

School Council Meeting minutes October 16, 2024, 6:30pm

Welcome to those attending –

Name	Present	Name	Present
Mary Sue Meredith	X	Tamara DeCraemer	X
Elysia Cloet		Jon Mendoza	X
Tonya Veltman	X	Melissa Santo	X
Eleanor McGrath	X	Nikolas Knowles	
Christine Glidden	X	Jennifer Benninger	X
Jennifer Thysman	X	Melanie Columbus	
Kathy Persad		Jonathan Tyler	
Doerte Shulze	X	Kathleen Siegrist	X
Sarah Steinert	X	Sheena Kinghorn	
Danika Fraser		Shireen Fawad	
Helen Quinton	X	Ninaa Persad-Mohammed	X

Welcome Message – Tonya

Territorial Acknowledgment - Mary Sue

Principal's Report – Mary Sue

- Pizza days will start soon and the order deadline is firm. We had to wait until the classroom reorganization (which was required for budgetary reasons).
 - This runs biweekly on Fridays. We offer cheese, halal chicken, and pepperoni options.
 - Cost is \$2 a slice but is paid in a lump sum at the beginning of the pizza ordering period.
 - For 1 slice x 5 weeks of pizza days, it costs \$10; for 2 slices across 5 pizza days, it is \$20, etc.
- An info session by Dr. Allison Yeung is being offered on Thursday October 17th from 6:30-7:30.
 - Hosted virtually, it is about Smartphones, Social Media & the Mental Health Epidemic.
 - This presentation is for Westvale parents.
- Lexia
 - Whole class licenses are available for grades 4, 5, and 6 for Lexia, which is an online reading intervention program.
 - This is an excellent program, and we're lucky to have funding to use it again this year.
 - This is provided for students in the core program (that is, students who are not in French Immersion).
 - Other students with IEPs have access as well

- Nutrition for Learning
 - Nutrition for Learning is asking for support; they had a 142% increase in demand/cost last year.
 - There are hungry children in schools across the region, including in Westvale Public School.
 - 1 in 3 children do not regularly eat breakfast; 33% of food bank users are children.
 - When students are nourished, their capacity to imagine explore and connect increases.
 - Students should not be stigmatised when seeking nutritional support. Any student is able to access food from the bins in each classroom, but they are asked to finish their packed lunch first.
 - Our budget this year is decreased, but each classroom has a bin
 - Our budget is \$1500 until Christmas, then \$1500 after Christmas until the end of the year. Last year we got 2.5k per term.
 - In addition, last year we raised about 5k last year.
 - The amount allocated by nutrition for learning depends on number of children in the school and the total amount of funding they have available.
 - We will be fundraising this year (e.g. with a twonie campaign). Please support these fundraisers if you are able to. Monetary donations can be made here: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/95440?v2=true>
- Food 4 Kids
 - Food 4 Kids is a weekend program which provides food for school aged children so they do not go hungry over the weekend
 - Some families in our school are receiving this, but there is a long wait list, and some other families at Westvale are waiting to receive this support.
 - Food 4 Kids is asking for donations either of food items or monetary donations.
 - Food 4 Kids feeds children experiencing chronic hunger and they are supporting 1200 kids per week right now.
 - Please consider supporting Food 4 Kids if you are able to do so. Monetary donations can be made here: <https://food4kidswr.ca/donate/>
- EQAO
 - EQAO results were discussed. In summary, literacy scores were on the whole improving for both grade 6 and grade 3, while math scores are still an area of concern and improvement for both grades. <https://www.eqao.com/interactive-dashboards/>
 - Grade 3 Reading
 - There was an increase from 60 to 80 percent students who tested at the provincial standard or above (Level 3 or 4).
 - We are above Provincial and board averages at Westvale.
 - Grade 3 Writing
 - We have improved from 20% increase over the last three cycles.
 - We are above Provincial and board averages.
 - Grade 3 Math
 - Improvements still needed.
 - Our scores were about the same across Level 3 and 4
 - There were no kids below level one.
 - Kids at level 1 is down from 14.9 to 9.1%.
 - We are really focusing on how to support students.

- Grade 6 Reading
 - Our scores have increased
 - We no longer have kids at level 1
 - We have decreased the number of students at Level 2 by 6% (in the past 3 cycles)
 - We are holding about even between Levels 3 and 4
- Grade 6 Writing
 - We had some students below level 1 two cycles ago, but we no longer have anyone lower than Level 1.
 - The number of students at Level 2 decreased from 22 to 14 percent (from two years ago)
 - The number of students at Level 3 increased from 60 to 70 percent
 - We have in total 86% at or above provincial level (Level 3 and 4)
- Grade 6 Math
 - Our scores have improved, but not as much as we would like.
 - We no longer have any students below Level 1, we have more at Level 1 than the board averages.
 - We have 44.9% of students at Level 2.
 - 46.9 percent of students are at prov standard (Level 3 or 4), this is a decrease from the previous year.
 - We are close to provincial standard in levels, and we are providing training for teachers to help close the gaps.
- KCI has a program called “sponsor a raider” which allows families to pay the athletic fees or membership fees for students who can’t afford it, so those students can play sports and join activities.
 - A similar program could be something to look at for Westvale.

Teacher’s Report- Helen Quinton

- September 30th was Orange Shirt day and classroom activities had an indigenous focus. This included read-alouds in classes for indigenous books and also educating about residential schools (without guilt for the students).
- Teachers have completed Acadience training
 - This is used in assessing reading skills and oral reading fluency and retelling (which starts in grade 2)
 - Junior teachers did oral reading fluency and retelling with Acadience, and will be using part of this as well
- Math Learning
 - Teachers are working to support students at different levels
 - We have access to some programs like knowledge hook, which has slight gamification for math, and teachers have been encouraged to sign up.
 - Reflex is another app that is starting to be available for fluency practise (gr 2-7). It is AI based and the teacher is able to configure it for addition, subtraction, division, multiplication, etc.
- Oct 18th is the Fall Play Day with different stations available
 - Grade 6 students will be helping Mme. Moser to run stations; most of the stations will be outside

- Field Trips
 - There are two field trips planned, and teachers are looking for support from school council to offset the cost of these trips.
 - Grade 1 and 2 Jeremy & Jazzy Live at Centre in the Square: Nov 12th
 - This is a bilingual performance, and is intended for both students in Core (English) as well as French Immersion
 - In total there are 96 students along with 10 adults who would be going
 - There would be 3 buses for a total cost of \$525 (\$175/bus)
 - Cost of the tickets to the performance is \$5 plus tax (total of \$542.40)
 - The current estimate is a per student cost of \$11.75 for the event and bus
 - Grade 3-6 Sultans of Strings at Centre in the Square: Feb 25th
 - In total there are 215 students, and we would require 5 busses
 - This is intended for both students in Core (English) as well as French Immersion
 - The cost of 5 buses is estimated at \$1000 (due to 2025 pricing).
 - Cost of the tickets to the performance is \$5 plus tax (total of \$1214.75)
 - We are estimating a cost of \$11.75 per child

Treasurer's Report – Eleanor McGrath

- The amounts reported in the last meeting were not quite right.
- Eleanor went over a recap of last year's spending and the current account balance.
- For those who are in the Westvale Council Google Group, a URL will be posted so you can view the financials in detail. If you are not currently part of the Westvale School Council google group/ mailing list and wish to join, please reach out to Mary Sue.
- Account Summary:
 - Last school year, 6.4k was spent on student activities
 - Last school year, \$800 was spent on events (movie nights, fun fair, etc.)
 - Last school year, school day fees (which are 2.9% of all money collected) was \$267
 - Last school year, we made 2.5k revenue from the fun fair, \$940 from Herrle's Produce Boxes, and \$657 from the used book sale.
 - There is currently 10.1k in the account
 - Accounting for the 3k reserve and previous commitments, we have 1k in current available funds.

WRAPSC – Jen Benninger

- It was explained that WRAPSC is basically a council of school councils, and Jen reminded us that anyone can attend at any time.
- Jen found it very informative and invites others to come out with her.
- At the meeting, they spoke about how to run a parent council, and what to expect. They encouraged us to think about the purpose of parent council and to go easy on fundraising without a specific goal.
- They also spoke about increasing parent engagement
 - One suggestion was to have volunteers wear t-shirts that say "ask me how to join"
 - They suggested having a special speaker every meeting to encourage parents to come out and stated that this could just be a teacher presenting something. Speakers should be advertised before the meeting.

- They had facilities there to present on playgrounds
 - Ministry does not fund playgrounds at all; these are entirely funded by parent councils so many schools DO NOT have any playgrounds.
 - They showed one that was recently built and it was 120k.
- A letter written by a WRAPSC member on school violence was read at the meeting. Council reps we were asked to vote on whether or not we support sending this to the trustees. Jen brought it back to council and asked the group whether or not it was something we would like to support.
 - The consensus was that the letter needed to be less vague to be helpful, and there was some concern that it could be stigmatizing for students (especially as it mentioned notifying parents every time a student witnessed an “emotional outburst” at school, which seemed very vague).
 - However, among Westvale Parent Council, there WAS an appetite for knowing when certain types of incidents are happening at school instead of just hearing it from our kids when they get home.
 - In the end, council voted NOT to send the letter as-is.
- An update was provided regarding the Parent Engagement Fund and PRO Grants. This year, there is no set amount for the PRO grant (previously it was \$500). We are looking for ideas for this year’s grant. Last year we brought in a speaker on diversity and inclusion.

Four All Ice Cream – Tonya

- We discussed when we should run our ice cream fundraiser for Four All. Prices had been previously agreed to and voted on in September.
- It was decided it should run from November 18-29 and that we should promote it at movie night on Nov 21st
- The goal is to have the ice cream delivered by Dec 16th
- Tonya will write the school day announcement and Mary Sue will send it out when the fundraiser begins.
- Because of the need for funds for Nutrition for Learning, Doerte motioned that all the profits from this fundraiser should be donated to N4L. Melissa seconded the motion. The majority voted in favour and the motion passed.

Update on Herrles – Christine

- We sold 400 boxes, for a total profit of \$980 (less school day fees).
- This was a very successful event with lots of volunteers.
- Many thanks to all of those who helped out by purchasing boxes, delivering the boxes to the school, and distributing the boxes!

November Movie Night – Nov 21, 2024 – Tonya

- A movie night is planned for November 21st
- This will be a free event, but we will have a donation box available
- Per usual, we will provide free popcorn to those who attend
- Jen will look into ordering and picking up popcorn
- Our vendor last year was Thunderstorm Productions. And their pricing in Jan 2024 for the large bushel bags (approx 80 cups of popcorn) was \$20 per bag. Box of 1000 popcorn bags was \$50, but we have plenty left.

- We purchased 4 bags in March 2024, and will look to purchase the same quantity for this event.
- Jen expressed concern about allergens, and said she would investigate. She found that the popcorn is GF and DF and no nuts are used on premises.
- We will offer one of the free movies that are available to the school. Mary Sue will create a short list and allow classes to vote. The winning movie will be shown.
- The event requires volunteers to come set up at 5:45 (setting up the popcorn table, pulling mats out of the back room and placing on the floor).
- Doors will open at 6:15 and the movie will begin at 6:30. Parents must stay with their children.
- Jen motioned we provide \$150 to purchase the popcorn. Melissa seconded the motion. Majority voted in favour and the motion passed.

Big Box of Cards – Christine Glidden

- Big box of cards is a fundraiser we've run in the past. This time it would be entirely online (via School Day). There are four different boxes of cards, and we can sell all four at once. There are no minimum quantities for ordering.
- Each box contains individually wrapped greeting cards, some of which have standouts or other decorative elements. They have videos showcasing each card in each box.
- There are 35 cards per box, which retails for \$35. Our profit is \$11 per box (minus school day fees).
- They offer free delivery as well as prizes for selling 75 or more boxes (like a pizza party for the top selling class).
- After some discussion, the consensus was that there was interest in running this fundraiser, but probably not until early next year.

Movie Night Popcorn Sales – Christine

- We can resell individual bags of popcorn from either Farm to Table Canada or from Kernals, but the Kernals bags were much more expensive with a shorter shelf life.
- The proposal was to offer flavoured popcorn bags during movie nights, but it was decided not to offer these for sale because of account balance. However, it could be sold in future especially to support a food program.
- Ms. Julian is planning to sell this popcorn as a fundraiser for the grade 6 trip.
- For those interested, here are the details:
 - Popcorn is sold by the case (23g bag x 32 bags). The cost is 78 cents a bag; 24.96 per case before tax. 88 cents and \$28.21 after tax.
 - Flavours available are: Light butter salt, white cheddar, dill pickle, sweet & salty, salt & vinegar, and chipotle cheddar.
 - For Best Before dates, product that is good for at least 5-6 months. When freshly made, it's good for 9 months
 - When selling a bag for \$2, we make \$1.12 per bag.
 - Pickup is 5 mins away from Townline road and the 401 in Cambridge or free shipping threshold is 15 cases.
 - Lead time is 5 business days

Fundraising Thoughts - How to Earn and How to Spend - Tonya

- We had previously voted on funding a per student amount to be used towards field trips or other student experiences.
- The amount previously voted on was \$5 per child.
- Some discussion was had about whether we should offer any additional subsidy for the field trips (which covers all students except JK/SK) and it was decided to keep the original amount of \$5 and then to fully pay for any student who cannot afford the remaining \$6.75.
- Christine motioned that we keep the original \$5 per child subsidy and pay the full cost for students who can't afford the field trip. Doerte seconded. Majority voted in favour, and the motion passed.

Next Meeting Date – November 20th, 2024 from 6:30-8:00 pm

Future Meeting Dates –November 20, January 22, February 19, April 16, May 21, and June 18