from Caithness to Strathmore instead of coming across the yard, which may help.
- There is a single caretaker at the school who has a large area to look after, including the Annex building. Parents could help with yard cleanup duties, but we have to be careful about stepping on the toes of the union.
- Liz mentioned that the front sidewalk is not technically TDSB property, so that is an area



where support would be much appreciated. The caretaker prioritizes the areas where kids play. In April for Earth Day, there will also be a student yard cleanup.

- If anyone wants to help pick up garbage in the front, we can try to organize some cleanup days.
- We could really use more garbage bins in the yard; however, they have to be brought in at night. There are more bins when the kids are out, but in the evening and on weekends, there are fewer as they have to be taken in.
- There are a lot of young people who hang out in the yard at night and taking the garbage bins inside is also part of a plan to discourage people from spending time in the yard after hours. The outdoor education yard has been used at night as well, even though it's usually locked. As a result, our local police officers have been asked to patrol it fairly regularly.
- *The Greening and Grounds Committee will come up with a plan to reduce yard litter.*

Fun Fair: Dayna Tekatch

- Progress Update: We're working hard to plan and prepare for Fun Fair!
- Planning and budgeting is tough now because everything is super expensive. We are trying to get sponsorships and donations where we can, including from grocery stores.
- Originally, we planned to everything outside but since we won't have most of the yard and COVID stress is lifting, so we are hoping to use more of the basement. This will also help if the weather doesn't cooperate.

6. New Business

Textile Recycling Fundraiser: Shanna Breslin

- For several months, we've been advertising our textile recycling [fundraiser](#) in partnership with Diabetes Canada. We're now ready to collect items at the school.
- We'll be launching the collection dates the week of April 17 (the week of Earth Day) and the textiles will be picked up by Diabetes Canada on Friday, May 12.
- Are there a few people who might be able to help with collection mornings? We'll be at the school from about 8:30 to 9:15 am and then will bring the bags to the Vice Principal's office on the first floor.
- I would also like some volunteers for Friday, May 12. Last time we did this, we filled the gym stage so there were a lot of bags to be thrown onto the truck. I asked for a morning slot but don't know the actual pick-up time yet.
- If you're available to help, please email council@wilkinsonps.org.



Funding Request – Art Club: All

- A Wilkinson Special Needs Assistant named Jennifer Ho has started an Art Club and would like \$700 to expand it to more students (currently 12 students are participating). There is an approved budget of \$100 from the school.
- Jennifer has some supplies, but there are not enough to provide activities for everyone.
- The club's purpose is to provide an opportunity for students to be creative in a non-academic setting and feel successful. Jennifer started by inviting some of the kids that she noticed seemed to benefit from art. Sometimes, she includes kids who are having a rough day.
- The Council can use Arts Committee funding for this.
- There are some other sources available for supplies, so some feel that \$700 is too much. Perhaps we can give \$400-500 instead since this is not a program that all students can participate in.
- Motion to approve \$400 in Council funding for the Arts Club. *Motion carried.*
- *Update: Jennifer has been notified. Note that there is a different process for ordering supplies and reimbursement for staff. This process has been added to our finance process document which is kept on the Council page of our [website](#).*

Mindfulness Course: Sharon Nolan

- Sharon completed a post graduate program in mindfulness. Her focus was on working with parents to reduce reactivity and stress.
- There is a common assumption that when we teach kids skills, parents already have them. This is not true. To support kids, we want to give parents the skills as well.
- Sharon would like to offer a free mindfulness program for parents. She will require a space to use and help with promotion.
- The course would run weekly for 6-8 weeks and be an hour per week. People are expected to register for the entire program – it's not a drop-in class.
- Liz suggests that a Monday or Thursday evening in the library would work well as ukulele classes are held in the school, so there is already a permit in place. Parents can also drop-off kids and come to the class. It's best to schedule it after 6 pm when the daycare closes, and more parents will be available.
- People will benefit most from doing it in person, so there is no virtual option planned currently. The classes would be maximum 10 people.
- Is there a physical component? The course involves mostly sitting practices. One week



focuses on very small mindful movements. The movements are very accessible.

- Dandylion will also put up a flyer.

Schoolyard Add-Ons: Beth Martin

- We will discuss this next month when we have more time.

7. Equity and Inclusion

- This is a space for people to share stories or incidents related to equity and inclusion.
- Any small incidents can be addressed so the school can take action.
- Please bring forward any issues or thoughts; there is always a place to talk about these things. If people are uncomfortable sharing things at meetings, they can always email Dayna, Beth or Liz.
- Comment: A parent came into the school recently and was very pleased to see the Black Lives Matter flag in the hallway. Their family has not always felt comfortable at the school, but the flag made them feel really included.

8. Council meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm.

**The next meeting of the 2022-2023 Council will be held on
Monday, May 1, 2023, at 6:30pm.**