

Northern School Council Meeting (Approved)

January 13, 2022, 6:30 - 7:55 pm (Via Zoom)

Attendees: Andy A, Jen A, Janice B, Diane C, Abby D, Sabina H, Laura M, Tania O, Karri P, Melissa R, Steve S, Rhonda S, Claire S, Monica T, Adam Marshall, Jenn Marr, Diana Goldie

Regrets: Rita C, Leslie Usin-Rojas

Meeting called to order at 6:32 by Janice B

- Welcome
- Land acknowledgement
- Code of Conduct reviewed

Operational Matters

- Approval of Agenda Motion to approve: Andy; Seconded: Sabina. Carried.
- Approval of Nov 24 minutes. Motion to approve: Rhonda; Seconded: Diane. Carried.

Co-chair Report - Andy

Spoke to Student Senate and talked through support funds available through School Council and request requirements.

On the last late Wednesday start in December, School Council provided a thank-you breakfast for teachers and staff for everyone's efforts leading up to the holiday break. Everyone was very appreciative of the effort.

Principal's Report - Adam

Grade 8 Open House. Held on Jan 12th, we had almost 500 attendees, who gave great feedback. Thank you to the Guidance team and student leaders for their fantastic efforts to make this event a success. Currently Northern's enrolment numbers remain the same for next year at around 96% occupancy.

Stolen 3D Printers. Over the holiday break, 4 3D printers taken out of the tech room. Currently working with Police & Insurance to sort this out. Security footage is being reviewed. Hoping to have replacement printers by the end of January.

Robotics Competition. We are hoping to move forward with participating in upcoming robotics competition. Final decision is required by Jan 18.

Child and youth worker. Our half-time child and youth worker, Lucy Fernandez, has now been increased to a full-time resource at Northern. We are glad to have her here every day and invest more time at Northern.

Virtual Learning. Transition to virtual learning after the holiday break went very smoothly; thanks to all for adapting so well. At the beginning of January, TDSB reopened the option to move to full time virtual learning for semester 2. 24 additional Northern students chose to move to virtual making a total of 92 students participating in virtual learning for semester 2.

Elevators. TDSB has approved fixing two elevators (one that has been broken, and one which has never been in service) that will provide access from cafeteria in basement to the 3rd floor.

Underground parking/field. Over the holiday break, work progressed so staff can use the parking lot again. However, the field will not be reconstructed until 2022/23 school year.

Activity Fees. We have only collected activity fees from 550 of the 1800 students. This level of participation is lower than normal and makes it hard to support school activities. The money raised from these fees covers the cost of the yearbook as well as other all-school efforts. It is administered by Student Affairs Council (SAC) to support the various clubs, sports and other student events.

A question was asked if there could be a yearbook only fee and it could be considered, though could make the cost of producing a yearbook prohibitive as it is approx \$25K.

Return to Extracurriculars/Sports. Currently all sports are on hold as per the City's mandate which is in effect until Jan 26th. TDSB will take their lead from the City for reinstatement of sports. Different sports have different risk levels and each sport will be evaluated individually. Hoping to be able to open sports but the priority is to ensure teachers are in classrooms.

Gym classes. More details to come on these classes.

Covid update. There is an updated screening tool to use to determine if the student can attend school. The school will be relying on families to communicate with the school about absences and any positive Covid cases. Impacted classes will be informed of positive cases but not asked to isolate. Two rapid tests will be provided to students as soon as they are provided to the school. If unable to attend school, and that class is a hybrid class (in person and virtual learners) then might be able to continue with the class virtually. If the positive case is in an in-person only class, the student will need to keep up with the work on their own via Brightspace. More details are expected in the coming days. Currently student vaccine rates at Northern are voluntarily disclosed, and 60% of the student body has disclosed their status on the TDSB app.

Semester 2 format. There is no indication right now of how semester 2 will roll out – regular or modified format. Hoping to have more clarity in the coming week as TPH and TDSB sort it out. New semester begins Feb 3.

Credit recovery days. There are three days at the end of semester 1 allotted for credit recovery. Two days will be the same as in the past where there is a day 1 & a day 2 credit rescue day. Students will be notified if they need to work with April Vibert in Student Success. Working out the details for day 3 right now.

Staff Absences. There is concern across the TDSB about the rate of staff absences given the prevalence of the variant. Northern has pre-booked 3 supply teachers for the first week of in-person school next week. There might be instances where classes need to be combined to manage staffing levels.

Enhanced measures to keep staff safe. N95 masks are being offered to teachers who request it. Staff can bring their own mask if preferred. Three-ply masks will be the standard. Students can use any mask they choose. We already had HEPA filters in classrooms. Northern didn't receive any additional HEPA filters.

Late Wednesday start pattern. For the remainder of semester one, it will be the last 3 Wednesdays of January. Pattern for semester 2 is TBD. Late start is Board-wide.

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).

Treasurer's Report – Steve

Update from last meeting:

- Total cash on hand is \$22,226, after disbursing \$8,015 for current year disbursements to date.
- The School Council sent out communications in the fall requesting parent contributions for the current 2021-22 year at a suggested amount of \$55. We received \$13,175 from parents:
 - 206 contributions were received (about the same number as last year)
 - The average contribution was \$64, ranging from \$25 to \$175.
- The School Council plans to have a minimum cash balance of \$2,000 at the end of the year, so we have approximately \$20,000 left to spend for the year.
- The current version of the budget has planned expenditures of about \$15,000 based on minimal communications with NSS club and association staff advisors. For the most part the budget is a carryover of last year's budget.
- Planned expenditures are subject to change and should be thought of as budget placeholders only.

Budget sub-committee update:

- No new funding requests have been received.
- The budget sub-committee can make spending decisions on requests under \$1,000. Requests over \$1,000 need to be voted on at School Council.

Motion put forward to approve [the budget](#) for 2021/22 school year.

Motion to approve: Steve; Seconded: Andy. Carried.

Academic Resource Committee – Tania

Since our last meeting, the Academic Resource Committee hosted another presentation to support student success. On December 7, our topic was, “Is your student struggling with math?” The primary focus was a Q and A session with Jennifer Molloy and Stephanie Kendall, the ACL’s of the math department at Northern. From their wealth of experience, they shared excellent ideas and feedback about when and how to get help, prepare for success, maximize tutoring, and more. We also shared tips and resources from other teachers and parents. You can still view the recording and slides that list tips and resources on our website under “What’s On”.

We are currently planning our next virtual presentation for March 1 at 7. It will feature a panel discussion with the founders of two outstanding organizations - Shift Your Thinking and Bright Lights Psychology Clinic. Susan Schenk and Dr. Todd Cunningham are very engaging and experienced experts in building effective support to enable our whole child’s success in school and beyond. This presentation will be for all students and parents at Northern and beyond.

Until then, these three presentations may be of interest to parents of students with LD’s-

- Jan 19- York University is hosting a workshop on the transition to post-secondary for students with learning differences
- Jan 25- Shift Your Thinking presents its recording of a webinar, “From Dyslexic Teen to Adult- what you need to know”
- Jan 26- Shift Your Thinking is hosting a live call for high school students to discuss “Organization and Homework” with educational experts.

For more information or links, visit the [What’s On](#) page on our website or email nss.school.council@gmail.com

Website - Tania

We are working on a refresh of our website so things are easier to find and all the relevant information that is helpful to parents is located in one place.

To that end, I’d like to highlight the committee’s update to the homepage. If you happen to have your phones handy, I invite you to visit nsscouncil.com and you will quickly see “Up Next at Northern” displayed. We will update this section weekly with “need to know” information for the whole school like late starts and schedule changes, deadline for course selection submission, etc as well as our upcoming presentations at Northern. Below that you will see “Ask Adam” where there is a now a link to the archives of his weekly bulletins so you can review his complete and latest updates at Northern.

Going forward, we will be updating the What’s On page to include the schedule for all the upcoming presentations that are available from Northern and beyond, as well as any recordings and slides for easy access.

Please do visit the site often, as we are sure you will find things there that will help you support your student’s success (and your own sense of community!).

Gifted Advisory Council (GAC) - Melissa

Stay tuned for more details to come on upcoming speakers and presentations. Hoping some of the opportunities will be in person.

Education Committee - Melissa

Across the TDSB, 1 out of 5 students have special needs. SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) is legislated by the Ontario Education Act to represent and advocate for students with special needs. SEAC meets monthly and has become increasingly concerned by changes to TDSB policies that reduce the level of adequate identification, placement, and support of students with special needs. These changes have been happening without discussion or disclosure to SEAC or families with special needs. As a result, SEAC has passed several motions to require the TDSB to share information in a timely manner, consult with SEAC before changes are made to ensure students' best interests are being considered, reinstate specialist help with DHH, Blind, and Low Vision IEPs, and grant SEAC access to data relating to ONSIS, IPRCs and SEPRCs.

More information on SEAC can be found [here](#) or reach out to Melissa at northerngifted@gmail.com.

Guidance Department Update

Jan 19 – York University is hosting a workshop on the transition to post-secondary for students with learning differences

Course selection for 2022-23 – Wed Jan 26 6:30-7:30. Info and link will be in the Friday bulletin. This is an important session to attend as course selection opens Feb 3rd and closes Feb 23rd.

Graduating students - Please note that the deadline for university applications is Jan 13 and college applications are due Feb 1.

New Business - Janice

School Council Appointment. A voting member has had to resign so there is a vacancy to fill. Thank you to Monica for her time and effort with last year's grad and this year's Council. She will continue to work on the ARC committee as a non-voting member.

Proposing Samir Fahs fills this vacancy. Samir is a former council member from 2020/21 and offers a balanced and thoughtful approach.

Motion put forward: Be it resolved that Samir be appointed to School Council as voting member for remainder of the 2021/22 school year. No questions were raised.

Motion to approve: Janice; Seconded: Andy. Carried.

Upcoming Event and Helpful Resources

- [TDSB Winter Clothing Drive](#)
- [TDSB Mental Health and Well-being](#)
- [Drop-in hours](#)
- [TDSB Winter Well-being guide](#)

Motion to adjourn meeting: Andy; Seconded: Sabina; Carried.

2022 Remaining Meeting Dates

- Wed Feb 23
- Wed, April 6
- Wed May 18