



Empire School
83 Empire Street,
Waterloo, Ontario
N2L 2M1
(519) 742-8375

Steewardship **O**ptimistic **A**cceptance **R**esilience

Empire School Council Minutes

May 11, 2022 at 6:30 PM

Present: John Tukums, Andrea Harris, Mary Lou Roe, Candice Bauman, Jenna Stephens-Wells, Andrea Ahrens, Justin Faulkner, Lori Williams, Amy Beamer, Shelley Croth and Evonne Komaromi

1) Approval of April Meeting Minutes

Minutes from April 13, 2022 Approved **1st Andrea Ahrens, 2nd Lori Williams, CARRIED**

2) Principal / Vice-principal Reports

School Update

Our twinned VP has started at Empire and is joining us today, welcome Andrea.

News/Events

School Wide Photo Day will be on May 17th. This year will only be individual photos, they are hoping to resume class photos next year.

JR Track and Field at Empire on May 25th

Trips/Assemblies

Many classes have gone on excursions to the Outdoor Ed Centre recently which has been a great experience for our students.

We have also been welcoming some guest presenters in to do workshops and presentations related to curriculum and community building.

Board Update

EQAO testing is scheduled for May 24-June 10

We are continuing to post Covid notifications on School Day when we are notified of a staff or student case.

3) WRAPSC Update

School Travel Planning – Leslie Maxwell (see slide deck for additional information)

- Society is car based with car being the king on the road → people concerned about using active school transport

- Being active can help students with their physical health, focus, mental health, and well-being
- Walking to school allows students to have graduated independence and is good for the environment
- The School Travel Planning (STP) team coordinates with other groups such as municipalities, local community groups, etc.
- The STP team offers and helps facilitate many programs
 - <https://www.stswr.ca/walkzone/>
- Individual schools can take on the school travel planning process by having the principal reach out
 - A school specific committee is formed to see what the needs are at that school and to provide an Action Plan with recommendations for that school
 - The process involves education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation
- STSWR provides many resources for families at www.stswr.ca/walkzone/home-support
- Drive to 5 maps can be constructed to help show parents safe places to park that are within 5 minutes' walk of the school to decrease congestion near the school
 - <https://www.stswr.ca/walkzone/maps/>
- Leslie is very open to connecting with individuals through email (leslie_maxwell@stswr.ca) or phone (519-744-7575 x 224)

Dress Code Policy – Teneile Warren & Crissa Hill (Note: slides cannot be shared as policy is still in draft form)

- Policy is a position that adopted by the board to provide a framework for a course of action
 - Because policies occur at the trustee table, it requires feedback from stakeholders to ensure it reflects the needs of the community
- Student dress is identity
- The student voice provided lots of useful feedback about when students felt “dress coded”
 - Students are sent home and shamed in a very public way
 - Dress code is not applied equally across all groups, including preferences to students to certain students depending on if they teacher likes them
 - Policies are extremely variable between schools as each school determines their own dress code → students have very different experiences based on their school
- Based on the student voice the new policy should include the following:
 - Religious items should be allowed
 - Dress code should be equal across all gender identities
 - Potential biases associated with race should not be allowed
 - Being “dress coded” for hats/hoodies/durags holds a racial connotation and occurs more commonly in schools with a higher population of marginalized students
- New dress policy will have equity and inclusion in mind, is student centered, and will be more explicit in what is/isn't allowed and what to do if a student is non-complaint with the dress policy
 - Will respect all aspects covered by the Ontario Human Rights Code
 - Will require that groin, buttocks, and nipples are covered by opaque materials, but will not limit exposure of legs, hips, chest, etc
 - No requirements for length of shorts/dresses and spaghetti straps allowed

- Undergarments will not be allowed to be worn as outerwear
 - Must be covered by another layer, straps and waistbands showing is ok
- Will allow students to wear headwear that does not cover the face (ie hats and durags)
- Will allow all religious/creed dress
- Will not allow items that
 - Include hate speech
 - Promote/symbolize alcohol, drugs, illegal activity, porn, profanity, or hate/discrimination
 - Incite violence or harassment
 - Threatens health and safety
- New policy will limit students being sent home – turn shirt inside out, ask a friend, have someone bring a new shirt, etc
 - Administrators help students determine an appropriate plan with minimal interruption to learning
 - Repeat offenders that require more in-depth intervention will be handled on a case-by-case basis
- Safety comes first, so appropriate dress is required for specific situations (ie removing an earring for gym or requiring safety glasses for science class)
 - Students are aware of the requirements in these situations
- Idea is that students that are allowed to bring their whole and authentic selves to school will learn better and be happier
- Before being finalized, the policy will be voted on by the trustees. Once it is finalized, it will be available publicly.
 - Expected for 2022-2023 school year
 - You can find all board policies here: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/about-the-wrdsb/policiesprocedures/policies/>

Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) – Mandi Ballentine, Mengda Wang, Christina Laughren

- Purpose is to interact with board and share information, to improve parent engagement,
- Some things that are to be considered for the future include improving the PRO grant process and in-person connection for new immigrant parents
- PIC looking forward to getting more feedback and bring information to the board, instead of just getting board updates every meeting
- PIC looking to work more with WRAPSC as a team and looking for the board to provide a framework for this to occur
- Board asked PIC to provide feedback on 3 questions
 - How can WRDSB adjust school council and other opportunities for parent volunteering to be more inclusive, productive, and varied? (discussed at WRAPSC tonight)
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k2hVVaddoE0LkdcGESctCJ6g31-C1BqP/view?usp=sharing>
 - Communication with teachers, recommendations on standardizing this
 - Navigating schools, how does a parent navigate through the school/school system, escalating a problem in the school, how does the school system work

4) **Financial Update / Donation to another School**

- Justin broke down School Council Financials in categories.
- We will no longer be able to donate to other schools as it is not considered an inclusive practice. The Board is managing a better distribution of funds. Lori will look into what the Board is doing to “better: distribute funds.
- Lori will look into what we can use WEFI funds for and how we can access them.

5) **Purchase items from staff update - N4L Cart and Recess Kits**

- The cart was purchased.
- When looking into purchasing the recess kits we discovered that the approved vendors are so expensive the \$500 allocated to the recess kits would not go very far.
- Lori will look into other options.
- Lori will try to put together mini recess kits

Recess Kits money allocation was increased from \$500 to \$1000

1st Justin and 2nd Andrea Ahrens Approved CARRIED

6) **Grade 6 End of Year Celebration**

- Magician will be coming in.
- Picnic with Parents
- Possible soccer game
- Empire Banner with Photos
- Hoping to tie-dye t-shirts and sign each other's shirts.
- Would like school council to provide funds for juice boxes and individual portions of popcorn.

School Council Approved \$450 for Grade 6 Celebration

1st Justin Faulkner and 2nd Shelley Croth Approved CARRIED

7) **Brochure Update**

Evonne doesn't have the right program to edit the Brochure, we may have to create a new brochure entirely.

Jenna offered to help edit the old brochure.

Andrea is willing to monitor the current email on the brochure.

Our vision and goals should be revised for School Council. We will hold off till next school year to update the brochure so we can update our vision and goals.

8) **Staff Appreciation Letter**

Evonne prepared a letter for Staff Appreciation. It was suggested that Evonne add: We are really looking forward to getting these out as soon as possible.

9) **Proposal for Council / September Event**

- Amy and Andrea will try to organize a family social in combination with the Meet the Teacher night September 14, 2022. School Council Approved \$500 in expenses for this event.
- Up to \$500 is allocated to this team to organize the family social September 14, 2022.

1st Andrea Ahrens 2nd Justin Faulkner Approved CARRIED

10) **Parent Questions and Concerns**

- The Grade 6 class is currently looking for T-shirt donations for the Grade 6 Celebration
- Notifications about COVID go out as soon as they are received on School Day.

11) **Adjournment**

Next Meeting October, 2022 at 6:30 pm