

## **George L. Armstrong Parent Council**

Meeting minutes

October 26, 2022, 6:30 pm – 8 pm

### **Parent Attendees**

Jolene Andrews [joleneandrews84@gmail.com](mailto:joleneandrews84@gmail.com)

Kimberly Clark [clarkkimberly13@gmail.com](mailto:clarkkimberly13@gmail.com)

Lisa Major [lisa\\_major@me.com](mailto:lisa_major@me.com)

Michelle Noble [michelle.s.noble@gmail.com](mailto:michelle.s.noble@gmail.com)

Michelle Brock [mbrock@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:mbrock@hwdsb.on.ca)

Kavelle Maharaj [kavellemaharaj@gmail.com](mailto:kavellemaharaj@gmail.com)

Ryan Brooke [ryanbrooke6@gmail.com](mailto:ryanbrooke6@gmail.com)

Lisa Mantysaari [Ronlisamkm@gmail.com](mailto:Ronlisamkm@gmail.com)

Elaine Smith [elaine\\_forsyth@hotmail.com](mailto:elaine_forsyth@hotmail.com)

Jen Bromley [jen\\_bromley@hotmail.com](mailto:jen_bromley@hotmail.com)

Kevin Jackson [jacksonkevin1378@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonkevin1378@gmail.com)

### **School Representatives**

Principal: Joanne Hall [joahall@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:joahall@hwdsb.on.ca)

Vice-Principal: Dianne Barlow [dbarlow@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:dbarlow@hwdsb.on.ca)

Teacher representative: Paula Wardle [Staff] [pwardle@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:pwardle@hwdsb.on.ca)

### **Regrets**

Nina Vallvé [nina.vallve@ontario.ca](mailto:nina.vallve@ontario.ca)

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### **Guest Speaker**, via Microsoft Teams

Tian Xu Wang [TianXu.Wang@hamilton.ca](mailto:TianXu.Wang@hamilton.ca), Public Health Nurse

- Tian is a public health nurse with the city of Hamilton who is assigned to our school.

- Graduated mac 2019. 1 1/2-2years in long term care before coming to Hamilton. June to Sept 2022 worked on Covid vaccine team until he joined the education outreach team

- Public Health's overarching view of role in schools is to PROMOTE HEALTH

- Tian is creating a team within our school that will promote physical, social and mental health and learn to build healthy behaviours

- He is building a Health Action Team made of himself, teachers, and students

- They meet weekly, discuss the needs of school and community and brainstorm for solutions

- In the next 2-3 weeks they will be meeting with Principal Hall, VP Barlow, Ms Wardle and Ms Bigas

- they created a survey and will send it out to students and teachers asking questions such as: what is your perception of Health in a school setting? What makes you feel healthy? What are our priorities and needs?

- they are currently recruiting students from grades 3-8. Trying to make it fun and give them a forum where they can share their ideas
- He will reach out if he needs any parent volunteers

### **Principal's Report**

- GLA's Action Plan** is currently being built. The focus will be on human rights, reading and writing
  - Made the connection to the RIGHT TO READ document in Ontario human right commission and the urgency around the need for students to be able to read to be productive in society
  - teachers will be assessing and working on phonics and spelling rules in each class and level, K – 8
  - teachers will also focus on writing
- Power Writing** – daily activity, teacher will give a small prompt and the students have time to write. eg. The board in the room said “ANIMAL” and the kids write about an ANIMAL. Often the prompt is connected to their curriculum
- Teachers will give in-the-moment feedback and assessment while it is fresh in the students' minds, the feedback “sticks better” with the students and they feel pride in their accomplishments.
- \*eg. Student who usually visits the office on break showed up with her writing book and said “I want to read you my writing!” She usually doesn't share her work, she was so proud
- it is a low risk activity
- Teachers will tweak sentence starters and send information home with tools for students and caregivers.

### **-Active Recess Program**

- helps to avoid conflicts on the school grounds – eg “hands off”
- morning recess they have the kilometre club (similar to Terry Fox run), students walk/run around the field, they get a popsicle stick when they do a lap, the class tallies the popsicle sticks and can win a monthly prize according to varying parameters, ie the number of participants or the number of sticks they collect as a whole.
- 3 times a week Mr Foreman will teach games in class and will run them with the kids in different groups during recess – this has shown to reduce conflict

### **Neighbour to Neighbour**

- volunteers from this organization have been reading with students that are not comfortable reading aloud, they work one-on-one during school hours
- Primary classes are identifying 3-4 students that will be buddied with an N2N volunteer

### **Math Tutoring Program**

- at the Concession St HPL there are reading and math support programs with N2N for grade 7 and 8 students. There are still openings left.

### **Additional classes/support programs**

Piano teacher is back in-person once a week, teaches grade 4 and 5s during the school day (for a fee)

Big Brother and Big Sister programs are starting up again for grades 3, 4, 5s

Looking into Peer Mentoring program for older kids

### **Grade 7 and 8s activity on Friday**

- walking trip, raising money for pediatric oncology
- Asking for donations to build up community ties

### **Safe Schools Protocols**

-Safe school protocols: 3 successful fire drills already. Need to do lock down drills and will be letting families know

### **Teacher's Report** – by Ms. Wardle

#### **Healthy Schools**

- discussed and handed out Healthy Schools Survey to Council members
- survey\* will also be sent home electronically: focusing on grades 3 and up for the survey and all teaching staff and school council.
- Will derive focus from answer

#### **-Culture Club – Positive Space**

- overlapping with Health Action
- Want to move away from extrinsic to internalizing the spirit of GLA, listening to student voice k-8. What's the best version of US? Pull together THREE words. WHO ARE WE AS A GROUP? Will hear over the next few weeks
- will be polling families

#### **Sports clubs**

- Swim meet upcoming for Jr grades – 3, 4, 5
- already had volleyball and cross-country

#### **Miscellaneous**

Nov 18<sup>th</sup> is photo day

Dec 9<sup>th</sup> Spirit wear orders are due

- Transitioning from sports to wintery indoor things: exercise group, lunch helpers, learning buddies

### **Home Reading Book Drive**

-would like to have a book drive for Early Readers, K-4. Need books that kids can take home, books that will enrich reading, not necessarily levelled books  
-will connect with Jolene

### **Chair update** - Jolene

Meet and Greet – set up worked well

Finances – currently have \$5,361.06, and getting additional \$500 from family engagement fund

-Principal Hall requested funds from parent council to help cover a guest speaker, Paul Davis who teaches about cyber savvy such as the use of social media and social media safety. During the presentations he collects data from kids and shares data with parents after

-Nov 8<sup>th</sup> – presentation for grade 7 and 8s

-another date later in the year for other grades

-Wednesday Feb 8<sup>th</sup> in the evening - presentation for parents. Will open up to our neighbouring schools Highview and Norwood Park

-council voted to contribute \$500 – in favour was Lisa Major, Lisa Mantysaari, Kim, Michelle Brock, online?

### **Possible events for the year**

-end of year Carnival (June): estimated \$1500

-Newcomer event estimated \$150

--make it annual? Keep contacts\*

-- can work with Christine Shaw our Special projects ESL teacher - very excited about the project and is looking into a date that works for us all. Maybe November if possible

--subcommittee needed

- include important services for newcomers to the area

-create a welcome package/flyer

---eg. Public health, Library, HSR, housing, settlement worker in school board, where to go grocery shopping, where to get cheap clothes, etc. tying them to the community.

- some schools have had Welcome packages. Mrs. Hall will see if she can find one. Lisa is willing to make one. Mirror it like secondary students. Calendars. Etc.

-hire translators to attend

- adding childcare, pumpkin patch, home daycare
- Lisa will be putting together packages

QUESTION: did Council pay for the Swag a few years ago? Yes. Last year, grads didn't get swags, they got different bags within the theme.

-Winter Wonderland (Dec 8,13 or 14?): estimated \$500 (family engagement)

--If we contribute \$750 to the guest speaker and utilize the estimated money accurately then we will still have \$2961.06 in our account by the end of the year.

Is there anything else we want to be spending this on? Any type of event?

Jolene will send out an email for council members to respond to and offer feedback re: events, ideas, volunteer opportunities

### **Fundraising**

-immediate needs of the school is money for tech, ie iPads, laptops, projector, 3D printer programs

### **Question**

- Questions/issues raised by council members new to the school:
- events/fundraisers that the School Council are discussing have no connections to academics. Moreso to events and techs. What are the broader principals? Events seems like a big chunks. What's the connection between?
- Council members that were on council for a few years answered:
- in the past, the teacher running the robotics team requested funds to help buy more equipment and elevate their club. School Council contributed \$500 and they were able to compete in robotics competitions.
- School Council hosted math nights in the past, pre-COVID
- Council paid for guest speakers.
- One of our main goals this year, and in the past is to build community and get families together.
- We have also joined Indigo to raise funds for books for our library
- Needs are reading, for books. We're here for parents and kids.
- Tech does impact learning.
- Events bring community together.

-In the past Council has focussed on 3 areas and funds are funds are usually split 1/3 1/3 1/3: Community building, purchasing tech for the school, Health and wellness (like nutrition program, trips, outdoor play equipment, jerseys.)

--We try to focus on filling gaps that are identified by the teachers and principal

Debate continues:

-Some members argue that the School Council needs to start with a focus. What is the overarching goal? What is the focus for the whole year? How is it split up? Priority is Community engagement. What does the Guest Speaker fall under? How do you vote on something like a Guest Speaker? Seems backwards that so much of the budget is on events.

- Responded with: This year is a bit of an anomaly. This is the first time that some parents have been in the building. Council is what you make it.

Argued back: Need to clearly define Council's mission statement and goals so people who want to join know exactly what it is that school council is about.

Decided to form a Mission and Bylaw subcommittee

- Create a School Council Welcome Package

- mission statement/goals

- more structure

- more diversity

- need more parents of primary students

- kinder orientations

- set top 3 goals each year, align with school improvement plan

- need to write bylaws

- Mission Vision/bylaw committee formed: Lisa Major, Ryan Brooke, Elaine Smith, Kavelle Maharaj, Michelle Noble, Kim Clark

- Lisa will organize meeting

Question about Garbage Cans – there are no garbage cans on the school grounds

- following up with the city because it is technically city property

- Eco team does a great job picking up garbage around the grounds

**Next meeting set for November 23, 2022**