

Northern Secondary School Council Meeting June 5/19 at 6:30 pm in the library

In attendance:

Helen A., Reuben N., Kasi K., Steve S., Andy A., Scott D., Kaan Y., John L., Stephanie S., Stephanie C., Jenn M., Gail A., Edith J., Melissa R., Rita C., Tania O., Nancy L., Naomi M., Peggy J., Adam Marshall

Principal's Report (Adam Marshall)

Changes to education

Staffing currently reduced from 103.5 to 91.5.

Surplus letter will be given June 7 to more teachers, may be unexpected by some.

Concerned about departments with lots of young teachers and overall morale.

Northern is still faring better than smaller schools.

School update

VP Eric Halling had an accident which has impacted speed of responses on a lot of fronts.

Dan Miller, head caretaker, retired; Brandon Polehill will take his position.

Over the summer, the library will have waterproof membrane done and the fire exit rebuilt.

Bleachers in the third floor gym will be replaced due to safety concerns.

Auditorium roof will be redone.

Question: With class reductions, how will kids and families know about scheduling conflicts?

Answer: Scheduling in grade 9/10 is expected be like normal year, so few conflicts expected.

In Grade 11/12, singleton classes will be hard to schedule. Coop may be discontinued at Northern since we can't afford the smaller class sizes. Grade 12 will get priority over Grade 11. (For example, if a Grade 11 wants a Grade 12 class, they will need to wait and let the Grade 12 student have priority.) Phone calls will be made to parents if there are changes in schedule and parent signature will be required.

Teachers will get bumped based on seniority and qualifications. Job action is likely in Oct/Nov.

Staffing is determined by enrolment numbers. Student population in Sept is expected to decrease to 1720 (110 fewer students).

Chair's Report (Tania O.)

Update on advocacy

The work thus far with parent groups and trustees has been an enriching experience, but ongoing advocacy effort is tiring and needs more parent engagement. She believes parents need to hold the TDSB accountable and that Council should use specific wording and information to communicate to parents about issues that affect students. Adam supports advocacy but in a neutral tone of voice. She asked for feedback on decisions to help determine better courses of action.

Many agree Council's role to advocate is important (Stephanie S., Gail A., Nancy L.)

Review of the year: this year, Council presented five parent workshops (Enrichment/AP/Scholarship, Everything You Wanted to Know About Northern, Empowering Communication, Study Skills, Anxiety), funded many new initiatives (Green Northern, bike kit, Conference in Colour), and brought topics of general interest to meetings. It also produced and distributed an Essential Toolkit to parents for advocating against proposed, negative changes in education in April.

Action: Council agrees to move the TDSB email to nss.school.council@gmail.com because of ongoing issues of reliability with the TDSB account. A request to opt into the new email will be sent to all parents via the weekly report and existing TDSB mailing list.

Green Committee Report (Andrea S.)

- welcomed teachers to talk about sustainability, and by January 2019, three areas of interest were defined:

1/ Bike Hub- a repair shop that could become part of tech courses in the future. Andrea and Richard (from TDSB management) are looking at infrastructure change (eg. more bike racks) to make Northern a community hub.

2/ Plastic waste. One of the teachers, Ms Braesh, engaged her careers and civics class in a discussion on plastic waste. Many ideas were presented. In the end, 8 kids developed a plastic waste survey and a single use plastic (SUP) petition. They presented it to the TDSB at Northern meeting.

3/ Organic and food waste discussion on how to manage it in the school

The city has gone through a second consultation and Jaye Robinson has also come on board to push forward this SUP issue so now TDSB, Council, students and teachers are collaborating.

Plan is to have more Green lunches with teachers going forward. Goal is to start conversations about food waste with students when they see Stephanie S. and her organic waste bin. Plan to direct paper towels to go to organic waste then green bin to city, raising awareness and education for kids.

Encouraged to see that students are engaged in watering garden in the Garden Club, even in summer months.

Andrea talked about Single Use Plastic Eco challenge with Drawdown in July 2019.

Budget Update (Steve S.)

Some requests weren't funded 100%, but at year end, there is money left in the account. Historically, 30% of families donate to Council (average donation \$45/family). He suggests an increase for the suggested donation (\$50) next year as well as offer multiple levels of funding to give families options to contribute more. Suggestions: improve the ask format; request donations twice a year with multiple levels. Next year's fundraising target is \$30,000.

Question: can donations be made tax deductible? Yes, but there are factors to consider. Helen A. will investigate. It will be more paperwork and there are guidelines.

Melissa R. to check if strings are attached (eg. limits on spending the money on where it would be allocated and if there is a service charge)

Action: to investigate if we can make contributions tax deductible donations.

Election (Scott D.)

Proposed guidelines:

Sept 24 election, so by October meeting, Council is established.

Candidates will talk about their interests then vote for 19 members.

Any parent who shows up can run and vote.

The work that happens is mainly at the committee level.

Since the committee cannot include parents who are running to be parent members, it is helpful if an outgoing parent run the elections committee (Peggy)

Vote to accept election plan passes unanimously.

June 19 School Council Social at the Granite Brewery
All parents invited.