



School Council Meeting
April 12, 2022 – 7 PM, Google Meet
Meeting Minutes

- Chair ~ Varvara Chernogorskaya
- Previous Co-Chair ~ Sarah Jane Estabrook
- Treasurer ~ Michelle Sinclair
- Treasurer (apprentice) ~ Ewa Pyman
- Secretary ~ Kate Raspopow
- Book Fair Chair ~ Joni Hamlin
- OCASC Representative ~ Hart Shouldice
- Grade 6 Committee Chair ~ Angie Wagner
- 100th Anniversary Co-chairs ~ Crystal Holly, Todd Lamont
- Volunteer Coordinator – Marion Siekierski
- Principal, RPPS ~ Heather Mace
- Teacher representative ~ Christina Hawley
- RPPS Parent Participants
 - Charlotte Morales
- Regrets
 - Sandra Miller - Vice Principal, RPPS

1) Land Acknowledgement (Ewa)

2) Review of Agenda

3) Review of February 2022 and March 2022 Minutes (5 minutes)

- Hart Shouldice moved to approve the February and March minutes; Joni Hamlin seconded. Minutes approved

4) Business Arising from Minutes / Review of Action Items (5 minutes)

a) School Directory

- Has not yet been distributed - Heather will pick it up with Crystal so it can be formatted and distributed.

5) Chair Report (5 minutes)

- Acknowledged the fundraising discussion to happen later in the meeting.

- Interested in hearing more on the 100th Committee, including the support needed to plan and deliver events and activities. Also curious on the plan to get in touch with the community, plan messaging, and provide clarity on the 100th activities to build momentum.
- Looking forward to the Book Fair update.

6) Principal Report (10 minutes)

- Provided COVID Updates - motion being discussed at OCDSB meeting tonight on making mask wearing mandatory again. Currently percentages of kids continuing to wear masks vary across classes, with lower percentages among primary classes and increasing somewhat in higher grades. Staff absences are a concern to the point where it's hard to find replacement staff (confirmed COVID, symptoms, personal reasons, learning opportunities, appointments, etc). Staff are taking on a big load right now - e.g., losing prep times, being called back from training. Student absences are reasonable at ~15%. RATs are still available upon request for students with symptoms.
- Highlighted that OCDSB has many consultations going on (e.g., Human Rights, high performance athletics), which are listed on the Board website
- Shared that RPPS got a grant to install a nature nook outside (thanks to Mme Whelan). A facilities rep is coming later in April to help set up the nature area for learning opportunities outside.
- Mentioned that the student management system will be changing to ASPEN; this is used to manage attendance, student report cards, etc.
- Provided an update on the spring staffing in progress: the school has student allocations (projecting 430 students; 19 homeroom classes - same as this year; and 24 teachers getting divided between all classes). They're designating staff assignments and working through allocations.
- Shared that the library has been re-opened to RPPS staff. Learning support is now in the Learning labs and cave spaces (RPPS bought furniture for learning spaces) and small group learning and support have restarted in these areas. The cave is also a sensory room. Our librarian is working with Manor Park's librarian tech to cull the collection - removing ~10K books (e.g., old, inappropriate, etc.), and identify where there are gaps. Target is to open the space for Education Week. Staff are looking at next steps for the maker space (e.g., BlueBots as next priority), bins of kits.
- Crystal asked if parent connections for maker space materials (e.g., 3D printer) would be useful, and Heather indicated that they would.
- Indicated that there's a meeting with the Board carpenter tomorrow regarding moving kitchen reno forward (8 x 10 space).
- Shared some of the days of recognition coming up: world Autism month; day of pink; Ramadan.
- Mentioned that an area of focus in the school now is structured literacy, including the Scarborough Reading Rope, which is intended to continue to refine the literacy work being done in classrooms in the Balanced Literacy Programs. Recent evidence shows some kids need explicit teaching of the letters and sounds they make to help them progress. Many educators are attending training (Top 10 Tools sessions; instructional coach coming in for staff). Educators are embedding this structured literacy into the things they're already doing.
- Share that the Kindergarten team is building a land acknowledgement appropriate for kindergarten level - includes asking questions to help them connect to a land acknowledgement. The school is also helping to look at kindergarten model options for the board (e.g., alternating EN/FR by day vs week) to see what will work for next year
- Highlighted the equity dialogue occurring - talk at staff meetings in connection to the Gender Equity and Gender Expression document; looking at how we use language, how we define bias and how it affects us; identifying our own bias, etc.
- Mentioned the Book club formed on the Third Path. Mentioned that the Lisgar School Council is asking if other Councils want to partner to host a 2hr webinar with Dr. David Tranter - the person

who created the third path - as it is costly. Suggested this could be a way to offer learning opportunities to parents.

- Shared information on the upcoming EQAO testing, which will be held online this year. Schools have a more extended period when they can take part this year: early May - mid-June. The test is comprised of language and math sections. There is now more flexibility in the daily/weekly timing of when the testing happens; they just have to all be done in the prescribed order. The Educator team will meet next week to coordinate the administration
- When asked when the playground would be open to students to use again, Heather indicated that this will happen once the ground is unfrozen and inspected.

7) Educator Representative Report (5 minutes)

- Shared that Forest school is continuing with other classes now learning, for example learning about mechanics, the seasons, nature appreciation, etc.
- Indicated that it's Autism awareness month, and classes are doing videos, writing stories, and contributing to bulletin board. Earth day is also coming up.
- Indicated that some classes have had Let's Talk Science (Carleton University students) do online workshops on topics such as building bird nests and bridges, and learning about pulleys, gears, and moving sidewalks
- Highlighted that this is the last burst of teaching time before the nice weather and EQAO for Grades 3 and 6. Educators are trying to wrap up required teaching before the end of the year
- Crystal brought up an opportunity shared with her for having composting worms in schools - the program is looking for 10 classrooms. Educators would get the materials lesson plans, which they would test out. Grades Kinder - 8 are eligible. It would cost a nominal fee (could be paid for from the item lines in the Council budget, if above the three per school). Christina indicated interest, and she and Heather will discuss and bring this to the educators.

8) Council - Committee Updates (25 minutes)

a) Book Fair Committee

- Shared the Committee had an informal Book Fair meeting (April 7) to plan for the next meeting (April 19), and that they're trying to do another recruitment push.
- Mentioned that Erin and Brad are forming a Planning Committee, and will set up a time to speak with Heather regarding options.
- Indicated we need to start collecting books now if we want a November Book Fair. Hoping this will happen in April so Joni would be available to help.
- Heather mentioned we need to make sure we can have volunteers in the school so that we can consistently move this ahead. There are books in the small gym; and she said that we can arrange for volunteers to move them into storage. Council members asked for clarity about having volunteers allowed in the school, but not being able to have them in for Book Fair planning and preparations. Heather indicated that with new Board directives, we can have volunteers in the school, but not at full volume; we could arrange for weekend/after hours volunteers for Book Fair. She's confident the book collecting and storing would be okay, but the in person event later is what we still need clarity on.
- Joni shared that Mutchmor is having an in-school book sale in May.
- Todd noted that secondary schools are allowing fans back in for sporting events, which is a positive sign.
- Heather said we could figure out now how to arrange small groups for sorting and storage.

- Joni emphasized that we need consistent access to the bins and to store (we can't go through the daycare now, which is needed for access to storage areas during summer when the school is closed); emptying the bins needs to happen almost daily. She indicated Book Fair was looking at alternate spaces to hold the event, but this would mean much less money coming to the RPPS Council, which could be a problem. Book Fair's Planning Committee is going to look at different plans for options, and we need to look at these options and decide before the end of the current school year. One option is Book Fair being dissolved and figuring out how we get rid of the assets.
- Joni's focus is updating the Book Fair Terms of Reference for next year. For example, currently community members can't take part in the Committee if they're not a parent of the school, however there would be interest in many in participating. It would make sense for the Chair, Treasurer and potential other positions to be required to be an RPPS parent, but we might want flexibility otherwise. Emphasized the needed focus on recruitment.
- Sarah Jane asked how we impress the importance of Book Fair for RPPS and the community to the Board. Heather said it may be worth connecting with other School Councils who run the bigger book fair events around the city to see where they're at (Elmvale, Broadview, First Avenue). Maybe holding Book Fair at a different time of year would help us in being able to do it (e.g., maybe why Muchmore is looking to hold their event in May), but there's been a reluctance to consider this in the past. She said OCDSB has given a few examples of what we can't do in terms of events, and book fairs was listed
- Joni underscored that if we miss another year of Book Fair, we'll lose a lot of the corporate and operational memory essential to running it. She's happy to have new blood involved in the Committee and more people running with it, but if it does not happen in November there will be no one left in the school who knows how to run it.
- Heather said she would talk to the Mutchmor Principal on how they got around the current OCDSB regulations for their event.
- Kate asked about opportunities to promote Book Fair at community events to help in recruitment. Doesn't seem possible due to capacity and recruitment issues.
- *Note: the Book Fair Chair had to excuse herself from the Council meeting at this point (8:00), and subsequent discussions related to Book Fair Occurred without a Book Fair representative present.*
- Note, in follow-up to this conversation regarding Mutchmor holding an in person event in May, Heather reached out to the Mutchmor Principal during the meeting to and shared information received in the Google Meet chat:
 - Current OCDSB guidance is "As part of a gradual approach to removing COVID restrictions, events at all schools are to remain on hold until further notice. Further guidance will be provided in the coming weeks."
 - Mutchmore is hosting a scaled down event with student books only. They're looking at the possibility of a Friday/Saturday option. Mutchmore doesn't have Community Use approval yet.

b) Treasurer

- Shared that since the last meeting, we spent money on the Google Space website
- Indicated that we still have quite a bit of money to spend - school grants, workshops, primary class support, field maintenance, 100th events, etc.

- Michelle will provide a list of where can still spend money to share with Heather and Christina to get this back on radars.
- Christina indicated that people might not be aware there's still money available, and will appreciate getting the list from Michelle, to share the information out.
- Regarding the school grants, Michelle asked which schools should we give our money to, and how this decision has been made in the past. It was shared that it used to be Book Fair Committee in consultation with the Principal who would decide (as the funds came from Book Fair proceeds). Last year Council donated to the two feeder schools, and one of the schools received the funds via iPad purchases vs the money. Often the funds go to schools that don't even have a School Council.
- When asked which schools come to mind as some to consider, Heather indicated RE Wilson, Viscount, Queen Mary, Cambridge, and Queen Elizabeth.
- In terms of process, Heather gets the money and a letter from Council and can give them the money. The treasurer can also mail it. If the school chooses to have items purchased with the money, RPPS administration arranges for this.
- RE Wilson and Queen Mary were put forward by Sarah Jane and Michelle for Council to Consider.
- *Sarah Jane moved to have Council approve RE Wilson and Queen Mary as the two school recipients. Kate seconded. Approved.*
- Heather will connect with the Principals to see if they would like money or items purchased.
- With respect to other budget lines remaining to be spent, Heather indicated that she'll go back to the staff to highlight what is still available, and get recommendations for what they want make space money spent on.
- Hart will reach out to contacts to explore providing funds to have the Third Path speaker (referred to in the Principal's update).

c) OCASC

- No meetings have been held since the last Council meeting; the April meeting is next week.
- PRO Grant speaker has been confirmed: The Math Guru on May 19 7-8 via Google meet. Our session will be with two other schools: Lakeview and Roland Mitchner. Duties shared among the three schools (publicizing it and getting people engaged).

d) 100th Anniversary Committee

- Indicated that Co-chairs will be resuming regular meetings with Heather
- Shared that people are hesitant to come on board and take on responsibilities. Co-chairs encouraged Council members to engage more and get their networks involved. The big role needed to fill in the immediate term is the archivist and community liaison role.
- Reminded Council that the fall and next may events are scheduled, and they're pushing forward to get quotes, reservations, etc.
- Small pieces on the 100th have been in all the local newsletters with info, and encouraging people to be involved.
- Mentioned that we're waiting for the tulip blooms to poke out. The Committee is looking for someone who's an experienced photographer who could take photos of tulips and with kids for promotional materials - there will only be a short window for

when they're in bloom. Some members provided information/potential contacts in the chat.

- Confirmed that after tulips bloom, the Committee will launch the sale. The tulip order has to be completed by mid-late August. Need to make estimates of how many tulips to buy. Funds will be needed for pre-payments of tulips.
- Co-chairs asked about the \$3K reserved in the Council budget for this year, and whether they can be used to pre-pay for some of the September event pieces that require down/early payments. Sarah Jane confirmed this is possible as the money is allocated toward the event, so would not have to be spent this Council year.
- Co-chairs also asked if, should excess Council funds outside of the 100th budget line be available, could we use them as well to pre-pay for Sept 100th event. They'll come back at the next meeting with details of the projected expenses and their timing, and then will come back to Council. Yes, the funds could be re-allocated and would just need a vote to confirm its reallocation, or could also be confirmed by the Council Executive. It was raised that, although there typically isn't a September Council meeting, we could call one in early September to get any last approvals on expenses and spending.
- Could also have a September meeting to get quorum to get approvals.
- The Co-chairs confirmed with Heather that they are still okay to move ahead with planning for the outdoor events, given COVID restrictions.

e) Grade 6 Committee

- Shared that the Grade 6 hoodies have been received, and will hopefully be delivered to students very soon.
- Mentioned that planning for year end ceremony is underway, and items have been ordered for the SWAG bags
- Indicated the mural is now going to be a canvas, and that supplies have been purchased and delivered. Reasons for the change are assumed to include to allow more children access to contribute, could easily have a 're-do' if any major mistakes are made the first time, for a smoother look and feel. Angie indicated she could follow-up to confirm.
- Noted that things are moving along with cookbook style yearbook

f) Volunteers

- Nothing to report

9) Fundraising (10 minutes)

- Sarah Jane, Michelle, Ewa, Marion, and Kate met regarding planning for upcoming fundraising events (raffle and trivia night). They will meet again ~April 19th.
- Marion contacted museums to see if they would donate passes - some are willing, but it takes ~4weeks to process the donation. She inquired whether it's possible to buy some passes with Council money in advance to save the time, and reimburse from profits. Dave indicated this has been done for raffle items in previous years. The committee will discuss at their next meeting.
- Council discussed the issue of how to know whether our messages and call-outs to parents are getting out. There has been limited volunteer uptake in general, for the 100th and for Book Fair, and there has been only one donor through the general donation call-out. There is no way of telling who reads the emails with this information, or the Newsletter.

- Council members discussed how we need to approach people personally to enlist interest; we need to be specific on what we want (e.g., people to stuff envelopes on day X); and need to proactively invite people to sign up for the Facebook Group (and increase our use of this platform for our advertising). Suggested we not approach people before we know exactly what we want/need so as not to lose the interest of people or our social capital.
- The idea of having a Welcoming Committee to reach out to new RPPS families, welcome them, see if they'd want to join Council or engage in the school in other ways was raised. This could also help new families connect and form a link with community.
- Council inquired whether educators could help send messages to their class parents. Heather indicated they often re-use language from her emails. With respect to educators helping identify families who might have a specific interest or skillset to support Council activities (as they know the families the best) Christina mentioned this would be done best by Council identifying what they need, then they could think if there might be anyone who might fit the need.
- Council will provide Christina and Jane with information on what we're looking for, and they can send out to their classes. First thoughts from council members include:
 - For the 100th: archivist/alumni relations person. So far the people contacted have not signed on. There are a few more names they'll follow-up on. Ideally they are looking for someone in the school who the Committee could connect in with for class projects, and a neighbourhood person who is interested in the history of Rockcliffe.
- Heather found RPPS archival pieces and has stored them in one place. The school is brainstorming ideas - getting the kids excited will have them talk about the 100th and bring back info to their parents.
- Other suggestions to increase visibility/uptake was to increase signage outside local venues (e.g. library, coffee shop, bookstore); and to connect the Heritage Committee (RPRA - Ewa will connect with Crystal on this).

10) Indigenous Learning (5 minutes)

- Indicated that Council members favoured the interactive option for dreamcatcher to offer to families. We would order kits and have them delivered to school, then families would get a link to a video and could do on their own time. This activity is done by Indigenous Experiences, which works with MASC. Indigenous Experiences is geared towards family activities and learning. This activity would fit well with the responses from the survey sent to families earlier in the year, where they indicated they would be most interested in learning about Indigenous art and culture.
- With respect to whether cultural appropriation is a concern with this activity, it's set up to teach of the traditional origin story of the Dreamcatcher, the medicine wheel, and other teachings, so it is a learning experience.
- Michelle proposed to start by ordering 40 kits and see the uptake. We could order more if the uptake is big. If not, we could use the remaining funds to invite one of the speaker options.
- Council agreed for Michelle to order the kits (they'll go to the school and will be sent home with kids when received).
- We'll need to promote to families.
- Michelle will provide Heather an email for her to send out in a separate mailing to advertise this learning opportunity to families.

11) Other Business (5 minutes)**a) Traffic Safety**

- Heather shared this topic has been raised to her a few times, and a parent conversation is needed about how to make arrival and departure safer. Continuing to engage the city is something we can move (e.g., conversations on sidewalks). Specific suggestions and recommendations for this consultation and other suggestions are what we want so we can put them back to the city.
- Crystal suggested considering whether setting up parent volunteers to safety to monitor traffic during arrival/departure. But this would be a consideration for next year.

12) Adjournment

Next Council meeting: May 10, 2022