

**SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING**  
 Cootes Paradise Elementary  
 (Remote via MS Teams)

February 12, 2024

**MINUTES**

In attendance via MS Teams: Jennifer Hogan (Principal), Sara Alves (Vice Principal), Matt Lindo (Chair), Rosalee van Staalduinen (parent member), Lisa Feinberg (Secretary), Anneli Thomson (Treasurer), Kara Jessop (Home & School Representative), Heather Ricks (parent member), Kristina Cote, Jude Belowitz, and Nikol Piskuric.

Regrets: Lily Huang (parent member)

Agenda Item	Comments	Person Responsible
1. Welcome, Introductions, and Land Acknowledgment	Called to order at 7:35 p.m.  Mr. Lindo presented the land acknowledgement.  Ms. Jessop has an ongoing disclosure that she is an employee of the HWDSB.	Mr. Lindo
2. Notice of Minutes from November 28, 2023 Meeting	The minutes from the meeting on November 28, 2023 have been approved by email and were posted online.	Mr. Lindo
3. Review and Approval of Agenda	Ms. Jessop moved to accept the motion. Ms. Feinberg seconded the motion. Motion was carried and the agenda was approved.	Mr. Lindo
4. Chair's Report	Mr. Lindo presented the Chair's report. Mr. Lindo reported that the School Council has focused on its priorities of increasing collaboration amongst School Council, Home and School Association ("HSA") and school administration and of increasing parent engagement with school. Mr. Lindo and other council members had an informal meeting in December 2023 to strategize on how to meet these objectives. In January 2024, Mr. Lindo met with the School administration to discuss some of the points raised, including the idea of having parent representatives for each class. An application was submitted for the Pro Grant in January 2024. School council has identified two committees: talent show and resource fair committees. Both are in progress, as the committees are trying to recruit members. Unfortunately, School Council was not able to be at a table at the School's Lunar New Year event due to scheduling issues, but HSA made use of the table instead.	Mr. Lindo

5. Treasurer's Report	School Council has \$427.68 remaining in the parent engagement fund. There are many opportunities to increase parent engagement. School council is keen to collaborate with administration to do further fundraising through food.	Ms. Thomson
6. Home and School Association's Report	<p>HSA fundraised through popcorn sales, which allowed it to provide \$850 in gift cards before the winter break to those families whose students are given Food4Kids bags. HSA had a table outside of the lunar festival event. HSA has upcoming events, such as the Skate and Bake Sale, to fundraise to lower the cost of the year end trip for grade 5 students. The Skate and Bake Sale for Grade 5 is tentatively planned for Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>.</p> <p>Ms. Piskuric is administering the outdoor space survey on behalf of the HSA, which has well received. There are over 100 responses so far from school and community members, with good representation from all of junior, primary, and kindergarten. The responses indicate that the highest priority area is the grass area in the back of the school, followed by the natural playground. A large majority of families wanted to see more climbing equipment, followed by opportunities to run around, and imaginative play. HSA is hoping that some of the smaller suggestions can be implemented in the next few months, such as installing soccer nets and other sports equipment. Some parents also asked about literacy scores and EQAO test results, which was outside the scope of the survey and HSA's mandate, but the feedback was passed on to the school. Additionally, HSA members noted that test scores go up when children are more physically active.</p> <p>HSA understands that students are also being separately surveyed by administration – it would be helpful to collaborate about those survey results.</p> <p>School administration was asked how many students are at the School – the answer was 568 students.</p>	Ms. Jessop and Ms. Piskuric
7. Principal's Report	<p>Ms. Hogan and Ms. Alves presented the school improvement plan in detail, which is appended to the minutes.</p> <p>They also reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How school generated funds are used: to fund upcoming trips, community events such as the lunar new year event (which cost \$1000), STEM room, MathUp licenses, and to equip the calming room.</li> <li>• Recent and upcoming events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Many teachers are volunteering to put on clubs over lunch period such as creative writing, open gym, reading club, bracelet making, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Ms. Hogan and Ms. Alves

- Current learning initiatives for language (lexia intervention, Heggerty, UFLI), math (MathUp – Grade 3s, Knowledgehook, the Thinking Classroom), and for community resources (Guest speakers: Brave).

As per the standing issues on Principle Report Request checklist, a request was made for 1-2 question that Ms. Hogan and Ms. Alves would have for School Council. Ms. Alves asked if there are parent volunteers who are able/willing to help out with pizza day on Wednesdays. She also asked School Council what its goals were. Mr. Lindo reiterated the goals of the School Council (increased collaboration with administration and HSA and increased parent engagement).

A question was asked if parents were permitted to run clubs over lunch, which has happened in the past. Ms. Hogan says that parents can run clubs over lunch if they have their vulnerable sector screening police check completed.

Ms. Ricks asks about whether there is currently a Safe/Positive Space club for students who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, which has existed in the past. Ms. Hogan responded that the teachers would previously run this club are no longer at the School, but that this club would be welcome.

In response to questions from parents, Ms. Alves said that there is no screen time for students grades 1-5 during nutritional break. There is limited screen time during kindergarten nutritional breaks.

Ms. Alves shared the results of the school’s communication survey, which conveyed parents’ desire for more communication and more accessible communication. The specific points addressed were as follows:

- Spotlight school initiatives with photos/ images - **done!**
- Providing more time before events so parents can plan accordingly- **done!**
- Use headings and subtitles- **done!**
- Remove the "shall not" section -**done!**
- Cootes community gatherings/ values and goals for student community (character assemblies)-**done!**
- Continue with social media presence (mainly Instagram)- **done!**
- Hoping for more community gatherings similar to Lunar New Year-**done!**
- Letter from Principals on Weekly Update-**done!**
- Image only (no PDF link to click)- **Next step.**

Ms. Alves shared that the School was very excited about its STEM room, the lunar new year event, the math program, and its new “makers” room. The School’s main challenge is the long wait lists for support

	<p>programs for students with diverse needs Ms. Van Staalduinien asks about current EA allocation. Ms. Hogan says that the School now has six EAs.</p> <p>A concern was raised regarding the inclusivity of the lunar new year event, as the capacity was limited to 300 people. School administration suggested that anyone who was not able to register should be in touch with them.</p> <p>Ms. Cote asks about the school’s plans regarding the results of survey of the grade 5 leadership group. Ms. Hogan responded that she would present the results at the next HSA meeting.</p>	
8. New Business	The Pro Grant was submitted in January 2024 for an event on creating a family mental wellness action plan (to take place in April 2024). School Council is now waiting for approval.	Mr. Lindo
9. Next Meeting Date	The next meeting’s date and time are still to be determined, with a suggested date sometime the week of April 22 <sup>nd</sup> .	Mr. Lindo
10. Adjournment	Motion made by Ms. van Staalduinien to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lindo seconded the motion. Motion was approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.	Mr. Lindo