

Kanétskare School Council

February 22, 2024 - Meeting Minutes

Members present:

Megan Evans - Chair (Secretary & Treasurer)

Eisham Abdulkarim - Vice-Chair

Joanne Hall – Principal

Janine Durajlija – Teacher Representative

Robin Latour, Cindy Stranak, Melissa Neil, Jen Castle-Timms, Kathy Hollands, Louai Moghrabi -
Voting Members

Joanne Hall started off with a summary of her first 7 weeks at our school. She and staff will be focusing on developing a School Improvement Plan based on EQAO test results, survey data and the next steps section on report cards which went home last week. Kanétskare EQAO test scores were low, and she wants to implement strategies to improve learning.

2023 (Grade 6) EQAO Test Scores:

Reading: Kanétskare 73%, HWDSB 75%, Ontario 84%

Writing: Kanétskare 63%, HWDSB 73%, Ontario 84%

Math: Kanétskare 30%, HWDSB 35%, Ontario 50%

(scores represent the percentage of students who tested at or above grade level)

She is also concerned about class sizes (English stream: avg class size 28 compared to French stream: avg class size 21). She has requested an additional learning support teacher from the school board to help with English stream classes. Kanétskare has a sizeable ESL student population, but we did not have an ESL teacher. She advocated for the return of an ESL teacher and the school board just assigned our school an ESL teacher for 2 days/week.

Joanne recruited 3 teachers to volunteer to run Open Gym during 2nd nutrition break. Each grade has one day per week where students can spend the second break playing sports in the gym. They started playing floor hockey and next week will switch to basketball. She intends to implement changes after March Break to the off-campus policy during second break for students. There have been lots of problems in the community involving Kanétskare students. For next year, she wants to have students and parents sign a contract regarding student behavior if they want to have permission to leave campus during the second break. After March Break, there will be a pass system and students leaving will have to present their pass to a teacher before leaving school. If there are disciplinary issues, a student will have their pass revoked. She also intends to allow students back onto campus at 1:20 instead of 1:35 (without bringing off-campus food with them) so they aren't left loitering around the neighbourhood.

She is working toward establishing an Affinity club for racialized students. There are currently no staff at Kanetskare who are racialized themselves who could lead the club. She may need to reach out for a parent volunteer if the school board isn't able to provide an appropriate person to lead it.

The school was chosen to participate in a pilot program the school board is running this year called BeKind. This will be led by someone from HWDSB later this Spring with the main goal being to show the students ways to bring kindness to their community. More details to come.

The school participated in a Winter Walk last Friday during the last two periods of school with the aim of promoting good health. Our school will participate in the Ride Smart bike safety course run by a local non-profit. The course will be for grade 6 students and will run June 17-21. More details to come.

Grade 8 graduation has been scheduled for June 21st. The ceremony will take place at Westdale highschool, likely from 5-6pm (to be confirmed). This will be followed by a dance at Kanetskare for the students from 7-9pm. Students will vote on the theme for the dance. We will need to convene a group of parent volunteers to coordinate refreshments and decorations (next month we will reach out about setting up the grad committee). This year, there will be some drinks available at Westdale after the graduation ceremony (will need to be provided by the grad committee) but no food. There will be food (will need to be provided by the grad committee) at the dance for the students. The school will still be ordering pizzas this year.

The school is planning several year-end trips for students. We are very excited to have field trips starting up again after a long hiatus! Grade 6 students will visit the Warplane Heritage museum. Grade 7&8 students will visit Battlefield Park (these trips will be tied to curriculum). Grade 8 students will also be going on a graduation trip. The students voted on the destination which will be a day in Toronto, visiting several attractions. Many details still need to be sorted out regarding the trips. Grade 8 students have been running fundraisers (selling snacks at school dances, pizza days, etc) to help subsidize trip fees which will be substantial. More details to come.

Janine Durajlija provided the staff report. Clubs are running at Kanetskare. One parent reached out to Janine and has started volunteering at school. The school could use more parent volunteers to help with student clubs and providing some basic learning supports. Please contact her if you have time and are interested:

jdurajli@hwdsb.on.ca

Megan Evans led the discussion around council business. We sent out the direct donation letter 2 weeks ago and have raised over \$1400 so far! We intend to send out a reminder next week to try to prompt some more donations. Our (very ambitious) goal was to raise \$9,000 (to be put toward new musical instruments and lounge seating for students in the library). Megan, Eisham and Joanne will be meeting before March Break to work on a rough draft of the welcome letter

for all families at Kanetskare. The goal of this letter is to improve communication between parents and the school.

Cindy Stranak provided an update from the most recent PIC (parent involvement committee) meeting. In December, Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini presented the HWDSB 2023-2028 strategic plan that launched in January 2024. The mission of this plan is: To ensure every student experiences a sense of belonging and engages in dynamic learning to reach their potential and build their own future. This will be the foundation on which all decisions will be made over the coming years. At the same meeting PIC learned about the HWDSB Math Achievement Plan. HWDSB recognizes that work needs to be done to increase math scores across the board. Specifically, the plan identifies 46 priority schools (Kanetskare is not included) that will be supported by 24 Math Facilitators.

The January PIC Meeting was a networking event for School Councils. Megan, Fleur and Cindy attended along with several school council representatives from around Hamilton. People shared their council experiences, how to engage the parent community and ideas for fundraising and events.

The February meeting focused on a presentation of the 2021 'We all Count' student census data. A high-level summary of the data confirms that there are marginalized people and inequities that exist among students. The Board plans to use this information to address and correct barriers in the system. To learn more about the census [click here](#). At the same meeting, PIC learned that HWDSB is reviewing the calendar to see if they can make it more inclusive to other religions (currently focused on Christian) however they are constricted by Provincial Guidelines so very limited on what they can do. There is a robust religious accommodation policy that is in place which includes if a student is away for a religious holiday, the absence is not counted on their record. Staff will be consulting with many groups and committees to get feedback as part of the review.

At the next meeting in April a presentation will be given by the Superintendent of Specialized Services / Special Education. If anyone has questions they would like raised at that meeting please contact Cindy (cindy@stranak.ca) before April 9.

Next school council meeting will be Wednesday, March 27th from 6:30-7:30pm.