

Northern School Council Meeting

November 25, 2020, 6:30 - 7:50 pm (Via Zoom)

Attendees: Laura A, Andy A, Janice B, Grace D, Abby D, Samir F, Andrea F, Diana G, Sabina H, Linda K, Ellie M, Tania O, Karri P, Sohinee R, Melissa R, Steve S, Mary Ann S, Adam Marshall, Leslie Usin-Rojas, Jenn Marr, Gethin J

Regrets: Rita C, Debbie L, Gail A

Meeting called to order at 6:33 pm by Janice B, Council Co-Chair

Operational Matters:

The following items were approved by Council:

- Agenda
- Oct 27 Minutes

Co-Chair Report - Tania

- There was a presentation from the Guidance Team on Post-secondary Planning on Nov 4 which focused on grad requirements, post-secondary pathway info, dates and details on scholarships and bursaries and more. [Click here](#) for the slides and video.
- We recently asked parents and caregivers to email their student's Q1 teachers or staff to express thanks and appreciation for their work - feedback from the teachers was very positive and we will likely repeat this at the end of every quad. Parents are invited to cc Adam so he can share "best practices" or helpful ideas with staff.
- Looking ahead we have three sessions planned before the winter break:
 - Parent Chat - Dec 3
 - Ask Adam - Dec 10
 - Toronto Public Health - COVID Information Session - Dec 14
- Thank you to Council for what has been a busy fall!

Co-Treasurer's Report - Steve

- After disbursing \$750 for the prior year's academic awards, total cash on hand is \$11,481
- While we have had no funding requests at this time, we believe this is due to clubs and associations not being fully up and running at this point and anticipate that there will be more requests in January and beyond
- TDSB has given clearance for fundraising through School Cash Online for student enrichment only
- Budget has been adjusted to \$15k this year (from \$30k last year) to support students, so we would need to raise another \$5k to meet that goal
- Committee is recommending we ask for same donation amount as last year, which is completely optional

- After a brief discussion, the budget and fundraising through School Cash Online were both approved

GAC Report - Melissa

- On Nov 10th, the Gifted Advisory Committee hosted a three-part presentation on Student Success: Study Skills A-Z, GAC Tips for 2020 and Finding Success in School in 2020. All three provided helpful resources for academic and emotional/social support. [Click here](#) for all three presentations.

Education Report - Melissa (to be added)

Caring & Safe Schools - See attached update, last page of these minutes

Roehampton Residence Report - Tania

- Safety at the school with regards to the Roehampton Residence seems to be going well.
- New issue of interest is that the Board of Health has approved implementing overdose prevention sites in city shelters to deal with the opioid overdose crisis. This has not yet been specifically planned for the Roehampton. [Click here for a full report.](#)

Website Report - Karri

- Updates have been made to ensure the site is as up to date and easy to navigate as possible.
- The top toolbar has been streamlined and the Special Ed pages have also been reviewed and updated.
- All the latest info can be found under the What's On page (links to presentation etc) and also upcoming events are the right hand side on the home page

Outreach Report - Mary Ann

- Outreach Committee will be having Zoom calls for to connect NSS parents with one other for sharing ideas and tools.
- The first chat is scheduled for Dec 3rd.
- To help with understanding needs, we took a poll during the Council meeting with the following results:

Question 1 - What day of the week would work best for you? Select all that apply.

Monday - 36%

Tuesday - 29%

Wednesday - 57%

Thursday - 32%

Question 2- Would you like the parent chat(s) to be for?

A specific grade - 32%

New parents - 21%

All parents - 46%

Question 3 - Which of these topics interest you? Select all that apply.

Wellness - 50%

Family Life - 18%

Educational Supports - 71%

Extracurriculars - 79%

Principal's Report - Adam

Credit Rescue

- The two days that had been scheduled originally as Exam Days for the end of Q1 were changed to Credit Rescue days to help students who were at risk of failing a course pass it instead.
- This is different from Credit Recovery which happens after a course is completed.
- During the 'mid-term' updates earlier in Q1, there were 146 failing marks in the school. After the credit rescue days this number decreased to 37.
- This is thanks to a great effort by parents/caregivers, teachers and staff, and, of course, the students

PD Day

- Friday Nov 20th was the first PD day of the school year
- The first half of the day was spent with 4 students from the BlackNSS group. These students spoke to 118 staff members about microaggressions they have experienced at Northern.
- The students described ways and places they felt welcome, and ways and places they have NOT felt welcome.
- The staff will have access to different books and reading material to help them with their own education and awareness of this issue.
- There is a new form PR728 which mandates a follow up on any Human Rights complaint (similar to the Duty to Report in the case of Child Neglect).
- The afternoon was reserved for self-directed work.

Budget

- NSS will be able to support some budget requests if no new major changes need to be funded.
- E.g. The yearbook and Grad, both which incur significant costs, could receive some funding from the school. Depending on what other things do/don't get funded, the remaining funds will be spent on things that are in the interest of students.

Air Quality

- This TDSB [document](#) lists schools that have met certain criteria for additional ventilation equipment (HEPA filters)
- NSS will not get HEPA filters (not deemed necessary by TDSB evaluation) and we [cannot fundraise](#) for them (can only fundraise for student enrichment)

- Re:open windows, there are many windows at the school that can be opened and the teachers will open them as appropriate depending on the weather etc.
- The school's air system should be able to handle the air cleaning.

Attendance Protocols

- Re: new attendance protocols - Ministry has asked that attendance still be taken on the days when students are doing independent asynchronous learning. Students are asked to fill out an online form between 8:45 and 9:00 a.m.
- Teachers will review and submit attendance by 9:30 a.m. and then the parent calls will begin.
- There has been lots of frustration around this system already. Organizations like OSSTF and TDSB are looking into it, and we will be notified of any changes that come about.

School Model for Virtual Learning Cohort

- Four different models were considered for the new virtual learning cohort
- The one that ended up working best for NSS was for grade 9 and 10 students to be clustered, and have one day with face to face (virtual) learning and all virtual on the second day.
- For grades 11 and 12, simultaneous instruction is happening where a teacher is teaching both in-person students and at-home students at the same time.
- As the school year goes on, options become more limited for clustered learning because there are fewer courses left for the students.

Support for Students who are isolating at home due to Covid

- We now have some tech that can help in situations where a teacher and/or students are isolating at home due to Covid exposure. It may involve a student temporarily joining the NSS virtual learning cohort for those days.

Student Support (GLE, IEPs, Student Success)

- GLE is not supported well by the quadmester structure. It's very hard to ensure that GLE is scheduled with the course the students need the most help with.
- This is obviously not ideal, but students with IEPs can contact Jessica Beresford (ARC/LD), Monique Cipollone (Gifted), or Eric Larocque (DHH) for additional support and/or 20-minute sessions if available. To learn more for students with learning differences, visit [Academic Resource Center website](#).
- Student Success is meant to support students who need help (for any reason), but do not have the benefit of an IEP. These students should contact April Vilbert, a Student Success teacher.

Grad Photos

- Due to Covid safety protocols, outside photographers are not allowed in the schools until further notice. Parents are welcome to have the photos taken outside of the school if they prefer not to wait.

Thank A Teacher Campaign

- As mentioned by Tania earlier, the emails from parents thanking teachers meant a great deal to our staff! Thank you!
- And a reminder - please take a moment at any point to let your teacher know if you student is struggling or enjoying their class. Feedback is very helpful this year.

NSS Website

- The best place for information is the [NSS Website](#).
- Info for next year's incoming grade 9 students (currently Gr 8) is [now up](#).

2019-2020 Grads

- Info will be going out to last year's graduates about the plans for them to pick up diplomas etc. later this month when hopefully most of the grads will be home from university.
- Current plan is for a drive-thru set up. Some adjustments may need to be made due to Covid.

Building Updates

- Northern has been working on upgrading two of the first floor rooms - plans is for room 137 to be dedicated as a wellness space (gym/yoga/health) while room 143 will be a space for makers and also for special presentations that require an upper level for overhead viewing. Updates continue but currently the rooms are being used for storage to accommodate the need for smaller class sizes this year.
- The roof repair is complete. The final phase of that is repairing the floors and change rooms that were damaged.
- The installation of security cameras continues.

Upcoming Events - watch your inbox for more details

- ARC Meeting: Nov 30
- GAC Meeting: Nov 30
- Parent Outreach Zoom: Dec 3
- Ask Adam - Dec 10 (send questions in advance to nss.school.council@gmail.com)
- Toronto Public Health - Covid Information Session - Dec 14

**NSS Caring and Safe Schools Committee Meeting - Notes
November 24, 2020 (by zoom)**

Attendance:

Vice-Principal Halling (Facilitator)

Vinusha Uthayakumar (Safe Schools Student Senator)

Julia Schindeler (School Council Representative)

A teacher & staff representative was not available

Q. Vinusha asked about soap dispensers running out in the washrooms and what the protocol is for checking them.

A. The caretakers follow daily procedures for cleaning and maintaining the washrooms; students can report any problems to the school office.

Q. Vinusha asked about how the desks are sanitized in the classrooms.

A. The caretaking staff clean every desk with a sanitizing spray, they do not wipe down the desks.

Q. Julia asked if hall monitors are able to connect with students in order to mitigate bullying.

A. Yes, hall monitors are encouraged to befriend students and build trusting relationships with them which would help in a situation where students are being bullied. Of course, this is not so easy to do while Covid pandemic restrictions are being followed. Every adult has a legal responsibility to report cases of bullying.

Q. Julia asked if there was a way for students to report incidences of bullying anonymously.

A. Yes, all reports of bullying, even those made anonymously, are dealt with appropriately. However, an anonymous report makes the investigation difficult if there are no witnesses and no evidence. Also, anonymous reports can themselves be an act of bullying if they are not substantiated. In general, it is better not to make anonymous reports because it is usually easy for others to figure out who made the report.

Q. Julia asked if teachers always arrange mid-class “walk-about”.

A. There is no mandated expectation that teachers will allow their students to have a mid-class walk around the school. However, if the teacher chooses to have a walk-about then the time needs to be booked ahead so that the classes don’t all leave the building at the same time and it enables the office to keep track of where the students are.

Mr. Halling reported:

- he is pleased with how the students are complying with the safety protocols
- the fire drills went well
- pest control will be called in to deal with mice
- timing of the lights in the parking lot will be adjusted so there is light in the early morning
- Toronto Public Health inspected Northern and were “very impressed” with the school