

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING
 Cootes Paradise Elementary
 (Hybrid Meeting – School Gym/Remote)

September 26, 2023

MINUTES

In Attendance in Person: Jennifer Hogan (Principal), Rosalee van Staalduinen (2022-2023 Chair, 2023-2024 parent member), Sue Dumitru (Teacher Representative), Matt Lindo (2023-2024 Chair), Lily Huang (parent member), Anneli Thomson (Treasurer), Kara Jessop (Home & School Representative), Natalia Gonzalez, Andrea Ara, and Jean Brown.

In attendance via MS Teams: Heather Ricks (parent member), and Nikol Piskuric.

Regrets: Lisa Feinberg

Agenda Item	Comments	Person Responsible
1. Welcome, Introductions, and Land Acknowledgment	<p>Called to order at 6:33 p.m.</p> <p>Ms. van Staalduinen presented the land acknowledgement.</p> <p>Ms. Jessop has an ongoing disclosure that she is an employee of the HWDSB.</p>	Ms. van Staalduinen
2. Review and Approval of Agenda	Motion made by Ms. Gonzalez to approve the Agenda, seconded by Ms. Ara. Motion approved.	Ms. van Staalduinen
3. Business from Previous Meeting	<p>a. Sharing of Freedom of Information (FOI) request Re: Educational Assistant (EA) support at <i>Cootes Paradise Elementary School</i></p> <p>Ms. van Staalduinen presented a summary that was prepared by Ms. Feinberg Re: the response to the FOI request. This summary, as well as the released documents, are appended to these Minutes.</p> <p>Upon questions from parents, Ms. Hogan confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cootes Paradise Elementary School</i> has been allotted 6 EAs for 2023-2024; however, only has 5 as of September 26th. • The vacant position is currently active. Ms. Hogan followed up again today to inquire about the status of the position. • The EA numbers went from 6 to 3 in 2022-2023 due to absences and a lack of new applicants. • No students have been asked to stay home so far this year. 	Ms. van Staalduinen

4. Chair's Report	<p>Ms. van Staalduin reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a summary on what School Council is (an important advisory body to the school and school board, and a cooperative body of parents, staff, and others in the community) as well as the importance of School Council (helps improve student achievement by placing student interests first, establishing positive relationships with the school principal and staff, increasing accountability of the education system to parents, promotes effective, ongoing communication among all partners in education, and advised the principal/trustee/superintendent in making decisions). • The main activities undertaken by the 2022-2023 School Council (SC). 	Ms. van Staalduin
5. Treasurer's Report	<p>Ms. Thomson reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HWDSB Parent Engagement Fund (\$500) has already been deposited to the school's account. • The final SC numbers will be posted online shortly. 	Ms. Thomson
6. Principal's Report	<p>Ms. Hogan reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a smooth and wonderful transition to the 2023-2024 school year. • The school is currently undergoing reorganization. • <i>Cootes Paradise Elementary</i> received its EQAO results: reading (80.6%), writing (62.5%), and math (59.5%). • Thank you to the outgoing SC! <p>Upon questions from parents, Ms. Hogan confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EQAO results were discussed in a staff meeting. • There has been a big positive jump in math and this will continue to be a focus in 2023-2024. • The school is looking for more math resources and has had good success with "Knowledge Hook." • The school will continue to integrate math and reading learning opportunities. • The Kindergarten curriculum remains play based, and Grades 1-3 as well as Grades 4 & 5 will have their own plans. • Scores have gone down since pre-COVID due to COVID and the electronic approach, introduced last year. • Last year's math score was in the low 40's. • Limited information on all Ontario schools' EQAO results is available on the Ministry of Education's website. <p>Ms. Dumitru noted that the school purchased math rocks as manipulatives.</p>	Ms. Hogan

<p>7. Teacher Representative's Report</p>	<p>Ms. Dumitru reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assembly for safe/active play went well. • Primary and Juniors have recess at separate times, which has made for less congestion on the playground. • A board specialist is coming to the Kindergarten rooms and getting them what they need. <p>Upon questions from parents, Ms. Dumitru confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and students are enjoying the new split Primary/Junior recess times. • Staff and students seem to be adjusting to the new nutrition break times and that all students have the flexibility to get some food from their lunch boxes or from the snack bin prior to nutrition break, as needed. • Kindergarten students now have centres outside and clear routines. A newsletter is going out from all Kindergarten teachers. 	<p>Ms. Dumitru</p>
<p>8. Home and School Association's Report</p>	<p>Ms. Jessop reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first meeting of Home and School Association (HSA) is directly following tonight's SC meeting. • There's a \$20 membership fee for HSA members, which is refunded at the end of the year. The fee covers insurance. • The "Chalk and Talk" event on September 24th was a success. • "Night Hike" is coming up on October 27th. Volunteers (with vulnerable sector checks) are needed to help carve in classrooms. • HSA paid for bus subsidies for the school and gave donations to community organizations in 2022-2023. • HSA came out in the black last year; they have money to spend at the school. • Voting members can make decisions on the allocation of funds. • The "Book Swap" in May 2023 was an excellent event, made some money, and all of the extra books were donated. 	<p>Ms. Jessop</p>
<p>9. New Business</p>	<p>School Council Elections for 2023-2024</p> <p>All nominated individuals accepted their nominations. The new SC (with voting rights) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair: Matt Lindo • Secretary: Lisa Feinberg • Treasurer: Anneli Thomson • Parent Members: Lily Huang, Heather Ricks, and Rosalee van Staalduinen • HSA Representative: Kara Jessop • Teacher Representative: Ms. Dumitru <p>Ms. Hogan is a non-voting member of SC.</p>	<p>Ms. Hogan</p>

10. Next Meeting Date	The next meeting is scheduled for 6:30 pm on Tuesday, November 28, 2023 . The location/format is to be determined.	Ms. van Staalduinen
11. Adjournment	Motion made by Ms. van Staalduinen to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Huang seconded the motion. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.	Ms. van Staalduinen

Summary of Freedom Of Information (FOI) Request

In March 2023, a School Council member requested records from HWDSB via a FOI request related to (1) the allocation of EAs within HWDSB and (2) requests for additional EA support at Cootes Paradise Elementary School (“Cootes Paradise” or the “School”).

On May 18, 2023, a substantive response to the request was received. 52 records were identified, 11 records were fully disclosed. Many were partially (20) or completely (27) redacted to protect personal privacy interests and/or employment information. Of note, we received the following:

- documents showing how many EAs were allocated to each HWDSB school in 2022-2023 school year (range from 2-19, CP is identified as having 6 EAs)
- a copy of the rubric used to allocate educational assistants within the HWDSB, which the HWDSB stated was only one tool used
- emails relating to EA allocation within the HWDSB and Cootes Paradise specifically
- emails sent by our administration at Cootes Paradise to HWDSB from June 2022 to February 2023, requesting more EA support
 - o Emails from the School administration to HWDSB in June 2022 requesting that Cootes Paradise have its EA allotment increased from 6 to 7 EAs
 - o An email from the School administration on August 29th 2022 to HWDSB, indicating that the School had to be creative in terms of stretching the six EAs to meet current needs, including by taking away a EA from one of their current students to meet the needs of incoming kindergarten classes
 - o Early September 2022 emails from School administration indicating that there are four students without any shared support who previously had it and that there is no assigned Specialized Services Learning Consultant to Cootes Paradise
 - o Emails from School administration to HWDSB in mid October 2022 indicating that they are unable to support the level of need and have had to reduce the length of the day of new students to ensure student and staff safety
 - o Board emails from mid October 2022 indicating that they are posting a transitional LTO EA role for Cootes Paradise
 - o An email from the School administration to HWDSB in late October 2022, indicating that Cootes Paradise is down to 3 EAs and requesting that an additional EA to be directed to the School
 - o An email from the School administration to HWDSB in November 2022, indicating that they only have 4 EAs at Cootes Paradise and no one is applying to the EA job posted to LTO status.
 - o Emails from January 2023 from School administration to HWDSB indicating that:
 - Cootes Paradise was down to 3 EAs
 - School cannot meet safety and toileting needs of students
 - Some classes were not able to attend the library or gym as a result
 - School is “continuing with [Board’s] recommendation to rotate through letting parents know we have no support for their child should they choose to send them to school.”
- internal emails regarding media interest in the EA allocation issue

The following records were received as a result of the FOI, have been compiled in a zip file, and are presented as a separate file:

20230322 - Index of Records May 18, 2023

20230322_Decision Letter

Record 1 attach - Final Transitional EA Recall Process Outcome Tracking_Redacted

Record 1- Fw_ Transitional EA Recall Process Outcome Chart_Redacted

Record 2 - Independence Rubric - Domains

Record 3 - June 2022 EA allocation emails_Redacted

Record 4 - Transitional EAs - Sept 2022

Record 5 - October 2022 EA Allocation emails

Record 2 - EA Support_Redacted

Record 3 - Fw_ Follow-up _ Spec_ Cootes

Record 4 - Re_ Spec request -- Cootes Paradise elementary_Redacted

Record 5 - Mail

Record 7 - 20230217 - Cootes Paradise School Council Letter Re EA Need - attach

Record 7 - Immediate Action Needed to Hire and Retain Educational Assistants

Record 12 - E.A. Situation_Redacted

Record 13 - Need_ EA Allocation Sept 2022 - Cootes Paradise_Redacted

Record 14 - Re_ EA Support Thursday October 26_Redacted

Record 16 - Re_ EAs_Redacted

Record 17 - Fw_ EAs_Redacted

Record 18 - RE_ Transitional EA_Redacted

Record 19 - Re_ Support for next week_Redacted

Record 21 - Two items_Redacted

Record 22 - Re_ Significant EA gap_Redacted

Record 23 - Re_ Reorg Impact On Student Need_Redacted

Record 25 - Student Needs_Redacted

Record 28 - Attach - Letter RE EA Support DRAFT clean copy_16Jan2023

Record 28 - Fw_ Increased Support and Planning Needed for Educational Assistants DRAFT

Record 30 - Re_ System LRTs for next week_Redacted

Record 31 - Support at Cootes Paradise_Redacted

Record 32 - Support for next week_Redacted

Record 33 - Re EA Support_Redacted

Record 47 - Re_ Increased Support and Planning Needed for Educational Assistants

Record 49 - Re_ Your Letter

Record 51 - Fw_ Immediate Action Needed to Hire and Retain Educational Assistants

Record 52 - Log Sheets_Redacted

Record 53 - Fw_ Immediate Action Needed to Hire and Retain Educational Assis