

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Mary Johnston School Council Meeting Minutes

Start time: 6:35 pm

Location: MJ Library

In Attendance:

Marcus Hoare
Francine Baruffi
Kara Botelho
Erika Bryant
Janice Taylor
Pooja Bhalla
Bill Halford
Sarah Bester
Magdi Elsayed

Welcome/ previous meeting minutes

Meeting begins at 6:35 with Co-Chairpersons Pooja and Bill noting that we do not have enough attending voting members for quorum, so now new spending decisions can be finalized.

Motion made by Magdi, seconded by Sarah, to accept meeting minutes from last month. All in attendance vote to accept. None oppose.

Marcus' welcome and update

- Marcus begins his welcome with a territorial acknowledgement. He also mentioned how Mme Nader gave the territorial acknowledgement earlier that day in the staff meeting, which he found excellent. It focused on moving away from something that is simply recited. There has been discussion about truly embedding the concept into learning in the upcoming year.
- Reminder of how school is continuously learning about classroom ways to address student needs.
- Model with EAs has been shifted and over the past 3 weeks, data collection indicates that the recent shift has been successful. Sarah asks about this and whether it is a funding issue that is resulting in the need to come up with new models. Marcus explains that it is more about efficiently using the human resources available.
- Mathology has been used with free trials. Ms Martin will collect information about this, and the staff will discuss it. Council may be asked to help fund a subscription if the free trials give the impression that this would be a helpful resource.

- EQL starts today and goes until June. Online. More autonomous. Some students can be working on it while others are doing a different activity. G3s and 6s will be doing this over the next month. Ms Cora has been involved in this.
- Literacy learning: Mme Nader Mme McManus and Mr Hoare have looked at decodables as resources. It is emphasized that knowing how to use these tools and resources is very important.
- School improvement plan is ongoing.
- Sign/Play Structure/Grounds
 - Recent painted games have been very well received by the school community.
 - Gaga Ball Pit is still a very popular addition to the school grounds.
 - Play structures have expiry dates. The junior one (by the portable – G4-6) will expire in June 2030 and will have to be replaced. When this happens, Facilities can *help* with regards to cost.
 - Some in attendance note that we have 5 years to work on fundraising to replace these structures. The cost is very high, and the School Board is not obligated to finance this.
 - Point is made by Council members that the Gaga Ball Pit has been enjoyed by many students. Evenings and weekends have seen many children coming to use it and enjoying the fun it gives. Marcus notes that outside learning is complemented by the availability of such resources (outside learning fuels inside learning).
 - School sign: Michelle has reached out to the company in charge, but they have not been very responsive. It is unclear to us at this point who funded the purchase of the sign. We have been looking for more info and answers to give us the information we need to see about getting it fixed. It has been decided that the company will not be recommended. If there are big expenses like this to be funded in the upcoming years, Pooja makes a point that the ROI on such matters must be considered. There have been issues with this sign since it was installed.
 - Staffing: Mary Johnston is in a situation now where the school's enrollment for next year has gone down by what is considered 2.5 classes. 3 teachers have been asked to leave and transfer to another school. Ms Mayled, Ms Stampatori, and Ms Rudo will be leaving the school next year. Pooja asks about the rationale for such decisions is when we need teachers with specialty skills. Marcus points out that of there are currently 109 teachers in our Board who currently will not have a job next year. None of those teachers are specialists in behavioural support. Enrollment transitions, which is what the 3 teachers from MJ are going through, mean that those teachers will still have a job with the Board, but will be transferred to other schools based on numbers of students. April 9th was the due date for Marcus to give numbers. Boards did not know in April how much funding they would receive. Marcus notes that in the past few years, the Board has been cutting back quietly. This is now more obvious. EA staffing has not been affected, thankfully. Marcus is

asked how he feels about such cuts. His response is that it is very difficult, but that we are lucky to have a great team and excellent teachers.

- Bill interjects with a question on why enrollment is dropping by 20-25 students. A discussion ensues where it is explained that the demographics of the neighbourhood, along with other factors such as inflation and real estate prices, have resulted in less young children living within the boundaries of the School. The total enrollment is projected to go from 396 to 373.
- Kodaly update: MJ Council was mentioned and thanked for the initiatives and donations made to support the event and enable parents to attend and support their child if performing.
- Move-A -Thon: JF Carmichael is the school that we will be helping with the proceeds. They are very grateful and overjoyed with the help. The funds will go to things such as whiteboards and other useful resources. Marcus and the Principal from the school will be talking to find a way to involve some students or find a way to connect the schools.
- Grade 6 celebrations: The team met this morning. There are some questions (Francine and Diane). Camp for G5-6 is being planned. There are track and field events are coming up.
 - Diane reached out to Jen and there has been a day booked (June 26th) for the students to use the local swimming pool (UB2) for two hours. Donations will be used to buy pizza/snacks and remuneration for the guards.
 - Funds have been voted on and should cover expenses for the picnic and activity day which has been planned.

Francine B Gives update on Nutrition for Learning

In terms of funding, \$4000 is the amount the School Council donated. Funding from government was \$4157 (this is down around \$2000 from previous year). We are now short about \$3000. There have been attempts to fundraise for this. Some of our gap will be covered, however, for next year, we may need to think of increasing the amount donated by 2-3k. Francine will email the Council and update members on what is allotted by the government. She will talk to Cary to close the account and let us know exactly what the financial situation is. The costs of NfL items are increasing. We will hopefully know by the end of the school year. We may need another donation to order what is needed to carry us through to the end of the year. We may end up needing to use the funds that were approved for next year to settle our account for this year and then increase the donation for the next school year. We will need to get approval for this which might be done by remote vote. Going forward, it would be better to start voting on the funding for NfL in the February meeting. Francine will ensure that the NfL organisation knows that we will cover our balance by the end of this year, to make sure they do not need to use any charitable donations (such as Tim Horton's smile cookies) to cover our current shortfall. The only amount that cannot be cross funded between schools is what the government

provides for each school. There is now a plan for this. Our current balance owed is \$2900 (\$1200 previously and the current order of \$1700).

On a related note, Pooja makes a point that Pizza Day is one of our only fundraisers that bring in significant funds. Looking forward, we may find that even though we have a significant amount of funds in our account right now, it may become apparent that we need substantial amounts for the future. There are some things such as playground structures and outside learning spaces that may be very costly (100k for playground structure).

Literacy and Math Night (May 22)

Math games have been purchased (around 7) for the night. 2 rooms, one for literacy and one for math games. Story telling in the library. Crafts have been ordered also.

Used Book Sale (May 22)

Michelle will be sending out a reminder (please spread the word). Office door is where books can be dropped off. Access to the gym at 1:50pm. Sarah will begin sorting earlier that day. Erika has volunteered to help. A discussion was held, and several details were considered, and plans were made to prepare for the event. Books will be sorted and labeled more by genre than reading level. 4 rooms will be needed: 1 for math, 1 for literacy, 1 for crafts and 1 for an interactive activity.

End of Year Event

Face paint makeup (is the leftover from last year available?).
Movie: will be chosen and slotted into the plan for the night.

Meeting in June?

It is likely that we will not have a meeting in June. Any votes needed can be done remotely.