

daVinci Alternative Public School

Minutes- Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 21, 2014

Attendees: Joanne Blanchette, Cheryl Hooper, Albert Oliver, Burgundy Code, Lisa Warner, Ted Vella, Peyton Leung, Lisa Freeman, Crystal Day, Ann Wu, Lisa Hoff

Call to order

- The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm

Welcome and introductions

- Introductions around the table
- Everyone was asked to sign in with their email address so they could be included on future agendas and minutes

Approval of Agenda

- The agenda was approved by all

Approval of September 2014 minutes

- Minutes are approved as written

Reports/Updates

Teacher's Report (Peyton Leung)

- Peyton Leung reported there were no specific issues coming from the teachers
- Teachers are interested in fundraising updates as they affect the classroom
- Clubs have started – Frisbee is being held on Thursday after school for students in grade 4-6
- The club will run until it gets too cold
- Kindergarten kids are welcome with a parent, but it is better suited for grade 4-6
- A stringed instruments club is being considered
- It is in the early stage and ideas are coming together in terms of who would be part of the club and how it will be presented
- The instrument may be ukele and Peyton is connecting with the strings teacher at Lord Lansdowne to discuss
- Peyton is looking into the cost of instruments. The lowest priced ones are \$30 at Long & McQuade, but they may not be the best quality
- He will ask about discounts and determine how to move forward once more information has been gathered
- Once kids start showing up to the club, instrument numbers will be better known
- This will most likely be an after school club
- The Eco club is now running at lunch – Wednesday at noon for grade 4 +
- There are plans to expand to the lower grades once it gets going a bit better
- They will also coordinate with Lord Lansdowne once it gets running

- The club may consider the “decorate your door” contest again as a way to encourage awareness and include everyone
- They may also partner older classes with younger classes to engage the lower grades and begin the conversation around the idea
- Signs are being made to help with waste management
- The large black bins are for recycling and the opened bins are for garbage
- Waste in the yard is a concern and everyone can help
- The club is working to create a positive message about dealing with garbage
- Trash masters ran last year to educate everyone about sorting garbage so this may be considered again
- Boomerang lunches may also be considered, but would need some recycling education and discussion around it
- Science – as the weather gets colder, the teachers want kids to be prepared to go outside
- Teachers will do their best to inform parents and kids to be sure they are ready as it becomes tricky if only some kids are prepared
- The bin of daVinci clothing has been put out and is labeled as such
- Teachers should let parents know if more items are needed
- Teachers saw plans for the playground to upgrade the schoolyard to support the full day kindergarten and included Jolen & Peyton for feedback
- The upgrade is In process, but there is no news on when it will start
- Joanne may have a copy of the plans and if so she will circulate it
- Most changes will be by the basketball area
- It will be changed to include a learning circle with benches, trees, totem poles, hill with shrubs, the sand pit will be expanded, water wall to be added
- No idea if it will happen during the school year, but most likely will
- No update on fixing the track at this point
- The Lantern walk is scheduled for November 20
- Lisa Warner will check the lantern batteries to be sure they are all working
- It is meant to be a community event
- Every class is creating a lantern style and learning songs around light
- Hot chocolate and baked goods will be served and the organizers will ask for volunteers
- There may be an email blast or a flyer for the walk that should be sent out to remind everyone
- Burgundy and Crystal will work with Lisa Marson who will design a flyer
- There was a suggestion to ask for parents to make their own lanterns so everyone has one

Principal’s Report (Ted Vella)

- September was a very busy month, but it was a successful start to the year
- The Terry Fox Run and meet the teacher night were held and were well attended

- In October, the power of persistence presentation was very successful. It included the teachers to help with the juggling
- The kids responded well to the presentation
- Photo day will be on October 28th
- The Halloween parade will take place after lunch on Friday, October 31st
- Patchy the Pan Am mascot will pay a visit to both schools on November 4
- Reports cards are going home on November 10
- Parent – teacher interviews will be held on November 13 and the morning of November 14
- Lord Lansdowne’s 125th anniversary will be held on Sunday, November 16 from 12-4pm

Treasurer’s Report (Cheryl Hooper)

- There is approximately \$600 in the account
- The funds are all allocated for instructional use – yarns, felting needles, watercolor paper and paints, brushes, beeswax crayons, baking supplies
- There is \$100 for stringed instruments
- The school has just put out a fundraising ask for \$50 per family
- A separate request may go out for donations for stringed instruments
- The Parent Reaching Out grant comes in January, but it is only around \$500
- It may be used it to fund childcare for meetings, otherwise would like to use it for something else

Ward Council (Joanne Blanchette)

- We don’t have a designated person as Ward Council Representative, but Joanne has been doing it unofficially
- Albert Oliver has volunteered to split the responsibility with Joanne
- Joanne gets the announcements of when dates for meetings are and will share with parent reps in case anyone else wants to attend
- We haven’t had a representative for the ASAC Committee for about 2 years – anyone interested in participating can contact Joanne
- Meetings are held at the board office
- The committee helps you navigate the system of alternative schools
- They usually have an informal “pre-meeting” before to bring things forward for discussion
- It gives you an opportunity to hear what’s going on in other alternatives schools – including high schools
- This might be a good way to make connections with other alternative schools
- It was determined that it would probably be a good idea to get a representative to help build our reputation in the community
- Crystal Day will consider and advise Joanne
- Nothing to report for PART process
- Final draft is in and waiting for the board

- They included the cost to do the renovations – about \$900K
- Any change is anticipated for maybe 2016
- Joanne wrote a letter to the board indicating we were in agreement with the proposal providing the renovations would be done as the space is unusable as it is
- We are now waiting to hear what's going to happen
- The teachers visited the space and found it to be very different
- They drafted a list of concerns – windows, sight lines, accessible bathrooms etc. after the visit
- Peyton will forward the list of concerns to Joanne for moving forward
- The decision needs to be made first about moving or not, before we can determine how it affects us
- We are not getting pushed out so if we stay, it doesn't change anything for 2015
- We won't find out until January what the real story is

Classroom Reps

- No specific issues were brought up, but a general conversation was included in the new business section below

Business arising from the September minutes

- The snack discussion has been clarified
- Joanne has posted the guidelines on the website and pointed parents there for information
- Burgundy and Crystal did a scrub in the kitchen to help Kim
- Kim is doing a great job and works very hard at keeping the program alive
- The parents wonder if maybe we can assist with the snack program in some way
- There are kids that don't get enough food and Kim helps out by having a secret stash which is much appreciated

New Business

- Regarding French starting in grade 3-4, Lisa Warner had a question about if it is possible to introduce French in grade 1 once or twice per week
- Ted Vella clarified that the Ministry funds French for grade 4-8 and we are limited because we are under the umbrella of the TDSB guidelines
- We don't have the staff currently for this, so it would have to be looked at and it's not likely to be approved
- There was a discussion about if having parents or other non-qualified teachers reading French stories runs into trouble with the collective agreements with teachers
- It was thought that maybe this could be discussed with the Waldorf mentor as soon as Beth has been able to meet with her
- Ted indicated that the staffing committee would need to be involved in a decision
- There is \$2,000 earmarked towards Marg for a grant, but it may be tied Marg specifically

- Beth is trying to meet with her, but she lives in Wingham, and arranging a meeting is a challenge
- There was a discussion about whether we could get another mentor, or if the grant money was tied directly to Marg
- Joanne will clarify with Beth what is happening with the daVinci 5 year review
- The TDSB district review will happen in January sometime, but this is different than the 5 year review
- There will be a report that comes back after the district review and shared with the Principal which can be used to fine tune the program
- There was some discussion regarding figuring out if everyone is in step with Waldorf ideas
- Lisa Freeman would like to see more people coming together to discuss this issue as there are varying degrees of understanding with the guiding principals
- Has the “Waldorf” fallen off or are we still in line with the philosophy?
- We don’t have a Waldorf committee anymore – maybe we should create one
- Have people been going to the Steiner events? Crystal Day and Lisa Warner attend events and may be able to share some knowledge
- We used to get invited to Waldorf Academy events, but that doesn’t seem to happen anymore
- Crystal will work to pull together a Waldorf Committee; Lisa Warner is interested in helping
- It may end up being in the format of a less formal “club” that would get the ball rolling
- Crystal will contact the Steiner Center and other schools and make connections
- Beth has agreed that we can attach a small fair to the winter concert, so the Winter Solstice Fair is scheduled for December 16
- For 2 hours after the concert, there will be a very Waldorf market for the kids
- This will be a jumping off point for possible future events to bring the school community together
- Burgundy and Crystal suggested that we make a sandwich board for posting notices and getting the daVinci parents involved
- Spencer Hoff’s dad will build a sandwich board for posting notices
- He will bring it to the craft circle on Tuesday, October 28
- There is a craft circle every Tuesday morning that is in a drop in format
- We are trying to be respectful of the teacher’s space for the circle
- It is being used as a way to build communication and community
- Burgundy wants to do a raffle at some point
- The next meeting will start at 7pm to see if this will attract more participants
- Joanne will send a poll to the class reps to see how to increase communication
- The class reps will be asked to send an email to the parents about coming to the next council meeting and find out what they need to be encouraged to come (ie: babysitting)
- Requests for childcare need to be arranged 1 week prior
- Lisa Hoff will ask Ian Hooper about who maintains the Facebook page and see if this is something that should be continued
- It could be used as a communication tool only – perhaps a closed group

Adjournment

- the meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm

Next meeting dates:

Wednesday, November 19

Thursday, December 18

Monday, January 19

Tuesday, February 24

Wednesday, March 25

Thursday, April 23

Monday, May 25

Tuesday, June 23

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