



Empire School
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Sewardship **O**ptimistic **A**cceptance **R**esilience

Empire School Council Minutes

April 13, 2022 at 6:30 PM

In Attendance:

Justin Faulkner, Lori Williams, Bernard V, Mary Lou Roe, Alison Blair, Laura Johnson, Amy Beamer, Evonne Komaromi, Andrea Ahrens, Ehren K, Candice Bauman, Jenna Stephens-Wells, Shelley Croth

1) Welcome and Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves.

2) Approval of February Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2022 minutes approved. 1st Lori Williams, 2nd Andrea Ahrens

Carried

3) Principal / Vice-principal Reports

School Update

- We will have a twinned VP beginning May. Her name is Andrea Harris and she is coming to us from a consultant role at the Ed Centre.
- We have introduced an outdoor recess for students which has been a learning curve, but overall is going well.

News/Events

- Empire Food Gardens
- Our staff volunteers have been busy getting the Empire food gardens organized. Classes have been signing up for plots to plant their seeds.
- Earth Day
- Week of April 19th Empire will be having our Earth Day week. We will be engaging in activities to increase awareness of ways we can care for our planet.

Board Update

- Covid Case Management Update
- A message went out on school day on April 8th regarding the reinstatement of case notification as well as reminders around masking requirements.

4) **WRAPSC Update**

Engagement

- Focus is to engage students, family, Parent Councils, people in the community
- Planned communications are being run by WRAPSC and PIC to try to improve clarity of communications
- Work on sharing innovations in classrooms
- Help share information that Director Chanicka and other senior staff have around changing education and help the Director connect with classrooms/schools
- Website development and communication through this medium – best place to get new information quickly
- Social media is also a good tool to follow board activities – feel this is the best place to engage a large variety of people
- Media relations – share information and respond to stories in mainstream media
- Parent Council Communications – key to understanding family expectations and understanding what’s happening at the school level

Social Media

- Social media is a great place to focus efforts to allow open and 2-way communication – doesn’t have time-limits and doesn’t need to be sensationalized as mainstream media has
 - When developing social media platforms, make sure you have rules set up in advance for what will be shared and community standards and a way to hand off to the next council
 - Permission required to post images
 - Be clear that it is the Parent Council, not the official school account, and comments are not made on the behalf of the board
 - Be sure that administrators know you have an account as a courtesy
 - Helpful to also let the communications department of the board know you have an account as well
- Don’t let it be a location to gripe about teachers, principals, etc
 - Direct them to the proper channels
 - <https://www.wrdsb.ca/our-schools/communicating-with-your-school/addressing-concerns/>

- Connect with the person via PM and make sure the principal is aware of the conversation as a heads up
- Feel free to shut the conversation down if it doesn't fit your community standards

Message from Superintendent Ron DeBoer et al.

- Secondary Streaming
 - Streaming has a negative impact on marginalized individuals
 - Graduation rates are lower in applied streams
 - De-streamed classrooms improve learning for all individuals as “high achievers” tend to just mimic teaching, but not actually learn how to problem solve
 - De-streamed grade 9 math better translates from grade 8 learning with fewer gaps
 - Classrooms have become more collaborative learning environments
 - Decrease in use of nightly homework and test/exams
 - Provide more opportunities for in-class practice and more, lower stakes assessments
- A new course has been developed to help with bridging between grade 9 and grade 10 math for students that need more foundational knowledge
 - GLD 20 is open to all students and will bridge between grade 9 and 10 math and teach skills necessary to be successful in the workplace
- Resource for parents – <https://bhi61nm2cr3mkgk1dtaov18-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Parent-Night-Handout-vF-1-2.pdf>

How to support your child:

- Avoid negative self-talk (We're not a math family)
- Don't keep from teaching your child the way they are learning because you don't understand how it's being done now
 - This may create gaps when a student doesn't understand the process that's needed to solve more complex problems in the future
 - Teach yourself how to do it or help your student create questions to ask their teacher
- Praise effort, not outcome – avoid “smart” label
- Foster joy of math – mathy games, <https://mathbeforebed.com>

5) Financial Snapshot

School council has \$10,401.97. The majority of the money is in WEFI and we discussed the difficulty with accessing the money from WEFI. More investigation needs to be done on how to access the WEFI money and what we can spend it on and how that process works.

6) Proposal for Council - Purchase items from staff

- Cart for Nutrition for Learning. **Approved up to \$350 Carried**
- Outdoor kits for each classroom. **Approved up to \$500 Carried**

Other items suggested:

- Wagon for the Kindergarten program
- Presenters that can come into the school
- Field Trips

7) Proposal for Council - End of Year event

A year end celebration was discussed. It was decided that we will work on a Fall get together instead. We are unsure what affect COVID will continue to have over the next couple of months and we will avoid any large gathering for the time being. Ideas for the Fall gathering will be brought to the May Meeting. Thanks to Amy for suggesting ways to get our community back together.

8) Proposal for Council - S.C. Brochure update

Evonne will prepare an updated version of our school brochure that is more inclusive.

9) Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant

The Pro Grant is available to apply for if anyone is interested. We could get \$500 but there are many restrictions placed on how to use this grant. It might be difficult to achieve with COVID restrictions.

10) Proposal for Council - Staff Appreciation

Evonne will write a letter of introduction on behalf of Council and will find a thank you card template to be distributed and then completed by students and/or parents/caregivers.

11) Parent Questions and Concerns

None

12) Adjournment

Next Meeting May 11, 2022 at 6:30 pm