

Northern School Council Meeting (Approved)

February 23, 2022, 6:30 - 7:55 pm (Via Zoom)

Attendees: Andy A, Jen A, Janice B, Diane C, Rita C, Abby D, Samir F, Sabina H, Laura M, Tania O, Melissa R, Steve S, Rhonda S, Claire S, Adam Marshall, Jenn Marr, Leslie Usin-Rojas

Regrets: Diana G, Karri P

Meeting called to order at 6:31 by Janice B

- Welcome
- Land acknowledgement
- Code of Conduct reviewed

Operational Matters

- Approval of Agenda Motion to approve: Andy; Seconded: Melissa. Carried.
- Approval of Jan 13 minutes. Motion to approve: Diane; Seconded: Andy. Carried.

Co-chair Report – Andy

Board Developments

- School Council no longer needs to purchase SC Insurance. Liability insurance will be provided under Board's policy. The insurance will cover sanctioned activities that are approved by school admin and TDSB. This will save us money and will be able to remove this from the budget going forward.

School Council Bylaws

- Email was sent by the board to school chairs with mandated changes to school council bylaws. Those schools with existing bylaws will need to review their bylaws to ensure they are consistent with the updates. If a school council didn't have bylaws, it would need to follow the template put out by board.
- We are required to review and update our bylaws by May and present revised bylaws at the May meeting for approval.
- Question: Is TDSB imposing themselves on school council and what do we owe as part of these bylaws and do we owe them anything since they are providing insurance?
 - Answer: Our bylaws are in line with the updated versions and didn't see anything of concern when reviewing the template. The board goal is to ensure that all SC have bylaws as many don't. One area that is more robust is the conflict resolution process.
- Question: Are offsite events covered by board's insurance?

- Answer: Additional coverage might be needed to be purchased per event. Will require further investigation when a specific event arises.

Upcoming Events

- ARC – March 1st presentation, “When Learning is Hard, What Do You Do?”

Website

- A new policy for content review will be shared later in the meeting and put to a vote, which was a motion that was omitted on the agenda.

Principal’s Report – Adam

Covid Case Update. Currently 220-330 students are away each day, out of the total student body of 1700 students. There are up to 8 total staff (including support) absent on a daily basis. According to the collective agreement, there is a maximum number of on calls a teacher can do during a year and currently on calls are running high. It may impact the availability of supply teachers in June. This is a board-wide issue. There is some impact to some classes.

Staff Update. Northern is fortunate to have a pool of supply teachers and they have been amazing at supporting us. As with many families with Northern, the staff are feeling the impact of two years of Covid on their families as they balance work and personal stress.

Extracurriculars Update. Some things are moving ahead. Hockey has the go ahead to practice. Volleyball has had games. There is a ski trip on Thursday Feb 24. Basketball tryouts and practice are permitted. Badminton and curling still TBD. Indoor soccer isn’t likely but perhaps outdoor soccer in the spring. Vaccination is required to participate in competitive sports. Music is up and running. Announcements are made daily. Other options to learn about activities are by using the QR codes posted in the school and following @nss.air on Instagram. Things are changing/expanding weekly.

Community Use of School. Northern is open for ‘light ’business and the stipulations for permits are the same as sports. Adult Education is not running in person; it is still online.

Bell Let’s Talk Day. The Wellness group created a video, which was linked to in the weekly bulletin.

Field/ Parking Garage Update. September is still the target date for completion which will mean that soccer and football will go ahead. Working with our Trustee to keep this as a top agenda item at the board.

Graduation Plans. Have submitted a request to U of T to secure Convocation Hall for June 29th. Waiting to hear back once U of T has set their dates. Been in conversation with SAC and have a tentative booking at Acadian Court for prom. Hoping that will be able to be held. Plan B idea is to do an event at the school, and we are working hard to ensure a solution is found. Photo retakes are lined up before March break. Watch the weekly bulletin for more information.

OSSLT. Semester 2 testing is harder to arrange as the class duration is shorter now that we are on a day 1/day 2 schedule. We have been brainstorming ideas while awaiting on official announcement from associate directors. A solution could be two days that are mandated to have longer periods to allow for the test to be written.

Fashion Show. As it is such a tradition at Northern, will do as much as possible to ensure that this happens. Currently in touch with student leaders and assessing the number of participants. Have to figure out a safe practice setup as well as manage expectations with students. Students are not as interested in a recorded option so working towards a live option.

Homework. For all the comments received that there is too much homework, the same number of people are asking when will academic rigour return and when are exams coming back. If you are finding a real lack of empathy from teachers then please reach out to appropriate VP to address. A note that when deadlines are delayed, teachers are then being asked to mark in perpetuity which is a difficult ask.

Racism & Anti-Semitism. Lots of coverage in TDSB and at Northern, we have engaged with a group called Abraham Global Peace Initiative. We decided to work with them because of Power of One program which is about all types of hate. The idea is to teach and educate about anti-hate and how to recognize hate in any form. We are working on developing lesson plans and figuring out how to roll out in school. A large assembly is not possible at this time and the current presentation is 78 slides which makes it hard to digest online. Working with SAC who are very interested in bringing this to the student body. A parent suggested reaching out to the Simon Wiesenthal Institute.

Update on rooms 137 & 143. One is being redesigned to become a fitness studio and the other is going to become a 2-story tech space. For example, Robotics is currently using the gym space because they need two stories. Funding is secured, but there is a lot of bureaucracy to work through.

Assessments. Assessments will be consistent with semester 1, so that there is fairness between the two semesters.

Optional Attendance. The application was deadline yesterday (Feb 22) and Northern made 80 offers under priority 7. The target is to have approx. 421 grade 9 students next year.

3D printer theft. Police have investigated but no other update on the 4 stolen printers. The deductible is so high that we won't be going through insurance. We have support from tech dept centrally and have purchased 1 printer and looking to get second one.

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

- No decisions to bring to council for discussion
- Tracking to spend quite a bit under our budget
- Currently have \$22,226 in the bank and we will likely underspend as funding requests are lower than expected
- Question: From your experience, since giving levels have fluctuated in the pandemic, should we change our strategy for funding requests/spending or are we ok on this path?
 - Answer: Suggest that Council moves ahead with the standard funding plan for the fall. Expect to be in the range of \$20K of spending for next year. Believes the current strategy can remain in place.

ARC – Tania

Since our last meeting, ARC has featured two presentations for Northern students - Post-Secondary Planning for Academic Accommodations (Feb 15) and Homework and Organization - a live student discussion with professional moderators hosted by Shift Your Thinking (Jan 26).

Looking forward, ARC is pleased to present two experts in the field of learning differences in a webinar on March 1 - Dr. Todd Cunningham and Susan Schenk. Their work is research-based, innovative, and insightful about how to understand and support the whole child “who thinks differently” and their family.

We chose to feature both speakers in one evening because their work is highly complementary. Dr. Cunningham is a clinical and school psychologist who has done extensive research and speaking about assessments, assistive technology, and learning disabilities. Susan is an occupational therapist who has worked in schools for 20 years, and also is an author and speaker. From their unique combination of lived and professional experience, both have founded organizations that offer excellent and affordable resources to assess, educate, treat, and support students with learning differences and their parents.

Since this topic is not age or school specific, we have invited other elementary, middle, and secondary schools in our area to join our webinar. We believe this is a great opportunity to keep developing and deepening our collaborative efforts, as these are complex topics. As well, we all benefit from learning about quality resources that enhance what the TDSB offers.

We encourage parents to check the website's [What's On](#) page for other upcoming learning opportunities about LD's and join us for some socials in the spring!

Education – Melissa

As mentioned at last month's meeting, there is a lot going on at SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) and the concern remains about the TDSB's lack of transparency and disclosure around changes to special education. At Northern, 50% of students have an IEP (Individual Education Plan). SEAC is continuing to focus on 7 key areas which include: Primary IEPs (not to eliminate IEPs for Grade 1/2), delays in assessments for IEPs and IPRC's (asking

for data), SEAC access to data relating to ONSIS, SEPRCs (SEPRC's have been closed by the Board; SEAC has asked for a reversal), reinstate itinerant teachers' input into DHH IEPs, ADHD (passed a motion to ask for more support officially for ADHD since ADHD is not listed in legislation), communication/information sharing between TDSB and SEAC and special education review policy.

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

Gifted – Melissa

- Watch for upcoming meeting details in Adam's weekly bulletin.

Website – Tania

In these times of rapidly changing information, the website committee has been upgrading the School Council site to make important information easily accessible for parents. We have added "Up Next at Northern" on our homepage to help parents keep track of schedule changes, late starts, and important deadlines. And we have "Ask Adam", where we have a link to all of Adam's archived weekly bulletins. On "What's On", we have a section for recordings of past presentations and slides. You'll find all the resources from Guidance you'll need for course selection, as well as recordings on post-secondary planning, wellness, study skills, and more.

The "Inside NSS" page gives you updates on general information at Northern - like semester schedules and days off. And "Inside NSS" has a section of parent tips. Most recently, it featured staff and parent approved tips on course selection to help you make the most of the Northern experience for your student.

Please check out our site to see how we can help you! nsscouncil.com

Janice mentioned that the Northern Secondary School Foundation has asked to have a link on nsscouncil.com. There were no concerns with adding this link to the website so the link will be added.

New Business - Andy

Website communications policy. There is a proposal to have a new policy for review of content that appears on our nsscouncil.com website. This proposal (distributed separately and attached below) contains guidelines for the website content as we want to provide accurate information on website to visitors. This policy is not designed to address typical Council materials like meetings/agendas etc or upcoming events. It is to address opinions and advertising. The idea is take new content through a defined process, vetted by a subject matter expert as needed and approved by full council. Website content is controlled by Council in accordance with TDSB guidelines.

Motion put forward: Do we adopt this process for new content for the website, following the outline contained in the document. Andy; Seconded. Sabina.

Discussion

- Tania. What is the reason for this policy? The parent tips for course selection that were of concern were removed directly after the issue was raised, and the matter was resolved without the need for a policy. Things can move quickly with information and it could become onerous to have a process that requires getting feedback, revisions and approval before it can be shared with the parent body. The concern is that with more regulation, the more difficult the communication gets and the less the website serves parents.
- Janice. This policy applies to a small amount of content. It is in the responsible spirit in how we conduct ourselves and doesn't see a change in that. This process gives everyone (admin, teacher, council) a chance for feedback on content that impacts them. By having this process, it is a link back to the updated bylaws.
- Rhonda. If it was a very small situation, why are guidelines needed? The proposed guidelines are not clear about what they apply to. Who determines what is relevant under the guidelines? Believe we have to trust the website committee as all committees. Don't see purpose of having this guideline. Asked if there is a disagreement within council on this policy. Reference was made to a Feb 6th email sent to council. Told there is no disagreement, and that this discussion is confined to the proposed guidelines.
- Adam. There was one tip on the website that Grade 11 science could be taken in Grade 10. The concern about that is in the school's ability to deliver. Some people may interpret this as fact and are entitled to it. But it cannot be delivered on for every single student.
- Melissa. Encourage information sharing and flexibility. Suggests that if the implementation of the policy makes things too bureaucratic, it isn't practical, could become onerous for busy members, and discourage parent participation. Appreciates the effort being put in by the website team and hopes this will be worked out.
- Leslie. The most important tip is to have a student talk to their guidance counselor who can give all the avenues that are available.
- Tania. Agrees that a few tips were poorly phrased, and they were taken off as soon as notified. This was done in spirit of cooperation and without a policy in place. Believes this process will create more problems than needed.
- Andy. This policy is designed to allow people to review content before it is posted so that situation like that can be avoided.
- Janice. This policy offers protection as a council.

The motion was put to a vote. Yes: 7; No: 6. Motion Carried.

Upcoming Events and Reminders

ARC Presentation Mar 1 at 7pm

- Details are on our website nsscouncil.com
- Everyone is welcome to attend to learn

TDSB Policy Consultations

- Happen year round, every year
- <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Policies-Procedures-Forms/Policy-Consultations>

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

2022 Remaining Meeting Dates

- Wed April 6
- Wed May 18

Review Process for Council Website Content

1. Objective

The objective for this process is to ensure that the Council's website provides accurate information to all visitors and complies with relevant TDSB guidelines. In addition, it will create awareness among Council members of new proposed content and give them an opportunity to provide input into the development and approval for that content.

2. Scope

This process is intended for content that include recommendations, tips, or opinions. It is not intended for factual content and normal council business – minutes, announcements related to school or school council events, TSDB announcements, etc.

3. Prohibited Content

The Council website cannot promote companies or educational service providers that charge a fee for services. The website may include logos and company names for sponsors who support specific school events provided that they appear in the context of a thank you for their support for a specific event.

Specific guidelines can be found in TDSB Advertising Policy March 10, 2021 <https://ppf.tdsb.on.ca/uploads/files/live/93/161.pdf> and Advertising Policy (P006) and Distribution and Display of Materials for Students and Parents from External Groups Policy (P041) Review: Phase 5 Feb 10, 2021 www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Agenda-Minutes/Type/A?Folder=Agenda/20210210&Filename=p006.pdf

4. The Review Process

- a. The first step in this process is to draft the content that is intended to appear on one or several of Council's webpages.
- b. The content must include references and sources for any recommendations or data cited.
- c. The draft must be reviewed by an expert in the field as nominated or designated by Northern Administration or the relevant TDSB Department.
- d. Upon completion of c., the content will be distributed to all council members by email. This email will request feedback on the content. In order for the timely uploading of the content to the website, the email will include a negative option approval process. Wording such as "if no comments are received by the specified date, the content will be posted to the website. The minimum time period for review should be at least 7 days.

Comments on the content that are received will need to be shared with council along with how the comment(s) will be addressed or resolved. If that takes the form of revisions to the content, the revised content will be emailed to all council members for review and approval. This subsequent review period may be shorter than 7 days.

- e. Once the review and approval process is completed, the content will be added to the website.