

Minutes
NORTHLEA HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION MEETING
Thursday, November 21, 2013 6:00 PM Library

Present – Sarah Dawson, Wilmar Kortleever, Shelly Lowe, David Ehrlich, Mike Kennedy, Sophia Danish, Susan Gray, Stephen Pierce, Aly Alibhai, Ying Wang, Sylvia Franklin, Kelly Nicol, Julie Zgjana, Julia Irwin, Peter Baugh, Melanie Harju, Linda Gilland, Monika Scholte, Sandra Whittaker, Melissa Beresford, Rami Batal, Eric Chue, Frank Chang, Sandra Draga, Gina Fortsas, Alexis De Castro, Sharon Krieger, Wendy Dancer, Marcus Dancer, Janice Klugston, Nicole Cooper, Linda de Ruitter, Doug McCormick, Julie Brown, Kara Kane, Rachel Chernos Lin, Christina Spangler, Suzanne Baran, Lisa Reid, Mary-Beth Sophianapoulos, Jennifer Williamson, Sandra King, Marina Kioulmetis, Anna Dumancic

Regrets – Claude Lukawesky, Valerie Cook, Jeannie Sit

The meeting was called to order at 6:11 pm.

1. INTRODUCTION – Sarah Dawson

We have a great full agenda tonight. Thanks to the teacher reps and to the entire administration team for attending, to address some important topics. The package includes agendas for both meetings.

MOTION	Wilmar Kortleever , Julie Brown APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA	CARRIED
MOTION	Kelly Nicol, Ali Alibhai APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – OCTOBER 17, 2013	CARRIED

2. CHAIR’S REPORT – Sarah Dawson

Thanks to Claude Lukawesky, for astounding work in gathering nominations for Jake, our Crossing Guard. We have entered him into the Canadian competition – this year we received over 100 submissions, with pictures, letters, etc. A sample is in the correspondence file, along with some other communications, People for Education information, goals for TDSB, etc. The School Statement of Needs is not in the file.

Please sign in on the attendance sheet. We use your email addresses to send constructive communications out to our families.

Northlea School turns 70 in Feb – it opened in 1944, and grew significantly after that. We will put some fun initiatives in place with the students, to commemorate it. We will also try to give Family Fun Night (FFN) a 1940’s feel and celebrate our 70th birthday. We have spoken about initiatives for the kids that are age appropriate. We will also incorporate the 1940’s into our upcoming Date Knight event. We have a sponsorship team in place for FFN and Date Knight. We will start soliciting for sponsorship donations for both events, this month. Letters are ready to go out, to established and new partnerships, and we have spots for both Gold and Silver sponsors. Please let Sarah know if you are interested in being a sponsor. We will try using TDSB’s charitable number, to see if we can issue tax receipts.

We are looking for inspirational leaders in the community, who can come in and speak to students on November 28th. We will need 12 speakers, to speak to the Grade 7/8’s. If you have any suggestions, please let Sarah know.

3. ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE – David Ehrlich, Mike Kennedy, Sophia Danish

- Report cards have gone home and parent teacher interviews went well
- The priority is to look at all 6 learning skills – there is consensus amongst the teachers to do this
- We just completed a drive to raise money for the victims of the hurricane in the Phillipines – we raised \$3200. We are trying to figure out a way for the government to match the donation.
- Some children went down to the David Foley exhibit this week
- Marci (our guidance counsellor) is on a leave – we will be hiring someone, to share with a few other schools. The job was posted this week. They will send us applicants by end of the week, and the 3 principals will interview. If you have any questions regarding high school applications, please bring them forward to the administration team
- Mike commented that we are in the final phase of our reorganization. We hired Jennifer Cruck, who will work 2 afternoon a week as a prep provider. She services 4 schools in total. Ms Robbins is therefore back to .5 librarian
- We are working through the space issues on Full Day Kindergarten (FDK). We are still sorting out space, location, room, etc.
- There will be 2 French and 3 English FDK classes. There is an FDK committee working on this and they are processing the information we've been given. There is still a lot of work to be done. Once we know exactly what it will look like, it will be communicated to parents. Julie Brown is our lead for the parent team.
- A question was asked whether our school has been impacted by the board's decision to eliminate field trips to City Hall. Have we used this as a teaching event in class? We've not discussed an approach with teachers, as it has not come up from the staff as a topic of conversation. It's a sensitive topic and is being addressed in individual classes, as appropriate.

3. HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION FINANCIALS UPDATE – Sharon Krieger

There is nothing to update on at this meeting. The financials are not accurate, as we don't have expense and revenue for all activities.

5. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – Sarah Dawson

MOTION Ali Alibhai, Wendy Dancer
 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Minutes
NORTHLEA HOME & SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING
November 21, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm.

1. INTRODUCTION: Sarah Dawson

This is an important meeting, that will address concerns that parents have had. Thanks for giving the administration team a chance to put together a plan. Previously, we have done analysis of EQAO data, to open our eyes to what we need to address. We won't spend a lot of time on data, but rather, how we comprehensively need to address it.

Also, we have copies of the books from the previous anti-bullying workshops – please take one. We will have further sessions on this in the future.

MOTION	Wendy Dancer, Kelly Nicol APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA	CARRIED
MOTION	Susan Gray, Sharon Krieger APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NOVEMBER 21, 2013	CARRIED

2. PORTFOLIO UPDATES – SAFE & CARING SCHOOLS – Wilmar Kortleever, Sarah Dawson

- The CATs team were asked for feedback on tonight's meeting and have prepared some questions
- Wilmar commented that the Safety Committee has picked up anti-bullying
- We are busy with traffic safety – a traffic officer has been here to investigate corners, for requirement of an additional crossing guard
- There is a letter on its way to our Mayor and Police force, to detail the unsafe surroundings on our street, specifically Broadway, due to construction and traffic issues. This will be the tip of the iceberg compared to what we will deal with during LRT construction. We are trying to create awareness early. We encourage parents to walk kids to school, as this in itself, will make it safer for our children
- Reminder that NCCC parking lot is for NCCC parents only
- We are also addressing birthday treats (issues around health and safety) – they are devising a policy which will come into place next year
- We now have a Safe & Caring School part of our website – you will find much information for parents and students – we will keep adding to it. If you have something of interest, please feel free to send it in, to post on the school website.
- For parents with kids at Leaside High, the Eglinton subway construction, will result in an emergency exit right in front of Leaside High School

3. DISTRICT REVIEW AND EQAO FINDINGS: LITERACY PLAN FOR 2013 – David Ehrlich, Mike Kennedy, Sophia Danish

- There are a few handouts that we've given out:
- 1) School Improvement Plan (this is the plan the administration team submits to the Board, based on the board improvement plan). It is very big picture and we won't focus on it much tonight
- 2) District Review checklist they used in our school last year, based on where you should be focusing in instruction and assessment. This is just informational for you
- 3) EQAO data – some data is available on the website, and there is specific information on last year, trends, male/female breakdown, French/English breakdown, etc.

- We will focus tonight, on the plan and discussions. We will give an overview of the District Review – where we are at the school, including a thorough report on school and school climate. Then, we will talk about EQAO trends, then on to School Literacy and EQAO plans.
- The plan was created by 18-20 staff along with the administration team. The recommendations made, will be implemented this year and next year. We will adjust our focus to change things in the school
- Mike – in the District Review, a group of administrators went classroom to classroom and gave us observations about the classes. They confirmed that there is a lot of great stuff going on – extra curricular, etc. They saw some evidence of learning goals and criteria, in the classrooms, as well as descriptive feedback and other positive things going on. There are Word Walls – things posted in classes that are there to aid in their learning, and limited evidence of differentiated instruction (ie) – individualized approach. We’ve done very well in problem-solving – worksheets are still being used quite a bit.
- We’ve had a great discussion with staff on high expectations and what that means. We need to focus on higher level thinking tasks, which they will need as adults.
- David – regarding all recommendations in the District Review, there was staff consensus regarding the accuracy of what they said, and we have already made strides in addressing some of these things. It certainly helps us guide our planning. We will summarize this information so it is easily consumable.
- We are working to consistently demonstrate what we need to. We have made some strides, but are not where we need to be on Learning Goals and Success Criteria. They need to be in every class and visible to all children.
- Everyone has an EQAO package – it is very detailed with a lot of information. We looked at trends – strength in Grade 6 literacy and numeracy and we need growth in primary writing and reading. There is an achievement issue around boy’s writing in both Grades 3 and 6. There are board concerns, but we’re specifically concerned with the gender gaps at Northlea. The writing scores increase from Grade 3 to Grade 6 and many students are above standard, however, Grade 3’s are consistently below and Grade 3 and 6 boy’s scores are below the girls
- Math – we are at the TDSB and provincial standards, and don’t see gender differences
- The TDSB standard is level 3 minimum, and these are trends over a minimum of 3 years
- The biggest issue we need to address is Grade 3 English achievement in writing – it is significantly below the standard. The Grade 6 gender gap for writing is also large.
- The Grade 6 French scores are slightly below standard, but there are big gender differences
- Grade 3 French Immersion children don’t do the writing portion of the test, as dictated by the board
- We know these results raise many questions around what we’re doing
- Transparency of the data is important – parents can see any data they would like to see – we make better decisions with more information. We need support to ensure we’re providing the best for the children.
- What is the goal/objective? Plan calls for 5% increase in EQAO results. Our goals are:
 - 1) Be continuously reflective of what we’re doing in learning
 - 2) Create a culture here, with teachers who want to practice and change what they need to do based on recommendations. We need to continue to support the teachers, to assist with the knowledge they need
 - 3) We would like to say we could hit 15-20% higher scores on EQAO as a goal, but we want to affect the learning plan. If we do that, scores will improve. A measurement will definitely be EQAO results. We will see improvement in several areas, some of which are measurable and some not.
- Sophia – we are looking at District Review suggestions – focus on literacy – have a school-wide approach for Grades 1-8, engaging students in relevant areas. Promote higher-order thinking skills and better Professional Development. We have started on these – we have had some PD and focused on areas of need. The teachers also see the need to improve. They are on board with the plan.
- Areas of focus: most significantly on writing. Have had good results on math, based on previous focus in the school. We are going back to a greater focus on writing.

- Learning goal and success criteria – these are really good teaching strategies. In District Review, they looked at student’s work and asked about what they were learning. They wanted to make sure each student knows what they are learning.
- Success criteria – how do you know you’ve been successful in learning? They might give the class a level 4 piece of work and discuss what made it a level 4 piece of work. Student would identify what the criteria are to make it level 4. Kids have the “rubric” so they can assess their own work eg) big ideas in a story – students get a level 4 response on a book they’ve read, so they can identify what makes it level 4 work. They come back to class and create criteria. Then students use this same checklist when they do their own piece of work. We want all teachers to have a common understanding of success criteria and learning practices, and have all teachers doing this consistently. Since June, there has been some growth and reflection, and we would see benefit from that already. We even see this in Kindergarten where they write their ideas in pictures.
- An anchor chart is something like class rules – you have it all year long. It is specific to a task you’re doing in the class all year eg) Fire drill procedure
- Will there be consistent success criteria across the classes? Yes, it will be used across the grades. It is specific to the task we’re doing, so classes may be focused on different aspects of a topic. Guiding principles are to be more consistent and collaborative – we want to be aligned from Grades 1-8 on writing, as an example
- Is success criteria driven by the curriculum? Yes, it is.
- Sophia will be hosting an evening on Special Education, coming up shortly
- Are there written success criteria and learning goals in each class? No, as it is specific to tasks.
- Makes sense that the teachers collaborate on tasks that are similar in each class, but student participation is important to the process. We’re still moving towards what a common understanding is of level 3 writing, based on curriculum. This forces children to understand why I’m doing this, to be actively participating and to determine what I need to do to be successful.
- We had a Professional Development day with staff on October 11th – talked about success criteria and learning goals. We will review our School Improvement Plan (SIP) in spring of 2014. Also, we talked about descriptive feedback – good feedback to students, guiding them specifically on what they need to do to make it better. Success criteria are used in descriptive feedback versus generic feedback – helps students to move to next level.
- We want teachers’ to be on same page regarding assessment of level 1 versus 3, as an example, in the same grade. We need a common understanding of work and assessment to make it consistent.
- On November 28th, we are working with all grades, to do a writing piece. We will work at identifying levels of work and criteria for each. Next step is the descriptive feedback we would give to that student to help them move up. Also, how can we implement this better to improve student’s work? We need to provide staff with the opportunity to get PD during the day, while providing appropriate curriculum for the children. We will validate a collaborative approach based on our plan. We also have an upcoming focus on differentiated instruction, and teachers are very supportive of it.
- What evidence will parents see when work comes home? You should see various degrees of feedback to your kids. There may be comments, but also consistent ongoing assessment of where the child is, before the final product is marked.
- There is commitment to PD for staff all year. It may be by class, by division, etc., looking at a specific skill where they have a specific activity with common assessment and evaluation. It is a teacher’s way of sharing expertise.
- Differentiated instruction – understanding a student and knowing what their needs are. Certain students need different support, so you tailor your learning activities by student. Allow them opportunities to show their level of learning differently. If you have issues/questions, please speak to individual teachers about it.
- Our goal is to have a common understanding of good assessment, good feedback, etc. This is something we are working towards.
- We constantly reflect on our practices and how we can do it better. A question is posed regarding what is changing? We need to work with people and develop a plan to make sure everyone understands expectation. We have to continue to work and make more strides to

become comfortable and supported with expectation changes. It takes some time to move everyone to the ideal, and the teachers helped create this for the school.

- Is there a way for the teacher to include what they are teaching kids as a descriptive component, in the homework package, so we know better what it reinforces in the classroom? Success criteria should be going home with all homework packages. We feel we need to support teachers to move through the process, with PD support. As we move through the expectations, conversations may have to happen with staff to assist them with this. Reflection and change takes time – need to build collaboration with these things.
- Is team planning new? It was done, but now we have a renewed focus. The teachers meet weekly (same grade teachers) to make sure they're moving in the same direction. Many things were being done, but the District Review tells us adjustments must be made, more formally.
- Do the English and French teachers meet together? Yes, by grade level.
- What kind of differentiated learning are we giving to boys? As the gap is significant, the generic improvements will hit both genders and the boys will naturally get better. We are looking at more non-fiction text for boys, as an example. We are looking at what type of activities engage boys better. Conversations are taking place on the strategies – find out what the student is really interested in, think about how we're teaching them, and how we can demonstrate the learning. When we move to next year, will look at it again, and get even more specific about what we need to do. The thinking is we will take a broad approach and get more specific as time goes on.
- How are we measuring the success? What are the outcome objectives? Need strategies and measures of what we're achieving. Next spring, we will evaluate how we are doing with success and learning criteria. Are the teachers executing on the strategies ie) is there consistent descriptive feedback happening in the classroom? Some things we can measure like standardized data, alignment of writing from Grades 1-8 – we need to make them measurable, quantifiable and achievable. Engagement, relevancy, purpose – are not as easily quantified.
- Could we create excitement around writing by having writing competitions, etc?
- We also have a focus on small group instruction – this is the PD on the 22nd – a way to give specific feedback to kids to move them forward in a task. We can give 3-4 kids specific feedback.
- We will review the levelled text area in the library, to understand the supplies of levelled material.
- As we continue to develop the plan, we will go back to the plan and decide what we actually need to get to our goals
- EQAO plan: in the fall, we will identify areas for growth – move towards school-wide results for concepts, ideas, what they're assessing and techniques they are using. We need to make sure concepts are taught, starting in Grade 1. We will provide a parent information session in the spring. We will meet with Grade 3 and 6 teachers to be specific on what we need to focus on. As we progress our results, we can look at more specific results, and develop specific teaching strategies to make it even better.
- Do we ever share with parents how the kids are being evaluated in EQAO? Yes, that would be helpful. Parents and teachers need a common understanding of how kids are measured.
- There is a common approach for Grade 3 and 6 in the spring – specifically looking at things around the assessment, to give them a sense of the setting, and giving them better chance of success
- EQAO.com has a lot of info regarding the test, and terminology used in the test to set them up for success
- This plan is fluid and will be re-looked at in the spring. We are providing staff with support they haven't had before.
- The District Review takes place every 5 years – is there an opportunity to do it more often? We could go through the checklist each year, on our own. David fills out a school assessment each year, assisting in development of the SIP. We are critical of ourselves, so we will work with Curriculum committee to test where we are.
- Did we see better results in Gr 9 than Gr 6? Yes, they continue to grow. We can share data on this.
- We need to look at worksheets being sent home, based on level of activity, and ensuring that we are sending work home that takes them into higher order thinking tasks.
- Did we collaborate with other schools that are ahead of us on EQAO? David met with a colleague skilled in this area, to talk about what we should take into consideration.

- Questions about how to improve student's work – we have upcoming PD on Dec 3 (Special Education) and Dec 19 (JK/SK speech development and early language), Jan 22 – talk to all parent (K-8) on language development and what we can do to support the children

4. NEXT MEETING – it will be in January - date has not yet been set and topics are to be determined. If you have suggestions, please provide them to Sarah. The Bullying presentation was very good – we could do a follow on presentation to that. The Safe & Caring School committee will also be coming up with next steps.

MOTION

Sandra Whittaker, Stephen Peirce
TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.