**Hespeler P.S. School Council Meeting**

**Via Google Meet**

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday, March 31, 2021**

7:00 pm

Present: Elke Lupinsky, Courtney Riddell, Michelle Bush Broga, Kevin Pomfret, Jesse Sabbagh, Rebecca Jutzi, Sharon McKeown, Jillian Bolender, Susan Fryer-Davis, Tryna Gray, Stacey Lawrence, Staci Jepson, Kyly Miller, Renee March, Caitlin Ramcharitar, Sabina Voisin, Crystal Bechtel, Kara Hall, Rose Kowalczyk

Regrets: Susan Ford, Scott Toman

1. **Welcome**
2. **Approval of Minutes from January 27, 2021**

* Approved as read - Elke motioned to approve, Jesse seconded, approved unanimously.

1. **Treasurer’s Report**
   * No account activity since our last meeting, so we have an account balance of $18,882.80
   * The same allocations/pending expenses of $12,950 remain: $5,500 Kindy play area items, $5,700 playground equipment, $1,000 Fun Fair prepayments, $750 parent workshops.
   * Leaves an available balance of $5,932.80.
   * At this point, we can probably cancel the Fun Fair prepayments and parent workshop allocations.
   * Jill motioned to move those allocations out of pending expenses and back into the account, Jesse seconded, passed unanimously.
   * Are there still plans to spend more on the Kindy area this spring? The school is looking at mulch for groundcover but that is a separate expense. We’re still so limited in what the Kindies can do out there right now because of COVID. We do have other things to put out there but we need to wait because of extra touchpoints. We can address this in the fall instead.
   * In terms of playground equipment, we thought we’d be further along in terms of knowing what we could do, but that's obviously been delayed due to COVID. We will keep the funds set aside for it. We have a commitment from the WRDSB to do work this summer on the parking lot extension. They are able to reconfigure the parking lot to not have to remove as much of the outdoor classroom. Regrading the ball diamond by the red & yellow climber will happen: the ball diamond will get grassed over so that should help a lot with the runoff problem. There is some concern over where new outdoor equipment could go so as not to impede Phys. Ed so we’ll wait and see how all this works out first before moving forward with the funds raised so far for playground equipment. Our intention was still to do more fundraising but with not being able to do fundraisers this year it will still take some time to raise enough for this project.
2. **Principal/Vice-Principal Update**

Principal’s Update – Rebecca Jutzi

* + We continue to be amazed at how students have adapted to our health & safety protocols, it’s been hard on them but they’ve done a great job. Some recent changes to protocols have led to more student absences because if a student has any symptom on the screening tool they must stay home (along with any siblings) until a negative COVID test result or other diagnosis is received.
  + Our mascot has been a great hit! Thank you Michelle for facilitating this. Our cougar mascot is named Winston.
  + We have started doing virtual announcements via Google Meet. Winston has been included in that and they’ve been doing some fun things through that. It’s been a good way to have more student connection since cohorts must stay separated.
  + A School-Day notice has gone out (and is on the WRDSB website) that schools are doing precautionary planning to send personal belongings and loaner devices home on April 1 in case there is a provincial shutdown next week.
  + Today was our first numbers count for next year. We have 686 students enrolled for next fall. That’s down from last year at this time, which is not surprising since we lost a gr1 FI class (now will only have one). It’s disappointing , but this coming year the WRDSB has decided that HPS will not be taking out of bounds students to start FI, only internal students. This will probably be the case for a number of years to come. If an SK already has a sibling in FI, they are classified as an in-bounds student. The Board rationale is that a) FI registrations are down across the board by 9 classes, and b) HPS is a full school. There are 23 students in new gr1 FI class with 2 on the wait list. It’s a tough situation.
  + Staffing updates: Melissa Brandsma retired today - Karen Kilbourne is taking over; Amanda Lambert left for maternity leave today - Adam Grimm is taking over; Kathleen Campagna is returning (Adam Gimm had been covering her class); Scottie Baxter returned.

Vice-Principal’s Update – Kevin Pomfret

* Staff PD update slide show - Equity has been our overall theme for professional development.
  + February’s focus was: Exploring Privilege (race & privilege, the role of privilege, unearned advantages, privilege in schools, and some ways your privilege may impact you).
  + In the self-reflection survey, teachers shared that they felt: more aware, guilty, reflective, surprised, uncomfortable and lucky.
  + March’s focus was: Resources and Classroom Libraries (windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors).
  + Windows means to have diverse literature available to help create a culture of understanding of each other, and social justice.
  + Mirrors means to have diverse literature where students can see themselves reflected in the story, as this helps create a feeling of belonging.
  + Sliding Glass Doors means having literature that allows the reader to walk into a story and become a part of the world the author has created.
  + Bookshelf Bingo audit activity had teachers look at what they’ve been personally reading lately, then look at their classroom library, then look at resources that they’re currently using to assess the diversity present or missing. They then had breakout groups to look at what they’d like to see going forward. We will be looking at our school library to increase diversity there as well.
  + Followup story from one of the Kindy classes: “Recently our class was reading the Blue spruce nominated book called The Proudest Blue. This a lovely story about the experiences of a little girl and her sister’s first day of wearing hijabs. The children of our class loved the story and a conversation started from a student talking about who in her family wears a hijab. I was so pleased to see the pride on this little ones face as she related to this story. It was a wonderful experience for all. The very next day our little one wore her own hijab to school she was beaming with pride, her friends all commented on how beautiful it was and some noted the similarities to the story. Our team was just so delighted at this beautiful experience and it truly has shown us the importance of making sure all our students see themselves in the literature we provide for the class. I was deeply moved by this experience and I was surprised to see how just the simple act of reading a book could have such an impact. I just thought you would enjoy this little tale.”
* Grade 8 graduation update: Things last year didn’t go very well across the board with how little time there was to react. Knowing we’ll be in the same situation as last year there is now more time to plan. A Board committee has been formed for gr6 & 8 grad celebrations. Historically, there have been systemic inequities across the board in terms of traditional year-end celebrations (pre-COVID as well). Administrators are now on the same page about having grad be consistent and equitable throughout the WRDSB and as we navigate the planning that will occur, as a group we are in the position to be mindful and intentional with our actions and decision-making.
* Rationale for this Direction is as follows:
  + System-wide approach that will support admin and staff in responding to community questions and desires for spring 2021
  + Want to make decisions rooted in equity of access for all students
  + Need to be in alignment with, and well positioned to respond to changing Public Health Guidelines
  + Alignment with Strategic Plan - “each and everyone” and finding innovative solutions to challenging issues
  + Ensure that students in distance learning are included in homeschool year end graduation, celebration, and acknowledgement events
* **Initial Framework - please keep this information to yourselves at this time, this is preliminary information and not set it stone so it can’t be released yet.**
  + Gr6 & 8 graduation celebrations will be done virtually, on the same day TBD.
  + Celebrations will not include drive-bys, door drop offs, lawn signs or gifts.
  + Gr8 grad photos will take place this spring (April 29), that messaging went out today and will include DL students.
  + Gr8 certificate of accomplishment can be created and sent home.
  + Due to making decisions rooted in equity of access for all students decisions are being made about awards. The next step is consultation with OPC and the family of Victoria D’Agostino.
  + Next steps are to make a true plan for grad by the committee so we’d like to be able to share that info with students directly first (before they hear it from parents) and talk with them to give the graduating class some input on what they’d like to see as part of the celebrations.
* Sharon reiterated that as council members our desire is to keep people informed, but it’s very important to let the administrators release information officially. We really want to help, but in this case especially we need to sit tight until clearer/final decisions are made. This also applies to anything we discuss at council. If people are asking you questions, it’s helpful to refer people back to the source (ie: administration).
* Kevin hopes that next week there will be more information released by the board grad committee, approval by the superintendent is pending. As soon as Kevin/Rebecca have information they will be going into the classes to let them know. They may go into classes tomorrow already to inform them that grad photos are happening, that celebrations will be virtual and more information is pending. We know emotions around this are high as this is going to be the first parent group for this new direction and that can understandably be hard, especially if they have older students that have already graduated. Historically, council has not been involved in grad other than by paying for the photo booth.
* Council has normally contributed $500 towards the grad photo booth, so if there’s something that council can support once there are more parameters on what can & can’t be done, please advise us.
* Kara suggested that the key message we can share is that these decisions are board-wide: every school will be running their graduations the same way. We can direct people to the WRDSB website or Twitter account for the information that has been released.

1. **New Business/Fundraising**

Fundraising

* We committed last meeting to revisit whether any fundraising is appropriate one last time.
* We’ve talked at great length about the position parents may/may not be in due to COVID. The last time we discussed this we were still in virtual learning. Now on the eve of a potential lockdown announcement there’s uncertainty again. Sharon recommends not to fundraise with a product/catalogue at this time, as it doesn’t feel like a fair stressor to put on parents right now.
* There are a number of schools doing things like pizza night, or sub night paired with a business and the school gets a portion of the funds. It is in keeping with the messages of “buy local”, “get takeout”, etc. If we’re going to do this we need to decide tonight. We could organize a series of nights. Some social media messaging would be needed, but not much else is required to organize this.
* Kara noted it’s an easy way for the people who want to to participate and yet there is zero pressure and no way for anyone to know if you participated or not. It’s completely voluntary, and takes the pressure off of families who are not able to fundraise.
* Our school contract for pizza lunch is through New Orleans. Sharon will look into this and compare pizza places. (New Orleans vs. Domino’s - Domino’s has helped us out with prizes when we’ve asked, but we’ve heard that New Orleans is typically the best with schools). If we have a series of nights people can participate when it works for them. We can space out a number of nights starting soon and through to the end of the school year, and we could also choose different nights of the week.
* Sharon will send out a council update with respect to the pizza plan before messaging goes out publicly.
* Courtney motioned to proceed with investigating & organizing pizza nights on a series of dates, Jesse seconded, passed unanimously.

1. **Other business:**

Second Gaga Ball Pit

* The door for the current pit has not been found. Joe (new custodian) is going to put in a work order to see about having it replaced. If the board won’t replace it then we’ll go through the company that installed it.
* The students still love it. They’ve been limited because of COVID restrictions, but since only one class is out in that zone at a time they aren’t needing to race for it anymore.
* A second pit might ultimately work on the grassed-over ball diamond when that is done. Right now it makes sense to wait until we can see what we can do with that space.

**MEETING ADJOURNED 7:55pm**

**Next meeting: Wednesday, May 19, 2021**

(Final meeting for the 2020-21 school year)