

Member Attendees:

Colleen Kaus, Reasa Diab, Todd Kirkpatrick, Mohammed Nalla, Joey Pottinger, Kristi Snary, Jessica Thomas-Troian, Sandra Wohl, Nicole Vincic

Non-Member Attendees:

Kelly Dunford (Principal)
Ria McNicholls-Ramrattan (Vice-Principal)
Jennifer Flewelling (Teacher Representative)

Regrets:

Umbrella Supervisor
Sherri Johnston

Secretary:

Nicole Vincic

Welcome

Meeting called to order, by Colleen @ 6:35 pm.
Welcome to all and special welcome to Ria (first school council meeting)

Land Acknowledgment

Read by Reasa Diab.

Approval of March Agenda:

Motion to approve, Joey Pottinger. Second, Kristi Snary. Motion passed.

Approval of January Minutes:

Motion to approve, Reasa Diab. Second, Joey Pottinger. Motion passed.

Future Meeting Dates Update:

April 19 Meeting – Virtual via MS Teams

Kelly Dunford sends her regrets for this date. Ria McNicholls-Ramrattan will step in and provide the Principal's Report.

May 25 Meeting – In-person and off-site meeting

Details will be announced

Principal Report – Kelly Dunford:

Grade 8 Graduation:

The graduation ceremony will take place outside. The ceremony will include both in-person learning students and remote learning students. The outdoor celebration will meet the needs of all students and families during this pandemic transition time. There will be a video compilation for all the speeches and awards, which will be available to our grads as a keepsake. There will be a picnic the day before the ceremony. And there will be dinner/dance party for the students that will take place in the evening after the ceremony.

Valedictory elections will take place in early April. Criteria will soon be released and interested students will submit their video to The Hub. Each grade 8 homeroom will watch the videos and then students will place their vote.

Question: Is there a need for parent volunteers for the grade 8 graduation ceremony?

Answer: Kelly indicated that she would pass this along to the graduation committee and mostly there will be a need for some help.

Reasa added that with the grad survey that was sent out with the dinner/ dance, it was asked if there were any parent volunteers interested in helping. Reasa may have a few names to pass along to the committee.

Covid-19 Update/ “Restrictions Lifted” Update:

Restrictions are being lifted in a phased approach, according to provincial guidelines.

Some of the recent changes include:

- Plexi glass has been mostly removed (thinking of repurposing the plexi-glass to avoid waste).
- Covid signage is being removed throughout the school.
- Daily screening is no longer being monitored (however, everyone is encouraged to continue to complete the daily screening and if students are sick, they stay home).
- Playground is now open for students to freely play (no more sectioned play areas.)
- Currently, approximately 95% of students are choosing to wear their masks. There are no reported concerns or issues.
- Conversations are being had about school trips, reading buddies, peer tutors, classroom set up.
- Fundraising will continue in schools.
- Visitors, volunteers, and third-party providers will be phased in – Spectators for school sports will be permitted; March 21 Trustee visit to the school; April 4th new family registrations will be open (however, families still encouraged to register online and via MS Teams).
- Many meetings continue to be held online which as worked out well. It provides access to many families who cannot meet in-person. The school will continue to offer MS Team virtual meetings.
- Immunization disclosure no longer required for staff, visitors, volunteers, or third-party service providers
- Link to HWDSB Covid updates: <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/blog/covid-update-march-2022/>

Question: If a fully vaccinate student travels, is masking required?

Answer: Yes, the school adheres to the Federal guidelines for travel.

<https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/covid-vaccinated-travellers-entering-canada>

Question: What is the “feeling” among staff in the current situation regarding masking? Has there been any feedback about the April 1st deadline when masking is no longer required?

Answer: There hasn’t been any comments/ questions/ or concerns raised. This will be about personal choice.

Question: Are Covid related absences still being reported on School Messenger?

Answer: Yes, there is still that code on School Messenger. The only difference is that there is no web reporting and that self-reported cases are not being posted because cohorts are now being mixed. However, Kelly is still completing the daily Ministry reporting.

Question: Are volunteers still required to be vaccinated, or this no longer required?

Answer: The board is back to using the original volunteer process that is being put back into place and that vaccination status is not part of the questions.

Question: Is there potential for pizza days to comeback?

Answer: We want to think about the comfort level of all families. We want to consider all options. Should we think about packaged pitas instead of pizza slices?

Reasa – This will be discussed at Home and School.

Question: What is the update on busing? It was noticed that some buses have been late in the morning and afternoon pick-ups.

Answer: There has been a bus driver shortage, due to absences. Bus drivers were covering more than one route to help deal with the shortage. This had an obvious impact on pick up times.

Red and Green busses seem to be most impacted. The school has reached out to the Transportation company. There is a staffing shortage. Families are encouraged to reach out to the board to express their concerns.

Question: In the past, HWDSB surplus money has been used for teaching and helping to reduce class sizes. What is plan for classroom sizes this coming school year? Are classes going up? How will AMES be affected?

Answer: Kelly is waiting to get her Full Time Educator Allocation for the school. Once she has more information, she will share with Council. The School Board is adhering to the board average cap sizes:

- Kindergarten to Grade 3: 20 students
- Grade 3/4 classes: 23 students
- Grades 4 to 8: 25 students (note: there is no hard cap)

Kelly has provided her projections to the Board. Ancaster Meadow Elementary School has typically gone through re-organization. The Board would prefer to increase an extra class than loose a class. As a result, they organize conservatively with this rationale in mind.

New Business:

PRO Grant 2021/2022:

The PRO Grant application was approved: \$1,000 has been awarded to help increase our community awareness and parental involvement around the idea of different cultures and inclusion. Colleen asked for volunteers to form a sub-committee to help roll out the decision on how the funds will be used to support the initiative. Reasa volunteered.

Any other interested volunteers are asked to reach out to Colleen: ckaus@hwdsb.on.ca

Taste Buds Snack Program:

Update provided by Reasa: The snack program is up and running, three days per week (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays) with the support of a couple of parent volunteers, Sierra (LAST NAME?) and Amy Raja and a team of student helpers that help delivery the bins to the classrooms.

Twenty-six (26) bins are distributed to each of the classrooms with various healthy snack items. The bins remain in the classroom until the end of second nutrition break. Recently, added blueberry scones, carrot muffin, and fruit cups to the menu of options. Trying new snacks to see what students like. Items include grain items, fruit, vegetable, or some protein.

Question: How are the number of items per bin determined? It was reported that in one class, not all the students got a snack.

Answer: There are approximately 15-16 items per bin to every classroom. Keeping tally of what is coming back and adjustments to numbers are being made. Some bins are coming back empty, while other bins still have snacks remaining. This is a work in progress... keeping watch to see how much should be included for each classroom.

Feedback from Mrs. Flewelling: Her class likes the variety the comes in the bin.

Reasa indicated she will send a classroom survey to the teachers to hear from more staff.

Parking Lot Concerns:

Kristi asked about administrations thought on parking situation. She noticed that parents/guardians who have permission to use the parking lot in the morning have a pass (which is great). However, she also noticed instances in which unauthorized parents/guardians are entering the parking lot and dropping off their children, who then walk/run between cars and busses to get to the front of the school. There was a particular incident recently, a grade 2 student who ran in front of her car. She is concerned about this ongoing issue of parents who are entering the lot during times when they are not supposed to be.

Question: What is being done to help secure the lot?

Answer: Parking passes have been created this year for families have approval to use the parking lot during the morning drop off times. Kelly mentioned that she will review this situation with Ria. She has recommended that they can spend some more time at the front of the building/ entrance to the school lot. She also recommended reminder communication be sent out. A stern letter reiterating the rules is necessary.

Ria has added that she has reached to by-law twice asking for their support. This is a short-term solution, because as soon as they are not on there, parents/ guardians will be back to the usual routine. She has also observed parents enter the parking lot after 9:15 am to usher their children to the class. Barriers may be helpful to consider. The only challenge is that the barrier will need to be moved each time a bus or car with permit entre. This is not sustainable.

Kristi added that she also reached out numerous times to by-law. They assured her that the school has been on the priority list. This seems to be the same response she has received in the past. This problem is ongoing and vey concerning because it affects the safety of our children. There is very limited support from by-law.

Final note: Clearly there is a problem with the parking lot, and we need to have cooperation from our parent community. A letter to all families is necessary, along with a map for drop off recommendations.

Meeting Adjourned:

Motioned by Mohammed Nalla. Second by Kristi Snary. Motion passed @ 7:45 pm.