

Northern School Council Meeting (Draft)

May 24, 2023, 6:30 - 8:00 pm (hybrid)

Attendees: Abby D., Adam Marshall, Andy A., Anna R., Beth L., Diana G., Diane C., Elena C., Everton L., Janice B., Jen A., Jenni Marr, John B., Kristina T., Melissa R., Omar B., Tania O., Willem M.

Regrets: Jonah J., Natalie B.

Meeting called to order at 6:41 pm by Janice B.

- Welcome
- Land acknowledgement
- Code of Conduct reviewed

Operational Matters

- Approval of Agenda - Motion to approve: Kristina T.; Seconded: Melissa R. Carried.
- Approval of April 4, 2023 minutes - Motion to approve: Melissa R.; Seconded: Omar B. Carried.

Co-chair Report – Andy A.

- Budget has been our primary focus; lots of funding requests.

Student Report - Jonah J.

- Deferred to next meeting

Guest speaker – Northern Secondary School Foundation

- Jackie Scroggie, President of Northern SS Foundation, shared the history and purpose of the foundation, which was started in 1999 by NSS parents to build a sense of community in education; includes former teachers, alumni, parents. Jackie described some of the fundraising initiatives, scholarships, grants, and alumni outreach to current NSS students and clubs, and highlighted the upcoming September 2023 silent auction (goal to raise \$10K). Contact at: info@nssf.ca

Principal's Report – Adam

- Prom/Grad - Prom will be held at the Eglinton Grand on May 26. Commencement will be held June 27 at Convocation Hall at U of T. Information for graduating events is shared

in the weekly bulletin; specific grad details in direct emails to graduating students and their families.

- Staff allocations for 23/24 school year: there will be more surplus teachers than vacancies. More ESL staff needed. Principal is lobbying for one additional Gifted teacher to accommodate larger number of incoming gifted students (135 gifted offers have gone out - expect 100 will accept). Total teacher allocation this year: 104. Next year estimated 110 teachers.
- Students: caps for academic classes will be reduced from 30 to 27. 588 Grade Nines will be incoming in the fall (total student population will be close to 2,000). Optional attendance was only offered to siblings this year.
- Student spaces:
 - Room 137 update – a long-unused room that is being overhauled for a fitness/gym space. Will be used as a classroom (wellness, yoga, physical ed) and have high intensity machines. Staff welcome to use as well. Will hopefully be ready in the fall.
 - All-gender washroom disrepair – new soap dispensers (prison grade) will be installed in the summer. Students had two suggestions: have a QR code on the wall to report maintenance issues; and have murals on the walls painted by classes to deter students from defacing the walls. Gay Straight Alliance has asked for taller bathroom stall doors to offer more privacy, and these would be beneficial to have in all bathrooms in the building.
- Budget pressure in TDSB is getting a lot of public attention regarding caretaking staff cuts; Principal described the types of building maintenance at NSS that are suffering as a result.
- Parent asked about creating a wish list for staff and student needs, for which council could fundraise. Council will look at this idea for the upcoming school year.
- Question about exams - schedule is not ideal and a bit jumbled because grad had to be moved earlier, reducing number of days available to complete class work, allow for moratoriums, and write exams.
- Question about staffing – when do teachers know what they will be teaching in the fall? They receive a timetable in June but often there are changes due to new allocations, retirements, etc.
- Question about student attendance robocalls, and what follow up takes place if a parent presses “2” for “no, I didn’t know my child was absent”. There is no follow up to secondary school parents because there is simply not enough staff to deliver that kind of information. Elementary parents get follow up.

Treasurer’s Report – Jen Ankemann

- The 2022/23 year started with \$28K available, and there is \$5,500 remaining. \$2K is always retained at year end, for funding requests that come in early in the next school year. A detailed report was shared, showing all approved funding requests for this year.
- Requests approved since the last council meeting:
 - Buddies - \$1,500 (voted and approved via email by full council)

- o Ceramics - \$500
- o Girls Rugby Team- \$750
- Budget committee is focused on wrapping up expenses for this year and planning expenditures for the GL 41500 funds available through the TDSB (automatically given to every school council annually to support parent engagement; based on student population).
- Looking ahead to next year:
 - o Budget:
 - This year we essentially had two years of funding (\$28K) to allocate due to the reduction/elimination of activities from the pandemic.
 - If fundraising amounts remain consistent with the past two years, we will have approximately \$14K for next year.
 - o Fundraising:
 - Timing: exploring the idea of moving the fundraising initiative to launch at the beginning of September, and doing two campaigns in the year instead of one.
 - Communications: looking to adapt the fundraising letter to include a summary of what we funded this year to give the community information on what their contributions are used for.
 - o Process
 - Looking to simplify the process to help both applicants and the budget committee. Aiming to move to a Google Form for people to submit their requests.
- Suggestion that we spotlight the recipients of funding (eg Buddies retreat, robotics club) on the website at the beginning of the year so families can see the positive results of financial support in videos, etc.
- Principal is looking into collecting Student Activity Fee via Square payments instead of collecting cash from students. It would also make it easier to donate to school council and support the school without using cash or School Cash Online (which is complicated to set up and also limits when funds can be collected or spent).
- Complete report is posted [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).

Caring and Safe Schools Committee – Julia S.

- This year, 16 teachers were engaged in an equity assessment of classrooms.
- Elevator has been repaired - now have full accessibility in the school.
- Next year – “respect” poster will be posted in classrooms, and Buddies will talk about this early in the next school year with classes, to set high expectations for conduct in the school.
- New parent liaison next year will be Alicia Sorenson.

Community Update – Melissa R.

- TDSB has seen a much greater level of parent engagement lately
- Shared a number of initiatives:
 - SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) passed two motions:
 - asking for better information from TDSB (Finance Committee and Process Committee)
 - To restore SEPRC process - this motion will go to trustees in Sept
 - Specialized programs (art, STEM, elite athletes etc) – concerns about implementation and its rebranding as Specialized Interest Programs; FOI request was made and seeing good results.

Academic Resource Committee – Tania O.

- Monthly youth calls by Shift Your Thinking have been successful with parents; hope to continue to offer next year
- Considering “Screenagers 3 - Under the Influence” membership for next year which would allow for unlimited viewings and material and access to the film for classroom use; significant financial commitment. If parents are interested, please contact nss.school.council@gmail.com

Website committee

- No update

Gifted Academic Committee – Jessica M., Anna R.

- Hosted an enrichment Fair in April
- Post-secondary education information fair was held in May

Education and Academic Achievement Committee – John B.

- Committee formed

New Business

- Paul Davis, public speaker (former OPP officer who speaks about social media and internet safety) has been booked for November 16, 2023 for a parent information session. More information to come.
- Grad committee – have decided to return \$2K of approved funds for graduation to general funds for students. \$500 is being held for any special grad-related costs.
- Teacher appreciation - Budget committee welcomes a submission from teachers for June event.

Motion to adjourn: Motion to approve: Diane C., Seconded: Diana G. , Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

2023-24 Meeting Dates

Final meeting of the 2022/23 council – September (date TBC)