

Elizabeth Simcoe Jr. Public School School Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 22, 2026 – Library | 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Attendance:

Amanda Formentini, Amanda Young, Chantal Elward, Elizabeth Hyland, Katie Eley, Kim Rogers, Megan Fitzpatrick, Melanie McLeod, Molly Christie, Paula Liu, Raluca Kostovski, Rebecca Ho, Robyn Bluestein, Ruth Coulter, Shannon Brandeis, Tammy Hewitt, Tricia Davey, Yana Verbitskana

Regrets:

Julia Lakats

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

- Elizabeth moved to approve the November 20, 2025 Minutes and Paula second the minutes.

3. Principal's Report

- Ruth

Construction Update

- Contractors have been pre-qualified; project is progressing through the building permit process. Building permit expected within the next few weeks.
- Tendering: Project will go to tender once the permit is received.
- Contractor Timeline: Anticipated contractor engagement by April 2026.
- Construction Start: Expected to begin late May–June 2026.
- Phasing Plan:
 - Initial focus on the addition, landscape scope, existing library, and East Wing classrooms.
 - Originally planned summer 2026 work moved to summer 2027 due to contractor timing.
 - Office and staff room renovations now scheduled for summer 2027.
 - Childcare centre to temporarily relocate during summer 2027.
- West Gym:
 - Closed summer 2026 for roof replacement and elevator installation.
 - Elevator pit excavation will require partial corridor closures.
 - Elevator installation may extend into fall 2026, possibly to December, due to safety testing.
- East Gym: Will remain open until West Gym obtains occupancy permit.

Sewing Studio Visit

- Program took place this week: Very positive student engagement especially among kindergartens.
- Students used portable sewing machines to create small projects. Presenters provided all equipment and materials.

Academic Updates

- Teachers currently preparing report cards and IEPs. Submissions due to the principal at the end of next week.
- Report cards go home February 10 (approx. date).

February Presentations & Activities

- Feb 4: Steel pan music presentation by Mr. St. Pierre.

- Inspiration Republic: Equity, inclusion, and anti-Black racism workshops. Separate sessions: K–3 and Grades 4–6.
- Student Activities:
 - Basketball, volleyball, ball hockey intramurals underway.
 - Students have begun sledding outdoors.
 - Skating rink expected to be ready by first week of February, pending weather.

Administrative Items

- EMA Forms: Approximately 25 students still missing forms. Required for participation in skating; alternative activities available.
- PALS Initiative: PALS group gathering student feedback on behaviour expectations and values. Goal: develop a school-wide code of conduct / mission statement. Posters will be created for all classrooms once finalized. Current concern: increased “snow drama” during lunch periods.

Technology & Display Screen Proposal

- Request to purchase a television display (approx. 50") for the school's front hall. Purpose: Showcase student learning (sewing studio, outdoor learning, Indigenous work, math, coding, robotics, etc.). Continuous slideshow using Canva, Google Photos, or USB slideshow.
- Considerations:
 - Ensure media release compliance for all photos.
 - Placement of USB ports (preferably side or bottom for wall mounting).
 - Wi-Fi reliability may affect smart TV options.
 - Funding to be discussed/voted on by the council.
 - Suggestion raised to purchase an open-box TV from Best Buy for cost savings.

Parent-Teacher Meetings

- Parent-teacher interviews are teacher-initiated, but parents may request a meeting at any time. Letter accompanying report cards will include this option.

4. Sunshine Childcare Report

– Kim

Construction Update

- Summer 2027 program will be relocated to another nearby school. Final location TBD; the goal is to keep it as local as possible. Sunshine will remain open; families may choose whether to send their children to the temporary location. Further details will be shared once confirmed.
 - Reason for relocation: Major construction within the school, including asbestos-related work and demolition of a wall in the office. The new office space will extend into the current staff room, making the area unsafe for childcare operations.

Staffing Update

- Ms. Harjot has returned from medical leave (away since September). She supports Mr. Leira in the school-age room.
- Vacancies: Open spots in the primary school-age room (SK to Grade 3).

March Break Program

- Finalising field trips; one trip already confirmed: Maple Festival at Horse's Mill plus Tree Walk Village. Scheduled for March 19. One more trip to be added (challenges with vendor callbacks; considering indoor playground or movie theatre).
- Program operates on a day-by-day sign-up; families may choose only the days they need.

Summer 2026/2027 Planning

- Registrations typically start in September. Summer program will run for 10 weeks, requiring 10 field trips to be booked. All trips must be booked before summer registration information is released.

Fee Structure

- For children under age 6, fees must be billed monthly (even if attending only part of the month).

- This requirement comes from the City of Toronto and is tied to funding and cannot be prorated.
- Funding cut-off is based on birth month: Jan–June birthdays: Funding continues until end of school year (end of June), even if the child turns 6 mid-year. July–Dec birthdays: Funding ends during the month the child turns 6.
 - Example: October birthday → funding ends in October. January birthday → funding continues until June.

5. Treasurer's Report

– Megan

- **Pizza Lunch:** reconciliations up to December 1 (January not yet included).
- **Teacher reimbursements:** Approximately 10 submitted; a few more pending (three cheques still to be written).
- **Scientists in School:** School reimbursed for all 13 sessions. Most teachers have now booked their sessions.
- **Nitwits:** Invoice received and paid (\$835).
- **Sewing Studio:** program paid.
- **Mabel's Labels:** Small commission received.
- **Holiday raffle:** revenue \$505.
- Lost cheque from previous year (Grade 6 graduation) located and cashed.
- Remaining items to clear include: Additional Scientists in School sessions, graduation expenses, classroom enrichment, Rocks & Rings program, Olympic athlete visit
- Once all approved expenses clear, the account will retain just over \$11,000

6. Events and Activities Updates

Holiday Outreach Initiative Review

- Amanda Y.

Holiday Concert Raffle:

- Donations were delivered to Dr. Roz's Healing Place before the holidays. Staff at Dr. Roz's expressed strong appreciation and shared how the funds were used. The school donated \$505.
- Due to a high number of children staying at the shelter (approx. 27 women and 29 children), funds were used for: Snacks for the children's daily programming and art materials (beads, paints, paper, etc.)
- Future Opportunities: If desired, Council may direct funds toward a specific children's program or consider materials-based donations next year.
- All raffle winners happened to be School Council members.
- Conversation clarified that: Many council members purchased multiple tickets, increasing probability of winning. There was a broad range of families who bought tickets overall. The outcome was random but reflected participation patterns.
- Next year, Council may run separate raffles by concert (primary/junior) if multiple performances occur.

Food Drive: Strong participation from the school and daycare. Large quantity of food and hygiene products donated (including toiletry items).

Winter Clothing Drive – Eastview: Very successful partnership again this year. Donations were quickly taken by families in need—all items were gone shortly after delivery. Eastview staff were grateful and open to continuing the partnership next year.

Holiday Hampers - Support for Families

- Two large local families in need were supported through community hampers: One family: father with five children. Another family with multiple children and significant needs (including medical items due to a car accident)
- Hampers included approximately \$950 in gift cards (grocery, Dollarama, Shoppers Drug Mart, etc.).
- Families were extremely appreciative; TDSB Social Work extended formal thanks.
- Some council members noted the hampers tended to be filled by the same group of contributing families.
- General Observations: Offering multiple giving options (food, clothing, hampers, raffle) provided flexibility for families to contribute in different ways.

Sewing Programme Update

- Robyn

- Sewing workshops took place this week and were very well received. Students were enthusiastic and proud of their creations; many asked for the program to return next year.
- The instructors were described as highly professional, well-prepared, and engaging.
- A highlight was the representation: Many instructors were men and people of colour, which positively broke stereotypes about sewing.
- Program Impact: Students produced a variety of creative items (e.g., stuffed characters like Ninja Turtles, Spider-Man). Teachers noted excellent engagement, even kindergarten students produced impressive work. Families shared stories of kids continuing to talk about sewing at home.
- Organisational Notes: Programme was expensive but widely regarded as worth the investment.

Olympic & Paralympic Athlete Visits

- Yana

- Confirmed Guests:
 - Calynn Irwin: 2018 PyeongChang Olympian - Halfpipe snowboarder
 - Billy Bridges: Paralympian, ice sledge hockey - Five-time Paralympian, three-time medallist
- Event Schedule: Athletes will be at the school beginning 8:30 a.m.. They will present twice, once each for: Primary (K–3) and Junior (4–6).
- Format: approx. 10–15 minutes of speaking, followed by Q&A. Teachers are encouraged to prepare one or two student questions in advance. Photos (e.g., group or class photos) may be arranged.
- Additional Notes: Both athletes are Toronto-based. Robyn has contacted a sponsor who may contribute a small gift for each athlete; she will coordinate with Ruth.

Pancake Breakfast

– Elizabeth

- Traditional Pancake Tuesday falls on Tuesday, Feb. 17, which is immediately after the long weekend making setup difficult. Council agreed to move the event to Monday, February 10. **Amendment: After meeting, new date was provided: Friday, March 27th. Setup will occur after school on March 26.
- Event Format: Same setup as previous years: Morning event. Scheduled class visits through lunchtime. Multiple pancake options to accommodate dietary needs
- Budget: Last year's cost: \$173. Request this year: up to \$250, to account for inflation.
- Ingredients & Allergies: Must ensure mixes are Peanut-free, Egg-free (or have egg-free version), accommodate gluten and dairy restrictions (separate mix will be prepared).
- Discussion around last year's parent request for Canadian-only brands: Council agreed this is not required, especially due to cost and allergy constraints.

Action Items:

- Elizabeth to prepare sign-up sheets and communications.
- Three mix options will be sourced: Main mix (nut- and egg-free), Gluten-free mix, and additional allergy-safe option

Theatrics Program

– Elizabeth

- Program confirmed for early April; exact date still being finalized.
- Timing must avoid: Good Friday (April 3), Easter Monday (April 6)

Action Items:

- Elizabeth will confirm availability with the provider and report back.

Rocks & Rings

- Katie

- Correct dates: March 4 & March 5. Earlier incorrect dates (April 4–5) were a typo and have been corrected.

Social Media Presentation

- Megan

- Paul Davis has become extremely high-demand and is fully booked for all in-school presentations for the current school year. Only availability offered: June evening parent-only session with cost: \$1,400 and unlimited parent attendance. Includes a pre-recorded 45-minute teacher presentation for classrooms
- Concerns noted about June attendance due to sports and year-end activities. Council leaning toward booking Paul Davis for Fall 2026, allowing: In-school student presentations and evening parent session. Awaiting follow-up from Paul Davis regarding next year's availability.

Nitwits Presentation

- Katie

- Request submitted for a Friday in April. Awaiting confirmation from the "head nitwit" for available dates.

Pollinate TO Grant

- Amanda F

- Draft of the grant application is complete; Ruth has signed off on school-related components.
- Still required: Additional documents from the school board
- Planned grant amount: \$5,000. To support front-of-school beautification, including greenery and flowers. Back area not eligible due to upcoming construction.
- No specified timeline for decisions—foundation contacts did not provide dates.

Action Items:

- Amanda to reach out to Ruth to acquire required documentation for submission. Once documentation is received, the application will be submitted.

Jays Care Applications

- Amanda F / Raluca

- Discussion regarding two separate Jays Care initiatives: Girls at Bat (girls' softball programming) And affiliate School Program (possibly new – unclear)
- Application not submitted yet. Original drafter (Amanda) cannot be listed due to conflict of interest with Rogers employment.
- Copy may need to be updated before resubmission. No known application deadlines.

Spring Movie Night

- Katie / Megan

- Council agreed to plan a Spring Movie Night. Discussion on ideal timing: March considered risky due to weather (wet boots, slush). April preferred. Date selected: Friday, April 24.
- Poplar Road PS may reach out to inquire about licensing (they are interested in running a parent drop-off event). Council noted: They *cannot* advise on licensing for drop-off events. Their proposed drop-off idea may require reconsideration for safety reasons.

News & Views (School Newsletter)

- Robyn

- February newsletter: Include "Save the Date" for Fun Fair – May 29.
- March newsletter: Include principal's Institute announcement (due March 15).

Fun Fair

- Robyn/ Chantal

- Confirmed for May 29.
- Potential construction impacts: Concern raised about early construction starting in May. Ruth will explicitly communicate to Facilities that Fun Fair must not be disrupted. Initial construction scheduled to begin with Kim's playground area, but likely not before late May. Will monitor closely.
- Main Event (carnival supplier): Will offer additional free items to compensate for last year's issues.
- DJ: Last year's DJ (not DJ Mike) was preferred due to sound quality. Will reach out to book him again.
- Volunteer recruitment: Initial call for volunteers to go out after Feb. 26 meeting.
- Dunk Tank: Will return this year. Will ensure proper cage/backstop (last year's unit arrived incorrect / unsafe) and dunk tank placed on grass, not concrete. Very strong participation last year- raised over \$1,000.

- Student Vendor Request: A former Grade 6 (now Grade 7) student requested a vendor table at Fun Fair to sell handmade items. Council discussed allowing a “Junior Maker Market” with possible location Book Room or a corner of the library area. Council supports including student entrepreneurs; location and process to be determined.
- Additional Fun Fair Ideas:
 - Plant Sale / Garden Table: Community-donated plants (perennials, succulents, divisions). A parent volunteer offered to manage the table.
 - Coffee Vendor: Potential partnership with a local café or coffee truck.
 - Revisit book sale logistics: Possibly relocate to junior hallway.

Action Items:

- Kickoff Planning Meeting: Date selected: Thursday, February 26. Ruth will submit permit request.
- Chantal to reconnect with Main Event rep (Matt) to confirm updated package.
- Need to track Drunk Tank total sales more precisely this year (Square + cash donations).
- Need to avoid turning Fun Fair into “too many sales tables”—to be discussed.

Book Fair Review

- Fundraising Leads

- Total raised: \$8,138. Equivalent Scholastic dollars: approx. \$3,700. Similar to last year's performance.
- **Parent access & timing:** Opening during holiday concerts boosted parent engagement, but Wednesday evening sales were low due to poor weather. Parents gave mixed feedback about last-minute purchases before concerts and managing holiday budgets. Large pre-concert student crowds strained volunteer capacity and made crowd flow difficult.
- **Volunteer Challenges:** Last-minute teacher schedule changes caused issues because Parent volunteers were not available at newly assigned times and some teachers insisted on switching despite volunteers not being available.
- Next year: Final schedule must be set in advance, with Teacher approval and no day-of changes unless the teacher staffs the fair themselves,
- Library Access (Future Years)- Uncertainty due to construction phasing:
 - West Gym → first under renovation and then East side
- Book Fair may need alternate locations or move online depending on construction status.

Pizza Lunch

- Elizabeth

- Cash-Online stays open until February 10.
 - New trial solution: Families wanting two different slice types can order two identical slices and email the coordinator to manually adjust - Avoids Cash-Online administrative complexity.
 - Financial Hardship / Sponsorship: Children sponsored in the fall will continue to be supported for the remainder of the year. New hardship cases can also be added as needed.
- Future “Donate a Slice” Option: Proposed for next school year: Families can add one extra slice donation during ordering. Helps cover sponsored students and occasional “forgotten lunch” emergencies- Council supportive of this idea.

Murdoch Mysteries “Murdoch in the Classroom” Program

- Amanda F.

- Amanda introduced a free Canadian educational program called *Murdoch in the Classroom*, developed in partnership with the production team from *Murdoch Mysteries*. Curriculum-aligned for Grades 5–9; could apply to Grades 5–6 at Simcoe.
- The program teaches: History and science, critical thinking skills, evidence-based reasoning and detective-style inquiry (observe, hypothesize, test, revise)
- Includes: Five ready-to-teach lessons, teacher guides, assessment rubrics, exclusive videos from cast members and developed with award-winning educators

Action Items:

- Amanda will email full program materials to Ruth. Ruth will consult the junior teaching team about feasibility and alignment. If the school wishes to proceed, Amanda will connect the program lead with Ruth directly.

PALS: Playground Rules, Student Survey & Behaviour Framework

– Tricia Davey

- Top Five Playground Rules (from student input): Common themes collected across primary and junior classes:
 1. Keep hands off other people.
 2. Stay within schoolyard boundaries.
 3. Use appropriate language.
 4. Respect personal space.
 5. Keep snow, rocks, sticks, sand, and wood chips on the ground.
- Why These Rules Matter (student responses)
 - "To keep everyone safe."
 - "So everyone can have fun."
 - These phrases were repeated across nearly every class.
- Problem-Solving Strategies (student responses)
 - Talk it out
 - Walk away
 - Tell a teacher
 - Work it out together
- Council noted these strongly align with the "WITS" strategy (Walk Away • Ignore • Talk it out • Seek help).
- Next Phase: Consequences & Protocol: Staff want consistent school-wide language about what happens when rules aren't followed. Distinction made between: minor issues (snowballs, boundary reminders, rough play) and harmful or hateful language, including racial or homophobic slurs.
- Discussion on Harmful Language: Council discussed having 0-tolerance for hate-based or violent language. Increasing concern regarding students repeating the N-word or slurs: Sometimes used in anger without understanding the harm and sometimes learned from older siblings, YouTube/social media, or peers.
- School Response: Ruth emphasized that hate-based language triggers immediate office involvement.
- Consequences include: Education-based intervention, student-created artefact (e.g., booklet, reflection, presentation) showing understanding of harm, parent communication, emphasis on education + consequences, not just discipline.
- Next Steps: Staff will develop: A common language protocol and posters for classrooms and shared spaces

Voting Results

Two items were voted on via QR code:

1. **Pancake Breakfast Budget** – *Approved*
2. **School TV Display Purchase** – *Approved*

(All voting members present voted "Yes.")

Technology & Coding Resource Update

- Ruth

- A parent raised concerns about LEGO Spike kits becoming obsolete by 2030.
- Ruth clarified: All classes are actively coding using LEGO kits, micro:bits, and Dash & Dot. Teachers are receiving release time to expand robotics and coding skills. School is heavily investing in Chromebooks and technology integration.
- AI in classrooms: Staff recently completed an AI workshop led by Ms. Noble. Teachers are using AI tools to design lessons (e.g., angle measurement with micro:bits).

Miscellaneous Items

- Katie requested a volunteer to take minutes at the next meeting as Amanda F will be absent. Raluca volunteered.

Next Meeting: February 12, 2026



Elizabeth Simcoe School Council Income/Expenses YTD				
Prepared on January 13, 2026 by Megan Fitzpatrick				
	Income	Expenses	Profit / Loss	NOTES
Movie Night (2024/25)		\$ (100.00)	\$ (100.00)	Giftcard given to to G&G as a thank you for donating equipment
Welcome Picnic	\$ 983.19	\$ (843.94)	\$ 139.25	\$915 CashOnline orders. \$70 Square. Expense: pizza, drinks, ice, plates
Chromebooks		\$ (6,486.20)	\$ (6,486.20)	20 Chromebooks purchased
Simcoe Spirit Shirts		\$ (1,100.00)	\$ (1,100.00)	100 Shirts purchased
Pizza Lunch #1-5	\$ 8,965.48	\$ (2,955.99)	\$ 6,009.49	School cashonline + private sponsorships x5
Movie Night Oct 2025	\$ 1,614.30	\$ (1,353.62)	\$ 260.68	CashOnline, Square, Cash; Expenses: Costco, Kernals, License, G&G
Teacher Reimbursement		\$ (2,386.83)	\$ (2,386.83)	8 Staff have been reimbursed
Scientist in the School		\$ (3,177.00)	\$ (3,177.00)	13 Bookings
Nitwits		\$ (835.92)	\$ (835.92)	November Session
Sewing Studio		\$ (4,704.00)	\$ (4,704.00)	Invoiced paid via school to save tax
Mabels Labels	\$ 102.99		\$ 102.99	Commission earned
Holiday Raffle/ Dr. Roz Donation	\$ 505.00	\$ (505.00)	\$ -	Cash deposit, cheque issued
Grade 6 Graduation 2024/25		\$ (215.24)	\$ (215.24)	LATE WITHDRAWAL- Yearbooks and Programs (June Cheque)
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
TOTAL	\$ 12,170.96	\$ (24,663.74)	\$ (12,492.78)	
Starting Bank Balance \$30,247.06 August 1 2025				
Total in YTD \$12,170.96				
Total Paid out YTD -\$24,663.74				
Current Bank Balance \$17,754.28 After all above listed transactions are completed				

Elizabeth Simcoe School Council APPROVED PLANNED/PROJECTED Income/Expenses YTD				
	Income	Expenses	Profit / Loss	NOTES
Nitwits		\$ (850.00)	\$ (850.00)	Spring Sessions
Grade 6 Graduation		\$ (3,000.00)	\$ (3,000.00)	Historically funded
Classroom Enrichment		\$ (3,600.00)	\$ (3,600.00)	12 Staff @ \$300
Theatrics		\$ (1,000.00)	\$ (1,000.00)	Approved; event details TBD
Pizza Lunch (#6-10)	\$ 8,000.00	\$ (4,000.00)	\$ 4,000.00	PROJECTED
Rocks & Rings		\$ (600.00)	\$ (600.00)	Approved; event details TBD
Olympic Athlete Visit		\$ (1,500.00)	\$ (1,500.00)	Approved; event details TBD
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
	\$ 8,000.00	\$ (14,550.00)	\$ (6,550.00)	
Current Bank Balance \$17,754.28				
Projected Total in YTD \$8,000.00				
Projected Total Paid out YTD -\$14,550.00				
Projected Bank Balance \$11,204.28				