

Minutes
NORTHLEA HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION MEETING
Thursday, November 27, 2014 6:30 PM Room 115

Present – Alexis DeCastro, Rachel Chernos-Lin, Kara Pearson, Shelly Lowe, Wilmar Kortleeve, David Ehrlich, Sophia Danish, Jane Wadden, M. Lariviere, Ms. Cornish, Mme. Larocque, Mr. Harris, Sharon Krieger, Lisa Towle, Doug McCormick, Rory Gleeson, Melanie Harju, Paige Purvis, Valerie Dubail, Nicole Cooper, Betheney Maheu, Jacqueline Frazer, Melissa Beresford, Peter Baugh, Stephen Peirce, Julie Brown, Sandra Whittaker, Birin Singh

The meeting was called to order at 6:45pm.

1. **INTRODUCTION** – Kara welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the year. It will be an interesting meeting, so please ask a lot of questions and get all of the information you are looking for.

MOTION Wilmar Kortleeve, Jacqueline Frazer
APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA CARRIED

MOTION Sharon Krieger, Nicole Cooper
APPROVAL OF THE H&S MINUTES – OCTOBER 16, 2014 CARRIED

2. CHAIR'S REPORT – Alexis DeCastro / Rachel Chernos-Lin / Kara Pearson

- As our last meeting focused on community safety concerns, with Staff Sergeant Moyer as our guest speaker, Alexis provided an update on the recent attacks on children. If there is anything further that we can communicate, we will do so. If you have specific questions, please let us know.
- Rachel reported that she went to the last Ward Forum meeting, which is open to parents. The topic was Assessment - how teachers assess learning. It was also about math and assessment in math. These meetings provide information and topics which are relevant to our kid's education. Trustees, superintendents, and a representative from the Ministry of Education spoke. There is a folder circulating, with pamphlets and handouts given out at that meeting, You are welcome to borrow them. As an illustrative example, when you get a test home with the rubric attached, that is one type of assessment.
- We also want to let you know that we've started to meet with the Chairs of other H&S associations. We met with Maurice Cody H&S just this week.
- Kindergarten playground – in the next week, they should be coming to start the work. David spoke with the daycare and kindergarten teachers regarding adjustment to the play time/areas during the installation. Entrances should both still be open. The work is all coordinated by TDSB staff – they may have contractors come in to deliver and install certain things. The play structure was chosen in consultation with the administration and kindergarten teachers.
- Kara reported that this past week, our PSP was slightly altered due to construction on Donlea. David, Wilmar and Kara met with the crew to voice concerns.....equipment by the PSP zone, signs on the road, etc. They understood our concerns and they were also helping to get kids across the road. They closed the intersection the following day, so we had to move the PSP zone slightly north for two days. Thanks for your patience and understanding, as we've adjusted. They have promised to give us communications beforehand in future, as the more communication we have, the better we can inform everyone.
- The H&S needs to fill out a survey, from the Ministry of Education – it is a health consultation survey regarding how curriculum is being rolled out and how it involves parents. The H&S Chairs are going

to complete it together, so they can capture as many opinions as possible. David pointed out that we are trying to ensure kids are getting 60 minutes of daily activity. We will hear more about how that will occur.

- There was a question regarding the new intramural program. The plan was to launch it in November/December timeframe. With the flow of the year, we've decided instead to start the house league program in January. We will be creating banners, etc with support of the grade 7/8 students.
- Family Fun Night – we still need someone to lead it. Kara and Rachel will support them.

3. HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION FINANCIALS UPDATE – Sharon Krieger

- As we didn't have copies of the financial statements for everyone to review, Sharon just gave a brief update. There is no major change from the last meeting. We have spent about \$1000 for bracelets for the House league program, which will be rolled out in January. We will formally review the financial statements at the next meeting in January.

MOTION Doug McCormick, Wilmar Kortleever
 TO DELAY ACCEPTANCE OF THE LATEST STATEMENT OF REVENUE &
 EXPENSES
CARRIED

MOTION Nicole Cooper, Valerie Dubail
 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING
CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03pm

Minutes
NORTHLEA SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING
November 27, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm

1. INTRODUCTION – Kara welcomed everyone to this portion of the meeting.

| | | |
|---------------|--|---------|
| MOTION | Lisa Towle, Sandra Whittaker APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA | CARRIED |
|---------------|--|---------|

| | | |
|---------------|---|---------|
| MOTION | Betheney Maheu, Jacqueline Frazer APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – OCTOBER 16, 2014 | CARRIED |
|---------------|---|---------|

2. ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE – David Ehrlich / Sophia Danish / Jane Wadden

- Reports cards have been handed out and interviews went very well. We've had great feedback on the process.
- School concerts will take place in a couple of weeks.
- The Book Fair is taking place in the library.
- Tomorrow, we have our Cross-country lunch.
- ITLC Intergenerational Learning – this is a program where seniors are doing activities with Grade 5 students, once/week on Thursday afternoons in the staffroom. The program is going very well. We thought the program might not continue, but we have great volunteers again this year.
- Volleyball and basketball teams are up and running. There is more league play than tournament play for most teams. There is some Grade 7/8 tournament play. David believes in this being after school play, so the students are not missing too much time in class.
- We held the SK immersion night last week. There has been a change in dates – enrolment must happen by Dec 5th. Approximately 30 parents came to the meeting. One change we communicated was the boundary for French immersion has changed. Bessborough school is now designated as Northlea. It is a central process that did not involve consultation with our administration team. David contacted the department to understand the changes. Northlea families are given priority if there are too many applications for spots. Siblings are first priority, then Northlea families, then families from Bessborough. We will monitor how it will roll out. In the last 3 years, everyone has gotten in, but if there is a waiting list and a lottery in future, we will push for what they've communicated. The reason for the change, is that there are a large number of families interested in French and have had trouble placing students. Davisville is very full so they had to adjust the boundary as a result.
- The Vice-chair of the French advisory committee was in attendance and added a few comments. They have opened 5 new sites in the last year as numbers are growing for French immersion. The next closest school to here was Davisville, but they doubled their numbers in a short period of time. The best thing we can do is get sites close to here, as it will take the pressure off of our school. There are only 61 French immersion schools, and many districts without one. Next time there is an option and pressure to open more, you could voice your opinion to have one close. Wilmar is also on this committee. We used to be a designate school for 5 schools, four to five years ago. As we became very over-crowded, we were then only designated for Northlea and Bessborough. The year after that, they did restrict us to Northlea access only. There were two reasons to restrict:
 - o 880 kids, so if you add classes for 8 years, need 8 new classrooms

- Stated policy and preference to have Northlea have a 50/50 split between French and English, so as not to have issues with staffing, class sizes, etc. We are trending to grow more on the French side. As an example, excluding JK and DD, we are at 54% French.
- Is there pushback on TDSB to let us figure out the placement ourselves, and the classroom divisions? We can engage them in that discussion but have no control in the central program. If we have an increase directed at us, can we have more control in how the classes are split? We get staffing #'s and allocations, and we do the best to organize it. We will continue to dialogue around this.
- They have not increased the # of spots in the French immersion program, just changed the catchment area. As we have a pretty strong balance between English and French, this is a strength.
- Comment - When Andrew Howard was here, there was a 70/30 split (English /French) in teachers, and that was viewed as ideal. We get our #'s in February/March timeframe and allocations are done right after that. In March, could they increase our spots? They can't go above our capacity, but it's all based on projections and they must find capacity for the children. They know our space limitations, etc.
- If they open the catchment area, what is the rationale for that? Could it be to increase the spots? We can't be sure.
- In the past in south Leaside, it was clear that it was a lottery. If you didn't get in, you would be guaranteed a spot somewhere else. It may not be close to you, but you would be offered a spot.
- A kindergarten class is significantly bigger than a grade 1 class, so one kindergarten class translates into 1 1/2 grade 1 classes.
- David will follow up on the statement that Northlea families will have first priority. Siblings have always had priority, but the lottery worked such that all applications went in and anyone could be picked from it.

3. PORTFOLIO UPDATES:

- SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS – Wilmar Kortleever

- This is an official committee as advisory to the school and we have 4-6 meetings/year. There are parents, administration, and support staff on the committee. We met on November 13th, and discussed the attack on students, traffic issues with Metrolinx and an extra crossing guard.
- The Parent Safety Program (PSP) is working well, although we need a few more volunteers. We were recently asked to come to St. Anselm School and present what we're doing with PSP. We have also presented at Bessborough and either Rolph Road or Maurice Cody.
- One issue we discussed at the last safety committee, was looking at all safety procedures in place at the school. We did a walkthrough around the school to look at safety measures we have in place. We are willing to listen to safety issues from all parents. Please approach your teacher if there is something specific to your child, and if it affects all children, please approach us.
- Lunch room procedures - we will be looking closely at safety, and our nut-free environment, etc.
- Winter preparations are underway – we all know how slippery things will be – the field, stairs, and walkways. The problem with the field is that we can't put salt or heavy equipment on it.

- Crossing guards – we have three assigned to us - at Eglinton/Rumsey, Broadway/Rumsey, and Broadway/Sutherland. We are hoping to keep all three. The Broadway/Sutherland intersection is the busiest intersection we have. Do we need one at Donlea and Sutherland? There have been issues with Rumsey and Divadale, based on the bus traffic. The issue with Donlea is that it is getting busier with the Eglinton construction
- Staff Sgt. Moyer has offered to come back and talk about traffic safety. If you'd like to see that, let us know.
- Please tell your kids to pick up after themselves. There are extra safety issues with things being left on the field and with snow and ice, it makes it more problematic.
- Parking can be an issue at the school. We will respectfully remind parents to park in appropriate spots.

4. EQAO & SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN – David Ehrlich / Sophia Danish / Jane Wadden

- David passed out the presentation to the attendees. David, Jane, Sophia and all staff continuously reflect on academic achievement and growth. We will talk about EQAO results – we are very pleased with the results. We will talk about our literacy focus and EQAO plans and next steps. We have information on trends and what we've seen over the last few years.
- There are guiding questions for a school discussion on this subject:
 - o High expectations – what is staff's common understanding of a culture of high expectations for students?
 - o Assessment – What is the balance of assessment?
 - o Higher level thinking skills – How can staff create additional opportunities for students to engage in collaborative, open-ended learning tasks involving critical thinking and problem-solving?
 - o Differentiated instruction – Consider how staff might incorporate and embed differentiated instruction more robustly across programs and the school?
- The EQAO data was presented. We are well above standards in reading compared to the board and province, above in writing, and significantly above in math.
- Grade 6 results – very strong results in reading, writing and math
- Last year, there were concerns about grade 3 literacy, especially in writing. We have worked very hard to improve results. If you ask why, there's not one right answer. It became an important priority here last year. You could see that best practices around writing were consistently happening in the school. We had very strong teacher commitment to look at instruction and results. We did more climate setting for kids, so when put into the assessment, the kids felt more comfortable in writing the test.
- Generally our grade 6 results have been strong, but made significant improvement in writing and math. It is a reflection of sound teaching, as we go up the grades. There is much focus in the board on mathematics.
- By gender – there were significant gaps as boys were struggling. There is still a gap but smaller than it was, with results going up. You can still see gender differences....still a 9% gap in writing, which we're looking at. It is a little better in grade 6.
- Will special attention be given to the boys who will write grade 6 next year, in writing? We look at trends and the grade 3 test is a reflection of all teachers prior to that, not just the grade 3 teachers. When you see results growing overall, it is not related to the cohort. If they are behind in Grade 3, will they get special attention so they are better in Grade 6? We focus on all of them.

- EQAO trends – reading:
 - o Scores consistently have increased by Grade 6
 - o Significant percentage of our students consistently at or above TDSB and Provincial standards by Grade 6
 - o Northlea results indicate that the percentage of Grade 3 students at level 3 and 4 higher than TDSB and province
 - o Boys at level 3 or 4 consistently below achievement

- EQAO trends – writing:
 - o Scores consistently have increased by Grade 6
 - o Significant percentage of our students at or above TDSB and Provincial standard by Grade 6
 - o Northlea results indicate that the percentage of Grade 3 students at level 3 and 4 higher than TDSB and Province for 2013-2014
 - o Previous year's results were below the TDSB and Provincial standard
 - o Boys at level 3 or 4 consistently below girl's achievement

- EQAO trends – mathematics:
 - o Consistently our students are significantly at or above TDSB and Provincial standard for Grade 3 and Grade 6
 - o Boys at level 3 or 4 consistently below girl's achievement

- Conclusions:
 - o Improvement in reading and writing achievement of Grade 3 students in 2013-2014
 - o Boys are underperforming compared to girls
 - o School focus needs to continue to address Literacy with a focus on boy's achievement

- Literacy plan – Northlea will continue to focus on Literacy skills, specifically:
 - o Linking oral language development to improve writing
 - o Small group instruction
 - o Guided Writing and Reading
 - o Use of technology to improve student achievement

- We can't do something for a year and then change the plan. We have to continue to supplement and fill in the gaps.

- We have a speech pathologist who has done a number of meetings with parents. We've got a targeted program to divide kids into primary and junior/intermediate. This year, there is a lot more focus on the kindergarten group and Grades 1-3. Teachers are doing professional development. We have very specific strategies for students depending on where they are with language skills. This will help increase vocabulary and oral language skills. The PD has given very clear strategies to connect with what staff are doing. Eg) building their vocabulary, so they better understand what they are reading. All of the strategies work well for French Immersion as well.

- Are we teaching them how to use linking words? Yes

- M. Lariviere - For primary, there are a lot of oral language components. We make sure they have the vocabulary before we start the book.

- The technology aspect will continue to engage the boys. We have wireless and it is still evolving.....some kids bring their own tablets and others use those at the school.

- Literacy skills – areas of focus:
 - o Continued use of Learning Goals, Success Criteria, Descriptive feedback and Differentiated Instruction
 - o Focus on Oral Language Development to support Writing

- Focus on Rich Tasks and use of the Achievement Chart (emphasis on Thinking and Application)
 - Small group instruction
 - Review of Levelled text
 - Boy's engagement
 - Use of technology
- At a future meeting, would like to talk about how we are connecting assessment to reporting. At times, there are not consistent evaluations – need a better understanding of what is standard and not at standard.
- Technology – going well at the Grade 3 level
- Ms. Cornish - Grade 2/3 teachers met today to talk about different apps. We looked at free/paid apps and how we use them in class. We visited another school to see how they are using ipads. Today, two classes were working on the ipad, brainstorming on a web site. They had to use the QR code in the class and it was an interesting exercise for the kids. We had 7 different groups, where everyone's work showed on the screen at the front. You got to see what everyone was doing at one time. It was very engaging. We are trying to find ways to use them with and without wifi.
 - Next week, we have another session, with Shelly Lowry coming in to work with Desire2Learn – kids can work online with curriculum activities. In all areas of the school, teachers are engaging the kids in online work.
 - We are still waiting on the chrome books – Jane gets weekly updates. We don't want students to have to put in a p/w, as we are sharing amongst classrooms. TDSB is working with Google Canada to negate the need for this.
 - We're moving in the right direction around this. Some kids/teachers are very skilled and are using different apps.
 - Regarding the technology plan, we will engage parents shortly. We may need to re-evaluate what we were originally thinking. It's great to have ipads at grade 3, but also want to see focus on older grades as well. Those discussions are on hold until we assess further.
 - We have found really good French apps as well.
- EQAO plan – last year we needed large improvement so we looked at the big picture. This year, we will look at more specifics regarding where kids are doing well or where they may be struggling. Our kids tended to struggle in the same areas as the board, so we will look at those specific things. As we move closer to EQAO evaluations, we will do more specific planning.
- David showed a question from the grade 3 assessment, which many kids struggled with. We think the kids had trouble with it as words were used that they wouldn't understand.
- Questions:
- It looks like there is a boy problem across the province – is there anything being done beyond the school to address? We are hoping to start the boy's reading club in the New Year. We can always look at the programs and technology. We need to engage boys to read/write in a certain manner. If the boys are engaged in the subject, they will naturally do better. The type of text we are selecting or the story we use has to be one that most can engage with. Boys tend to like non-fiction.
 - Is this different than in the past? Will it always be an issue? Boys used to be better in some subjects (math and science), but no longer.
 - Do we have boy-centric experts coming in to address this? It's not always the text, it can be awareness around how to differentiate the learning between boys and girls. There is a lot of documentation on boy-centric learning, on what they need to learn and how they need to learn. Our staff members are quick to see that kids have different learning styles and approaches. Sandra Whittaker offered to connect David with some experts.
 - Is the trend recent with the gender gap? It's been at least 10 years. It seems to be an issue in North America.

- Question regarding math and our international ranking – are we changing our focus in primary grades on basic numeracy? Do we expect EQAO to change towards basic numeracy? We don't know what EQAO will look like. We don't see us changing significantly in how we teach math. We're aware that data says they need basic skills, but we want them to be able to apply higher thinking as well. We've traditionally done better than other schools in math. There has been research internationally on how math is being taught.....drills versus big problem solving.
 - What is the definition of high expectations? Is it to reach level 3, or are we pushing for level 4? We always push for level 4, but we generally want to see them progressing. We talk about the comparisons of level 3 to level 4. It's a focus for the schools.
 - Are we tracking the outcomes, as far as where the students move in their results? Yes, we should be. Have we set targets? No, but may look at it.
 - There is a lot of pride in the staff around the results. PD continues next week and staff are on board when they see the course we are taking is a good course. We have to continuously reflect and adjust the plan. We want to have a balanced school for sports, academics, etc. Support from the community has been great.
 - If anyone wants more info, please let us know.
 - We had great PD around use of ipads. If anyone works in the S/W field, they can help us with where we want to go.
 - There is a huge difference in the school this year, regarding focus on level 3 and 4. How much does cohort affect the results? In the past, we were below where we should be. We made a concerted effort to focus on kids at risk from a much earlier stage. Kindergarten kids were evaluated on literacy skills. These gaps will grow as they get older, so we are trying to identify gaps much sooner and put interventions in place, specifically in areas they have difficulty with, so they are stronger going in. All SK kids were offered the assessment, and the majority agreed to it (both French and English).
 - We are doing other things to support literacy – reading buddies, co-planning between teachers, collaboration in terms of assessment, to name a few.
 - We are pleased with results, but more the commitment of community and staff.
 - Starting next year, can we track the cohort and see if they improved relative to grade 3 scores? Yes, we see that data.
 - Is that information available to parents? Yes, it will be provided. You can see the trends.
5. **NEXT MEETING** – we don't yet have a date for the next meeting. We will let you know of topic areas.

MOTION Doug McCormick, Wilmar Kortlever
TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32pm.