

Northern School Council Meeting (Draft)

February 22, 2024, 6:30 - 8:00 pm (hybrid)

Attendees:

Council: Abby Dwosh, Adam Marshall (Principal), Anna Rutledge, Diana Goldie, Elena Comelli, Giovanni Grasselli, Jen Ankenmann, Jessica Miklos (co-secretary), John Bakous (co-chair), Stephanie Nacawa, Kristina Turner (recording secretary), Melissa Rosen, Natasha Sachs-Pepe, Omar Becerril (co-chair), Susan Woodward (staff representative), Tania Osmond, Everton Lewis

Parents: Cathy, Jennifer, Mila, Nilgun, Beth Lauer, Janice Barnett, Ruth Kenny, Tatiana

Regrets: Stephanie Koutakis (student representative), Ana Rodrigues, Andy Anderson, Gaya Sathiyamoorthy

Meeting called to order at 6:40 pm by Omar B.

- Welcome
- Land acknowledgement

Approval of agenda

- Request to add a community update
- Motion to approve: Anna R.; Seconded: Diana G.; Carried.

Co-chair Report – Omar B, John B.

- Condolences sent from Council to the family of Robert Deak
- John B. attended the Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO) School Council Roundtable and a meeting with Trustee Chernos Lin where the topics of Diversity in Math and Culturally Responsive Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) were discussed. See Education Committee report for more details.

Principal's Report – Adam M.

- Staffing update: fully staffed! Projected at 2,139 students for the fall.
- Ongoing shortage of supply staff – teachers, office staff, support staff, sign language facilitators, caretakers etc. Adam encouraged concerned parents to advocate to the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan to increase the limit on days that retired teachers can teach.
- Northern runs a lot of co-curriculars and they require teacher accompaniment; to fill those absences, we've already used up our allotment of on-calls with staff (see *); there are also complicating factors with using supply teachers.
 - o * ON CALLS: Teachers get one prep period each semester while teaching three classes. Teachers can be asked to give up one half of a prep period on any given day to cover half of another class, and this counts as one "on-call". Individual teachers can be asked to cover a maximum of 27 on-calls during a school year. Teachers would not be asked to give up their full prep period because then they would be unprepared for their own classes.

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- If a teacher is away with a sports team and is missing the last period of the day, for example, there may be a need to use 2 "on-calls" to cover that period (two per period as each on-call is only half a period). Students in the class that the teacher is missing would have the supervising teacher switch half-way through the period. In some instances, a supply teacher will be called in rather than using on-calls, but this is inefficient if coverage is only required for one period.
 - If supply teachers are unavailable, it means that on-calls are used up very early in the year (it would take 6 on-calls to cover for one teacher for the full day). By the end of the year, that could mean that there is a need to combine classes in the library or auditorium so that there is supervision of students. When this occurs, very little meaningful learning takes place.
- Commercial tech boundary change:
 - Staff is presenting a recommendation to trustees. The staff report was just released and can be viewed [here](#).
 - Adam has expressed his concerns to the Board - if the boundary is expanded to a lottery of optional attendance, we run the risk of students having engagement issues if they are coming from further away.
 - The catchment for Northern will likely change soon after the comm-tech boundary change happens.
 - Adam prefers the larger catchment with fewer optional attendance for stability of student population.
- Gifted education:
 - TDSB staff are placing significant limits on the gifted course offerings that can be offered to grade nine students in the 2024-2025 school year at Northern. They are preventing Northern from offering any grade 9 gifted courses beyond English, Math, Science and Geography. Rachel Chernos Lin has been an exceptional advocate in trying to get to the bottom of this change. It does not cost any extra money to offer other required courses in a congregated gifted format. Historically, Northern has offered gifted French and a gifted tech rotation in grade nine in addition to the four courses that are currently approved for next year.
- Security threats:
 - Lockdown (threat is inside the building – police might believe robbery happened down street, possible they are hiding in building) - paper goes on windows, lights go out, cell phones off, silence in classrooms
 - Hold and secure (we believe there is an external threat – access is only in one door) - school business carries on.
 - In today's incident, police and staff were great. This was a threat they had not seen this before. Person captured. Sometimes Board sends message if it's a lockdown. Parents can look at **school website home page** for latest update - TDSB can update the Northern website directly if needed. Official messages come via email, not other social media.
 - Will talk to Superintendent Roni Felsen about communications with parents for future incidents. Kids have safety drills annually – remind at home.
 - April PD day will be a session with staff for safety training with TPS
- Important dates: Prom – June 7; commencement June 27 at 1pm at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto.

Parent questions:

- Will there be a curriculum night for semester 2? No - department heads present their information in the one fall curriculum night – not able to offer second.
- OUAC submissions – the April 22 deadline is the important one for most students. If parents are concerned about submissions, they should contact Guidance.
- Will we offer onsite or offsite dances? No, due to risks.
- Band trip for this year or next – no date set yet.

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- Use of auditorium for Connected Parenting Presentation - discussion will be taken offline to get clarity.

Council Business

- Approval of January minutes. Motion to approve: Anna R.; seconded Diana G.; Carried.

Treasurer's Report – Jen A.

- Treasurer reported that we have \$13,000 to spend, with \$3,500 spent so far.
- Grant request: Rugby team club – requested support for going to tournaments in late April [uniforms, equipment, transportation, fees]. Last year the Rugby club received \$750. Council discussed and approved a grant of \$750.
 - o Motion to approve: Jen; Seconded Anna R.; Carried.
- Fundraising campaign for month of March will be set up with school cash online. Tax receipts for donations over \$25 will be automatically issued. Goal: \$7500, to be spent by July 31. Need to make teachers aware so money can go to good use.
- Complete Treasurer's report [here](#).

Subcommittee Updates

If you are interested in joining a subcommittee, please visit our website to learn more or reach out to School Council via email (nss.school.council@gmail.com).

Academic Resource Committee – Tania O.

Have a look at ongoing learning opportunities on our website- nsscouncil.com There you will find links for two free seminars next week: Addressing self-harm and teen suicidality, presented by SickKids on February 27; and financial goal setting for students on February 28. As well, you'll find a great parenting webinar on "Rewriting the parent-child script".

If you have resources to share, please send them to us at nss.school.council@gmail.com

Education Committee – John B.

- The Employment Equity Policy (P029) is being renamed Positive Organizational Culture and Inclusive Workforce Policy and reviewed.
 - You can find the draft policy posted for your review/comment and can provide feedback via the online survey portal at: <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Policies-Procedures-Forms/Policy-Consultations>.
 - Please share with us your thoughts, questions and recommendations on the draft Policy through the online survey ([click here](#)) or by email to TDSBpolicyconsultation@tdsb.on.ca on or before April 11, 2024.
- At Ward 11 Forum on February 8, presentations were made to demonstrate changes to curriculum: "Diversity in Math" and Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) - view the presentations [here](#).

Gifted Academic Committee – Anna R.

- We held a virtual event on Feb 7th called AI in One Lesson. 198 people registered for the call and 98 logged in. Thanks to our presenters, Kate Bowers and Michael Fraser From Action/Insight for volunteering their time and expertise. Thanks also to parents at Northern, Leaside, York Mills and Forest Hill for attending the talk. We are looking forward to a follow-up event organized by Tania Osmond with our own Ana Rodrigues presenting.
- We are in the early planning stages for a grade 9 gifted connection-building event for early September 2024. We are considering several off-site options. We welcome any interested parents to get involved.

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- Our next GAC event will be on April 11th. We are tentatively planning a games night in the library to allow families to develop deeper connections than we may have time for during more structured events. In May, we will meet on May 29th and are tentatively planning to repeat the "Planning for post-secondary" event that we held last year.
- Gifted families who are not yet on the Gifted Advisory Committee mailing list are welcome to subscribe by completing our [online form](#). Many gifted families also choose to join our WhatsApp group which is a great resource for quick questions that come up in the day-to-day life of a gifted student at Northern.
- Welcome to our newest GAC volunteer, Wendy Li. Wendy's son is in grade 11 and is new to Northern. Welcome Wendy!

ESL Potluck – Nilgun

- Potluck on Feb 15 to discuss course selection and educational terminology
- More events to come

Fundraising committee – Diana G.

The fundraising committee wants to create a dream wish list with input from staff and students (SAC and Buddies). This list will be the focus of our fundraising campaign in the fall and we may have a fun fundraising event in February as well.

Social Committee – Tania O.

Come meet some awesome parents at Northern! We have an option for everyone: Walking Buddies meets on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month; Families in Crisis meets for dinner at the Granite Brewery March 5, Games Night will be held at a parent's home March 3, and we hope to host an evening in the spring called Speed Parenting - where parents are invited to share 2 minutes of their best resources on one or more topics of their choice. Get some new ideas and leads on anything from extracurriculars to experts to you name it! For more info, email nss.school.council@gmail.com

Website committee – Tania O.

We are excited to welcome Gemma Capone and Stephanie Nacawa to the website committee! Look for changes in the near future at nsscouncil.com

Community report - Melissa R, Tania O

- The TDSB wrote and released a new handbook to 20,000 public school teachers on Facilitating Critical Conversations. In it, "Core Beliefs" are listed. They include statements like, "Education is a colonial structure that centres whiteness and Eurocentricity and therefore it must be actively decolonized," and "White Supremacy is a structural reality that impacts all students and must be discussed and dismantled in classrooms, schools, and communities."
- It received much negative press and was taken off the TDSB website, and supposedly the handbook is being reviewed. Interested parents can read more here in the Toronto Star: <https://archive.is/Npw9v> and the Sun: <https://archive.is/rAvyU>.
- The TDSB is proposing significant changes to policies governing Community Advisory Committees (PIAC, SEAC, French Language, etc.)

Motion to adjourn. Moved: Diana G.; Seconded: John B.; Carried.

Next meeting – Thursday April 4 – 6.30pm – school library/MS Teams