

**PARENT SCHOOL COUNCIL 2021/2022
MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 9, 2022**

ATTENDANCE

- **Present:** M. McCann (Principal), A. Litster (Secretary) J. Roy (Teacher Rep), S. Kelenc (Teacher Rep), Mrs. Johnson (Non-Teacher Rep); A. Cunanan (Chair), A. Patola (Co-Chair), A. Pronski (Secretary), Kristin Zeljkovic (Parent Rep), N Sarin (Treasurer), Heather Jagiello (Co-Secretary), Sharon Hobin (Trustee), Leah, Kelechi Ozurigbo, Charlene Essue
- **Regrets:** J. Rye (Community Rep), Sojourner King (OAPCE Rep), Ljeoma, Nargim, Amanda

AGENDA ITEMS

1. WELCOME/OPENING REMARKS - M. CLOUTIER MCCANN, A. CUNANAN & A. PATOLA
2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Recording
3. OPENING PRAYER - A. CUNANAN
4. GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD – Sharon Hobin, Trustee and Chair of the Board of Trustees
 - Ministry of Education operates under the Education Act, which has multiple regulations. For example, class sizes, health expectations, laws to protect children, etc.
 - Over the last few years more regulations have been added. For example:
Vaccine clinics, masking, self-assessment forms. As such, these things are mandated/regulated, not within Board control
 - Regardless of the challenges during these COVID times, incredibly engaging education activities continue to occur thanks to our amazing school staff
 - Purpose of the letter to the Ministry (which parents received a copy of) was to highlight some of the miscommunication occurring & challenges. Examples include:
 - HEPA Filters:
 - For example, Minster said every classroom would have HEPA filters
 - The school board received money to improve HEPA
 - However, there is not a HEPA filter in every classroom. Rather the schools have top of the line ventilation systems and Air Scrubbers added in FDK classes, portables and special education classes; any leftover HEPA filters are dispersed to other classrooms – but there is not enough for every classroom
 - Board hears about changes by watching CP24, they are not previously consulted or informed. They do regularly meet with the Minster, but after he makes announcements to the public press
 - Self-evaluation forms:
 - Approach is not practical and lacks understanding of how schools operate
 - Request is to have an app that would digitize and streamline this process
 - Consent forms for School Vaccination clinic
 - Very few clinics are up and running. They will prioritize low vaccinated areas
 - Board was not comfortable proceeding without parental attendance to comfort their child

- Want to see mandates lifted on sports, extracurricular, volunteers, fundraising, etc. back into schools
 - Minister is thinking about it and speaking to the Chief Medical Officer
- Propped up COVID funding has been very helpful for staffing, custodian support, HEPA filters, etc. but one day this will stop
- Transportation study underway to get more funding for transportation needs
- Addressing concerns with Ministry around future funding related to \$ per pupil approach and the declining youth population in urban areas
 - Urban areas are facing a decline vs. London ON for example with a 45% increase. This is a challenge to funding as Board is funded by pupil. However, the fixed costs of running a school remain the same.
- Property taxes support Public schools by default (not Separate Catholic schools), trying to change the default with the Ministry so when supporters move they don't have to re-do the paperwork
- **Parent Question:** One of the purposes of the School Vaccination clinics is to help parents who are extremely busy, working multiple shifts, in marginalized communities, etc. get their kids vaccinated. The requirement to have a parent present, defeats the purpose.
 - **Trustee Answer:**
 - High school is complete. This requirement is targeted at 5-11 year olds who need more comforting/support
 - The schools don't have enough staff to facilitate this individual one-on-one vaccination approach
 - Some parents are very against School Vaccination clinics
- **Parent Question:** You mentioned some parents view sending School Vaccination information to parents via email as 'promoting vaccinations 'and are vocally against it. This is the vocal minority. The majority are pro-vaccine and I want to ensure you hear from this group too, even though they might not be as vocal. I would like to see more promotion of the vaccine within our schools. To keep our children, staff & healthcare system safe.
 - **Trustee Answer:**
 - In complete agreement, but these are challenging times
 - Administrators and staff have unfortunately been berated
 - Regulations and mandates come top down from the ministry
- **Parent Question:** Graduation plans
 - Still waiting for mandates around graduation plans. Minister yesterday said a decision should be coming imminently (including athletics & extracurricular)
 - Starting to discuss contingencies – e.g. host them outside and bring umbrellas if inclement weather
- **Parent Question:** How they are supporting the mental health & well-being of students & teachers
 - They have funding for mental health, more targeted towards students, particularly at the secondary school level
 - First time back to a semester system with 4 courses at a time. Only 7% are online; many are in hybrid until Feb 22nd, but most are back
 - Social workers are very concerned about students who were already on their radar or may have been in jeopardy at home – social workers are working around the clock

- To support staff who are managing their own mental health or challenges within their families – the Board has health & wellness programs, mental health leaves, etc. Long-term disability has increased 2.5x, which includes mental health leaves and this is very underfunded, so running at a deficit
- **Parent Question:** Vaccines for Grade 7 & 8s
 - Has been put on hold. The issue is getting nurses (the schools never had access to nurses)

5. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES - A. CUNANAN & A. PATOLA

- Approved – A. Pronski moved for approval & H. Jagiello seconded motion

6. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MEETING AGENDA - A. CUNANAN & A. PATOLA

- Approved – A. Pronski moved for approval & A. Patola seconded motion

7. TREASURER REPORT - N. SARIN

- All commitments (agendas, awards etc.) have now been debited (cheque \$1,517.60 on bank statement)

Balance (as of Jan 31 bank statement)	\$4,688.23
Donations (26% participation)	\$3,822.00
Available School Council Funds	\$ 8,510.23

8. COMMITTEE REPORT(S)

- OAPCE – meeting coming up in February, all are welcome
- CCCSC (Central Committee for Catholic School Councils) – Feb 3 was the last meeting; Key message: *I will be my best and God will do the rest*". Next meeting is in March.
 - Upcoming event – First week of March, Human Trafficking presentation
 - Upcoming event – Feb 24 – SEAC – TVO Digital Outreach Math Programs
 - Parent engagement budget for each school of \$500
 - Parish Rep (we don't have one) - they are setting up a meeting with the Bishop. As well as setting up a virtual mass.
 - Some schools have been having difficulty fundraising
 - St. James one-time donation approach has been very effective throughout COVID, other schools will be following our approach
 - Even though our 26% participation is way down compared to past years, it is still much farther ahead than some schools.
 - Ms. McCann said the school council & community should be proud about what we have been able to fundraise and therefore fund around the school for the benefit of the students. The students are very happy with & grateful for the benches, sensory hallway, paintings, etc. we funded last year

9. PREVIOUS BUSINESS – A. CUNANAN & A. PATOLA

- Shade/Awning

- Board will only support the planting of trees
- Spirit Wear
 - Did not occur in January due to COVID. Should we now proceed or defer?
 - It is a lot of administrative work for the school AND it is far into the school year
 - **Deferred:** Plan is to put it on the April Council agenda to approve for the new school year. Then we can get it out in the September Newsletter, before first opening meeting of the Council. Could also showcase clothes IF we have the open house. Great time to size the students to facilitate easy ordering and take some of the administrative pressure off the school staff (Council members could volunteer)
 - **Decision:** A. Patola moved to approve the motion. A. Pronski seconded motion
- List of items from survey & Allocation of Funds
 - The below table is a follow-up to the November 24 Council Meeting with regards to survey items and approx. costs
 - Today we voted to approve the standing items for funding
 - **Decision:** Approved – A. Cunanan for approval & A. Patola seconded motion
 - **Deferred:** Motion to defer the rest to our April Council meeting. Giving the Council time to review the list, discuss and have a plan for how we will allocate the funds. During our April Council meeting we will put it to a vote.
 - **Decision:** Approved – A. Cunanan for approval & A. Patola seconded motion

ITEM	Cost
Outdoor Soccer net	Outdoor learning grant/school
Outdoor volleyball net	Outdoor learning grant/school
Ball hockey - painting	175
Pavement painting - 4 square	100
Trees	505
Logs – replacement in Peace Garden - 4-5 logs	3,340
- Logs seats (east & west corners)	
- Paint for logs	
Benches (around trees)	2126.24
Benches in pavement area	
Picnic tables	
Soil/mulch for ECO	200

Butterfly Garden (Kiss N Ride)	300
Bird Houses/feeders	
Mural - outdoors	
Hallway Painting - Junior	4032
- Intermediate – 1 wall mural	987
- Library – 2 pillars	1536
Standing Items:	
- Agendas (grade 1-6)	800
- Graduation tree	505
- Graduation awards	350
- Bank fees	60

10. NEW BUSINESS – A. CUNANAN & A. PATOLA

- Fundraising – Mabel’s Labels
 - No work for staff. Heather offered to coordinate setting this up. Once it is activated it is an always on campaign with no work required by St. James staff.
 - Discussion about the historical context of the “one-time” donation request approach. Purpose was to prevent parents from being hassled for more money for this fundraiser and that; plus to reduce the administrative burden of running those types of campaigns for the council & staff
 - A fundraising approach like Mabel’s Labels or Spirit Wear is completely different – it is something some parents are going to buy anyways and this way a percentage goes back to the school fundraising efforts (in addition to the one-time voluntary donation amount). It is an optional participation, not a requirement
 - We will draft an always on communication to be included in the monthly newsletter School Council section, so parents always know where to find the link. To start in March or April, depending on when Heather can set it up for
 - We will also include it in the Journey Into Learning package that is distributed in the summer to new JK students, as this is a key time when parents are buying labels
 - Trustee confirmed that other schools are doing Mabel’s Labels as well
 - **Take-away:** Ms. McCann to confirm it’s board approved
 - **Decision:** Approved – A. Cunanan moved for approval & A. Pronski seconded motion
- Graduation
 - Trustee Hobin answered this question earlier, see above
- Sacramental Gifts
 - Other schools have this as a standing item
 - Due to COVID there are a lot more students receiving their sacraments
 - **Take-away:** Ms. McCann will get the information and send to the council members
 - **Deferred:** Moved to next meeting to discuss in more detail
- Learning Gap

- There is lots in the news about this perceived learning gap; however we need to do our own assessment as parents & educators. EQAO will occur this year which will be hard data, as well as report card data, and educator's observations. This hard data will enable our school community to identify any gaps
- We already have some programs
 - [Empower](#) – direct instruction program through Sick Kids
 - Lexia – more technology, self-directed & independent, but Mr. Kelenc supports them
- Government is looking to fund some Professional Development days
- Trustee said she and the Board are advocating to not do EQAO this year. Sounds like the Minister plans to proceed
- Trustee referenced a book - "Love Builds Brains" by Dr. Jean Clinton – more important is the mental health, learning will come.
- [Zoom recording: Love Builds Brains - the Heart & Brain Connection - Rise Together to Resilience with Dr. Clinton](#)
- Trustee shared that conversations are occurring between High School & University level about the readiness of students and support required

11. SCHOOL'S REPORT – STAFF

- Catholicity
 - Virtue Certificates
 - Advent Mass virtually
 - Ash Wednesday – March 2
 - Lenten mass – March 10
- Curriculum
 - Term 1 Report Cards
 - Reminder on how to access Report Cards was sent out last week
 - Student Led Conferences
 - At St. James, these are different from a traditional teacher conference. This is a time for students to profile their learning. Talk about their Learner Profile, etc.
 - **Parent Action:** Read the section in the February Newsletter, regarding what this Student Led Conference is, why it is important and how parents can support & engage in these discussions
 - Virtual trips/webinars
 - EQAO
 - MYP and Black Heritage
 - Grade 6, 7 and 8 Science classes are highlighting achievements of black individuals in the field of science
 - In religion, theme of solidarity specific to black history
 - Social studies & black history integrations
 - Family life – leveraging the Trailblazer resource around the theme of commitment
 - In Language class they are reading a number of educational black history novels (e.g. Alexandra of Africa, etc)
 - PYP – Equity Focus
 - Morning announcements feature Jesus as a person of colour and integrating black history throughout the curriculum

- Many classes are looking at accomplished black people from Canada and around the world
- Leveraging TrailBlazers resource
 - a. G1 & G5 attended a virtual meeting with the author, explored identities & histories, and learned about different points of view in history
 - b. FDK thought about their hopes & dreams for their future selves; listened to Martin Luther King's speech I have a dream, etc.
- Many stories have been read throughout the various classrooms and are profiled in the library throughout the year with black characters
- Co-Curriculum
 - Math Competition – 41 participants, 16 in Gr 7 & 8; 25 in Gr 5 & 6; Overall 7 students achieved in top 25%
 - Spirit Days – this week is all about Olympics
 - Photography Club – continued in December
 - ECO team – extracurricular is currently on hold; but Eco team supported sweater day last week
- Facilities
 - Masks while on school property – thank you to all parents who are wearing masks. Continue to thank each other in the school community. Unfortunately staff are still struggling with the minority who are confrontational about wearing a mask
 - Snow removal – Mr. Black worked very diligently, as did contractors in removing the snow. Thank you to parents for their patience in finding alternate spots to park in
- Other
 - Teacher candidates – 3 this term in Grades 3, 4, 5
 - Registrations – happened a couple of weeks ago.
 - JK to Gr 8, 169 registrations. Huge thank you to Ms. Lister who while running the office, also processed that volume
 - 41 JK, 23 spots
 - Absenteeism – since this was started to be tracked, school has never gone above 7% between school & staff. Therefore, have not had to disburse classes

12. OTHER

- Parish Representative – to be filled
- Upcoming event – Feb 24 6:30-8pm – Learn about TVO's FREE Digital Outreach Math Programs, hosted by SEAC. Register by February 17th

13. Motion to Close the Meeting

- **Decision:** Approved – A. Cunanan moved for approval & A. Patola seconded motion

Future meetings (virtually via Zoom):

Wed. April 6, 2021 @ 6:30PM