

Abraham Erb Public School

School Council Meeting Minutes

(Generated by MeetGeek, Reviewed by Ivy Cui)

Date: 20 Sep 2023, 19:00 EDT

Attendees:

From the school: Jodie Hancox-Meyer, Shelley Carey, Meghan Wentworth

Parents and Community Member: Ivy Cui, Hadas Avni-Peleg, Alex Korobkin, Melinda Hecht-Enns, Sirisha Puli, Vasudha Raghunathan, Amy Le Roji, Stephen Iiu, Hanan Alshommali, Kai Zeng, Katie Bates, Prajaktha Kashalkar, Ruchi Gera, Vaidhehi Kumar

Meeting Summary

During the meeting, the election of council roles was discussed, with a concern raised about a missing participant. The need for a co-chair was also discussed, and it was suggested to use MeetGeek as the secretary. The teacher's report included updates on student volunteer positions, popcorn sales, and the Nutrition for Learning program. School-related updates encompassed information about new staff members, changes in the daily schedule, the introduction of new furniture in common areas, and upcoming PD day training sessions. Additionally, negotiations with staff unions over contracts were mentioned. Other topics covered during the meeting included initiatives aimed at assisting ESL students, the treasurer's report, a review of the yearly report, and an overview of the school council's financial status. Furthermore, plans for organizing a spirit wear campaign were discussed. The next meeting has been scheduled for October 18th, with a pre-meeting planned to set the agenda.

Topics & Highlights

1. Election of council roles

Please find attached the list of School Council members and their roles

2. Teachers and Principals reports are attached for reference

3. Change in Daily Schedule

- The school has adjusted the time of their second nutrition break to be half an hour later in order to maximize learning while students are at their freshest.

4. Chick Hatching Project: Creating an Educational Experience in the School Library"

- The school will be buying a starter kit for hatching chicks, including an incubator, heat lamp, cage, food, fertilized eggs, and bedding. This project will be led by our experienced head secretary, and will take place in the library.

5. PD Day and Training

- The WRDSB has opened registration for the International and Indigenous Languages programs, which are held on Saturdays starting at the end of September. Classes begin on September 30th and run until June 1st. More information, can be found on the WRDSB website.

6. Contract Negotiations

- The Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, which includes secretarial staff, plans to ask its members to vote on binding arbitration this fall, giving up their right to strike if a deal can't be reached, with an outside party producing the deal.
- Jodie will keep reporting on the strike action at school council to keep everyone informed. Additionally, EQAO results will be available soon and individual reports will be sent home or can be accessed on the EQAO website.

7. Helping ESL Students

- This year, the school has 1.3 ELL teachers who are currently busy doing assessments to help our students. Shelley Carey suggested sending an email tomorrow to discuss further.

8. Treasurer's Report

- In October, the treasurer reported that the total funds, including the WEFI, amounted to \$15,388, out of which \$3,958 was already committed for spending. This included the purchase of two document cameras and projectors for the school, as well as \$950 from the previous year. By the end of October, the remaining funds were \$11,430.

The school council had a relatively light year in terms of spending money, with the exception of the graduation lollipops. They also received tax rebates and a refund from the WRDSB, totaling \$1600, of which \$1200 will be refunded. Additionally, \$360 was allocated for Taru's Student as Writers project. Currently, the council has a total of \$11,758, including a WEFI of \$435.

9. Spirit Wear Campaign

- Ivy, Menlinda, Vaidhehi, and Hanan will collaborate to organize this campaign and will present the proposal at the next School Council meeting in October.

10. Next meeting and agenda

- The next meeting is scheduled for October 18th and the chair, treasurer, and Jodie will have a quick online meeting about a week before to put the agenda together.

2023-2024 School Council Members		
		Yes: 18 No:
Name	Position	Yes/No
Ivy Cui	Chair	Yes
Hadas Avni-Peleg	Treasurer	Yes
MeetGeek Notes	Secretary	
Alex Korobkin	Voting Member	Yes
Melinda Hecht- Enns	Voting Member	Yes
Sirisha Puli	Voting Member	Yes
Vasudha Raghunathan	WRAPSC Rep	Yes
Amy Le Roji	Non-Voting Member	Yes
Stephen liu	Non-Voting Member	Yes
Hanan Alshommali	Non-Voting Member	Yes
Kai Zeng	Non-Voting Member	Yes
Katie Bates	Non-Voting Member	Yes
Prajaktha Kashalkar	Non-Voting Member	Yes
Ruchi Gera	Non-Voting Member	Yes
Vaidhehi Kumar	Community Rep.	Yes

Principal's Report for School Council

Wednesday, September 20th, 2023

School

We've had a very smooth start up to the 2023-2024 school year. We have welcomed 35 new JK students, along with about 40 other new students in other grades. We have a total of 18 classes (last year we had 19) and our population currently sits at 397.

We've also welcomed a handful of new staff members (teachers Mrs. Barlow, Ms. Duquette, Ms. Sullivan and Mme Wu, EA Mrs. Avci and custodian Mrs. Nash). We're lucky to say "welcome back" to teachers Mrs. Skilling, Mr. Moffett and Mrs. Cressman, along with EA Ms. Brule.

The City of Waterloo has crossing guards in place at both Erbsville and Laurelwood and again at Laurelwood and American Beech, which we are so grateful for to help keep our students and families safe.

We had a fun "welcome back" assembly on the first Friday of school in the gym where we practiced singing our school song, practiced our new cheer and then went out on the back field for a huge scavenger hunt. The kids had a blast!

We are excited to have motivational speaker QMack coming to us on Friday, September 22nd and all our staff and students will get to enjoy his "Be and All-Star" show. QMack is very entertaining and uses basketball tricks to reinforce character attributes like respect, attitude, leadership, love, self-control and teamwork for students.

We have changed our daily schedule slightly this year. Families won't notice much, if any, changes at all as our start and end times remain the same. However, we have adjusted the time of our second nutrition break from 1:20 to 1:50 p.m. This means that we now have 2 "big" instruction blocks of 4 periods at the beginning and in the middle of the day and only a 2-period block at the end of the day after second NB. This give teachers more "double blocks" of instruction and maximizes the instructional time when students are at their freshest and able to do their best learning (morning and middle blocks).

We have some new furniture in some common areas of our school. You may have noticed at our Meet the Staff night last week that we have created a "lounge" area in our main foyer. Upstairs we have created a "learning commons" in our choir loft. Many of our junior students use this space for group work and they now have some couches, tables and plants in their space.

We have taken advantage of the nice weather and have practiced our fire drills and also a lockdown drill so far this year. The students at Abraham Erb are so cooperative and take these drills very seriously. They do a fantastic job.

We are going to continue our partnership with Panago Pizza this year and offer pizza days on Fridays. The ordering information is out on School Day.

We are excited to share with you that we are going to be hatching chicks this year. The school will be buying a starter kit (incubator, heat lamp, cage, food, fertilized eggs, bedding, etc) and we will be running this out of our library. The students will be able to watch the entire process from fertilization to hatching and they're sure to be enthralled. This project will be under the leadership of our head secretary Mrs. Balkos, who has done this many times and is very experienced.

Board

As you are all aware, the WRDSB started this school year with a PD Day on Tuesday, September 5th. This allowed all staff to complete a full day of mandatory training (which historically has happened on PD Days in October/November).

The WRDSB now has opened registration for the International and Indigenous Languages programs, which are held on Saturdays. Classes begin on September 30th and finish on June 1st, 2024. More information, including a link to register students can be found on the WRDSB website.

Province

Many school staff (including teachers, EAs, secretaries, custodians) having been working without a contract since August of 2022. Last year, there wasn't much movement or progress with bargaining. Recently, OSSTF, representing secondary school teachers and a few other employee groups, announced that it was going to ask members to vote on a process called binding arbitration this fall. Our elementary teachers' union, ETFO, has rejected binding arbitration and has asked for a conciliator to help with negotiations. ETFO will also be holding a strike vote this fall, allowing the bargaining process to move to next steps should an agreement not be reached with continued negotiations with a conciliator.

EQAO results should be available soon. Individual reports for all students who wrote the test last year will be sent home with them as soon as we get them.

Teachers' Report for School Council

Wednesday, September 20th, 2023

The Library - Mrs. Mueller

- The library has slowly started sending students home with books, and have gone through orientation of visits and handling of books, a school-day letter also went home to families to advise of responsibilities of taking books home.
- Mrs. Mueller would like to know if a date plan has been set or if she could be contacted with potential dates the parent council is considering for The Book Fair so she can plan accordingly.

Junior Student Volunteers

- The grade 5/6 students have begun their volunteer positions around the school.
- Some of the roles include safety patrol, office helper, morning announcer, lunchroom helper, door monitor, library assistant and nutrition for learning helper.
- Helpers will switch at the end of January.

Popcorn Sales

- Mrs. Wentworth and the grade 6's will start popcorn sales in October. There will be two ways to purchase: preordering will be available on school-day each week and students can also bring cash on the day of. The money raised will go towards subsidizing the cost for the grade 6 students to attend camp in the spring.

Terry Fox Run

- The Terry Fox run will be held on Wednesday September 27. Mrs. Watson has put a ton of work into organizing the day with school decorations, classroom resources and solid plan for the run. Students will run together as a school in the afternoon.

The slogan this year is “Bring a Toonie for Terry” and donations for the run can be made at <https://schools.terryfox.ca/AbrahamErbPSWaterloo>

- The students really love this event and enjoy the little class competition of collecting popsicle sticks to track their laps.

Pizza Fridays are back and the deadline for payments was due today. The kids enjoy the special lunch and it’s always very popular, and the parents seem to like the break from the kitchen.

Things coming up: Remembrance Day Assembly