

Minutes
NORTHLEA HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION MEETING
Thursday, October 17, 2013 6:45 PM Library

Present – Sarah Dawson, Wilmar Kortleever, Shelly Lowe, David Ehrlich, Mike Kennedy, Rachel Chernos-Lin, Sue Brookes, Sandra Whittaker, Mary-Beth Sophianopoulos, Reh Rhomberg, Jeannie Sit, Peter Baugh, Claudine Lukawesky, Kelly Nicol, Doug McCormick, Marcus Dancer, Wendy Dancer, Christine Wilby, Sharon Krieger, Stephen Peirce, Sean Hannon, Marina Koulmetis, Amy Carter, Monika Scholte, Sylvia Morais-Jones, Ronda Fox, Frank Chang, Angie Novachis, Julia Irwin, Nancy Baillie, Linda DeRuiter, Janice Clugston, Michelle Chue, Leslie Gibson, Wilmar Kortleever, Deidre Barry, Christy Lockington, John McPhee (TDSB), Ted Libera (TDSB), Dilys Haner (PREVNet)

Regrets – Julie Brown, Lynda Debono, Alexis DeCastro, Valerie Cooke, Sophia Danish

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm.

1. INTRODUCTION – Sarah Dawson

Thank you for coming to the first Home & School meeting of this school year. There was very sad news this week regarding the sudden passing of Mr. Kay on the weekend. Family will receive friends from 2-4pm and 6-8pm at Humphreys Funeral home tomorrow. We are trying to think of a way to commemorate Mr. Kay within the school – one idea is to create “Mr Kay’s corner” in the library as a tribute.

Welcome to our first Home & School Association meeting. Sarah introduced Dilys Haner, who will facilitate the workshop later on. Sarah also introduced David Ehrlich, Mike Kennedy and Shelly Lowe, sitting at the front of the room with her. She reminded everyone to please sign the attendance sheet, in order to receive a copy of the book from the workshop.

MOTION	Stephen Pierce, Jeannie Sit APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA	CARRIED
---------------	---	---------

MOTION	Peter Baugh, Rachel Chernos-Lin APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – JUNE 12, 2013	CARRIED
---------------	--	---------

2. CHAIR’S REPORT – Sarah Dawson

There are two things to review in the Correspondence file: 1) the letter we sent on behalf of School Council to ask for extra resource to help with prep for English primary. We have been successful in getting someone for 2 ½ days per week (shared with two other schools), but we have been able to keep our library resource at .5. 2) a letter from People for Education

We have had a fairly good start to the year. Thanks to Julie and Sandra for the Grade 8 graduation last year. Thanks to Val and Alexis for a fabulous Welcome Back BBQ. Thanks to Gina and Erica for the well organized September packages. Thanks to Jeannie and Barbara Boyd for taking on the QSP campaign – looks like we’ve done really well with it.

We had a Power Breakfast with Gerri Gershon and Principal Ehrlich – it was a roundtable format to talk about what we’ll do for the year. TDSB will start to look at mental health issues with students. Tonight’s Anti-bullying workshop is a first step to identify needs in our school. Claude, our Safety Chair, will run with initiatives coming out of tonight’s discussion.

We have now established the parent committees – technology, safety, FDK, parent council advisory team (CATs). There is much to work on this year, with many motivated parents.

3. ADMINISTRATOR’S UPDATE – David Ehrlich

David thanked everyone for welcoming him to the school. It has been a busy and enjoyable first 8 weeks. He is impressed with the commitment of students, staff and parents. M Lariviere, Mlle Larocque and Mr Harris are our teacher reps for this year. It is clear that teachers feel strongly about attending these meetings. Sophia sends her regrets as she can’t be here tonight.

We’ve now re-organized and two new teachers have been hired – Ruth Procopio and Matt Arthurs. The official start date is tomorrow, for children moving classes. Parents were understanding and supportive, and a few good questions were posed. Report cards are coming out Nov 14/15....teachers are in the process of doing report cards. We had a successful PA day – in the morning, we looked at the District Review recommendations and EQAO trends. Teachers were very engaged and had a good discussion on strengths and where we need to go. We did a variety of large and small group activities.

There was communication regarding a police release yesterday, with a letter sent out yesterday from the TDSB. Today, Mike met with all junior classes in the afternoon, and David met with senior classes.....80-90% of children had communications within their families, which is great. We reviewed safety protocols with the students. We also asked the primary teachers to speak to younger kids, just about general safety. We have also communicated specific incidents to students. We will likely send a follow up note tomorrow, to keep everyone informed. We will send out any correspondence we see fit to share. The staff has the picture and we believe we’ve handled this well within our school. If you have any feedback on how we’ve handled it, please provide it.

Question: Should we revise the time that the doors are locked? Incident is directly related to a specific school and is more of a domestic issue. Kids may stay at school until 4:30 and all kids know to use that door if they need anything, so we don’t want to lock them out. If Safe and Caring Schools feels we should do something differently, we can discuss.

It’s been a difficult few days for the staff, with the passing of Mr Kay. We have also spoken to students and made them aware that they can come and talk to the staff if they would like. Please connect with staff you have a connection with - it may help them feel better.

4. HOME & SCHOOL BUDGET – Sharon Krieger

Sharon reviewed the financials for the last year and budget for this year.

Rachel commented that of the funds we are committed to give to the community, it will be split evenly between People for Education and the Thorncliffe breakfast program.

Also, we agreed in May that additional revenue would help to fund new playground equipment, and we are able to give \$10,400 to the playground....we are getting close to being able to implement that.

Budget – we’ve changed the format to separate School Council. We expect to spend \$60K on funding proposals, if things go as planned – another potentially astounding year of fundraising for the school. We’ll continue to support great initiatives.

MOTION Nancy Baillie, Sandra Whittaker
TO ACCEPT THE FINAL STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENSES CARRIED

MOTION Rachel Chernos-Lin, Sandra Whittaker
TO APPROVE THE BUDGET & COMMUNITY DISBURSEMENTS CARRIED

5. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – Sarah Dawson - Nothing further was discussed.

MOTION Angie Novachis, Wilmar Kortleever
TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 pm.

Minutes
NORTHLEA HOME & SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING
October 17, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:34pm.

1. INTRODUCTION: Sarah Dawson

Sarah introduced Dilys Haner from PREVNet, who will be doing the workshop. She also introduced Ted Libera, the Central Co-ordinating Principal for Safe and Caring Schools at TDSB and John McPhee Central Guidance Support at TDSB

MOTION	Rachel Chernos-Lin, Sue Brookes APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA	CARRIED
---------------	---	---------

MOTION	Stephen Pierce, Rachel Chernos-Lin APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – JUNE 12, 2013	CARRIED
---------------	---	---------

2. ANTI-BULLYING WORKSHOP:

Dilys thanked everyone for inviting her, and commented that she was delighted at the turn out this evening. It is clear to her that there is so much parent investment in healthy development and mental health of the students at Northlea. She welcomed questions and comments during the presentation, while trying to address the things that are important to us as a parent group. This is a complicated multi-faceted issue. As adults, how we respond to bullying situations depends on our own experiences with bullying in our youth. Bullying often flies under our radar – the climate in which young people socialize is very different than when we were young. Many of them are electronic. Bullying can come into the last safe haven – home.

We need to start with a common definition. Bullying is not a problem of one child's bad behaviour, and is not about conflict as that is normal in a relationship. In bullying, there is an imbalance of power that results in abuse of power that is deliberate and repeated. Belief is that all youth have strength and capability of healthy relationships. You should never "label" a child....only talk about behaviours. Focus on the behaviour that can change in the future. There is no such thing as a typical child who bullies – there are different characteristics and different times when they use it. They may see it get attention, or they can learn it at home or at a sport. There is also no typical child victimized - it can be random. Kids who are different in some way may be viewed as vulnerable and can be at higher risks. We are really concerned about a sub-group that are both bullied and are bullies themselves. It is not unusual for everyone to have experience of bullying sometime in their youth. Kids experiment with power, and some realize they don't like it and to some, it feels rewarding. It is troubling where a situation is allowed to continue or is on a bad trajectory.

Bullying is a relationship problem that requires relationship solutions. It is often hidden from adults. Kids who are bullied often haven't talked to their parents for 2 reasons: 1) they worry that the adult will take the power/control away from them and will result in unwanted trouble for them or 2) they don't want to bother and upset their parents with this – don't want them to worry.

The first thing we should do is to work on relationships with young people, by modelling our relationships.....talking to them, working through problems, when someone brings us a problem we will work with them to make the problem smaller. Second thing – we need to work, on an individual basis, on what we project to them about how busy we are, or how stressed we are. Make sure we show that we always have time for them.

Relationship solutions need to be tailored to those involved. Work on gradually making the problem smaller – solutions take time.

Kids show power in many different ways. Physical aggression is typically first, then verbal bullying, later into social aggression (exclusion from a group, as an example), then onto cyber-bullying, sexual harassment and dating aggression.

Question: Is social aggression more prevalent with girls than boys? Probably more likely amongst girl groups, but definitely see it with boys, and across genders as well. Girl's language comes online earlier and they are typically more adept at social communication.

The majority of kids aren't involved in bullying. It tends to peak in junior high (grade 7/8) and then spike again in Grade 9 and tapers off in high school.

There are many effects of bullying: The kids being bullied need support and so do the kids who are bullying, in order to change their behaviours. It is important that as adults, we regulate our emotions and understand there is a reason they are exhibiting behaviours and help to make it right. We see a lot of stress related issues on both sets of children.

Little kids will often manifest physical symptoms (tummy ache, head ache, trouble sleeping). It is important when unexplained symptoms come up, that we investigate and take the time to understand and point out that we're always safe to talk to.

There are signs of kids bullying others – most have to do with empathy.

There are signs of being bullied – unexplained anxiety and fear of going to school, or other places, reduced interest in things they used to enjoy.

88% of the time, there is an audience to bullying and the audience is incredibly powerful in determining the outcome. The more peers who are present, the longer and more severe the bullying episode tends to be. The audience appears to be approving, and they often align themselves to the powerful person so they are not the next target. When peers decide to intervene without encouragement from an adult, the bullying stops more than half the time, in less than 10 seconds. We should encourage our kids to intervene – it will stop the incident, and hopefully it will encourage others to also intervene.

We tell young people if there are bullying situations, go to a place at school where bullying is less likely to occur, where more adults are present. It's also important that parents communicate with the school, so staff and administration are aware and can handle situations like this.

Question: Is there more prevalence of bullying with many kids of different ages in the same space? There is no study to substantiate that.

Message we should give to young people: We want to hear about bullying because we want to help. As long as it is developmentally appropriate, we want them to lead in problem solving. If we are able to make the problem smaller, what would be different? Talk about steps you can help them take to explore making the situation a bit better. As an adult, you need to judge if there is serious physical danger, and it is your job as a parent to make sure that they are safe, but explore possibilities to make the situation better.

Dilys pointed out that there is a difference between tattling and telling: Tattling is just to get someone else in trouble; telling is letting an adult know what's going on because the situation is not OK and you need help.

Peers can intervene in different ways: walk away and don't give it attention; respectively and assertively tell the person who is doing the bullying to stop.

Question: Generically, what are the concrete steps we can provide to parents? It is not that simple, to have a process that will work for every situation. From intervention and prevention standpoints, it is helpful if it is done with every level of school – students, parents, staff – where you gain buy-in from each

of these constituents, in order to start change of the organizational culture. We need to start building awareness. It builds a community with the individuals who care.

Sometimes, it is also important to tell children that tolerance is important in life, in dealing with difficult people.

Question: Does it help the situation for kids to understand the consequences of bullying? To some it does and others, it doesn't. If clearly articulated and if kids are involved in creation of the rules, they are more likely to adhere to them, especially if they see them consistently applied (all teachers act in the same way) and all youth are responded to in the same way, understanding that all needs are different.

Restorative justice practices are most successful - helping kids understand the real impact they have on another child and building empathy. It is important too, that when consequences are finished, that it is over. We should never gossip about these situations - kids need to be allowed to save face in these situations and recover.

Potential next steps:

1) Communicate the Northlea School Policy regarding bullying and the consequences of such behaviour.

PREVNet website is www.prevnet.ca

We will get additional info that we can post on the website.

3. NEXT MEETING - The date of the next meeting is Thursday, November 21st. The agenda will include EQAO results, School Improvement Plan and feedback/plans resulting from the District Review.

MOTION

Jeannie Sit, Sue Brookes
TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm.