



St Emily School Council Meeting Minutes

September 23, 2025
St Emily Learning Commons
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

*		Emalie Ujjainwalla	Chairperson
	*	Sarah Nazarenko	Vice Chair
*		Chelsea Wanvig	Treasurer
*		Abirami (Abby) Yoganathan	Assistant treasurer
*		Elizabeth Lorello	Secretary
	*	Ana Fernandez Bustamente	CSPA representative
*		Jessica Taylor	Fundraising chair
*		Theresa Krepelka	Lunch chair
	*	Carolina Elliott	Parish Representative
	*	Mareen Francis Saviour	Member at large
	*	Garinder Kaw	Member at large
	*	Nixsala Antory	Member at large
	*	Naveen Thomas	Member at large
*		Vincenza Nicoletti	Principal
*		Tina Lalonde	Vice Principal
*		Rachel Cleasby	Teacher Representative

6:32 pm – Meeting called to order by Emalie

We began with a roundtable of the new faces.

St Emily Prayer and land acknowledgement - Tina

Approval of Agenda motioned by Emalie, seconded by Jessica.

Follow-up question from the June minutes: have the soccer nets been secured yet?
Vincenza: there is a work order to have this done, but we are still waiting for the installation.

Approval of June minutes motioned by Emalie, seconded by Jessica.

Treasurer Report - Chelsea

June opening balance: \$53,256.06

June closing/September opening balance: \$31,336.57

Principal/School report - Vincenza

A thank you to the parents on the council as we work together to achieve our shared goals for the new school year.

The spiritual theme of this school year is “**Building Bridges**”. Educators and students will have a monthly theme to focus on; currently we are focusing on “Belonging” ensuring that everyone knows they belong to our St. Emily family.

We have **595 students**; 5 junior/senior kindergarten classes; 11 primary and 10 junior classes. We are beginning to work on our student achievement plan which aligns with our spiritual theme, while keeping innovative strategies and focusing on indigenous learning, mental health strategies, reading and math.

Tina:

Custodian Appreciation Day is coming up on October 2nd
World Teacher day will October 5th

We have a new **Supervisory Officer** this year, Brent Hopkins, and our **Trustee** is Spencer Warren.

Safety / Safe Schools updates:

We have new Code of Conduct posters around the school and a plaque will be installed. We will be starting the **Dare to Care** program, which relates to bullying. There are lesson plans for each grade and this will be introduced to the teachers at the next staff meeting in October.

Erin’s Law: requires the school board to provide resources and information for the parents and educators about child sexual abuse. There will be grade appropriate lessons and programs provided to the teachers to introduce the students; aims to enhance child sexual abuse prevention and reporting for students, school staff and parents.

Safety around school buses and the walker gate: the rope is up at the entrance of the parking lot at 8:50 am so that people cannot come in with their cars, and then taken down at 9:10am. At the **bus gates**, parents are asked to use the paths to walk your child to school and not through the parking lot.

There will be two **lockdown drills** in the year; one in the fall and another in the spring, as well as six **fire drills**. We have already had our first fire drill, and the students did an amazing job.

Kinders will continue to play outside in the morning after the bell rings. Parents are encouraged not to linger around the gates once the bell rings as some children become apprehensive when people are watching, and this is part of their learning time.

The reporting dates are all posted on the calendar, and also included in the slide deck shared at the beginning of the year. There will be reminders in communications.

This year we did not collect a large **activity fee**, only a small one to help cover the costs of agendas for the primary grades, as well as classroom activity materials for inclement weather days. There will be field trips this year and activity fees will be collected on a “pay as you go” basis.

Open communication is prioritized and the school asks that parents communicate with teachers as the first line as they are in the classroom with your child.

Teacher Update - Rachel:

Cross country is coming up and the school is looking for about 2-3 parent volunteers for the meet on October 7th. This will be a pizza day; pizza will be kept at the school for them upon their return.

The grade 4's are doing the **Eco Eagles project** again this year, and the first initiative will be the Litterless Lunch campaign. Last year the council donated money for a popcorn party to the winning classrooms of the campaign and the school is asking if the council would be willing to do that again this year. The school received **Platinum** certification last year and we will go for gold this year and hope for platinum again. All Grade 5s will participate in the **entrepreneur project**, like Tidal Wave last year. If council is willing, the students would be excited to make a pitch for this project again this year.

Dissolution of last year's council - Vincenza

Elections for the 2025-2026 council members:

This year, the Fundraising Chair role has been split into 2 roles: Fundraising Chair & Events Chair. There will be 3 Members at Large positions.

The newly elected 2025-2026 Council Members are:

*		Emalie Ujjainwalla	Chairperson
*		Grace Fulton	Vice Chair
*		Chelsea Wanvig	Treasurer
*		Sarah DuPerron	Assistant treasurer
*		Elizabeth Lorello	Secretary
*		Jessica Taylor	Fundraising chair
*		Alyssa Kraimaty	Events chair
	*	Vacant	Lunch chair
*		Mourad Graido	CSPA Representative
*		Winnie Engola	Parish Representative
*		Brook Yitna	Member at large
*		Kevin Smith	Member at large
*		Beata Hamish	Member at large
*		Vincenza Nicoletti	Principal
*		Tina Lalonde	Vice Principal
*		Rachel Cleasby	Teacher Representative

Lunch Program

Term 1 lunch program is set up and going well. We are offering pizza (**Toppers**) on Tuesdays and **Freshii** and The **Baker** on Thursdays, which has replaced last year's Subway day. It is already more popular than Subway with 182 lunches ordered. Both companies have added new items to their lunch program but with current recycling changes in the school we do not recommend at this time, but can revisit at term 2.

Eagles Under the Stars **Movie Night** is replacing the Welcome Back Carnival this year. Home Depot has partnered with us and provided boxes for the younger kids to use as seating for the movies. Supplies will be available so that kids can decorate their boxes to make their own soapbox cars. There will be a **Scavenger Hunt** with prizes for the older kids. Kernels is supplying some popcorn, and there will be an ice cream truck, and pizza/chips/drinks for sale. The movie chosen by the student vote was the Lilo & Stitch live action.

The **Dance-a-thon** is our biggest fundraiser; students will participate in a Halloween dance at school and can collect money from friends and family to raise funds for the school. Every child gets a raffle entry when their envelopes are returned to the school and every \$10 raised gets an additional entry. The 3 top earners win prizes (Nintendo Switch, Sens tickets, Flying Squirrel gift certificate) and other prizes will be available as well. As the school is trying to avoid handling cash, Vincenza will speak with Elisa about continuing to raise cash for this event, as per previous years. The dance-a-thon will be held on Halloween this year; students can wear their costumes but no accessories.

Jessica motions to spend \$1200 for the dance-a-thon (prizes & decoration), seconded by Emalie.

The **Student Survey** was put out last year to gauge how students felt about the **activities** council brought into the school. Overall students rated council run events (Cake Walk, Dance-a-thon, Carnival, etc) higher than activities brought into the school (Rocks and Rings, JungleSport, etc). This year, we are looking to change the activities, including field trips. Mad Science is one option - Jessica has flyers she will pass on to Rachel. Other suggestions: a tennis/basketball/ultimate frisbee clinic, Tae Kwon Do program, Meet the Keepers (small animals), winter survival course for Juniors at Baxter Conservation. How much council involvement would the teachers like to have when planning these events - Rachel will check in with staff.

We have had a yearbook for the last two years. It is a big project and we recommend getting started on the **yearbook** earlier this year as it will be easier to spread the work out over the whole year. We will need a parent lead and a teacher to work together, i.e connecting with the teachers to collect the photos. - Elizabeth will be the parent lead for the yearbook this year.

A weeding schedule was maintained over the summer for the **Butterfly Garden**. We are still waiting for soil and mulch, which was ordered through the Board but has not yet been received. Once we receive it, we can get a few parents together to spread it all out in the garden and clean it up before the winter months.

What are the plans for the square “planters” in the yard? Vincenza had Planning and Facilities come in to have a look at them but as this is not in their scope, council will work with the school to plan something for this area of the yard. The stones are starting to warp, we need to determine if we get rid of them but then the roots are all exposed. If we want to keep them, we will need to get them rebuilt/fixed or removed. At one point there was a **yard plan**, some information may be in previous council minutes. Last year we talked about planting bulbs in the fall to have plants in the spring while the kids are still in school. This can be a project for the kids (Eco Eagles), a clean up/planting day. Jessica will buy about 4 boxes of tulip bulbs (around \$100). **Voting members can spend up to \$100 without voting** - save your receipts to be reimbursed.

Some small purchases:

A **First Aid Kit** will be picked up at Costco to have on hand for council-run events.

As there is no more recycling being done in the school, we will need to purchase **clear garbage bags** for our events, to collect pop cans, for example. The school should already have some.

Students often forget to bring their own **utensils**, however the school does not have the budget to keep these on hand. The council can purchase some bamboo utensils to supply a bag to each classroom; Rachel will ask staff if they are interested in receiving these supplies.

In the past, the council has supplied the **snack pantry**, either with granola bars or apples and we are happy to continue with this if there is a need. It is a good idea to have a variety of snacks for when there is a need, apples would be preferred. The council will continue to provide apples as needed.

Spirit Wear usually offered in the fall and the spring but there weren't too many orders last spring so we can touch base later in the year. Jessica looked at three different companies over the summer; Spirit Wear Canada is very expensive, and there are a lot of fees; Sam Group is cheapest for youth t-shirts, which are the most popular items, but every other item is more expensive. We used Tuck Gear in previous years and although communication isn't the best, shipping is easier and there is no minimum order. We would prefer to keep our prices low so more people could afford it. We will continue with **Tuck Gear** for this year.

We have the **Eddy the Eagle** sample **stuff**; we would have to buy 500 units and the cost to us would be \$9.40ea, including shipping. We would have to go through SCO for selling. The school has confirmed that storage won't be an issue, so we can go ahead and order them. If we sell them for \$15, we would make \$4.92ea after SCO fees. Once an order is placed we could get them in 4-6 weeks, so we will try to launch these in time for Christmas, with spirit wear.

Chelsea motions to spend \$5000 on Eddie the Eagle stuff, seconded by Kevin.

We voted last year to purchase an Eagle costume as the school **mascot** that could be worn at school events. Tina said she will dress up in the costume. Will launch at the dance-a-thon. With the spirit wear, we can order a St. Emily's t-shirt to put over the costume.

Signing authorities for the bank account - Abby and Greg will be removed and Vincenza, Sarah and Alyssa will be added to the account. With that, we now have 6 people with signing authority, including Chelsea, Jessica and Emalie.

The **Buddy Bench** is still sitting outside the office. A work order will need to be placed to have it installed outside. Vicenza/Tina will follow up.

Volunteers are still needed for help with set-up before, or with help during the movie, ie. handling cash at the food table - the Google form is still up.

Adjourned at 7:57 pm

Next Meeting: October 14, 2025