

GLA Parent Council



Date: Wednesday, November 23, 2022

Time: 6:30pm – 8pm

2022/23 Co-Chair: Lisa Major and Kim Clark

Minutes Prepared by: Kavelle Maharaj

Parent Attendees:

Lisa Major - lisa_major@me.com

Michelle Noble michelle.s.noble@gmail.com

Kavelle Maharaj kavellemaharaj@gmail.com

Ryan Brooke ryanbrooke6@gmail.com

Allison allison_walker@outlook.com

Kimberly Clark clarkkimberly13@gmail.com

Carla Casco karlamen69@gmail.com (Iker Morales)

Lisa Mantysaari Ronlisamkm@gmail.com

School Representatives:

Principal: Joanne Hall joahall@hwdsb.on.ca

Vice Principal: Dianne Barlow

dbarlow@hwdsb.on.ca

Teacher representative: Paula Wardle [Staff]

pwardle@hwdsb.on.ca

Regrets:

Vallvé, Nina (MTO)" nina.vallve@ontario.ca

Jennifer Clarke jenniferclarke007@gmail.com

Jen Bromley jen_bromley@hotmail.com

Essra Kamel esraa_kamel@yahoo.com

Lisa Speziale [Staff] lspezial@hwdsb.on.ca

Elaine Smith elaine_forsyth@hotmail.com

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Approval of Minutes

No minutes were presented from October 2022 meeting due to previous chair stepping down. Current Co-Chair Lisa Major mentioned that she would work on getting the minutes from Jolene to have for the council's records.

Welcome

The Co-Chair, Lisa thanked members for coming to the meeting. Meeting began with the reading a HWDSB land acknowledgement and significance of Wampum Belt.

An update about Jolene stepping away from the role of chair due to personal reasons. Lisa has graciously stepped in to fill the role of Co-chair for the remainder of the academic year 2022/2023 with Kim Clark.

Plans were presented to the group to begin looking for current individuals interested in learning more about the council and the role of co-chair for the remainder of year to hopefully prep for the 2023/2024 school year – Chair in training/mentorship program. This would be Lisa's last year on the council and she is interested in as much knowledge transfer and ideas from the current members to ensure the council is set up for success in the future for the GLA community.

Kavelle indicated initial interest in learning more about the council and chair role, however since she was new to the school and council did not want to step into the role immediately without better context.

The group agreed that Lisa should finish the academic year as Co-Chair with Kim since many events and plans are currently underway for the 2022/2023 year. This would give the group enough time to refocus its mission and goals, find the best balance for what works for the committee and what council means for the 2023/2024 year.

Other individuals are encouraged to express interest in the Co-chair roles, please indicate to Lisa via email or at our next meeting to be part of the co-chair in training pieces.

Principal's Report

Principal Joanne Hall updated the group about current initiatives at the school.

- The Reading and Writing Sheet for parents to take away are in progress and looks promising for



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students. She would have more of an update when it is completed.

- EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) Results as of November 23, 2022 were shared for GLA with attendees, The results were not great, however, she noted that massive potential that the school is experiencing, and GLA is moving in the right direction. This is very exciting for the school. One factor that was had to fully review was the historical vs pandemic related data that would skew results.

You can find the report for GLA School here -

<https://www.eqao.com/report/?id=4030&mident=212490>

Additionally, the EQAO platform has changed a little. They are now able to look at Student Individual Assessment Reports, support students further and understand what them as educators can and cannot do to support improvements with students.

However, from the looks of the scores, while below provincial standards, the school suspects scores will continue an upward trend due to some of the current programs and initiatives they are trying with the students to ensure they are set for success.

A question was asked about the EQAO exam regarding after the initial test if another test is done to see the improvements. It was noted that these tests are usually only completed once when the children are in certain grades. E.g., grade 3, grade 6.

- GLA has started the Culture Club to support positive culture and wellbeing at the school. After two and half years of the pandemic, when students returned to in person learning, it was noted how much it affect the children's self-esteem. Students had a difficult time picking out their best qualities and saying it.

Teachers have been communicating with students about self-esteem, being positive, self-efficacy, and pointing out positive whether large or small throughout their classes (pump the positive). Part of this initiative, the school has also launched Wellness Wednesdays where each class embarks on wellness with key players like teachers, early educators and assigned school social worker is involved in programming. The Wellness Wednesday program will run 4 weeks from November – December with the hope that in the new year, the program will shift from doing work from within to what an individual can do to focus on helping another individual on their wellness path also.

- Great news on the capital front – GLA has been benchmarked for renovations. A 1.57million



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renovation is set to occur in 2023. The update will include corridors, hallways and bathrooms followed by both gyms. Additionally, certain rooms will be reassigned and be made into a science room, art room and a music room. These upgrades will bring GLA in line with the benchmark standards for elementary schools.

The principal also mentioned that she is advocating to remove the old lockers since usage is very low and usually not needed in school by students at this level.

Renovations will begin in Summer 2023 where rooms will be taking out of commission on a varying schedule. This will ultimately affect availability of these spaces. The principal will update the council accordingly as these renovations begin.

The proposed timeline for this

- November 2022 - Contractors coming in for bids of architecture work
- February 2023 – Moving to Tenure
- July 1, 2023 - Start date of Renovations

Teacher's Report

Ms. Paula Wardle updated the council of the upcoming teacher activities:

- The GLA Talent show is coming up at the school. It will feature students of all ages. Auditions will begin the week of November 28, 2022. A relevant flyer and email were sent to all parents earlier this week with information on this. They are asking that children auditioning be prepared with relevant talent (E.g., singing, karate display, dancing, etc.) when auditioning. It was noted that all cultures and languages are welcomed. See original communication sent to parents.



Dear Adults at Home,

This year G. L. A. is going to be running a school wide Talent Show! Auditions will be the week of November 28th and the show will be the week of December 19th. If your child wants to audition for the Talent Show they should come prepared (including any equipment and music) with a practiced and appropriate talent (Ex. Dance, Clean Jokes, Poetry, Singing, Karate, Playing an instrument, Magic trick, etc.). Only students who come prepared for auditions will be allowed to be in the show. If your child is chosen, a permission letter will go home after the auditions.

If you have any questions please contact Mrs. Zaroski at the school.

We look forward to seeing your talent!

Sincerely,

The Talent Show Team



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- The Robotics club will be starting back in January 2023. More details around this to come.
- Athletics – There was an update regarding the Senior Basketball season. The staff is currently helping with coaching for the time to prep for competitions. It usually runs for about 6 weeks. The Volleyball team has won and is off to the next round of games.

A question was asked about co-curricular sports being only during school. It was noted that sports are not just during school but also before and after school sometimes with scheduled games against other schools.

- Not originally on the agenda – question was asked about the vulnerable sector screening about timelines and mailing the screening to the school. It was noted that it was not necessary to email the screening received to the school since they do not need to have it on file. Parents just need to complete the volunteer forms and when returning these forms, show their vulnerable sector screening to the office prior to the trip, not the day of.

Subcommittee Presentation

The mission/vision and constitution reform subcommittee members included Ryan, Elaine, Michelle and Kavelle. Ryan and Kavelle presented their suggestions moving forward for the council. The detailed presentation is included in the notes for reference.

The subcommittee began by first acknowledging the current council's contributions, strengths and what has been completed thus far. The main purpose of this group was to understand the context/history, what guidelines we had to work within (HWDSB), the challenges over the last few years (Especially with COVID) and how best to restructure the council into what works for us.

It was also the time for clarity not just regarding goals but clarity for members/future members and their role/responsibilities, purpose with the ability to ensure what the parent council does aligns to what we are trying to achieve together for our students at all levels, abilities, and backgrounds.

The group noted that the remainder of the year 2022/2023 should be the year to test the proposed model with current members and the year to grow. It is the year to restructure the council into what we want it to be, something that is workable for parents to support the enrichment of students.

The presentation focused heavily on the structure of the council around three main focus areas (which

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could be then turned into subcommittees to support these focuses):

- Student Learning, Enrichment and Academic Achievement – 50% of total budget
- Community and Parent Engagement – 25% of total budget
- Communication and Marketing – 15% of total budget

Additional focus

- Adhoc Opportunities– 10% of total budget

Within each focus, there should be a subcommittee that supports the development of 2 - 3 subgoals throughout the school year. This may change from year to year on priorities. For example, this year we know that some of the student learning priorities surrounds math, reading technology, health and well-being. Within each subcommittee, members should work together to achieve the subgoals and some fundraising or grant applications for that school year. The group also suggested that the council meetings should move from only updates to some updates with scheduled time for each subcommittee to connect and work on set goals for the year. This will alleviate some of the time to meet outside of the assigned council times if parents are too busy.

The group suggested that the adjusted structure will:

- Create the opportunity to have a larger vision before going into minute details (efficacy)
- Budget Allocation for the year
- Get parents to understand what the council does (at ground level)
- Determine engaged parents with clear roles and responsibilities (what is in it for them)

Ryan mentioned the update on the draft constitution and how it will be related back to our goals. He also discussed the timeline for completion for initial review of the council with the proposed completed date of May 2023 with the hopes of it being ready for the September 2023 council intake. In the New Year, this subcommittee will need feedback of the current document to continue to move forward on these agenda items.

The subcommittee welcomed group feedback regarding the presentation and structure. Generally, the council agreed with the proposed structure and are willing to try the suggested moving forward. Longer council members identified the benefits of this structure however that it will be an uphill battle to get members out after the last few years and parent changing priorities. The subcommittee did mention that while it would be great to have more parents involved, that the current proposed structure could work with 8 -10 involved and dedicated parents moving forward assigned to specific roles. It was also noted by the principal some of the challenges regarding fundraising and how certain timelines and budgeting would

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occur for next year.

Lisa and Paula asked about including language around diversity and equity in the constitution for members. Members did discuss the importance of equity and diversity and what that meant in terms of culture. While it does not explicitly have an equity and inclusion line, the council is fine with adding a line into the constitution to reflect this, however identifying that all members of the school community should understand that equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) should be embedded in everything we do.

ACTIONS:

Ryan - to add in EDI line in constitution.

Kavelle – to share presentation with co-chairs to share with council members as well as to gain support for subcommittee groups.

Ryan, Elaine, Michelle and Kavelle – to review constitution prior to January 2023 meeting and send to Co-chairs, Lisa and Kim.

Lisa and Kim – to send to council members proposed constitution for initial review and comments.

Link to WIP

constitution: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1vLHKvzKuc9nP3xF_fFhUo7TxmOmSvyVK?usp=share_link

Newcomer Mix & Mingle

Lisa presented an update on the Newcomer's mix and mingle event. The event was envisioned as a way for newcomers to the school, Canada and the area of Hamilton to understand the various services available as supports to them. Lisa graciously spent time to do outreach to various organizations within Hamilton and the City of Hamilton to get them on board to be information tables at this event.

- The current list of services involved:
 - o Hamilton Public Library
 - o Hamilton Street Railway (HSR)
 - o Public Health – through the school liaison - Tian
 - o Translators on site to support information sharing in Arabic and Spanish. There will also be a Somolian SWIS worker, but we do not currently have Somali newcomers at GLA.
 - o Christine Shaw, Special Assignment Teacher ESL/ELD Programs
 - o School aligned settlement workers within school (SWIS)

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The council noted all the hard work completed for the current event, however questioned the reach of the event and if this was the best medium to provide resources to parents. Currently the event is potentially reaching 30 families who may be considered newcomers and missing the larger school population that may not be newcomer but will also benefit from the services for families of different backgrounds.

Joanne Hall noted that many newcomer families that arrived during the pandemic did not have access to the usual SWIS and other community resources and therefore would benefit from an in-person event.

Since this is a first-time event, the council agreed that it should move forward, however, it be evaluated for the future to reach a wider parent and family base, develop a better timeline to ensure council can be involved and determine the best way to add engagement pieces for the attendees coming to the event.

Lisa is looking for a support (event set up, pamphlets, chairs, snacks, etc.) on event day from the parent council for the Newcomers Event.

ACTIONS:

Please indicate to Lisa Major – lisa_major@me.com your interest by November 30, 2022 to support the Newcomer's Event on December 1, 2023 from 7pm – 8:30pm. Original Flyer sent out to parents below.



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GLA School Council Presents: **NEWCOMER MIX & MINGLE**

Are you new to Canada, Ontario, or Hamilton?
Please drop in and make some connections!

Thursday, DECEMBER 1
7:00 - 8:30 pm

Meet at George L. Armstrong Elementary, Small Gym

- speak with Arabic, Somali, and Spanish interpreters
- enjoy some refreshments
- meet School Council members
- mix with other newcomer families
- meet our settlement workers
- learn about services such as the library, public transportation, public health and more!

Please RSVP to the school: georgelarmstrong@hwsb.on.ca or (905) 385-5337

- The council noted the need for transparency of potential upcoming events from January – May 2023 to ensure that the co-chairs have the support from the group or if certain proposed events need to be evaluated by the group and adjusted based on the proposed goals moving forward and capacity of current members.

ACTION:

Lisa and Kim (Co-chairs) to send full list of remaining events to council prior to January 2023 meeting to review and discuss in the new year what events and initiatives will be taking on.

New Business

Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant – Lisa began by explaining what the PRO grant was and some historical context regarding the grant and the event that was completed in the past. The grant is directed to support parents' engagement within the school within the various categories:

- Addressing social inclusion and racism specifically anti-Asian, anti-Black, and anti-Indigenous racism and other prejudices toward racialized and marginalized groups
- Creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Demonstrating respect for parents as valued partners within the education system regarding decisions about their child's education
- Enhancing communication with teachers
- Informing parents about the expectations of the Ontario Curriculum and supporting

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resources.

Last time the council organized a screen with for an indigenous film for families. Lisa did note that the outreach pieces for this event could have been better since not many parents showed at this event.

Before Jolene stepped down, she was exploring the idea of having an LGBTQ+ speaker from Chris Pauls Rainbows for this grant application. While this was suggested, this has not been confirmed and other ideas are being welcomed for this grant application due in January 2023.

ACTIONS:

ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS – Please email ideas to Lisa Major at lisa_major@me.com to support the grant application for 2022/2023. PRO Grant parameters included below. Lisa will also email out the updated PRO Grant application to all Council members.

ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS – Indicate to Co-chairs which committee they would like to be part of for January 2023.

- Student Learning, Enrichment and Academic Achievement
- Community and Parent Engagement
- Communication and Marketing

Lisa and Kim – To share past successful grant with council members prior to January 2023 council meeting.

Lisa and Kim – Send email to current council members regarding subcommittees and interest to join. Committees to join: (ALL MEMBERS TO RESPOND PRIOR TO JANUARY 2023 meeting)

PRO Grant Guidelines – For reference only

To promote and encourage parent/guardian/caregiver involvement in schools, the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board Parent Involvement Committee is accepting applications from schools. School Councils should work with the school Principal to complete and submit an application for funds regarding their project or initiative by January 27, 2023. Applications should be submitted to PIC@hwdsb.on.ca.

Project Eligibility Criteria

The Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants program provides funding to school boards to provide opportunities for School Councils, the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) and the school community to lead projects that support parent/guardian/caregiver engagement and align with at least one of the following objectives:

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- Addressing social inclusion and racism specifically anti-Asian, anti-Black, and anti-Indigenous racism and other prejudices toward racialized and marginalized groups
- Creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Demonstrating respect for parents as valued partners within the education system regarding decisions about their child's education
- Enhancing communication with teachers
- Informing parents about the expectations of the Ontario Curriculum and supporting resources.

Applications that meet the criteria are eligible for a maximum amount of \$1,000. Schools may develop applications individually, or with another school. If schools choose to collaborate on an event, they can submit one application and combine funding. Individuals from the school community who have ideas for projects or initiatives that they would like considered, are encouraged to connect with their School Council or Principal.

Project Guidelines and Activities

- Activities must follow all Public Health measures and HWDSB procedures. Should conditions change and revisions to applications be requested, please contact PIC@hwdsb.on.ca
- Activities will support School Council initiatives or initiatives in partnership with community organizations
- Activities will identify and address local barriers to parent engagement and may include but are not limited to:

Development of parent resources (e.g. leadership resource for parents, resources addressing well-being, mental health, and anti-racism for students and families, etc.)

Next Meeting

The Chair ended the meeting and scheduled the next council meeting date for

Thursday 19 January 2023 | 6:30am – 8pm | GLA School Staff Room