

Elizabeth Simcoe Jr. Public School School Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 13, 2025 – Online | 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Attendance:

Amanda Formentini, Amanda Young, Amy Zubick, Chantal Elward, Elizabeth Hyland, Jesse Chao, Julia Lakats, Katie Eley, Colleen Leung, Lornah Mark, Mary Filson, Megan Fitzpatrick, Melanie McCloud, Laurena Navratil Crewe, Rebecca Viapiana, Robyn Bluestein, Ruth Coulter, Sharmila Sivasankaran, Stephan Psarros, Tammy Hewitt, Yana Verbitskaia

Regrets:

Beth Brooks, Raluca Kostovski, Kim Rogers, Stuart Rogers

1. Welcome & Land Acknowledgement

- Katie

- The TDSB Land Acknowledgement was read: *We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and the Inuit peoples.*

2. Approval of Minutes

- Katie

- Tammy moved to approve the January 16, 2025 Minutes, seconded by Robyn thereby passing the motion.

3. Principal's Report

- Ruth

Robotics Update

- Ruth mentioned that there were plans to have students showcase their robotics skills at this meeting, but due to weather conditions, this did not occur.
- A future attempt will be made to showcase the robotics at a spring Council meeting when the weather is better, and students can safely travel to and from the school.
- Lorna has been working through the classes in the library with the robots, and Ruth recently purchased Dash robots for Kindergarten to Grade 1 students. Ruth noted that the robotics are being well-used throughout the school.

Snow Day and Parent-Teacher Interviews

- Ruth shared that today was a rare snow day (the fifth snow day in 27 years).
- The snow day meant that parent-teacher interviews scheduled for today would be rescheduled and confirmed that staff will coordinate make-up sessions next week for parents who were unable to attend today's interviews.

Skating Program

- Ruth provided an update on the upcoming skating event for grades 1 to 6, which is scheduled for the end of the month.
- Ruth expressed gratitude to those who have signed up to volunteer for the event and noted that the team is currently collecting and organizing the necessary equipment.
- Ruth encouraged families to donate any old skates or helmets that they no longer use, as children's sizes tend to change quickly.
- Helmets are mandatory for all students, staff, and volunteers, in accordance with TDSB safety policy.
- Ruth emphasized the importance of modeling safety practices and following regulations during the event.

Little Yogis

- The students enjoyed a session with Little Yogis on February 4th.

Steel Pan Performance

- A performance by a steel pan musician took place on February 3rd. The performance was animated and engaging, with the students dancing and learning about the origins and construction of the steel pan. The performer shared that his father was instrumental in getting the steel pan program into schools.

Upcoming Reggae Dance Class

- On February 20th, Kevin, a local instructor from the Port Union and Lawrence area, will be hosting a school-wide reggae dance class. Students from kindergarten to grade 6 will participate in three separate sessions (K, 1-2, 3; 4-5-6).

Ball Hockey

Students participated in a co-ed ball hockey event. While the team lost every game, the students returned with big smiles, having enjoyed the experience. It was a great introduction to the sport.

Girls Volleyball & Boys Basketball: Both tournaments are scheduled for February 20th, the same day as the reggae dance class.

Polling Station:

- The school will be used as a polling station on February 27th for the provincial election. The West Gym will host the polling station, with setup occurring the day before.

Excursions:

- Grades 2-3 will visit the Young People's Theatre.
- Grades 4-5 will visit the Hillside Outdoor Education Centre.
- Grades 1-2 will visit Harbourfront.

Hot Chocolate Donation for Skating Event

- Amy Zubik and her family have generously offered to provide hot chocolate for the students on the days of the skating event.
- Inclusion of all students: Emphasized that not all students will participate in the skating, either by choice or parental preference. There needs to be an opportunity for these students to also enjoy hot chocolate.
- Discussion on Hot Chocolate Station: It was suggested that the hot chocolate station be set up near the library so that both students on the rink and those in the classroom can enjoy it.

Equipment for Skating Event

- Helmet and Equipment Safety: Julia raised concerns about the safety and expiration of helmets for the skating event. Ruth confirmed that the school is working through the inventory to ensure that all helmets meet safety standards. Some helmets were found to be outdated and will not be used.
- Donations for Equipment: It was discussed that the community might be able to provide replacement equipment, particularly for any expired or unsafe helmets.

Parking Lot Line Painting and External Lights

- East Parking Lot: Ruth confirmed that a work order has been submitted to have the lines painted in the East parking lot.
- External Lights: Ruth also requested that the timer for external lights be adjusted to improve functionality, and Marco has been asked to address this.

Family Games Night

- Ruth will discuss organizing a family games night with the staff at the end of the month. This event may take place in the spring, depending on staff feedback.

Bell Timing Issue

- Rebecca raised a concern about the school bells ringing two minutes early. Ruth confirmed that a work order is in place to address this, and an electronic specialist will need to come in to adjust the bell system.
- Parent Communication: Rebecca suggested that parents may need clarification on the bell timing issue, especially regarding whether students arriving after the bell is ringing are considered late. Ruth will send a communication to parents regarding the situation.

Skating and Kindergarten Inclusion

- Rebecca asked if the kindergarten students could be included in the skating event. Ruth explained that this year it would not be possible due to the logistical challenges, including teachers recovering from injuries and the need for many parent volunteers.

Action Items:

- Follow up on robotics showcase in the spring at a future Council meeting.
- Ruth to send out communication about the bell time issue.

4. Sunshine Childcare Report

– Kim

No updates to provide.

5. Treasurer's Report

– Megan

Financial Update:

- Megan provided a brief financial update for the month. Classroom enrichment payments are nearly complete with 16 out of 18 staff paid, and the remaining receipts are pending.
- Little Yogi's payment has been processed.
- Pancake breakfast, Nitwits, and movie night events have been added to the budget. Movie night expenses have a \$500 buffer for potential caretaker costs.
- A new category for the Fun Fair budget has been added, with initial payments made for inflatables and a DJ. Sponsorship money is also being received.
- The projected bank balance is approximately \$12,000, not including upcoming expenses.

6. Earthly Fundraising

– Katie

- The guest speaker, from Earthly (a local sustainable product company), will present in March. They are now a TDSB-approved vendor and will run a similar fundraiser to Mabel's Labels. A link will be provided for the community to purchase items, and a percentage of the proceeds will be donated back to the school.
- Julia endorsed highlighting its organic and sustainable products, and expressed support for the fundraiser.
- Jesse asked for clarification on how the fundraiser works, which will be similar to previous fundraisers where purchases made through a link generate a kickback for the school.
- Earthly is also interested in having a table at the Fun Fair, where sales will also benefit the school.

7. Events and Activities Updates

Little Yogis Recap

– Katie on behalf of Raluca

- The program was generally well-received, with students enjoying the activities and practicing yoga poses outside of class.
- Some teachers appreciated having a structured activity for their students, especially those not familiar with teaching yoga. However, other teachers felt it was something they could have done on their own in the classroom.
- The possibility of offering the program again next year is under consideration. Feedback from teachers will be gathered to determine if it is a worthwhile investment for future events.

Puppets Cool

- Rebecca

- With a focus on younger grades (1-3), the program costs \$20 per student, it was suggested to have teachers select which classes will participate.
- A possible concern was raised about the program's cost and whether parents could help cover some of the expenses, should the school's budget need additional support.
- Ruth offered to poll teachers at the next staff meeting to gauge interest from approximately 5 classes. This would help estimate the total cost of the program (roughly \$2,000 - \$2,500).
- The puppetry program would involve one hour of instruction, where students learn about puppetry and create their own puppets to take home for storytelling activities.
- The program will be further discussed, and a vote will be conducted at the next meeting based on teacher interest.

Action Items:

- Ruth will gather teacher feedback on the puppetry program.

Rocks and Rings

- Katie

- There was no update for Rock and Rings as it is scheduled for April. More information will be available when April arrives.

News and Views

- Robyn

- Confirmed that the next "News and Views" is due in mid-March, with a personal timeline of having it completed by March 5th.
- The content will feature the "Save the Date" announcement for the upcoming event, using imagery from Megan's e-mail newsletter. The focus will be on what's confirmed for the fund fair, with an encouragement for attendance and a call for sponsors to reach out via the fun fair e-mail.
- Robyn will send the content for review if needed.

Fundraising for Sister School Ideas

- Julia

- **Dance-A-Thon:** Each child would pay \$10 to participate in a dance for a set time (e.g., 20 minutes) during school hours. Older students could be DJs, possibly assisted by a parent DJ. To encourage participation, teachers suggested offering incentives like a cookie that meets allergen-free requirements.
- **Art Auction:** There was feedback that parents and teachers prefer individual art pieces over group efforts for auction. However, the concept of classroom collaboration in art for the fund fair was also considered. Cedar Drive and Eastview expressed interest in participating in fundraising efforts.
- **Additional Ideas:** Matching donation idea was proposed, where for every dollar raised by the other school, the group could match it with a lump sum, students traveling to Cedar Drive or Eastview to sell items like freezies, with the potential for a matching donation, inviting the other school to events like the year-end dance or DJ party, where they could sell tickets and raise funds.
- The group emphasized the importance of involving students in fundraising to teach them about giving and community support.
- There were concerns about the practicality of hosting joint events due to the logistical difficulties of transporting large numbers of students between schools, particularly with Cedar Drive's limited resources.
- Julia clarified that she had reached out to both Cedar Drive and Eastview to explore ideas, but there were no firm commitments yet. She stressed that the discussions were still in the idea stage and nothing was guaranteed.

Action Items:

- Julia will continue to explore ideas with the schools and provide updates in the next meeting.

Pancake Breakfast

- Elizabeth

- **Volunteer Update:** Elizabeth confirmed that the initial email for volunteers has been sent out and there are more than enough volunteers for the pancake breakfast event. A few volunteers have been placed on a standby list in case someone is unable to attend on the day.
- **Supplies Request:** Elizabeth will draft an email listing the supplies needed and will send it to the Council first. If more supplies are needed, the email will be extended to the larger community.
- **Dietary Concerns:** Elizabeth mentioned that it is important to reach out to teachers through Ruth to check for any dietary restrictions or allergies among the students. Ruth confirmed she can assist with this and will send out an email to parents about dietary concerns. Elizabeth will provide the wording for the email Ruth will send to ensure clear communication regarding allergies.

Action Items:

- Elizabeth to send out an email to Council regarding supplies needed.
- Ruth to send out an email to teachers and parents about dietary concerns.
- Elizabeth to finalize event schedule and volunteer coordination.

NitWits

- Katie

- The Nitwits performance is scheduled for March 21st.

Movie Night

- Katie on behalf of Raluca

- Movie Night will take place on March 28th.
- The winner for the older kids' movie category is "Yesterday".
- For the younger kids, there was a three-way tie between *Finding Nemo*, *Inside Out 2*, and *Moana 2*. A vote was conducted to decide the winner:
 - Finding Nemo: 4 votes
 - Inside Out 2: 2 votes
 - Moana 2: 8 votes
- Moana 2 and Yes Day will be shown at the movie night.
- Megan will start working on the flyers for the event, and further updates will be provided in the March meeting.
- Plans for snacks and volunteers will be discussed further closer to the event.

Popcorn Machine Discussion:

- Chantal inquired about purchasing a popcorn machine for movie nights and the Fun Fair. Storage and maintenance were concerns raised in previous discussions.
- Megan will look into pricing out the machine and consider whether purchasing one makes financial sense.
- Julia added a note on the limitations of popcorn and cotton candy machines, especially regarding their minimal runtime (approximately 45 minutes) before the motor risks damage. If purchasing machines, consider the need for breaks and be mindful of the runtime, especially for longer events like the Fun Fair (3 hours). The machines may not last as long if used continuously.
- There was a discussion on how the machines were used during previous events and the possibility of team effort to ensure they are cleaned after each use.
- The committee will continue to assess whether purchasing the machines makes sense from a cost and longevity perspective.

Action Items:

- Megan to begin working on the flyers for Movie Night and provide updates at the March meeting.
- Megan to explore the feasibility of purchasing a popcorn machine and other related equipment, considering storage, cleaning, and runtime limitations.

Everblast Play Company

- Megan

- Megan provided an update on the Everblast program. They followed up, but unfortunately, the company is not approved by the TDSB.
- There were mentions of other schools (Guildwood and one near Midland and Kingston) using a similar service. The team will explore other options and check for TDSB-approved providers.

Spirit Wear

- Megan

- The Spirit Wear website being up and running. New local designs have been added, including:
- Varsity-style logos, a hoodie with the Simco logo.
- The website offers a wide price range of products, from \$15 T-shirts to \$200 jackets.
- There are various customization options available, including: Embroidery or digital print, name/number customization, and multiple logo placement options (left, middle, right).
- The Spirit Wear program will run year-round, with profits distributed once the \$1000 threshold is reached. So far, there has been a positive response.
- Shipping and Delivery: Confirmed that free shipping is available for orders over \$120. The delivery times have been quick, with orders arriving within a week or so after being placed.
- Ideas for Promoting Spirit Wear: Amanda suggested organizing Spirit Days to coincide with Pizza Days, giving everyone a reason to wear their spirit wear. Megan agreed, and the idea was well-received. It was proposed that a Spirit Wear day could happen on March 7th, the day after the next meeting.
- A flyer promoting Spirit Wear has already been posted on the cork board outside the office, featuring a QR code for easy access to the online store.

Action Items:

- **Megan** to follow up on **Everblast** options to find a TDSB-approved alternative.
- **Megan** to promote during **Spirit Day** on **March 7th**

Fun Fair Update

- Robyn / Chantal

Sponsorship Outreach:

- Sponsorship outreach has begun by contacting previous sponsors from last year to offer them first access to new sponsorship packages.
- Some changes were made to the packages to offer more incentives, particularly for higher-tier sponsors, as last year's packages were too similar across the board.
- So far \$3,750 has been secured, with a possibility of an additional \$4,000 as some sponsors are still deciding between silver and gold packages.
- Outreach has not yet been made to new potential sponsors.
- Silent auction items secured include donations from Pauline (Zoo passes), Aquatics Scarborough, Gym Elite, Good Life Fitness, and Code Ninjas, among others.

Sponsorship Form:

- Yana requested access to the sponsorship form; the committee prefers to manage distribution to avoid multiple submissions. However, individuals can personally introduce sponsors via email, and the team will send the sponsorship documents directly.

Volunteers:

- Inflatables and other activities are being coordinated. The team has begun processing payments and confirming reservations.
- Dunk tank is planned, but volunteers and a schedule are still needed, including possibly having teachers participate.
- Volunteers are needed for organizing classroom baskets (possibly a raffle), the pizza room, craft rooms, and 10 games.
- Volunteers will be recruited by sending out calendar invites for the next meeting on February 20, 2025, in the school gym.

Donations and Account Status:

- Megan is in touch with Mary about donations. Some sponsors have already submitted receipts, but not all. Mary has a meeting with Megan on Wednesday to confirm donation deposits.

DJ for the Event:

- A new DJ is being booked after DJ Mike became unavailable. The selected DJ has previous experience with the school. The DJ runs foam parties, which were considered for the end-of-year party but not feasible for the Fun Fair due to space limitations.

Budget Discussion:

- The committee will put together a budget for the event to discuss at the next meeting. While most of the expenses are handled close to the event, the council may need to approve some costs in advance.

Reaching out to School Board Trustees and Parliamentarians:

- The team has reached out to Paul Ainsley and Andrea Hazel our school board trustees, for potential donations or sponsorships.
- Ainsley donated two passes and expressed interest in attending the fair, though he was unable to last year due to a family commitment.
- Andrea is considering getting a vendor table, possibly as a sponsor, but clarification is needed about the exact nature of her involvement.

Action Items:

- Katie to send out a save-the-date for the upcoming meeting to the school community.

Community Event for Family Day

- The event at Holy Trinity for Family Day was promoted, which includes a magic show, slime-making activity, hot chocolate, and raffle prizes (tickets to the zoo donated by Paul Ainsley).
- Families are invited to attend. The event is free and open to everyone.

Krispy Kreme Funds

- Robyn

- The Krispy Kreme fundraiser raised \$660.
- Discussion followed about allocating some of this money towards purchasing a charging cart for the Chromebooks, as requested by Miss Noble. The cost of the charging cart is about \$1,800, and it was proposed to use the Krispy Kreme funds along with some funds from the pizza lunch fundraiser (net \$12,000).
- **Vote Results: A motion was put forward and passed with a vote of 14-0 in favor of using the funds for the charging cart.**

Action Items:

- Ruth will follow up on the purchase of charging cart.

Other Items

- All

Budget and Future Needs

- The Council discussed remaining funds from the pizza lunch fundraiser, which will be used for various school needs.
- At the end of the year, the bank account needs to be zeroed out, so ideas for using the funds were encouraged.
- Ideas for future purchases include a ceiling-mounted digital projector and five additional robots for the Lego Robotics program.

Grade 6 and Kindergarten Graduation Discussions

- Grade 6 graduation support was confirmed, with funds set aside for hoodies and awards.
- For Kindergarten, a formal graduation is not possible due to non-compulsory status, but a recognition ceremony could be considered.

Book Fair Feedback

- Parents had difficulty accessing the teacher wish lists during the recent book fair, and some suggested better communication about the lists in the future.
- It was proposed to have larger or more frequent time slots for parents to visit the fair.
- There was discussion about students bringing cash for purchases, and one suggestion was to use a card-based system (MyDo) as an alternative for students to manage funds.

Square Card Reader Update

- Megan is working on obtaining a Square Card reader for use during school events such as movie night and fun fair.
- This will allow for easier payments and testing before the next large event.

Next Meeting: March 6, 2025 at 6:30pm