

## School Council Meeting Notes – Jan 7, 2026

Secretary's Note: Several topics are compiled within sections, even though during the meeting those may have come up at different times.

### Land Acknowledgement & Prayer

Land Acknowledgement read by Mr. Skinner.

Prayer read by Chair.

### Discussion on Agenda & Preamble

Chair wants to acknowledge that this is their first time writing an agenda and it is copied from an old agenda. Bear with us as we learn which parts are, and are not, redundant/unnecessary.

Chair also wants to start by noting that the AI Scribe was a useful tool. Don't want to share the scribe notes widely, but we should run the AI Scribe to help with compiling minutes as it leaves more time to focus on running the meeting.

At this point in the meeting the AI Scribe was turned on.

### Principal's Update

In the month of December, the Province shared EQAO results with the public.

For our School, in Math in Grade 3 we went from 59% at Level 3 and 4 in 2024 to 65% at level 3 and 4 in 2025.

In Grade 6 we went from 50% at Level 3 and 4 in 2024 to 35% at level 3 and 4 in 2025. We are working with the Math consultants and our Grade 6 team to reinforce strategies to show work and consider all options when responding to multiple choice questions in the online format.

In Writing in Grade 3 we went from 71% at Level 3 and 4 in 2024 to 68% at level 3 and 4 in 2025.

In Reading in Grade 6 we went from 82% at Level 3 and 4 in 2024 to 83% at level 3 and 4 in 2025.

In Reading in Grade 3 we went from 81% at Level 3 and 4 in 2024 to 80% at level 3 and 4 in 2025.

In Reading in Grade 6 we went from 82% at Level 3 and 4 in 2024 to 87% at level 3 and 4 in 2025.

We had a very exciting December, starting with our Advent Liturgy and Reconciliation with Father Marc on Dec. 9th, followed by the Christmas Market on Dec. 11th. We had a wonderful turnout of community members for the liturgy and the students really enjoyed the shopping process during the Christmas Market.

We also had a successful food drive for the Kanata Food Cupboard, which included donations from the audience for the Little Drummer Dude.

The performances of the Little Drummer Dude for the students, staff and parents on Dec. 16th and Dec. 17th were amazing. The performers and technical crew did a wonderful job and wowed the audience.

The refreshments and information table provided by the School Council were very much appreciated.

We also had a fun Spirit Week the final week before Christmas holidays, with theme days of Christmas Hat, Team Grinch or Santa, New Years Glitter, Christmas Sweater and PJ Day.

For our Christmas Support, we provided \$100 PC gift cards to 18 families. One was a physical card, provided by the SuperStore, and 17 digital cards were purchased. Through donations, families provided \$456.00. So, there was an expense of \$1700.00 on my corporate card and \$1244.00 will be needed from Council to cover the expense.

Mrs. McLean also wanted to mention to Council that the cost for the Sparx Machine is \$201.10, so if that could be included in the cheque as well that would be appreciated. Mr Hopewell will be providing more information about the skating program in his report.

Kindergarten registration for 2026-27 has started and we already have 30 students registered, which is a great start. We will have an information session in March and will invite Council members to attend, once we have selected a date.

We are wrapping up the first pizza program next Wednesday, and will be sharing the ordering information for the second session, as soon as we receive it from Council. It will be shared on School Cash Online and School Messenger.

We need a cheque for this week's pizza and next week's pizza delivery from Council for \$1271.25

Looking ahead, we will have Luv2Groove Dance Workshops happening January 21-23 in the gym, for all grades.

On Friday, January 30th, there will be a PD Day, as teachers work on evaluation and professional development activities.

## EQAO Results

During Mr. Skinner's update attendees discussed the subject of EQAO and how the school manages students' perspectives of this challenge. This is the provincial testing that's given to grade three and six. It's the standardized test for reading, writing, and math. And there's been a change in recent years to an online format. Now it's entirely online. It's written in the month of May into June.

These tests do not impact report cards. They are used to measure the performance of the school overall and they are also a snapshot evaluation of student's performance in these subjects. They are a tool to be

used at the board level. St Martin's is ensuring the students can attend and write these evaluations with relatively low-stress and low-pressure. Striking a balance between students taking all day to write the evaluation, but also not racing through it either.

Secretary's Note: The above is my summary of a conversation where many things were said about EQAO, but far more information is available at <https://www.eqao.com/the-assessments/>.

### Concern Raised

Attendee raised an issue with pizza not being distributed properly. Mr. Skinner noted that he had already addressed the issue that occurred in that classroom. Mr. Skinner also reminds everyone that there is always extra pizza on Pizza Day. Any student not receiving theirs should come to the office. Chair echoes this, the last pizza day there were several pizza's worth of extra slices.

### One more item from Mr. Skinner

Likely will be able to provide a Winter Carnival/Play-Day date in the near future. Probably a Friday after Family Day.

Treasurer notes that we provide Hot Chocolate for this event. Total cost last year was about 73 dollars.

### Two expense items

Upcoming Love 2 Groove dance classes, Mr. Hopewell believes the last estimate was \$1,875. Not yet paid by Council.

Skate sharpening machine cost \$2,110. Secretary doesn't believe this was paid out yet by Council, but it is budgeted for.

Lots of room in the budget for that.

### Vice Principal's Update

Love 2 Grove estimate noted above.

Students are doing a good job of staying within the confines of the yard. This can be a particular challenge in winter (there is a big snow pile at the back of the yard which they want to play on).

Mr. Hopewell also noted that we got some skating equipment from Holy Trinity High School, so these are some larger sizes, but should help. Hoping every class can go skating once, if not twice, during the skating program.

### Mr. Farrell Teacher's Update

Mr. Farrell starts by thanking a massive number of people from the community, student teachers from UOttawa and Nippising, many students from St Martin's, many teachers, other schools in the area, and board employees. The community truly turned out to support The Little Drummer Dude.

The food donations which supported our Lenten Project resulted in massive quantities of donated food (Mr. Hopewell spoke of "Several thousand items"). Some of this was outside the Little Drummer Dude performances, but the impact of the play was significant.

Cost of materials ended up below earmarked funds (525 dollars or so vs 700 earmarked from budget).

Many attendees make positive comments about The Little Drummer Dude. Chair takes a moment to thank Mr. Farrell explicitly. This was a tremendous amount of work and greatly appreciated.

Chair takes a moment to encourage Mr. Skinner, Mr. Hopewell, and Mr. Farrell to share Council's willingness to help with more things. We don't need teachers to ask us for things, but we want to help and we want them to know we are here to support them.

## Small Update from Cathy Koss (Parish Rep)

The youth group is continuing on Friday January 9th new year night for the rock. Now that it's in the new year, it's for grades 5 to 8. So grades 5 and 6 are invited to attend from 6:30 to 8:30 at the church. The jam group, grade 9 to 12 is 8:30 to 10. I'll be sharing that in the newsletter, but also encouraging teachers to share that in their classes.

Funeral mass for Father Paul's mom who passed away recently is Thursday, January 8th at 6:30 p.m. at the church.

Father Paul is collecting used cell phones with chargers if possible to bring with him to Nigeria. They can be dropped off at the parish office or given to Father Paul after any weekend mass.

If there's anyone in our community that you would know of that would benefit, probably not a student, but if there was someone, there's a free brand new walker that's been donated to the parish. If you or someone is in need, contact the parish office.

## Treasurer's Update

Account balance is about 12,000 currently. Treasurer has budgeted everything we have earmarked school-year-to-date and everything that was done last year (budget for end of year party, grade 6 grad events, winter carnival, etc) and added a little increase in price, based on inflation.

Expectation is our end of year budget should be about 3,623 if we make a similar amount of money on Pizza Days compared to last year.

## New Business

### Votes That Occurred Since Last Meeting

1. Chair nominated themselves to the Chair position (was the Secretary at the time). That vote passed. Note that our previous Chair had exited the position, so it was vacant at the time.
2. Little Drummer Dude refreshments fund was approved.
3. Jojos was voted in as the Pizza Day vendor for term 2 (of 3). Note that there is some info in the newsletter update which explains that we had reviewed available vendors before retaining Jojos.
4. We voted on today (Jan 7 2026) as the next School Council meeting date.

All the above votes passed since the last meeting.

## New Vote

Chair takes a moment to explain that there are voting positions on Council. We love that people are attending and anyone is welcome to nominate themselves to a Council position and thereby get a vote, but these votes are only going to involve members of School Council (which includes Mr. Farrell as a Teacher Rep).

Voted to accept minutes from Oct, Nov, and Dec. Chair will deliver those to Mr. Skinner digitally after the meeting.

## General

Several subjects discussed,

1. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the School - Goal is to have a celebration during Education Week. Will include inviting old alumni and staff. An organizing group is being formed. Once we have a committee we will be looking for volunteers.
2. Lunch Lady – Chair gave the green light to the school staff to launch Lunch Lady as quickly as possible. Mr. Skinner notes this will take several weeks. Chair notes that he did not realize until speaking with school staff that this was a big concern from the community. It has been quickly actioned as a result. Mr. Skinner notes that it may not run on Tuesdays, still figuring that out.
3. Chair asks for an update on Popcorn Days - One of the Community Reps notes that the info was retrieved and sent to the Council Inbox. Chair asks Community Rep to re-send it. Apologizes for missing it. More updates to come on Popcorn Days.
4. Discussing AI Scribe – The leading note in this minutes details the broad strokes, but a few additional notes. The scribe is helpful and Council wants to continue using it. The scribe attributes most of what is said to Mr. Hopewell, so we all need to realize that it isn't going to attribute the correct statements to the correct people. The document produced also has a lot of personal information, so it won't be widely shared or distributed. Treasurer suggests we delete the file after using.
5. Pizza Days – Chairs notes that we have all the things we need for near term pizza days. Napkins and gloves.
6. Winter Fun Day – Chair wants to do a resource check. Do we have what we need? Napkins, Hot Chocolate, and Cups are in our inventory now. We may need crock pots with ladles or a carafe. Carafe was the best option in the past, but the person who shared it is no longer involved in the School/Council. Mr. Hopewell notes that Instant Pots worked well in the past, they boil water very fast. Attendee offers to check with their office, might have one. Chair notes that we can give the Social Media Rep a list of things we need once we have a date. Mr. Skinner promises a date next week (after the next staff meeting).

## Facebook Group and Volunteer Solicitation

The Winter Fun Day conversation led to a wider conversation around the management of the Facebook Group and the solicitation of help. One of the Community Reps notes that there isn't a lot of lead up to volunteer requests in the Facebook Group. They have offered help many times, but mostly sit at home waiting and wondering if anyone will follow up...."There is a disconnect".

Chair thinks that makes sense. For the playdate we can be specific about how many people we need, what we will need them to do, what equipment we need, and when we need it all.

Community Rep thinks people might engage more if we can be more consistent.

Another attendee also contributes that it's not just events that some parents want to volunteer for.

"Does your classroom need someone to read in the hall with students for an hour or are you working on a project and you need a parent specifically in your class? Do you want somebody to take home a bunch of cutting of construction hearts for you over the weekend? I think there's a lot of parents that want to participate but yeah are finding that there's some missed opportunity."

Mr. Skinner offers to continue this discussion with the teachers at the staff meeting.

Chair takes a moment to note..." I feel like I should have mentioned too, I know that we have a lot of willing volunteers... Even when reaching out short notice, when we thought we needed people for the refreshments [in December], I was able to get volunteers really quickly, within eight hours. So, I know the community is very willing."

### Issue Raised by an Attendee

This discussion is about disruption in a classroom. Mr. Skinner notes that anyone can contact him or the teacher directly to address those issues. Will work together to ensure the best possible learning environment.

Chair vouches for Mr. Skinner's responsiveness.

Secretary will not be adding any further details in respect of privacy.

### Open Table

Chair notes that that is the end of his planned agenda items. Opens the floor to anyone who wants to raise any issues.

Treasurer asks if anyone wants to join Council. No volunteers. Chair notes that people can always raise this, they do not need to wait for the next meeting.

Attendee asks about class pictures. Mr. Skinner confirms those should have already been sent home. Check the backpacks! Mr. Skinner notes this is good feedback, next year we should mention that in the Newsletter.

Council holds a quick vote, next meeting date is set at Feb 4 2026. Chair notes he will be attending virtually.

Meeting is ended.