



LeMarchant St Thomas

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC): Minutes

January 20th, 2020, 4:30pm

Members Present

Moira Cavanaugh	Principal	mcavanaugh@hrce.ca
Denise Jarvis	Vice Principal	djarvis@hrce.ca
Margo Chiasson	Teacher	mchiasson@hrce.ca
Steven Beyea	Secretary/Parent Rep	steven.beyea@dal.ca
Graeme Gunn	Chair/Parent Rep	halifaxgunn@gmail.com
Daniel Makhan	Vice Chair/Parent Rep	daniel.makhan@gmail.com
Maria Graham	Community Rep	maria_graham@me.com
Jen LeBlanc	Community Rep	jen.leblanc@dal.ca
Maureen Mitchell	Community Rep	maureenmitchell0@gmail.com

Others Present

None

Regrets

Michael Zhang	Parent Rep	michael.zhang@smu.ca
Sara McFarlane	Teacher	smcfarlane@hrce.ca

1. Additions of any other business to the agenda

None

2. Review and approval of November 2019 minutes

Written comments on changes provided by MC/DJ, and Graeme mentioned that his name was spelled incorrectly. Changes made and minutes were subsequently approved.

3. New/Old Business

a. *Student Success Plan update (DJ)*: Overall we are in year 3 of the student success plan. In the area of literacy the goal is to improve student achievement in reading with a focus on deeper comprehension (through workshops, learning targets, etc), and in the area of math the goal is to improve students' ability to problem solve and communicate their understanding (with teachers using a constructivist approach).

A well-being goal is to be decided. The school is using the Caring School program. There are 4 components (Class Meeting lessons, a cross-age Buddies program, Homeside Activities and the Schoolwide Community Building Activities), as part of the Caring School Community program kit. As part of this there are class meetings on a specific topic either from the kit or as part of an ongoing identified concern. This provides a way of addressing issues in a class setting without talking about individuals. One of the lessons provides materials that helped guide teachers for

assemblies, now that the school has the potential to hold them in the new space. Creates consistency in behaviors and expectations in this environment. Additionally, they have lessons on how to welcome new students in particular from different backgrounds, getting ready for a substitute teacher etc. Once the broader programs are established in the school, they would hope to see this to extend beyond the school walls with conversations on topics also taking place at home. All of this links to restorative practices more broadly. Margot talked about how she thought this was a very good program from the teacher's perspective and that there is nothing she would change. Although it existed last year, this year is really the launch year and Moira talked about how this is being talked about continuously within the teaching staff, teachers are being encouraged to talk about Caring Schools in their class newsletters, etc. Daniel and others talked about how this fits into the "Learning Buddies" aspect, and how as parents this has been seen as a positive both as the mentor and mentee.

b. *Walking School Bus update:* Out of the 3 routes there are 2 that are viable, but small. One along Vernon (blue route) and one coming up from the south end (beginning at Inglis, purple route). The one that was originally to be the most popular based on additional registrations (red route) has fallen off as parents dropped out. There is a need to have some discussion about how to make this more appealing (prizes for participation, doing special presentations for parents, etc). Recommendations coming from the organizer (Natalia Diaz-Incense) right now is to focus on the 2 routes that they do have, and then re-advertise in the spring. Funding has been applied for to bring in local seniors who could then act as the route guides. Graeme raised that perhaps people who are already doing unofficial walking school buses could be approached to join and make the program more a bit larger. Moira raised that she was aware of some challenges for parents who were interested but said that it might not work for them based on schedule or other reasons.

c. *Thoughts on SAC Funds Disbursement:* So far we have only spent a small portion of our funds (the Walking School Bus, \$900). Funds need to be spent in this academic year, and so we need to make some decisions fairly soon. Daniel raised that we maybe could focus on spending the balance in a way that supports the Student Success Plan. Moira talked about ideas that she had from that perspective. One idea was linked to bring someone in to support Drama, and another was to bring in the Discovery Centre again to supplement STEM, and some supplemented Art teaching (integrated into what the individual teachers are already doing). Maria wondered if there is a toolkit, like the Caring School kit, linked to art programs to support that aspect of the curriculum (similar to the Art Homage program that used to be done in Ontario). There are also in the longer-term things that wouldn't be feasible right now but we could have a vision for like murals on the stairwell walls, with the children involved in what that would look like. This would really need a grant to supplement though, so it is something to vision for a future year. Another alternative is to reimburse other things that Moira has paid for (e.g. the drummer and the hip-hop/breakdancing instructor). Graeme asked Moira for an order of priority from her perspective, and it was determined that the Drama teacher or Discovery Centre would be most valuable relative to what the teachers are currently able to provide in terms of level of experience. Moira is going to create a list of items, and then we can have a focused discussion and vote at the next meeting as to what we would support.

5. Any other business

- a. OLD BUSINESS: None.
- b. ADMINISTRATION UPDATE: Theme for the month is empathy. There are two student teachers (M. Maclean and R. Macintosh) who have begun at the school. Primary French Immersion information session will be 6:30pm January 30th. February is Primary registration month, beginning February 1 and goes until end of summer but parents are encouraged to register as soon as possible. The Mary Poppins musical is going ahead well (it will take place Feb. 20th at 6:30pm), and Shopping Under the Stars raised \$1,500 toward their Grade 6 trip on June 11 and 12. Superintendent E. Leroux came to visit in November and talk about student achievement and well-being. Tomorrow and on the 21st the Battle of the Books will take place. On the 20th there will be a session of digital/cyber citizenship for the grade 6s.
- c. ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Moira provided the update that effective January 27th is when the school switches over to having the school booked out through the city after 6pm. At that point community groups can book the facility for community use (e.g. sporting groups in the gym).

6. Dates for next meeting:

February 25, 2020 at 4:30pm