

NORTHERN SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING- Wednesday March 29, 2017

Present: Ron Felsen, Bettina Hoar, Scott de Veber, Adam Gordon, Kasi Kugapalan, Jackson Flagal, Joanna Strong, Kaan Yigit, Rob McCready, Peggy Judge, Sylvia Perry, Nancy Matthews, Karim Hajj, Melissa Rosen, Ethan Thompson, Tanya Goldberg, Steve Sims, Judy Steiner, Johanna Samuel, Sue Fisher, Behzad Jazizadeh, Jenn Marr, Rachel Cayley, Mehrnaz Sekora.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Quorum achieved, no conflict of interests declared.

BUDGET COMMITTEE: Kasi Kugapalan, Steve Sims (Steve needed to leave the meeting).

There is \$19,837.00 in the bank. This year we have had fewer funding requests than anticipated in our budget. Groups wishing to request School Council funding may fill in the funding request form available on <http://www.nsscouncil.com/nssc-funding.html>. Guidance has not yet requested the Post Secondary Applications Assistance funding, Mr. Felsen to follow up (budget: \$1,500).

It was noted that there was interest in purchasing fans for classrooms made at the Caring and Safe Schools Committee. Sue Fisher volunteered to lead the project to see how many would be needed and how much money required. She will do the research and submit the funding request.

Blinds and plants in classrooms have been requested by teachers. We will hold off on the plants until the beginning of next year and Jenn Marr will liaise with Dan, the Head Caretaker, regarding the size of blinds required in those rooms where blinds were requested.

CELL PHONE COMMITTEE- Scott de Veber

The Survey has gone out to Parents (sent by Principal Felsen) and will be live until the end of next week. Reminders will be sent out this week and early next week.

259 parents have responded, 286 Students have responded and 35 teachers have responded. Once the Survey closes the committee will meet and report back to the School Council.

ECO COMMITTEE- Bettina Hoar

There will be alternate funding for the School Gardening Project. Thanks to Ms. Signorile, the school has received a grant from Whole Foods for a garden on the North West side of the building. Additional funding was requested of Evergreen Brick Works and, although the grant was denied, they let us know what needs to be done next time so that the request might have a greater chance of success.

There is an installation in the main foyer initiated by Iva Kinclova (teacher- Native Arts) made up of 1,700 water bottles teaching students about water, harm and waste of plastic bottles.

WELL BEING COMMITTEE- Tanya Goldberg

A Quiet Lunch Room project is up and running (a safe space for students). A select number of students have been invited to attend but attendance has fallen off. Sylvia (LD Committee) questions whether the lunchroom has a stigma connected to it and isn't sure if the program will be kept up next year. A recommendation was made to canvas the students who have stopped attending to find out why. The program takes place in the Computer Lab Room. The program could be rolled out to non LD students (per Peggy) and Sylvia will speak to Irene A. about this. Participants are staff identified students who could benefit. **Learning Skills Project** - students struggling with anxiety. 3 or 4 sessions have taken place. Admission is by self referral and/or guidance recommended. The program would be a 6 week program over lunch hours.

LUNCH & LEARN : There is a proposal to provide teachers with information on how to identify students with anxiety and stress. Guidance suggested that this isn't necessary given teachers and the WellNSS Committee work well together. However, the given input around the table, council believes this might still be a worthwhile endeavour.

Proposal to have a **Mental Health First Aid Course**: Tanya will pass the information on to the Teachers. The Council could pay for this (update: Council cannot pay for Professional Development). It is a 14 hour commitment (2 days) (approximately \$250). The course covers many disorders. Would the TDSB need to approve this? We will revisit this at the next School Council Meeting.

Issue of Common Timetables: (coordinating Assignments and Tests among teachers/classes to minimize stress on the students). There is a Pilot Project underway for Grade 9 from Feb 5 – Apr 5 for compulsory courses to coordinate due dates and not have more than 3 assignments per week. The hope is to expand this to G10. It is difficult to do this for older grades since students have few courses in common.

L.D. COMMITTEE- Sylvia Perry

- **Lunch and Learn**: they wish to do a session for students by Integra along the "walk a mile in my shoes" theme.

- **A Parents LD Meeting** took place February 13th and was extremely well received. Thanks to Irene Adrianopolitis, Marc Szwarc and Principal Felsen for participating. The committee would like to make this a yearly event.

- **EQAO results update**: Principal Felsen has agreed to consider (on a case by case basis) not incorporating Grade 9 EQAO results towards a student's math grade if the EQAO result means that the student will fail the course. Thank you Principal Felsen!

- Committee is trying to book Professor Trevor Brown as a **speaker**. He has provided Math Workshops to students which present math in a different and more interesting manner. The idea is to have him address Grade 9 students in particular to help change their attitudes towards math early on in their high school career. Mr. Brown is not available this year, so the committee would like to book him for next year.

- Proposal for a **“Welcoming new LD Students Session”** in early June (June 1st). Many students are overwhelmed with how to navigate Grade 9. This proposal would aim to have a student panel set up to answer questions from new students (i.e. how to arrange for extra time on tests, how does one know who to go to for a variety of issues...) The idea is to make NSS less daunting for new students.

- **TDSB Parents as Partners Conference** - April 2017

The Parents as Partners Conference will take place on Saturday, April 1. This free conference - planned by parents for parents - includes a variety of workshops and resources that will help any parents support their children in their achievement and well-being at school and at home. Learn more at <http://www.parentsaspartners.ca>. Saturday April 1st there is an all day event for parents and educators which will help parents learn about educational trends and learning issues.

- Will implement a Buddy System for next year (so younger students have older student to turn to).

- The LD Committee is now ready to add pages to the SC Website, the purpose is to help people to understand what the committee is all about, what we've done, when the meetings will be, view the meeting minutes and to act as a resource so that people can better determine how to help their kids. Other committees are encouraged to do the same to make the nsscouncil.com a one-stop place for parents to find useful information.

GIFTED PROGRAM COMMITTEE- Peggy Judge, Rob McCready

There will be a Gifted Advisory Committee meeting Thursday (March 30th) and a sub-committee will be forming to organize next steps for the motion to retain the size of the Gifted Program. Principal Felsen has provided the contact of the Supervising Principal for Special Education- Maria Lo Bianco (416-394-4898, maria.lobianco@tdsb.on.ca) who is the person who makes final decisions about Gifted placements within the NSS, Principal Felsen has no say. She has a copy of the School Council motion to maintain the size of the Gifted program. Offers have gone out to students to be in the Gifted Program at Northern 2017-2018. There are 120 spots available, Principal Felsen does not know how many have accepted offers as these numbers come in waves, trickle in. Maria Lo Bianco would have access to the system to know these numbers. It was agreed that GAC can go to the Board on behalf of School Council to take further action on the motion.

- GAC will collaborate with LD and Wellness for a future speaker as many of these students have similar issues and these are often related to well-being.

BREAKFAST COMMITTEE- Bettina Hoar: There was a donation of \$2,500.00 received by Skylark Corporation (used to be called Delisle). A commercial toaster was purchased and \$1,235.00 has been spent. There will be money left over, but the TDSB SC funding policy is that funds received must be spent within the year received. There is a chance that some of this money may get rolled over to next year. This matter referred to the Budget Committee.

CARING AND SAFE COMMITTEE Mehrnaz Sekora

- The issue of drug use and resolutions to this problem was brought up and it was confirmed that drug use is an offense which will result in a student being suspended from school. There was an attempt to engage in a conversation about setting up a “safe drug using area” at Northern which was immediately dismissed as the School Council has no authority in this area and drugs are against the law. Council was reminded that recommendations for initiatives must come through the proper channels, via a motion. Bettina recommended Skylark’s drug education and harm reduction courses (Sessions <http://www.delisle-youth.org/pages/education-p>) for students, and Tuning In for parents). Session dates for these are forwarded by Principal Felsen in his weekly reminders or you can contact Skylark directly for further information.

The school is in dire need of fans in the classrooms. Sue Fisher will price out fans and make the order once Principal Felsen gives her the catalogue of approvable fans and the number needed for the school.

STUDENT COMMITTEE- Jackson Flagal, Ethan Thompson

The Buddies Retreat is 5 weeks from now and they are waiting for the cheque for \$2,500.00 for this (provided). Student Senators and Class Reps are going to be reminded to fill out the Cell Phone Survey. Buddy Applications for next year are complete and interviews will take place next week. A question arose about who chooses Head Buddies and Buddies – this is done by a committee of the

TEACHER AND STAFF REPORT: Jenn Marr: A funding request for Blinds in the classrooms is required. Jenn will work with Dan to do a quote and establish how many rooms need blinds.

COMMUNITY MEMBER REPORT: Behzad Jazizadeh

Behzad attended the PIAC event and spoke to parents across the Ward and Board. There seems to be an information gap between school councils at the

TDSB. School Councils seem to be re-inventing the wheel and school councils focusing on fundraising rather than student achievement.

He will attend the **Parents as Partners Conference** and report back.

The Parents as Partners Conference will take place on Saturday, April 1. This free conference - planned by parents for parents - includes a variety of workshops and resources that will help any parents support their children in their achievement and well-being at school and at home. Learn more at <http://www.parentsaspartners.ca>. This conference was highly recommended by Bettina. Behzad has proposed establishing workshops for parents.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Ron Felsen):

The Survey of whether to change to a Semester Program at Northern was sent out and the final decision was to maintain the non-semester school at Northern. 53% of the Students voted against a semester program at school, 52% of the Parents voted for a semester program, 63% of the Teachers voted for a semester program, however, the staff committee organizing this proposal had set the threshold for a majority at 66% therefore the school will remain a non semester school program. Because the numbers were so close, it reflects that this is definitely a hot topic and may need to be revisited again next year.

Money was donated to the school by the School Council in prior years for **Projectors in classrooms** and now every room has a mounted projector. They will begin to get connected in mid April.

The TDSB has decided against approving trips to the **U.S.** therefore schools that had planned to travel to the U.S. after this decision was made will no longer be able to go. Trips approved prior to the decision are still a "go".

EQAO- Thursday March 30- There will be an Assembly for all Core Math Students at 9:00am regarding the EQAO test and at 10h30 for all Applied Math Students. Grade 10 students will be writing the EQAO Literacy Test that day. All classes will be cancelled after the EQAO Assembly at 11h30.

The Principal was asked to please add times when he refers to alternative schedules so parents know when they school day ends.

SOUNDS OF TORONTO CONCERT- Next Thursday April 6, at Massey Hall. It was announced that Ms. Lomp will be retiring after 30+ years at NSS (she graduated from NSS!). This is a great chance to see Ms. Lomp's amazing work.

REPORT CARDS- will be out on April 12th (Provincial Report Cards)

MAINSTAGE PRODUCTIONS of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"- April 20 & 21st.

Assembly for Grade 12 students regarding the Prom will take place April 27th

Students hoping to be **Valedictorian** will address their peers and students will then vote (end of April).

Our Resource officer (SRO) will return to Northern after his training.

SCHOOL CHAIR REPORT: Scott de Veber, Bettina Hoar

PRO Grant (Parents Reaching Out) - Tanya Goldberg

This program grants money for a variety of programs which the individual schools must design and apply for by May 25th. (i.e. Literacy vs. Civics- looking at the Educational System and if it gives students tools for the future...). Tanya recommended applying for a grant to study “Technology and Kids” (stress, phone use, role of technology in kids inability to focus and complete tasks, family time...) We could apply for a speaker. Tanya will make the application on behalf of the School Council but needs help with ideas for topics and speakers. It was recommended to look at the PRO Grant Database to see which topics have been funded. Each application is eligible for \$1,000.00. If you have a recommendation for a speaker you would like to hear at NSS next year, please contact sc.northernsecondaryschool@tdsb.on.ca .

There was a motion to extend the meeting by 5 minutes which was approved.

WEBSITE COMMITTEE- Karim Hajj

Our new website (nsscouncil.com) is doing very well. There have been 3,900 visitors since September and 10,000 page views. Each time Principal Felsen sends out an email mentioning the School Council, the numbers spike. Visitors are mostly reading the Documents which are posted, as well as What’s On at Northern, and How to Join a Committee. All Committees are encouraged to put up pages onto the website. Bettina and Karim are available for training for this and to ensure there is some consistency across what is uploaded.

Meeting adjourned: 8:05 p.m.