

Meeting with Superintendent Meeting - Jane Macpherson October 30th, 2018

Attendance - 28 Parents/Guardians, 1 community member, Mr. Puppa (teacher), Principal Degner, and Superintendent Macpherson.

1.Introductions

Superintendent Macpherson explained she is the superintendent for a family of schools in the board, some in the Dundas and Ancaster area and some in the Hamilton core. She thanked parents at Yorkview for being involved and engaged. She committed to listening to concerns, answering questions, and taking back questions she did not have answers for to colleagues at HWDSB.

2.Facilities Issues

Lead in the water

Daily flushes of the pipes are being done at Yorkview. Some schools in the board are facing the issue of multiple fixtures testing for lead so they are using bottle water. Jane will look into and follow-up.

Points of clarification: The fountain that has an exceedance is the one in the hall outside the Grade 4 classroom. History: the old fountain was immediately shut down in the fall of 2017 when the test results were learned by the board. A new fountain was purchased by the board and installed but has never been used because there is still an exceedance. The fountain will not be reopened until there is no exceedance and Public Health is satisfied there is no risk. There is a binder that is a public document that tracks the lead levels, parents may ask to see it anytime.

Follow-up Questions/Comments from parents about the pipes:

- Are we going to have to rip up pipes in the school?
- What is the long term plan for fixing the lead in the water?
- The city has identified lead in the water as a city issue and is working on system to help with lead in the water, across the city but adding over the next two years orthophosphate.
- So the board replaced the old fountain but it still does not meet ministry standards...can you explain this?

Action – Superintendent Macpherson will follow-up with facility department about the lead in the water.

State of the Gym

The Gym will be painted white by Christmas. As part of the facility management plan the gym at Yorkview is being considered for an expansion. There is no confirmation at this time. The Yorkview gym did get a new score board this year.

Air Conditioning

New schools have air conditioning, older schools in the board do not. In some cases air conditioner units are added to classrooms for students with medical needs. It is a cost issue to go

and add it to all old schools. Parents and staff would prefer air conditioning. Board is making no commitment to add air conditioning at this time. Current practice is not to fundraise or seek donations for air conditioning units. If this were to change, any purchase/donation would need to be through a board approved vendor for insurance purposes.

Follow up questions/comments about air conditioning

-It is the cost of the infrastructure to add the air conditioning, or the operational costs of running the air conditioning - It is the understanding of the superintendent that the cost concerns relate to the initial infrastructure

-concern over students coming home from school with heat rash

-Electrical infrastructure may be another reason that air conditioner units may not be able added

-Can school council raise funds to add air conditioner units to classroom? It is Mr. Degner's understanding that school council cannot raise funds to purchase air conditioning units.

Fundraising done by school council should relate to the *School Annual Plan*. The school action plan is created by the Principal in consultation with the teachers. The *School Annual Plan* is presented at every school council meeting.

Action - Superintendent Macpherson will follow-up to see if school council can raise funds to purchase or accept donations of air conditioner units through the boards preferred vendors.

Blacktop

The board is moving forward with repairing pavement, no commitment towards a full repave. Parents expressed concerns about the decision not to repave the entire back playground. Student safety, seeing a cost benefit analysis and long-term maintenance plan, reduced area to be repaved might be more cost effective, and sharing of vendor quotes with parents were discussed.

Follow up questions about the Blacktop

- Many parents concerned about the safety of the blacktop, students injured in the past
- Can we see past quotes for work done on the black top
- Would like to see a cost benefit plan of repair vs. repave
- Multiple parents made clear, rather see repave instead of repairs
- A request to see all the quotes from each of the various board preferred vendors for both repair vs. replace was made to compare and contrast
- A request for contact with the facilities management involved in infrastructure was made to see and discuss the long term (5-10years out) plans for Yorkview

Action - Superintendent Macpherson will follow-up with facilities management, to see if past black top repair quotes are available and to see if a repair verses full repave analysis has been done.

Facilities Management Operations

Is there an overall list of facility issues/concerns/priorities/what needs repair at Yorkview? Can this be presented to School Council?

Current practice is for the caretaker to submit work orders for maintenance items as need arises. A monthly Health and Safety inspection is also carried out by principal, caretaker and a teacher. Health and Safety work orders are treated with a higher priority by facilities management department. Parents expressed desire to discuss concerns with Facilities Management directly.

Action - Superintendent Macpherson will follow-up to see if there is anyone at Facilities Management parents can share their concerns with.

3. Reduction in Educational Assistants (EA) at Yorkview

Parents expressed concern over the safety of students and the level of support some students are receiving at the school. All funds for EA support are allocated for the year at this time. Special education department made the decision to reduce the number of EAs at Yorkview based on a needs assessment across the board. The principal has reached out to the special education principal, accessed other supports and programs to assist staff and students. The needs of schools are always changing. The special education principal has confirmed that Yorkview does not need more EA's at this time and the support needs are currently being met at Yorkview.

4. Transparency and Logic of HWDSB Decision-Making

Parents expressed concern about the lack of transparency from the board with regards to Yorkview (ie expansion of the gym, allocation of funds, closing of the classroom, removal of EA, etc.). Without transparency, it is difficult to understand the logic in some of the decisions made. Concern that policy is being followed at the expense of Yorkview community. For example, parents wondered why they can't contribute financially to specific items in the school that they want for their children? Wouldn't this allow the board to use money for other schools or items? Also, parents wanted a clear answer as to whether or not Yorkview will close. Superintendent confirmed there has been no talks about Yorkview closing at this time.

5. Next Steps

It was suggested by one parent for everyone to express concerns to Ministry of Education. Currently the provincial government is doing consultations with people interested in educational reform.

Action - Superintendent Macpherson will share feedback from HWDSB about above action items at or before the next council meeting (Nov 19th 2018)