

BOWMORE SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date | time February 25, 2019 @ 6:00 pm | *Meeting called to order by* Lyndsey Camps

In Attendance:

Lyndsey Camps, Andrea Maugham, Angie Winstl-Ackland, Ruth Lee, Rasha Mourtoda, Lori Sears-Malik, Nancy Bothelo, Sarah Kelar, Brandi Zebrak, Natalie Poissant, Lynne Newman, Leah Jarvis, Fatima Zehna, Jody Sadotsky, Cindy Perry, Elizabeth Grundin, Kelsie Hernandez, Shaileen Casimiro, Jen Fleming, Michaela Jeffs, Jolane Folts.

Indigenous Acknowledgment:

Acknowledgement offered by Talcia Richards.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes were read from the January 2019 Bowmore School Council Meeting by: Approved by Nancy Bothelo, seconded by Natalie Poissant.

Call for New Business:

N/A

School Council / Parent Concern Protocol

A reminder of the etiquette for these meetings: this forum is a great place for discussion and keeping up-to-date, but everyone must ensure that the proceedings are respectful. This is a safe place. Please do not raise specific issues regarding an individual member of the school administration. At each meeting, Lyndsey and Andrea moderate discussion to ensure it remains respectful, productive, and efficient.

Recent Bowmore Successes

Let's take a moment to acknowledge some of the excellent activities happening at Bowmore:

- The Dance-a-thon raised over \$18,000. So many parent volunteers stepped up, and the kids LOVED the event. Part of the success was the assembly in advance and the daily reminders to get kids engaged. Thanks to everyone for contributing.
- Our first Allergy Awareness Week went even better than anticipated. The kids were really excited and engaged. There were programs and competitions for all grade levels. Mr. Parsons did great programming that combined education and games. It was very effective at promoting messages around food safety. It is being considered for part of the curriculum each year. Thank you to Fatima, Ruth and VP Parsons.
- In Sports Bowmore has seen big success with intermediate boys in basketball.
- The Robotics team also did well, they were even featured in the Beach Metro.
- Snuggle Up & Read night was a huge success. We had a great turnout, better than last year. Next, we're looking into doing a math night.
- Family fitness night was also really well-attended. This event was part of the school wellness initiative. Next year we might consider a warmer time.

This is Indigenous Focus Week at Bowmore. We hope to take part in a huge water walk that is coming up to support the protection and care of this life-giving force. It helps to raise awareness about helping to protect the water. We also had an Indigenous elder at the school. All classes are participating in a different way. Bowmore has the second highest indigenous population in the city.

Black History Month. Many activities at appropriate levels are planned or have taken place:

- Door decorating contest
- Lord Dufferin came in and taught students to play Awari (they plan to host their own championships)
- The kindergartens had Jamaican storytelling
- Ballet Creole is coming in to showcase different African dance styles
- The next Live Different presentation is scheduled for grades 6-8, centred on Kindness

A reminder that Michael Eisen is coming back March 6. His previous presentation was very well-received.

Take Action Update

Leah has been meetings with students during lunch on Tuesdays to work with all the milk bags that have been sent in. She brought one large mat to show their beautiful work. They can make two more mats to be sent to third world countries where there has been a natural disaster, etc. The program will run until the end of May. You can keep sending milk bags.

ECO Team Update

Update from Jen. Green bins has arrived and we hope to have them in use very soon. There will be another textile drive April 22-29, so clean out your closets! Leftover Lost & Found items will also be washed and bagged for this donation.

The used marker collection continues in the lobby.

Health and Wellness Update

Snack Team update from Lori. Thank you to everyone who responded with cleaning materials and mandolins. It is greatly appreciated. We've been trying to highlight the snack program by showing more of our efforts on Facebook. We've secured great vendors for healthy baked goods, fresh fruits and veggies and dairy snacks. There is always something in the snack bin for every kid and we've been incorporating special snacks for occasions like Valentine's Day.

We will be asking for donations soon. It is not required for students to participate but it helps offset any little extras and trying to align to the school's no waste eco mission. Due to great vendors, advance planning and bulk buying we're really able to stretch the budget.

The Snack Program does take a lot of time. There are a team of parents that help out regularly. If you ever have time (an hour or so) after drop off, swing by the kitchen behind the senior gym) to help out.

Lori is also having discussions with the Community Centre about starting a tennis program on the beautiful new tennis court.

We are hoping to schedule an additional speaker in May, perhaps around social media.

Fundraising Team Update

Update from Lyndsey and Andrea.

Bowmore Rocks. We're looking for items for the raffle or auction. Teachers have also been asked for artwork for the auction. If you are attending, you're expected to volunteer for a short shift (45 min) during the event.

Carnival. We're looking for sponsorships from local business to help alleviate the expenses/up front costs. There are different levels of sponsorship available. Please ask your local contacts.

Diversity and Inclusion Team Update

The team has been looking at ways to open up Council involvement for more people, some of whom may find it intimidating because they don't know anyone. We want to get people excited about volunteering.

One way we'd like to tackle this is to involve more people in the ideation around events and activities so they feel more invested. Council discussed and agreed that the first hour of the April meeting will be devoted to a brainstorming / planning session. It is critical to promote this meeting to as many new people as possible. Please make an extra effort to welcome new participants. If we can get new people in on the ground floor of ideas, it will build investment, engender support and engagement for next year.

The brainstorming session should be facilitated by a professional. Any thoughts or ideas are welcome. This idea is to create space for new ideas, and not necessarily vet feasibility. The goal is more to get people in the door and feel like they are contributing. And perhaps uncover different ways to contribute. E.g., how do we engage parents who work and can't be here during school hours?

Shaileen inquired if there is a technology solution / opportunity to involve more people. Perhaps a webcast or Facebook Live event or video conference.

Rick Hansen Foundation Speaker

Opportunity raised by Jolane Folts. Jolane discovered a potential opportunity to have an inspirational speaker from the Rick Hansen Foundation come in and speak about living with a disability and overcoming challenges. The Foundation has an ambassador team. April is Celebrate Diversity month. Perhaps this could evolve into something similar to the Allergy Awareness week next year. And it fits well with our recent partnership with Variety Village.

Family Math Night

We have booked the date for a school-wide Math Night. Stay tuned for updates from Ms. Reinsalu.

Lunchroom Concerns

Issue raised by Melanie. Melanie has collected informal feedback from parents about the lunchroom experience and has found a lot of opportunity for improvements. Parents have reported that the lunchroom is very noisy and some kids have to wear their winter clothes. This is not ideal for shy or easily-distracted kids who need to eat a good meal to learn for the rest of the day. Most parents want to promote values like manners and healthy lifestyle and kindness but the environment doesn't promote these values. Kids are rushed and they don't have time to eat.

To begin to see how we can address the concerns, Melanie would like to first understand the scope of the problem in order to seek support from the Council on an informed action plan. How can we understand the restrictions in space, time and resources?

Heather contributed some information for clarity. There is currently 1 staff member for every 100 students. We have 5 supervisors for primary, junior and intermediate in three spaces, at the same time. School Administration is advocating for another supervisor. It is a position with the school board. Teachers are entitled to 45 min uninterrupted lunch.

Darryl mentioned that this issue was brought up last year but found no solution. It is a systemic TDSB problem.

Melanie will meet with Administration to understand opportunities for improvement.

Home Ec Room Supplies

Concern raised by Jen Fleming,

Recently when volunteering for the great Home Ec program, Jen found the equipment and supplies dismal. She asked how often the state of the kitchens is audited, to ensure kids are encouraged to cook, in a safe environment.

Leah informed that there is one parent and teacher who regularly checks in on kitchen and replaces some equipment. The Council will connect with parent volunteer to follow up.

Equitability of Classroom Treats

Jen Fleming raised a concern about inconsistent rules in classrooms for special occasions like Valentines Day and birthdays, etc.

Heather added that the school Admin is looking at rolling out a school-wide policy about bringing food into school. Many schools have a 'no food' policy. Once determined, the policy will be communicated through newsletters etc.

Admin Team Update

a) Caretaking. With regards to snow removal, kindergarten playgrounds, and general maintenance, we have 7 caretakers in the school working different shifts. This season there has been a lot of discontent with ice not being properly removed. Our school is aging and we need much more than cosmetics. If you want to report an issue (e.g. a corner that isn't cleared), please bring concerns to Heather, Talcia, Stephen and they will address with Glen (head of the caretakers).

We're also looking at options for Kindergarteners when they are not allowed out during bad conditions (maybe primary gym so they get exercise).

b) Extended French lottery. EF continues to be a very sought after program for which Bowmore serves 4 schools. We are allocated 58 spots next year and had 87 applicants. There will have to be a lottery in March for all students who are eligible. Most of the TDSB population doesn't have access to Extended French at all. The TDSB decides how many spots we get. Students who are already in extended French have a spot for the next year.

d) Speciality high school considerations. We recently found out that three of our students didn't get into Rosedale. Please understand they look at lateness and absences and learning ability (front page of report card). Issues that affect attendance (eg anxiety) will affect acceptance. We will be talking to students to about attendance and trying your best. Please make sure your children prepare applications early and put in the effort (show interest over a period of time).

Meeting Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm on Monday, February 25, 2018.

Next Meeting

Tuesday April 9, 2019 at 6:00 PM.