

Minutes of School Council Meeting February 1, 2021

Date: February 1, 2021

Time: 6:30pm

Purpose: School Council Meeting

Location: Virtual Google Meet - McKenzie Smith Bennett School, Acton, Ontario

Attendees:

Kim Phillips (P), Erin Keen (VP), Tania Spill, Stacey Bale, Tiffany Varas, Lucia Tumber, Kristy Butler, Susan Pickles, Sarah Ansell, Betsy Bond, Shari White

Absent:

Shanna Maltby, Kim Perry, Chrystal Radtke, Jenn Duguay, Sarah Gnass

Regrets:

Lorna Brooks (Non-Voting), Cassandra McBride

Quorum: 50% +1 of attending voters at meeting

Voting Parents: 10 (4 Executive + 6 Parent Reps)

Total Votes: 13 (10 parent + 2 staff + 1 community rep)

Welcome and Introductions: Lucia Tumber

Approval of the Agenda: Lucia Tumber

with correction of Feb 1, 2021 beside Approval of the Agenda not Feb 22, 2021

First: Betsy Bond

Second: Stacey Bale

Approval of Minutes (Nov 20, 2020): Lucia Tumber

First: Stacey Bale

Second: Sarah Ansell

Principal's Report: Kim Phillips

"Halton as we know it today is rich in history and modern traditions of many First Nations and the Métis. From the Anishinabe to the Attawandaron, the Haudenosaunee, and the Métis - these lands surrounding the Great Lakes are steeped in Indigenous history.

As we gather today on these treaty lands we have the responsibility to honour and respect the four directions, land, waters, plants, animals, ancestors that walked before us, and all the wonderful elements of creation that exist.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation for sharing their traditional territory with us."

As we finish speaking the truth of the treaty, I think I'll move right onto sharing the work that was shared at the HHSCC meeting last Thursday. Principals, teachers, and HHSCC reps came together to share the work that is being done around anti-racism, anti-colonialism, misogyny, and homophobic education at all schools in Halton Hills.

There was a slide show that was created by the principals and that was to be shared out to their families. The copy I had was shared out on the Sunday Summary yesterday, and if your child is in a Virtual School, the Virtual Principal should be sharing it out as part of their regular messaging.

Basically, it was an opportunity for schools to see what work is being done, how the need, the readiness, and the work is different for each school community, and the reality that it is work all schools are involved in, not just one or two. I know myself, that I watched and listened and found resources that I would like to use myself and to share with my staff. There were lots of resources

that would support our next steps when we are ready for them. I highly suggest you take the time to look at the slides and the speaker's notes as they give some really good insight into what's happening in Halton Hills schools.

As we mentioned last time we met, our teachers are expected to teach directly to the Harmful and Discriminatory protocol, they are engaging in Professional Development to help them review their own biases and the biases in the way they teach, as well as to engage in the work of embedding anti-racist education into their programme so that it is not an "add on" but a framework for approaching teaching and learning throughout the whole year. This work was started a few years ago, and we get better at it every year, and we will continue to make it a focus for the years to come.

Acton Integration Committee:

Met last week and I will let Shari White, the AIC representative, speak to that when we get to it, however, one positive announcement that came out was that Mrs. Keen will be the Vice Principal of the Acton Elementary School so she will be a familiar face to students, families and teachers to help make the transition as smooth as possible and to use her upper elementary expertise to bring light onto issues as they arise. So we'll get back to the AIC information later in the agenda.

Return to school date:

Well, at this point, we don't know when HDSB will be returning to face to face learning. While Peel and TDSB are slated to go back February 10, there was no date given for HDSB's return to school. We might assume that it will be the same day....but I've learned not to assume anything. While overall positive cases are going down, death rates are rising, and there is the added complexity of the new, more contagious variant....so I'm not sure what the decision will be.

In the end, I'll wait for the 24 hour heads up announcement that we all get and try to be prepared for returning to school as quickly as possible. In the meantime, our teachers have been amazing at putting their programme on line, for staying connected to their families, and for being flexible to meet the needs of students who did not choose to go online but have to for the time being.

Change of Delivery Model Date:

March 1st (assuming all goes as planned) 10 moving in, 2 moving out. No impact in terms of our classes. We can comfortably move them back in without rearranging classes or shifting staffing.

Online Cautions:

Continuing along that thought of online learning, things seem to be in a settled groove now for most teachers and students. The only thing that we are starting to have issues with is security around the classroom.

As you would have seen from the Sunday Summary last night, it is essential that students use their hdsb.ca account for logging in. Students who have been using their parent's login, etc., will have to switch to their hdsb.ca login. In truth, this does not represent a large group of students, but it will change for some of them going forward. We have to put classroom security over the convenience of using whatever account is most easily accessible to our students in the moment. This represents the continued learning that we are doing as "in-person" teachers work in a virtual environment. So, they will not "invite" anyone into the classroom with an external email and any "old" links from a week or two weeks ago, have been removed from classrooms.

Moving forward, links will only be made through the teacher's calendar and then posted in the classroom. Teachers will not share links with each other (i.e., supply teachers) - All teachers must create the link that students enter into and that they are teaching in. That way, whomever is teaching is in complete control of the classroom.

Finally, we ask that students do not share links with other students in other classrooms. We will also remind them that they are responsible for their personal hdsb.ca account and not to share passwords. As mentioned yesterday in the Sunday Summary, those accounts are individual to students and they will be held accountable for events, incidents that happen with that account. Therefore, they must not share passwords and if parents/students think their password has been

compromised (i.e., someone else knows it) then they need to request to get it changed by contacting the teacher. In essence, we will be encouraging them to get into the habit of doing their part in making sure their class is a safe place to be at all times.

New Public Health Protocols for Students and Education Employees:

Finally, we are receiving new protocols from the Public Health unit in preparation for whenever we return to face to face learning. For example, prior to this, teachers were expected to wear masks all day. They were expected to wear face shields only when they were working among students (i.e., face to face, side by side, etc.) or in a special education setting. Teachers could eat in a lunch room with a maximum of 5 people and their mask was only off when they were eating. The expectation in place now and for moving forward when we return to face to face teaching changes that:

Now, teachers wear masks and face shields whenever they are in a shared space (hallway, classroom, staffroom, office, etc.). Teachers may take off their masks and face shields when eating, but this cannot be done in a shared space - therefore they can no longer eat together which as you can imagine, is very isolating. We are expecting further direction from the HDSB about what this will look like for teacher breaks/lunches once the school returns to face to face.

In addition, students are required to wear their masks inside (as they always have) but now are required to wear their masks outside when they are in their zones if they cannot be 2 metres apart. So for the two 20 minute periods that students are in their outdoor zone, they must wear a mask. For a number of reasons. Generally, they are running around and expelling air at much higher rates and distances but more importantly, they do not social distance when they are in their zones, and even if your child was sitting quietly to the side and not engaging with anyone, we cannot guarantee that another student wouldn't run by them, towards them, trip over them, and potentially put them at risk. This has been the one thing that students have not been able to manage in an outdoor setting despite constant reminders from teachers. However, we are fortunate that lots of our teachers engage in Outdoor Education as well as regular mask breaks. Teachers will continue to provide mask breaks (as they have done since September) during which students can go outside into the larger yard with their teacher and take their masks off if they are maintaining the 2m distance. So students will get mask breaks as a regular part of their day.

New Active Screening Process:

Finally, the Ministry of Education has put into place a new "active" screening process. For us, it applies to our teaching/adult staff only. For secondary schools it applies to students as well.

In essence, it's a tracking system to ensure that people are actually engaging in the morning COVID self-assessment before they leave the house and enter the school. All adults in our building must provide a picture of their green check mark dated for that day before they are allowed to enter the building. This will also apply to any contractors, maintenance people, and/or essential visitors to our school.

We will continue to encourage families to take the screening process seriously upon our return to school and to keep their children home if they have symptoms and/or be prepared to pick them up if they develop symptoms at school. We get that many of these are "cold" symptoms, but they could also be COVID symptoms and as the person responsible for the safety of 82 staff members and 440 students, I will not take any risks with the adults or students under my care.

Fortunately, our community has been extremely supportive around this. Once we know that we are returning back to school, I will send out messaging to remind people to make that green checkmark a part of their morning routine.

Kindy registration and numbers for next year.

Our Kindergarten registration is ticking along and while we still have lots of time before September, at present we only have 21 JKs registered out of typically 38 or 40 by this time. Yes, some of those registrations could come in August....but the decision about how many staff we have

is made on our projected enrolment numbers in about 3 weeks. So, the more JKs we have in the hand by then, the more stable we are and hopefully won't have to surplus anyone due to low enrolment.

So my request to you....if you know of ANYONE with a school aged JK who hasn't registered yet, please encourage them to do so. They can contact the school and we will walk them through the process.

PRO Grant Application

Finally, the PRO Grant application came across our desks about 3 weeks ago. Typically, when we run parent nights, they are pretty poorly attended so I was hesitant about applying - but I went ahead and applied to use the money to provide a virtual parent engagement night that would be related to "unlearn" which is an anti-prejudiced focused learning module specifically designed for parents to help them with recognizing biases and how to talk to children about that.

The other option, which seemed to make sense to me was the idea of something around supporting positive mental health in the face of a year of, well, a global pandemic. So I sort of "hedged" my bets when I put in the application and included both options in there.

In addition, I think that if we were going to provide some sort of virtual workshop, we would likely get more people interested than we normally do when it's a "come out to the school" event, however, I think we still might have to combine with another school (potentially Robert Little or Acton High) to open it up to all of our community members.

So, in the meantime, I have applied, I wait on the application, and if we get it, we'll reach out to our community schools to see if anyone wants to share the workshop and move from there. I would suggest that the workshop would be in April or May but could be earlier.

Teacher Representative Report: Stacey Bale

As we begin week 5 of online learning, I feel most teachers have found their groove and are teaching in a manner that is effective for their students and themselves. The sharing of information, ideas and lessons between the teachers, EAs, other staff and admin is heartwarming and valuable. The amount of hours spent on creating something, then willingness to share in a click is not only helpful but has had a ripple effect. I think grateful is a word that we have been using more and more often. Kids are the real heroes with their learning flipped upside down but they are doing great. As a teacher it is much easier to teach when we can see our students on camera. With respect to equity- we are reading, learning and practising many new and invaluable practises with our students. We are trying our best to promote open, honest discussion around race, equity, and privilege. Here is a quote I thought was really something to think about: "If my wife comes to me in obvious pain and asks "Do you love me?", an answer of "I love everyone" would be truthful, but also hurtful and cruel in the moment. If a co-worker comes to me upset and says "My father just died," a response of "Everyone's parents die," would be truthful, but hurtful and cruel in the moment. So when a friend speaks up in a time of obvious pain and hurt and says "Black Lives Matter," a response of "All lives Matter," is truthful. But it's hurtful and cruel in the moment". -Doug Williford.

A parent asked that teachers continue to encourage students to turn their cameras on.

Treasurer's Report: Kristy Butler

- No change from last meeting. Balance in account \$500.00

Fundraising Committee Report: Tania Spill

- Fundraising still on hold per the Board

PIC/HHSCC/AIC Representative: Shari White

- PIC - A meeting was held on Jan 14th It was noted that in 2020 there is Ministry direction that our board was lacking in having a set of bylaws for the PIC. John Pennyfather sent the

proposed document to the Board's lawyers and the equity rep . The General bylaws and terms of reference for the PIC are a set of rules around how long members can remain on the committee, their responsibilities and the number of voting members and that all meetings are to be open to the public and recorded. The Jan 14th meeting was also spent getting ready for the All-REP PIC meeting for all of Halton on Jan 18. Shari will be joining this meeting virtually. Because HDSB has been coming out with human rights and equity education there is now a link on hdsb.ca website. Here is the link: <https://hreaa.hdsb.ca/>

- HHSCC - All schools shared all of the equity education that they were doing in their schools. The slide show is being shared out to communities from their principals.
- AIC - Mrs. Keen is moving to the Acton Elementary School at the high school. Scott Podrebarac will be sending an AIC update shortly. The AIC members saw a floor plan of what they are planning but they cannot share with the general public for student safety reasons. They are working on a brochure with Q&A. They are also working on the start and end times now. Start and end times will hopefully be the same since the amount of periods that the highschool kids are in school, aligns with the instructional minutes the elementary students get. What doesn't align are the times that their classes begin and end, which means that for the most part, they will not be in the hallways at the same time, they won't see each other much as there is no overlap in their movement through the school. Shared spaces are being fine-tuned now.

Business arising from the minutes: Lucia Tumber

- None.

New Business: Lucia Tumber

Question about needing to register Gr 6s and 7s to the Acton Elementary School. Kim Phillips confirmed that all grade 6s and 7s have already been transferred over to Acton Elementary School.

Question about what the celebration will look like at the end of each school year for the future Gr 6s. Kim Phillips shared that this year Gr 6s and 7s will be receiving a certificate and a t-shirt and the Gr 8s will have a graduation celebration (probably virtual like last year) and a certificate and t-shirt. Gr 6s Burgundy t-shirts, Gr 7s Navy t-shirts and Gr 8s Black t-shirts. Future years going forward is still to be decided but MSB and Robert Little will try to have similar events to celebrate Gr 6s transitioning to Gr 7 at ACE.

Acton Elementary may look at a name change for the school but that would be discussed only next year and with the students' input if it were to happen. In all cases in our board the school name has not changed (Burlington Central and Aldershot) and that's in recognition of the history of the school in the community so there is no call for a name change at present but if the community were interested in it, there is a process for that in the board. In the meantime, the school name will stay the same but the elementary school will have an acronym of "ACE" which is only used internally by the board. For example, MSB's acronym you would think would be MSB...but for the purposes of the board, the name they use is MCK. So, for now, there will be no name change.

An idea was shared for photos for Gr 6s and 7s and to get students' on camera during meets is to have them upload a screenshot of themselves and that can be used to create a possible class photo. Mrs. Phillips said she would look into this and check with the privacy coordinator at the board level but if possible, it would be a neat idea.

Next Meeting: March 29, 2021 at 6:30pm via Google Meet

Future dates: May 31, 2021 all at 6:30pm

Termination of Meeting: Lucia Tumber

First: Sarah Ansell

Second: Kristy Butler

All in favour.