

**Minutes of the Parent Meeting
held on September 23rd, 2015 at
Cootes Paradise Elementary School
(pending approval)**

In attendance:

Parents: Lara Borys, Lynda Bruce, Laura Cleghorn, Isabelle Defaria, Jennifer Gautrey, Jennifer Godsmark, Heather Harvey, Carrie Hung, Heather Hurst, Kara Jessop, Lynn (Young-In) Lee, Erin Lepischak, Kathryn Mattison, Siobhan McEwan, Kalpana Nair, Ewa Oleksiak, Derek Pratt, Lynn Pratt, Clara Sacchini, Rachel Sheahan, Cameron Whitney

Staff/Administration: Denise Minardi (Principal)

The meeting was called to order at 7:10

1. Welcome, Introductions and Voting

1.1 Introductions

Individuals in attendance introduced themselves.

1.2 Review of School Council

Jennifer Gautrey discussed the role of the School Council. It is mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education that each school should have a School Council. The Council's focus is to increase the achievement of children by providing increased accountability of the school to parents, i.e., a link. Parents can provide feedback on issues/concerns/recommendations to school council members, who will bring forward this info to the Principal and provide feedback. Further issues can be taken to the School Board. The School Council is structured such that the executive members coordinate and parent volunteers run various committees, such as the Outdoor Space Committee, the Arts Council, the Traffic Committee and the School Code of Conduct Committee.

1.3 School Council Voting

Jennifer Gautrey and Kara Jessop were put forward as Co-Chairs of the School Council for the 2015/2016 school year. Kalpana Nair moved that both be acclaimed as Co-Chairs, Heather Hurst seconded and the motion was carried.

Heather Harvey, Erin Lepischak and Kalpana Nair are Members-at-large.

If other parents wish to be Members-at-large, please contact Jennifer Gautrey at jgautreyhpl@me.com.

2. Review of Agenda and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The motion to accept the agenda was moved by Kara Jessop and seconded by Erin Lepischak. Motion carried.

The approval of the Minutes from the June 3, 2015 meeting was inadvertently missed. These Minutes will be approved at the November Parent Meeting.

3. Open Discussion – Questions/Issues Arising

3.1 Split Classes

A parent brought up the issue of split classes, expressing frustration that:

- the majority of classes are split classes this year
- children in split classes are isolated from their friends in their grade, especially those children in classes where the split is not even and they are one of only a handful of children in their grade in the class
- the reason for so many split classes seems to be to provide administrative flexibility

Principal Minardi agreed there are several split classes and that split classes provide flexibility as to where to put children and also for staffing.

Additional parents voiced further concerns and questions, including:

- is there any detriment to being in a split class?
- how is the decision made as to where to place each child?
- will the children be taught the full curriculum, especially the older ones?
- is an effort made to ensure the split is even?

Principal Minardi commented that split classes are not detrimental overall and have positive aspects including variety in class makeup, a chance to make new friends and the opportunity to develop leadership skills. With the goal of putting together balanced classrooms, school staff weigh a variety of factors, including student work habits, social skills, social dynamics, academic abilities and gender. She noted the students are taught the curriculum and teachers will sometimes choose to teach as a team. (For example, the teachers of two 3/4 classes might have one teacher take the grade 3s and the other take the grade 4s for some lessons). Schools attempt to make the splits even, but this isn't always possible. There must be at least four children of the same grade in a split class.

3.2 Team Teaching

A parent enquired how parents can find out if their teacher will be doing team teaching with another teacher. Principal Minardi suggested speaking to the teachers at pickup or drop-off.

3.3 Change to Core English

A parent asked why their child's French Immersion teacher was also teaching English this year. Principal Minardi responded that, with teachers' input, the school decided to move to a model where Core English is integrated into the French Immersion homeroom class. 250 minutes per week are allocated for instruction in English for students in grades 2 to 5. Principal Minardi said the change means teachers are able to cover subjects usually taught in French (e.g., science, social science) in some of the time for English instruction and that this 'fluidity' is a benefit and reinforces learning. Principal Minardi will send a note home about why the change was made and how English instruction will be different from last year.

3.4 Learning Plans

A parent asked if teachers will be sending home learning plans. Principal Minardi responded that teachers were not sending home information as part of their job action. She said that the curriculum would be followed and that parents can find information on the curriculum here:

<https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/grades.html>

3.5 Giftedness

A parent asked about giftedness at the school. Principal Minardi said that giftedness testing takes place in grade 4, if agreed to by the child's parents. In the past, children identified have had the option to join a gifted class at another school in Hamilton for grades 6, 7 and 8. This approach, however, has changed a great deal in the last few years: gifted children are now encouraged to stay at their local school, since studies show children do better when they stay in their communities. Gifted children in grades 5 – 8 are given the opportunity to take part in monthly activities with other gifted children at a central location. Students identified as gifted also have the option of attending a weekly after school drop-in program, again at a central Hamilton location.

4. Cootes Paradise Elementary School Report – Denise Minardi

4.1 School Update

Current population is 571. Cootes Paradise is closed to Out-of-Catchment for the 2015-2016 school year. Classrooms include:

- 6 Full Day Kindergarten (FDK)
- 9 English
- 10 French Immersion
- 2 Mandarin
- 2 English as a Second Language
- 2 Learning Resource Teacher (LRT)

The table below summarizes the current make-up of the classrooms. (There will be some changes with the reorganization).

English	FI	Mandarin
FDK 4 classes of 30 children	Gr 1 - 15	FDK - 17
FDK - 15	Gr 1 - 14	Gr 1/2 – 15 (3 / 12)
Gr 1 - 20	Gr 1/2 - 14 (5 / 9)	Gr 3/4/5 – 12 (6 / 1 / 5)
Gr 1/2 - 21 (12 / 9)	Gr 2 - 19	
Gr 2/3 - 20 (12 / 8)	Gr 2/3 - 16 (10 / 6)	
Gr 2/3 - 19 (10 / 9)	Gr 2/3 - 18 (11 / 7)	
Gr 3/4 - 21 (11 / 10)	Gr 3/4 - 23 (14 / 9)	
Gr 3/4 - 22 (11 / 11)	Gr 3/4 - 23 (15 / 8)	
Gr 4/5 - 23 (11 / 12)	Gr 4/5 28 (9 / 19)	
Gr 4/5 - 22 (10 / 12)	Gr 4/5 - 25 (10 / 15)	
Gr 5 - 24		

4.2 Reorganization

Once the school year starts, each school sends the Board a summary of student numbers. These student numbers are often different than numbers projected in the spring as new students register over the summer and in September. The Board reviews student numbers then, if required, makes adjustments to staffing allocations and changes typically take place in early October.

A new FDK class was added on September 14th (Ms. Schinkel). (This change was made earlier than usual because it was apparent in late August that class sizes would be very large). There

are now 4 FDK classes of 30 children, each with one kindergarten teacher and one Early Childhood Educator. There is one further FDK class of 15 children with one kindergarten teacher. There is also one Mandarin FDK class with 17 children.

The Board has just informed Principal Minardi that the school will lose one French Immersion teacher in the lower grades. There will therefore be movement of French Immersion students to other classes to accommodate this change. There will be an internal reorganization of the English classes as well as the student to teacher ratio is too high for the lowest grades.

New staff include: Mr. Gould (VP), Mrs. Puric (ESL), Mrs. Hamilton, Mlle Pattinson, Mr. Aquino, Ms. Runco-Falcao, Mrs. Macky, Mrs. Hathaway and Mrs. Blonkski.

A staff list has been posted on the school website. An updated staff list will be provided after the reorganization.

4.3 Volunteer Policy / Police Checks

The school welcomes all parents to volunteer and Volunteer Forms are available in the main office. Parents must have police checks to volunteer with the school. The school can provide parents with a further form that will enable them to receive a police check for half the cost. Once the police check has been reviewed, the Principal can help parents to identify volunteer opportunities (e.g., with Home and School fund-raising events, in the classroom, in the library, on trips).

4.4 Daily Physical Activity (DPA) Equipment

Principal Minardi thanked the Home and School for providing \$2,000 for new DPA equipment (skipping ropes, skip-its and several different types of balls).

4.5 Meet-the-Staff / Welcome BBQ - postponed

The Meet-the-Staff night planned for September 30th has been postponed until the teachers' job action ends.

4.6 Tastebuds Application

Vice Principal Gould is continuing with the school's application to Tastebuds (part of the Student Nutrition Collaborative) for funding to provide all students with the option of a mid-morning snack.

4.7 Upcoming Events

All of Me Day, November 20th – Kim MacKenzie (Phys. Ed. Teacher) is putting together a health and wellness day for students. The full-day event will include hip hop dance instruction, a presentation by the Canadian Diabetes Association about hidden sugar in food, and other activities. Parents interested in volunteering at this event should contact Ms. MacKenzie.

5. Home and School Report – Jennifer Gautrey

The Home and School Association (H&S) is an independent, parent-driven organization that plays a vital role in school life. H&S aims to enhance the school experience for students and to provide parents with a voice and opportunities to participate in our school community. The H&S

organizes many fun initiatives for the children as well as for the greater community. Our fundraising activities allow us to financially support popular events, such as the Nutritious Snack program, the annual Pumpkin Night Hike and ongoing Lunch Clubs. H&S also pays for gym and activity equipment and funds the Arts Council. Some of our events raise money to provide support to economically challenged families in our community as well as less affluent schools elsewhere in Hamilton.

H&S will need to update its bylaws this year to reflect the change in the name of the school. It is also proposed that the bylaws are changed to provide the option of having one treasurer as opposed to two. The treasurer role was simplified when H&S's investments were cashed in for use in the Outdoor Space Project. Assets are now smaller and less complicated.

H&S is looking for volunteers, would like to particularly encourage volunteers from families with younger children. The majority of the current volunteers have children in grades 4 and 5 and those families will be graduating from the school in the near future.

5.1 Treasurer's Report

As at August 31, 2015, the bank account balance totalled approximately \$22,400. In addition, there is a cash float of \$200. Investments were cashed in during June 2015 to support the Outdoor Space Project. All dance-a-thon funds directed to the HWDSB Foundation (for tax receipts) have been returned to Home & School. A detailed reconciliation of the financial position is attached and will also be posted on the school website in the School Council folder.

5.2 Fundraising Initiatives

Pita and Pizza Lunches

Heather Hurst reported that orders are currently being collected and organized in preparation for the first Friday lunch on October 2nd. Those who overpaid will be sent a refund. The group discussed difficulties encountered while trying to use the online payment method: the Board's School Cash Online service. These difficulties were seen as teething issues that will be worked out. Helpers are needed for some of the lunches to receive and pay for the order, set up the lunches for pick-up by the students and to respond to students' questions. Please contact Heather Hurst (hnb@cogeco.ca) if you are interested in helping.

Magazine Fundraiser

The magazine fundraiser is one of the H&S's most effective fundraisers, bringing in over \$3,000 last year.

Fortino's Receipts

Ewa Oleksiak will be coordinating the collection of Fortino's receipts again this year. Fortino's provides the school with a 1% cash refund on all money spent at the Fortino's on Main Street West. Receipts (dated between September 1st and June 10th) should be put in the envelope in the Home & School's mailbox in the school's front foyer.

5.3 Initiatives

Healthy snack

Last year the H&S provided funding that enabled the daily provision of apples to any student who wanted a snack. Ewa Oleksiak reported that apple crops are bad this year and as a result she has not been able to contract a supplier this year. She will try some other places. Denise Minardi noted that the Healthy Snack and Tastebuds initiatives are complementary.

5.4 Upcoming Events

Lunch Clubs

Jennifer Godsmark will be coordinating Lunch Club this year and is looking for volunteers to lead a club once a week for six weeks this fall. Typical activities include lego, board games, sports and crafts. Volunteers can choose to hold their club in either the first or second nutrition break. Interested volunteers should contact Jennifer at jennifer.godsmark@gmail.com.

Pumpkin Night Hike – Friday, October 23rd

For this magical event, students design jack-o-lanterns that are used to light a path through the woods. McMaster University students help run the event, which includes games at the end of the hike. This year the carving will take place after school at the Lawn Bowling Green in Churchill Park. Parents interested in helping carve pumpkins and trail setup/takedown should contact Kristen West (kristenboulard@yahoo.com).

5.5 H&S Executive – position vacant

The H&S Vice President position is vacant. Please contact Kristen West (kristenboulard@yahoo.com) if you are interested.

6. School Council Report – Jennifer Gautrey

6.1 Outdoor Space Committee – Lara Borys

Lara Borys reported that the school fundraising raised \$20,647. Combined with other funding sources (\$150,000 from the Ward 1 participatory budget, H&S donation of \$11,500, a Toyota Evergreen grant \$3,500 and community fundraising of \$6,000) gave a total budget of ~\$191,000. As the three quotes for the playground work were higher than the funds available, some design features had to be removed, scaled back or less expensive building materials substituted (e.g., log benches are less expensive than boulders for seating). This scaling back was guided by the original goal of greening the ground. The work will start the week of September 28th, beginning next to the parking lot and proceeding counter clockwise around the school, and should be complete by the end of November. Denise Minardi thanked Lara Borys, John Atkinson and the rest of the committee for all their hard work.

6.2 Traffic Committee – Jennifer Gautrey

The Traffic Committee was formed last fall to address concerns that the merger of GR Allan and Prince Phillip populations would increase traffic around the school. Traffic did not increase significantly however, mainly because French immersion students from Ainsley Wood who had previously been driven to school can now take the bus. Seven school buses transport just under 200 children to and from school every day. Last year the Traffic Committee arranged for Public Health's Active and Safe Routes to School group to audit traffic around the school and the

School Council has just received their report. Those interested in joining the Traffic Committee to review the report and plan next steps, please speak to Jennifer Gautrey (jgautreyhpl@me.com).

6.3 Arts Council – Laura Cleghorn

The Arts Council provides students with the opportunity to work with artists and to connect with the arts community. This year the Arts Council will be supporting Artists in the Classroom for grades 2 and 5. The Arts Council is also installing a gallery in the first floor hallway where selected pieces of the children's art will be displayed. Last year the Arts Council also coordinated 'Cootes Paradise Draws', an outdoor drawing event where artists provided guidance to students in grades 1 to 5. Parents interested in volunteering with the Arts Council should contact Laura Cleghorn at laura.cleghorn@gmail.com.

6.4 School Code of Contact Committee – Jennifer Gautrey

As Cootes Paradise is considered to be a new school, a Code of Conduct must be developed. One of the first objectives to be tackled this fall will be to shape the dress code. Work on the broader Code of Conduct will start in January or February.

6.5 Dalewood Update – Jennifer Gautrey

Dalewood School, including the Dalewood Recreation Centre, is being completely renovated including hazardous materials abatement, gutting to the studs and technology updates. Renovations are expected to take two years. Cootes Paradise's swim team will practice at the Ryerson Recreation Centre pool.

7. New Business

A parent asked if anyone else found the message on the mural in the library ("Once upon a time a knight in shining armour rescued the damsel in distress from the evil monster") to be inappropriately promoting gender stereotypes. Parents commented that, while they had been in the library several times, many had not noticed the wording in the mural before. Principal Minardi suggested the Arts Council might consider commissioning a new mural for the space.

8. Meeting Adjournment

The next Parent Meeting will be November 25, 2015. Ward 1 & 2 Trustee Christine Bingham is expected to attend the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50.

**Cootes Paradise Home and School
Fundraising/Program Support Plan
Summary for the Period September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2015**

Updated: September 23, 2015 | 2014/15 Budget Approved at October 1, 2014 Parent Meeting, 2015/16 Budget Approved at June 3, 2015 Parent Meeting

Income	ESTIMATES		FINAL		2015/16	Proceeds used to support	Comments
	2014/15 Budget	2014/15 Actual Proceeds	2014/15 Actual Proceeds	2014/15 Approved Budget			
Fundraising Activity							
Bake Sale (Winter Concert)	-	458	458	-	-	DPA equipment - special motion December 3, 2014	
Bulldog Tickets	-	-	-	-	-		Activity was not run in 2014/15
Dance-a-thon	4,500	3,240	3,240	3,200	3,200	Playday, DPA Equipment	
Flower Fridays	2,000	550	504	1,000	1,000	Outdoor Space, Inreach	
Magazine Orders	2,500	3,207	3,207	2,500	2,500	Volunteer App, Teacher App, Read-a-thon, H&S Operations, Lunch Clubs, School Council	
NHCHC Outreach							
Pita/Pizza Lunches	10,000	7,675	7,666	7,500	7,500	Arts Council, Grade 5 Trip, Performances/Programming	
Parents' Night Out	-	-	-	-	-		Activity was not run in 2014/15
Partnership Fundraisers	200	1,200	394	1,200	1,200	Nutritious Snack	Mabel's Labels, Fortinos
Summer Camp Fair (2016)/Mom-to-Mom Sale (2015)	200	-	-	500	500	Unallocated - TBD based on budget/area(s) of need	Mom-to-Mom sale was not run in 2015
Subtotal	19,400	16,330	15,469	15,900			
Community Activity							
Halloween Hike	1,000	1,865	1,865	1,000	1,000	Inreach	Donations to RBG/Smiles Over Sickness (\$200 each)
Movie Nights	1,000	900	900	1,000	1,000	Unallocated - TBD based on budget/area(s) of need	May be held inside in gymnasium
Open House BBQ	-	266	266	500	500	Nutritious Snack	Cupcake sales at Open House
Subtotal	2,000	3,031	3,031	2,500			
Donations/Transfers	1,500	2,123	2,123	-	-	Estimated amount from Prince Philip H&S - to be used for playground painting	
		3,500	3,500	-	-	Toyota Evergreen Grant received for Outdoor Space Committee	
Total Estimated Proceeds	22,900	24,984	24,123	18,400			
Expenses							
Annual Expenses/Program/Activity Support	2014/15 Budget	Actual	Actual	2015/16 Budget	Comments		
Arts Council	6,500	6,500	5,569	4,000	Adjusted re 2014/15 budget included additional amount for display cabinet for first floor		
School Council	800	500	509	800	Math League, Checkers, School Council administration/programming, Grade Parties		
Inreach	1,500	1,500	881	1,500			
Outreach	1,500	-	-	1,500	For Inner City School		
Teacher Appreciation	200	76	76	200			
Volunteer Appreciation	300	300	411	300			
Home Reading	4,000	-	-	-	Removed re HWDSB Fundraising Guidelines		
Lunch Clubs	700	425	425	500			
Gr 5 trip/Farewell Assembly	1,500	1,500	1,788	1,700	Increased to reflect inflation in bus costs, Gr 5 party costs		
Playday	300	300	208	2,000	Remaining balance of \$1,700 transferred to DPA Equipment per vote from H&S Members at Jun 3, 2015 mtg, no Playday as recently had a PanAm activity day		
Technology	3,300	3,071	3,071	-	Removed for 2015/16 re HWDSB Technology Initiatives		
Office Supplies/H&S Operations	200	50	135	200	Includes bank charges, photocopying, Volunteer Newsletter		
Performances/Programming	-	-	-	1,700			
DPA Equipment	2,158	2,158	1,967	1,300	Special Motion from Dec 3, 2014 meeting to use bake sale proceeds for DPA equipment *Note if not paid, amount will be added to 2015/16 budget, \$1700 added from Playday budg		
Read-a-thon	100	120	120	200			
Healthy Snack Program	1,200	1,206	1,206	1,700	\$1200 from Fortinos receipts, plus funds from cupcake sales, to be reviewed		
Subtotal	24,258	17,706	16,366	17,600			
One-Time Expenses in 2015/16 School Year							
Playground Painting/Equipment	1,500	-	-	2,100	From Prince Philip H&S funds that were transferred - estimated \$1500 to be received in 2014-15, actual was \$2100+		
Subtotal	1,500	-	-	2,100			
Outdoor Space Project							
Outdoor Space Committee	3,500	-	-	500	For gardening, playground greening and incidental expenses from Outdoor Space Committee relating to project		
Outdoor Space Project - Funds held in trust	In Trust	Amounts Paid	Amounts Paid	In Trust			
H&S Investments	11,600	11,600	11,600	-	Approved by Member votes (Proxy and Members present) at special meeting of March 21, 2014, \$11,600 paid to Evergreen Canada		
AWWCA	3,000	3,000	3,000	-	\$3,000 paid to Evergreen Canada		
HWDSB	10,000	400	10,000	-	\$400 paid to Evergreen Canada, \$9,600 transferred to HWDSB in trust for project		
Toyota Evergreen	3,500	-	3,500	-	\$3,500 transferred to HWDSB in trust for project		
H&S Account	-	-	11,500	-	Approved at Parent Meeting June 3, 2015, \$11,500 transferred to HWDSB in trust for project		
Subtotal	31,600	15,000	39,600	500	Funds expected to be paid out in 2014/15, received additional funds from HWDSB also to be held in trust		
Net Revenue/(Expenditures):	(34,458)	(7,722)	(31,843)	(1,800)			
		Estimate	Actual	Estimate			
Estimated Assets		65,829	65,829	22,604	Estimated Assets May 27, 2015 (Note: includes \$200 float)		
Plus: Revenue to be received		900	51	18,400	2014/15 - Estimated Revenue from Partnerships (\$800), Flower Fridays (\$100)		
Less: Expenses yet to be paid		(21,209)	(18,676)	(20,200)	2014-15 - Estimated Expenses of \$32,706 less actual of \$13,057 less expenses against revenue for 1 Pita days @ \$720 each, plus 2 pizza days @ \$420 each		
Less: Special payments/transfers to be made		(13,100)	(13,100)	-	2014/15 - Outdoor Space transfers to HWDSB Foundation (Evergreen Grant and balance of Evergreen design budget)		
Estimated Net Assets at August 31st		32,420	34,104	20,804			
Less: Contribution for Outdoor Space Project		(11,500)	(11,500)	-	H&S Donation to Outdoor Space Project * Amount approved by H&S Members at June 3, 2015 mtg		
Estimated Remaining Assets at August 31st		20,920	22,604	-	Goal: Hold funds equal to all budgeted expenditures for 2015/16 plus small contingency		
			22,604		Note: Bank balance at 31-Aug-2015 is \$22,403.98 + \$200 float = \$22,604 (rounded to nearest dollar)		
			ACTUAL				