

**Present:** Mrs Walsh (Principal), Mr Qureshi (VP), Sara Van Geffen, Meghan Smith, Richard Gelder, Sasha Pivarnyik, Neha Sethi, Altamash Hashmi, Lisa Richter (minute-taker)

**Teacher Report (Karen Wilkins):**

- Noted many joyous activities worth celebrating
- Jr Girls (gr 6-7) in volleyball finals **tonight** at DVSS – very exciting (Mrs Forman & Mrs Williams coaching)
- Expect to hear notices of additional teams to sign up for
- Cross-country took place; basketball has started
- Gr 8s have been leading wonderful initiatives in the building. Kindness Assembly took place 1.5 weeks ago. Keeping initiatives going throughout the school (positive affirmations, kind words, etc). Bulletin boards/displays in the front lobby (Kindness Can Move Mountains; Show Kindness in Snow Many Ways) which every class contributed to; many have been stopping by to read the messages.
- Earlier in the year, there was a collaborative (whole school) art project to create a mural with feathers which came to form a giant eagle (school's mascot). Students now stopping Ms. Wilkins in the hallway to ask what collaborative project the school will do next. These initiatives are all contributing to positive school culture and climate.
- Initiatives led by senior students trickle down to all age groups. Really thinking about mental health and wellness; will start to hear even more about in the new year.
- Lots of excitement in the music room, especially for Gr 6-8. Gr 6 band started in September. Winter concert is Wednesday December 21, 2022 (on this date, there will be an afternoon assembly (K-5); evening opportunity for community; following morning (Dec 22), the Gr 6-8 students will see the concert). Sr Band, Jr Band, Jazz Band, Eaglets, and Glee Club all performing. Food donations accepted, and pay what you can to attend.
- Always looking for ways to keep energy up and positive
- Talk of starting some extra-curriculars for juniors in the new year
- Chess club started – lots of kids coming out to participate. Many students engaged in sports and/or arts; looking to explore other opportunities to be inclusive to other interests.
- A lot of interest from senior students to help run clubs/activities for younger.

**Health and Safety**

- 3 Fire Drills have taken place - successful flow. 3 more to take place in the Spring
- Lockdown Drill took place in November -successful
- Hold and Secure drill coming up next week (kids won't necessarily recognize that staff have engaged in a protocol; a little less intimidating for students; a requirement for staff to participate in)
- New masking mandate – voting by Trustees took place at Board office on Monday evening - family and staff to receive info in next day or so (will be asked to mask; this includes visitors). Form to be filled out on parent portal if someone opts to not mask. People will not be reminded to mask, however. Need to be respectful of people's individual beliefs/feelings in this political climate. School Council is asked to support staff in recognizing varying views. Other precautions in place (hand sanitizer available; reminders re: handwashing; students and staff should be staying home if unwell)

**People**

- Mme Beale has returned full time in FI 6, Mr. Allum Gr 8 FI on leave (LTO TBD), Ms. McAlpine day 5 .2 FDK on leave (LTO TBD), Ms. Crockett DECE on leave (LTO TBD), Ms. Schwendiman .2 Perm (in as LTO for grade 2/3 Ms. Whillier) -day 4 (LTO TBD)
- New FT caretaker this year – Dusko – new role for him; very personable and an amazing addition to the school
- Need to respect the privacy and confidence of individuals and their absence(s)

## School Annual Plan

- Positive Culture & Well-Being: building student and staff well-being through positive climate strategies and supportive relationships \_CYCP (Child & Youth Practitioner), Ms. Nicolaides' leadership with intermediate students/staff, tiles (Ms. Wilkins)
- Plans for each division (more individualized this way and responsive to the needs of each division)
- Moving away from target and underserved groups, and looking at individual being
- *PA day Nov 25 focus*: UDL -universal design for learning, mental health needs/support, team collaboration and planning
- new and existing community partners to enhance opportunities for students (virtual field trips etc.)
- really focusing on wellbeing; ensuring students are "well" first and foremost

### Plant/Facilities:

- repairs of hand rail at front of school stairs (corrosion)

- field is being used regularly this year; no issues as of yet this year

- new snow plan for clearing of snow – City, caretakers each responsible for different aspects; accessibility issues (kindergarten pen; sewer in field area causing water run-off and thus, ice); not ideal to keep students inside. Safety is paramount however, so will explore options (indoor recess (if absolute safety issue) or rotating areas outdoors).

### Partnerships (families, community):

- Brave Education -peer conflict/relationships – looking into bringing this organization in (virtually or in-person); they run sessions for classroom teachers, groups. Have put aside some funding r/t mental health, so will draw on this.

- CYCP (Child & Youth Practitioner) - system level to support school; noticing in middle school, having issues with peer conflict and relationship building (problem-solving, advocacy for self in kind and respectful ways); recognizing difference between conflict or social problem vs bullying. Bullying assembly that went with kindness assembly took place. Recognizing some developmental issues (around conflict resolution or social skills) related to learning losses as a result of the pandemic.

### School Business:

- pizza day, lunch programs
  - Alternating pizza/sub days – for safe food handling, slices come in an individual box. Is slightly more cost. Council considered waste from boxes. Price increase has been noticed by parents. Concern that some families might be excluded because of this. Would like a lower cost option, while also ensuring quality. May explore A1 again in the new year; will discuss options with vendor (gluten-free, dairy-free, etc)
  - Offering to families twice a month if they need financial support, so students do not feel excluded.
  - Would need parent volunteers if it was to be regular pizza (not boxed).
  - Positive feedback on the alternating of food options.
  - 3 volunteers (Sasha, Sarah, Meghan) expressed availability for pizza days
- overnight trips – will take place, but may look a little different than in the past. Will be tied to curriculum and offer an ability for every child to attend (i.e. plans in place for safety, behavioral plans, economic support)
- Picture day mishap – school has asked the company for some \$ to support school initiatives to make up for mishap (\$500 given and some will be put towards Brave Education or other initiatives to support students needs/priorities r/t student wellbeing)
- Grade 8 annual reviews with high school staff, parents – ensure everyone has an intake meeting who has an IEP or exceptionality

- Amazing leadership from staff and older students – a lot to be proud of. Students are rising up and supporting each other in ways that couldn't be seen in last few years. Leaders from DVSS coming into gym program to create recess games. May be coming to do band presentations to role model.
- Community walkabout for traffic safety – took place after parent concerns raised. Connected with City of Hamilton (4-5 groups came, including By-Law, Public Health, etc). Talked about thresholds for safety to see if a crosswalk would be warranted in the area. Will be assessed next week. Acknowledged that traffic pattern now is different than in the Spring (different seasons affect traffic considerations), so another follow-up/assessment will take place at that time. Community walkabout was very informative.
  - One issue: people parking too close to driveway – creates a hindrance for students/families crossing. Important to educate/highlight safety in the neighborhood.
  - Parents/caregivers and students encouraged to voice concerns to school admin.
  - School admin will be asking for By-Law and community police presence on occasion to monitor/be present to encourage safety in the area.

#### **Other:**

- Issues with social media and phone use. Not possible to police every issue. Phones in school at times for instructional use. Trying to curb use as much as possible. Will be addressing in community letter, to have conversations with children. There have been suspensions related to this issue. Some miss having community officers in the building because they were able to deal with the legalities related. Many others do play a role however – teachers, parents/caregivers.
- Suggestion for community/family presentation re: internet/social media safety. Lisa R mentioned Paul Davis as possible guest speaker (<https://socialnetworkingsafety.net/sample-page/>). Idea to plan for a community event including other elementary schools in town (will help to ensure good turnout).
- Angel Tree – gifts that have been suggested by agencies and gifts suggested that child(ren) would like. Offers a good opportunity to give back within the community. Parent concern raised that their child came home with an angel gift idea that was high in price range. Parents should be aware that they are not obligated to participate, and the gifts are suggestions only. Parents are reminded to please only provide what is within your means.
- Looking at other options for fundraising and for 'treat' days: Kernels, TCBY
- Book Fair – did very well - \$4500 back to school as a result of sales. Will be another scheduled for May.

#### **New Business:**

- New member noted that she has been very impressed by the leveling of reading and that her daughter is very motivated by prizes for # of books read; admin identified Reading Specialist to work with classes, teachers which has been very good for the school.
- Feedback that Info Night at DVSS was fantastic. School staff (SWO and DVSS) considering various transition opportunities.

**Next meeting:** February 23, 2023 (5:30-6:30 pm).

Will promote School Council again to the community