

Northern School Council Meeting (Draft)

April 8, 2021, 6:30 - 7:35 pm (Via Zoom)

Attendees: Andy A, Janice B, Abby D, Samir F, Diana G, Sabina H, Ellie M, Karri P, Tania O, Melissa R, Steve S, Mary Ann S, Adam Marshall, Leslie Usin-Rojas, Jenn Marr,

Regrets: Rita C, Andrea F, Linda K, Debbie L, Gail A, Grace D, Sohinee R, Laura A, Gethin J

Meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Janice B, Council Co-Chair

Operational Matters:

The following items were approved by Council:

- Agenda
- February 25 minutes

Co-Chair Report - Tania

- We were pleased the Academic Resource Committee hosted Adrianne Sequiera on March 25 for a presentation titled "The Teenage Brain". The session was attended by over 60 parents, and the slides and a recording will be on our [website](#) until the end of April. It includes many excellent resources about the unique and significant life transition of adolescence which our teens are all experiencing.
- We have also been pleased that the grad committee has gotten underway and come up with several unique ideas for enhancing the graduation experience for the Class of 2021. There will be a separate committee update, but we are always open to new suggestions. We encourage Grade 12 parents to send us questions and ideas about graduation. As well, if you would like to join the committee, email us at nss.school.council@gmail.com.
- As we approach the end of Quad 3, we are running our "Thank-a-teacher" campaign again. Adam has told us what an impactful and powerful effect this has to encourage and boost morale with the staff. So, we want to encourage everyone to reach out and send a quick email. It may seem like "nothing", but it actually makes someone's day.
- We would like to think of something to do for the entire school from School Council that would be a positive, mental health boost. Adam remarked that there have been no assemblies this year, and that programming something in the 2-3:15 teaching spot would not be a disruption to teachers' schedules. So, if any of you have ideas or contacts for presentations (preferably something non-academic), please let us know at nss.school.council@gmail.com

Principal's Report - Adam

Saliva tests at NSS :

- To date there has been no results provided from the Covid tests that were handed out at the school last week, but it seems safe to assume there were not a great deal of positive results or we would have heard back sooner. The Covid case at the school this week was not detected by these tests.
- A good number of tests were returned, estimating about 80%

Grad (see Grad Committee section for more info):

- The new stay-at-home orders have potentially complicated grad plans. The main takeaway from last year's events is that we need to provide the 2021 class with closure and not leave things as open-ended.
- Current plan is for a virtual 60-minute program on June 28th (the original ceremony date). The program will feature speeches from valedictorian, dignitaries and staff and memory images of the school.
- Grad photos that were scheduled to take place now have to be re-worked. We are trying to work on setting up photos booths either out back under the overhang or in the auto shop bays so grade 12 students could safely come and get their photo taken. Tech support would be available and Covid protocols would be followed.
- If grad photos happen, we can go ahead with other parts of the Grad agenda including a hard-copy memory book similar to what was done for the 2020 class. Photos would need to be done by May 28 if the book were to be ready to distribute by June 28. If the photos can't get done before that date, the books would be given out before the kids went off in the fall.

Quad 4

- Timetables are currently in the works. Tuesday April 20 is the TDSB deadline for releasing the timetables but they could be released earlier if ready.
- Some students are switching from virtual back to in-school to finish the year
- Quad 4 starts April 23

Teacher Vaccinations

- At this time, priority is being given to teachers in hot spots (by postal code) and special education teachers. NSS is not in a hot spot so our teachers will have to wait.

Masks/Filters

- There is no graphene in our masks.
- The school received 75 portable Hepa filters that have been distributed to all classrooms.

Staffing:

- We are pleased to be at 96.5 staff positions for next year, we are only verbally surplussing 1 teacher for a half timetable so all staff will be back next fall.

Teacher appreciation:

- As Tania mentioned, it means so much when teachers receive an email from a parent or caregiver showing appreciation.

Treasurer's Report - Steve

- Total cash on hand is \$18,136, after disbursing \$3,670 for current year disbursement to date.
- The School Council plans to have a minimum cash balance of \$2,000 at the end of the year so we have approximately \$16,000 left to spend for the year. This amount will be carried forward to the next school year if not disbursed.
- Council approved two funding requests:
 - A request for \$2000 to create a video memoir for grad students
 - A request for \$800 to provide food to teachers as a thank you.
(Normally requests under \$1000 can be approved by the Budget subcommittee without going to Council. Samir and Melissa pointed out it set a precedent because it was the second funding for a teacher thank you this year and the two amounts totalled over \$1000, so it was put to a vote.)

GAC Report - Melissa

- On Tuesday March 2, GAC hosted “ADHD Highlights: What You Need to Know about ADHD” featuring Heidi Bernhardt, founder of the Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada. There were over 300 attendees (the event was open to other schools as well) and feedback was great. We are considering having her back for a teacher education event in the future.
- ABC Ontario held their Annual General Meeting Sunday March 7, with keynote speaker iDr. Louise Porter, a child psychologist based in Australia who specializes in supporting children’s emotional, social and developmental needs. It was a very informative evening.
- SEAC (Special Education Action Committee) is a TDSB committee focusing on special education. The committee is currently looking for feedback from anyone with a special ed student at any school, any grade. In particular, they are looking for things that are working and concrete suggestions for improvements. Ideas will be pooled and shared confidentially. Please email Melissa at northerngifted@gmail.com with any comments or suggestions.
- The next GAC meeting was scheduled for April 15 but with the shift of March break to April, that meeting will be cancelled. May 13th will be the next GAC meeting.

Grad Committee Report- Tania

- The grad committee has been in “brainstorm mode”, looking for ways to create a meaningful “finish line”. Creativity is strong, but our decisions need to align with TPH restrictions on gathering, as well as be accessible and equitable to all our students, financially and physically (virtual/in-person).

- The greatest limitations come from TPH - for example, the school is allowed to have multiple cohorts of gym classes on the field as part of school, but grad events would fall under “gatherings” and would be subject to limitations like weddings, etc.
- Our grad photo company is not allowed to operate until restrictions reach the red zone. Our teachers are not even allowed into the building during lock-down. But, we all agree that it is important that there be a clear “finish line” within this school year, and not hope for opportunities to gather in the fall or winter to do more in person.
- To that end, the school’s main priorities are a beautiful keepsake memory book (which was done last year for grads) and the official graduation video showing on Monday, June 28 at 7. SAC (Student Affairs Council) will be arranging grad hoodies. Our main initiatives are to support students to create the photo collage and “nostalgia” part of the video. We are also planning a “Grad Central” page on our website of ideas and links for families to use to create their own festive occasions.
- We are focussing our efforts now on those projects, as they require the most advance planning. But, if TPH restrictions change, we have discussed many fun, joint efforts with the school to do things that involve our field, a car parade, a “parting shot” photo op...the energy and will are there, but we need restrictions to lift.
- ***If you have any ideas to add, please send them to us. And specifically, if you are someone with connections, experience, or skills to volunteer to support the students with photography, graphic design, or video production, please let us know. We'd love to have your help!***

Shelter Committee Report - Tania

- Since August, we have been representing Northern School Council in the bi-weekly meetings between city staff and schools to assess and manage the impact of the Roehampton Residence and its clients on the local schools.
- We are pleased that the number of incidents involving personal safety or paraphernalia on school property is very low thus far.
- We are also pleased that thus far, there is no further discussion or pursuit of a safe consumption site for the Residence.
- However, we are concerned that it has taken until now for ongoing issues at Eglinton PS to begin to be managed properly. We have been watching that situation carefully, in case similar issues were to arise at Northern.
- As weather warms and activity patterns change, we want to remind parents that we are here to represent parent concerns for student safety, and to forward any questions or concerns to this committee at nss.school.council@gmail.com

Other Business - Janice

- We are considering minor changes to the Council by-laws to make things more efficient and would love feedback and ideas from other people. This year, reaching quorum for

conducting business has been a noticeable issue. If you would be interested in discussing this please send an email to nss.school.council@gmail.com

Upcoming Events - Tania

- April 26th: ARC is hosting April Vibert (our student success teacher) for an info session on three programs at the school that we believe will be of interest to parents and students:
 - SWAC (School within a College)
 - Dual Credit Program
 - SHSM (Specialist High School Majors)
- School Council - last meeting for this school year: May 5th, 6:30 pm
- GAC: May 13th, 7:30 pm