

Elizabeth Simcoe Jr. Public School School Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 23, 2025 – Library | 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Attendance:

Amanda Formentini, Amanda Young, Chantal Elward, Elizabeth Hyland, Julia Lakats, Katie Eley, Melanie McLeod, Megan Fitzpatrick, Molly Christie, Lorna Mark, Raluca Kostovski, Robyn Bluestein, Ruth Coulter, Tammy Hewitt, Yana Verbitskana

Regrets:

Kim 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

- Megan moved to approve the September 25, 2025 Minutes. Tammy indicated she had reviewed the Minutes but did not approve them due to an amendment she wanted to propose. The amendment concerned a reference to "Freezing Friday," which was incorrectly noted as a fundraising event last year. Tammy clarified that it was not used for fundraising. Amanda agreed to make the necessary correction.
- Julia's last name was confirmed and will be correctly recorded in the minutes. The discrepancy was acknowledged and will be resolved.

Action Items:

- Amanda to update the minutes with the amendment regarding "Freezing Friday" and fix Julia's last name.

3. Principal's Report

- Ruth

Academic Updates

- Teachers are currently focused on preparing report cards and communication of learning documents.
- Report cards will be sent home on November 11th.
- Parent-teacher interviews are scheduled for Thursday and Friday following the report card distribution.

Extracurricular Activities

- Cross Country:**
 - Approximately 150 students participated in the first meet led by Ms. Noble.
 - City Championship is scheduled for Wednesday, October 29th at Sunnybrook Park.
- Boys Soccer:**
 - Coached by Ms. Mark and Ms. Pauling.
 - The team reached the quarterfinals.

Remembrance Day Assembly:

- Scheduled for November 11th. Led by Ms. Di Paolo, featuring performances from multiple choirs.

Winter Concert Discussion:

- Proposal to host the concert on one night at Sir Wilfred Laurier High School. Concerns raised about suitability for younger students due to the high school venue. Alternative option: two nights at the school.
- Tentative dates: December 16th–19th, with final date to be confirmed.

Wall of Heroes Initiative:

- A tribute to veterans and active service members.
- Inspired by Ms. Di Paolo, supported by several staff members.
- Location under consideration: main hall or near the office.
- Staff and families encouraged to contribute photos and stories.

Movie Night:

- Noted as a great success.

Holiday Hamper Proposal

- A suggestion was made to support a family in need during the holiday season through a holiday hamper.
- The idea was prompted by a request from the school social worker, who identified families requiring assistance.
- Suggested items such as gift cards for grocery and drug stores (e.g., Food Basics, No Frills, Costco, Walmart, Shoppers Drug Mart) and examples of requested items (clothing, general household items).
- The proposal was well-received by the council, with agreement to support at least one family.
- The group expressed interest in potentially supporting more than one family, depending on capacity and need.
- Timeline: Commitment deadline: October 22. Family profiles assigned: Week of November 17. Hamper pickup dates: December 15 or 16

Other community initiatives

- Eastview coat drive, Native Centre at Anderson Road, Galloway programs, Church donation programs.
- Emphasis was placed on the importance of targeted support and clarity of needs to avoid waste and ensure meaningful contributions.

Angel Tree Concept

- The idea of an Angel Tree was raised as a potential format for organizing donations.
- Could include specific items (e.g., blender, clothing) tagged for selection by donors

Action Items:

- Ruth to follow up with the social worker and confirm participation. Explore the possibility of supporting multiple families.

Remembrance Day Assembly

- Assembly scheduled for November 11th, led by Ms. Di Paolo.
- A question was raised about kindergarten participation; follow-up with Ms. Di Paolo is needed.
- Indigenous Veterans Day (November 8th) was suggested for inclusion in the assembly to honor all veterans, including those who served outside Canada.

School Improvement Planning

- Staff are currently developing school goals for the year.
- Focus areas include:
 - Indigenous Education
 - Literacy and Mathematics
 - Student Achievement and Belonging
 - Mental Well-being
- A \$16,000 grant proposal was submitted by Ms. Mark and Ms. Tsioutsoulas for experiential learning with Indigenous specialists. Aim: Integrate Indigenous knowledge into innovation and technology learning.

Book Fair

- Parent Council may take the lead on day-of operations. Volunteers needed for each class period.
- Ideal timing: Second week of December, to align with holiday gift buying.
- Concert scheduling may affect Book Fair timing; further discussion needed.

4. Sunshine Childcare Report

– Kim

No updates.

5. Treasurer's Report

– Megan

Chromebooks:

- Payment made for 20 Chromebooks, which have now arrived.
- All students in Grades 2–6 now have 1:1 device access.
- Devices are used throughout the year and returned for rotation annually.
- Kindergarten and Grade 1 students share devices as needed.

T-Shirts: 100 school t-shirts purchased.

Pizza Lunches: Second round added to projected expenses. Four families sponsored students who couldn't afford lunch.

Movie Night:

- Net profit: \$215 (after purchasing a movie license). Candy was purchased on sale at Costco, helping reduce costs. Gross revenue: \$1,614, including \$600 from concession sales.

Mable's Labels Commission: Received \$103 from sticker sales.

Farm Sales: Profit: \$350. Fruits and vegetables expected to arrive in November.

Cookie Sales: Profit: \$1,000.

Projected Budget: If all approved expenses are spent and pizza lunch trends continue, the council will have \$17,328.23 in available funds.

Scientist-in-the-School Bookings: Only Ms. Noble has booked so far. One teacher has emailed interest; not yet processed.

6. Events and Activities Updates

Movie Night Review

- Raluca

- The event was successful, but several technical challenges were noted:
 - Equipment from G&G arrived late in the evening, causing stress. School Wi-Fi outages occurred two days prior, impacting setup and streaming capabilities. Streaming was ultimately done via phone tethering.
- The team expressed gratitude to G&G for their ongoing support but acknowledged the risk of over-reliance on external donations.
- A recommendation was made to invest in school-owned tech equipment, particularly:
 - A data projector for events like Movie Night and other school functions.
 - Potential audio equipment (e.g., speakers) was discussed but deemed incompatible with current needs.
- Dave from G&G offered to provide equipment at cost and has a projector available.

Vendor Approval & Board Requirements

- Any purchased tech equipment must be sourced from TDSB-approved vendors to ensure IT department support, Insurance compliance, Long-term compatibility
- Donations (e.g., projectors) are acceptable
- Consider aligning equipment purchases with future auditorium or gym upgrades, though these are not currently covered by the school board.

Equipment Purchase Discussion

- Council discussed the possibility of purchasing tech equipment (e.g., projector) for future events.
- If Council leads the purchase, it may be less restrictive than if the school does, due to TDSB IT support requirements.
- A parent contact may be able to offer equipment at reduced cost.
- Council members expressed willingness to take the lead on the purchase to simplify the process.

Movie Night Feedback

- Overall, the event was better received than the previous spring.
- Attendance was slightly lower (~30 fewer students via Cash Online), but several families paid at the door.
- Suggestions for future events:
 - Add a friendly reminder on flyers for parents to help supervise.
 - Set up a small concession table near the grade 4-6 entrance to reduce crowding and keep students contained.
 - Signs and supervision were improved, contributing to smoother flow.

Action Items:

- Raluca to follow up with Dave from G&G to explore options.
- Clarification needed on: Whether the movie license includes access to a catalogue of titles, if movies are provided via streaming or physical media (e.g., DVD) and whether Netflix or Prime access is permitted under TDSB firewalls.

7. Nit Wits

- Katie

- Happening November 13th

8. Theatrics Program

- Elizabeth

- Owner, Jeff has offered to run two workshops per class for the entire school.
- Each workshop will be 40–45 minutes long and conducted in-class unless a larger space (e.g., library) is preferred.
- He can accommodate up to six classes per day, allowing the program to be spread over multiple days (e.g., 4, 4, and 5 classes across three days).
- Teachers may be able to sign up for time slots, depending on scheduling preferences. Flexibility exists to split sessions across weeks if needed.
- Elizabeth will confirm with Jeff whether workshops need to be consecutive or can be spaced apart.
- Need to avoid conflicts with: March Break, Diversity Show (tentatively in March), Rocks & Rings Program (week after March Break), Earth Day (April). April appears to be less busy school-wide and may be a better fit.

Action Items:

- Elizabeth to follow up with Theatrics to confirm feasibility of split scheduling and preferred dates based on school calendar
- Final decision to be made after staff meeting and further input.

Overview of Last Year's Initiatives

- Three outreach initiatives were successfully completed last year:
 1. Winter Clothing Drive in partnership with Eastview Public School
 - All donated items (jackets, boots, sweaters, socks, shoes) were taken by families in need.
 - Eastview confirmed interest in partnering again this year.
 2. Concert Ticket Fundraiser for Dr. Roz's Healing Place
 - Raised approximately \$600.
 - The organization expressed deep gratitude, noting they rarely receive school-based donations.
 3. Food & Hygiene Drive for Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities
 - Long-standing partnership with the school.
 - Organization noted that few schools donate, making the contributions especially meaningful.

Planning for This Year

- Goal: Spread out initiatives to avoid overlap and increase impact.
- Suggested timeline:
 - Winter Clothing Drive: Begin in early November to align with seasonal needs and family sorting cycles.
 - Food Drive: Consider aligning with December or concert season for visibility and participation.
- Promotion strategies:
 - Posters around the school
 - Social media posts
 - Donation boxes placed in high-traffic areas

Action Items:

- Amanda Y to follow up with Eastview and other partners to confirm participation and timelines.

Additional Donation Ideas

- A mitten and sock drive was suggested, based on a successful initiative from previous years.
- Many families donated new packaged items last year, which were well received and fully distributed by Eastview.

Holiday Concert Tie-In

- Proposal to link the food drive with the holiday concert:
 - Families could bring a donation as part of their admission.
 - Encourages family involvement rather than placing responsibility solely on teachers requesting items.
 - Helps spread out initiatives and avoids overwhelming staff.

Professional Clothing Donations

- Discussion around supporting women re-entering the workforce with professional attire.
- Uncertainty about whether Dr. Roz's Healing Place supports employment readiness.

Next Steps

- Plan to launch the winter clothing drive in November, aligning with seasonal needs and family sorting cycles.

- Fundraising via Holiday Concert: Plan to auction off front-row seats at the holiday concert to raise funds. Proceeds may go toward holiday hampers or other outreach efforts. If the concert is held at Laurier, more seats will be available for auction. Reminder: last year, 25 seats per show were sold at Fun Fair
- Explore feasibility of a professional clothing drive in partnership with local organizations.
- Amanda or another council member to follow up with Dr. Roz's Healing Place to clarify current needs.
- Social Media & Promotion: Megan will assist with social media promotion for upcoming initiatives. Posters will be created and shared for visibility.

Action Items:

- Confirm Eastview clothing drive timeline.
- Finalize food drive logistics at next meeting.
- Await family assignments for hamper program.
- Discuss monetary donation allocation once fundraising totals are known.

10. Rocks and Rings

- Katie

- Rocks & Rings program is confirmed for March 4–5.

11. Social Media Presentation

- Megan

- Proposal to invite Paul Davis, a speaker specializing in social media and online safety.
- Paul Davis is known for engaging presentations on topics like: Social media risks (Snapchat, Roblox, YouTube) and online safety for children and awareness for parents
- Format: Afternoon presentation for Grades 4–6. Evening presentation for parents (potentially open to Jack Miner and other local schools)
- Estimated cost: \$1,000

Action Items:

- Megan to confirm: Availability in spring (avoiding January–February due to weather) and whether pricing changes based on audience size or venue (e.g., Laurier)
- Melanie can put Megan into contact with Board of Safety Committee from Laurier.

News & Views Submission

- Robyn

- No update; next issue due in December.

Cultural & Enrichment Programming

- A sewing program was suggested as a potential cultural enrichment activity. Focuses on breaking stereotypes and teaching practical skills.
- Previously discussed by Council; well-received. Program is active in other TDSB schools and serves students from Kindergarten to high school.
- May not be a board-approved vendor, but Council-led funding could allow flexibility.

Action Items:

- Robyn to inquire about pricing and availability and report back.

Pizza Lunch

- Elizabeth

- First pizza lunch held on October 3rd; went smoothly with strong volunteer support.
- Next meeting October 31st
- Ordering process was improved:
 - Fewer leftover pizzas compared to last year.
 - A new system allows families to request split orders via email, simplifying logistics and avoiding changes to Cash Online.

- Only one family requested support; outreach was made but no response received.
- Volunteer email will be sent out soon.

Fun Fair

- Chantal + Robyn

- Tentative date: Friday, May 29th
 - Planning to begin soon, with a focus on recruiting more adult volunteers, especially for setup and supervision.
 - Contacting Main Event for vendor coordination.
 - Exploring licensing requirements for raffles sales:
 - Raffle licensing involves multiple fees and legal considerations.
 - Molly volunteered to investigate and manage the process.
 - Previous research and contacts will be shared to support this effort.

Skating Rink

- Katie

- A social media post was shared by Mike, a former council member and parent of two children at the school. Mike was seeking funds to support skating rink at Simcoe Park
- The council acknowledged the Go Fund me hit donations targets and no further discussion at council is required.

Safety during Lunch and Recess

- Raluca

- Request to discuss student safety during lunch and recess due to recent incidents across various classrooms.
- The goal was to brainstorm general ideas for improving safety, not to address individual cases.

Lunch Supervision Overview:

- Lunch hour is a challenging time due to teacher contractual obligations (40 minutes uninterrupted).
- Approximately 240–250 students stay for lunch.
- Current staffing:
 - 4 lunchroom supervisors (2 in kindergarten, 2 for Grades 1–6)
 - Split lunch model implemented to reduce crowding:
 - Grades 1–3 eat first while Grades 4–6 play outside.
 - Then Grades 4–6 eat while Grades 1–3 go outside.
- Principal and staff rotate support as needed, especially in the primary lunchroom, which has been described as chaotic.
- Common Issues: Indoor lunchroom: Noise, running, and restlessness after eating. Outdoor recess: Disputes over games, rough play, and rule disagreements (e.g., soccer, basketball). Some students arrive early to lunch, leading to extended idle time and behavioral challenges.
- Supervision Challenges Difficulty hiring additional staff due to Unionized hiring process (CUPE) and limited availability of approved candidates. One kindergarten supervisor is currently on medical leave, adding strain to coverage.

Suggestions & Ideas:

- Code of Conduct Reminder: Consider creating or updating a school-wide code of conduct that includes expectations for unstructured time (e.g., lunch and recess). Could be shared with families to reinforce shared responsibility for behavior.
- Student Leadership Opportunities: Expand PALS (Playground Activity Leaders) program to engage older students in guiding younger peers. Explore assigning older students to small groups for peer mentorship and activity leadership.
- Staff Communication: Reminder to staff to drop students off at lunch only at the bell, to avoid extended unsupervised time.
- Progressive Discipline Review: Principal plans to review progressive discipline procedures with staff to ensure consistency.
- Clarification:
 - Serious incidents (e.g., fighting, racism, hate speech) must be escalated to the office.
 - Minor behaviors (e.g., silliness, disruptive conduct) can be addressed in the classroom.
- Acknowledged that teachers may not always have time to fully investigate incidents in the moment.

Incident Tracking & Communication:

- Incidents requiring follow-up are tracked and managed by the Principal.
- Homeroom teachers are typically informed of lunchtime incidents to help maintain classroom climate.
- Students are encouraged to report issues to yard supervisors first, before escalating to the office.

Field Trip Transportation

- Noted that TDSB bus bookings made before February may be significantly discounted (approx. \$300 vs. \$600). This could benefit planning for trips to the Toronto Zoo or Ripley's Aquarium.
- Council may consider pre-booking buses to take advantage of reduced rates.
- Ruth noted that early bookings require upfront payment, which may strain the school budget unless supported by Council.

Upcoming Events & Volunteer Roles

- DJ Dance Party: Volunteers confirmed interest in organizing and supporting these events again this year.
- School Garden & Greenhouse Communication: Amanda and Julia confirmed to lead and assist with planning. Noted grants: Experiential Learning Grant (\$16,000) and Eco Grant (\$1,000 from the City of Toronto)

Action Items:

- Initial research into TDSB plant policies and grant opportunities is underway.

Activity Suggestions & Follow-Ups

- MLSE Outreach: A member will reach out to MLSE to explore potential lunchtime programming or partnerships.
- Indigenous Education Initiative:
 - Strong support for expanding Indigenous learning at the school.
 - If approved, the Experiential Learning Grant could fund eco-sustainability projects and deepen student engagement.
 - Melanie expressed interest in supporting rollout and programming.

Olympic & Paralympic Engagement

- Yana offered to explore opportunities with Olympic and Paralympic organizations:
 - Potential for athlete visits, workshops, and community events.
 - Contacts within the Pan Am and Special Olympics networks may help facilitate programming.

Earthly Fundraiser

- Earthly reached out with a holiday promotion opportunity.
- Council agreed to proceed, noting:
 - The fundraiser is low-effort and non-intrusive.
 - While not highly lucrative, it aligns with eco-friendly values and offers useful products.

Spirit Wear Promotion

- Plan to promote school spirit wear on Pizza Lunch Days to encourage participation and school pride.
- Next promotion will align with November pizza lunch as October is on Halloween.

Lunch Program Updates

- Lunchbox Orders (via Cash Online) are active and running smoothly.
- Subway is currently the most popular option among families. Lunch Lady continues to operate. Parents appreciate the variety and convenience of not having to pack lunches.
- Missed order deadlines were a common issue. Proposal to send Saturday morning social media reminders to help parents remember to place orders.
- Confirmed that multiple weeks can be ordered at once, which may help families plan ahead.
- Lunch Lady allows cancellations up to 10:00 AM on the day of delivery.
- Cancellation flexibility for Lunchbox is unclear and may need to be confirmed.

Elizabeth Simcoe School Council Income/Expenses YTD				
Prepared on October 23, 2025 by Megan Fitzpatrick				
	Income	Expenses	Profit / Loss	NOTES
Movie Night (2024/25)		\$ (100.00)	\$ (100.00)	Giftcard given 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	\$ 8,912.50	\$ (749.50)	\$ 8,163.00	School cashonline + 4 sponsorships x\$75
Movie Night Oct 2025	\$ 1,614.30	\$ (1,399.18)	\$ 215.12	CashOnline, Square, Cash; Expenses: Costco, Kernals, License, G&G
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
TOTAL	\$ 11,509.99	\$ (10,678.82)	\$ 831.17	
Starting Bank Balance \$30,247.06 August 1 2025				
Total In YTD	\$11,509.99			
Total Paid out YTD	-\$10,678.82			
Current Bank Balance	\$31,078.23	After all above listed transactions are completed		

Elizabeth Simcoe School Council APPROVED PLANNED/PROJECTED Income/Expenses YTD				
	Income	Expenses	Profit / Loss	NOTES
Scientist in the School		\$ (3,250.00)	\$ (3,250.00)	13 classes x \$250
Nitwits		\$ (1,500.00)	\$ (1,500.00)	2 sessions- based on a per student price
Grade 6 Graduation		\$ (3,000.00)	\$ (3,000.00)	Historically funded
Classroom Enrichment		\$ (6,000.00)	\$ (6,000.00)	20 staff x \$300
Theatrics		\$ (1,000.00)	\$ (1,000.00)	Approved; event details TBD
Pizza Lunch (#1-5)		\$ (3,000.00)	\$ (3,000.00)	Additional expenses for current round of pizza lunches
Pizza Lunch (#6-10)	\$ 8,000.00	\$ (4,000.00)	\$ 4,000.00	PROJECTED
			\$ -	
	\$ 8,000.00	\$ (21,750.00)	\$ (13,750.00)	
Current Bank Balance \$31,078.23				
Projected Total In YTD	\$8,000.00			
Projected Total Paid out YTD	-\$21,750.00			
Projected Bank Balance	\$17,328.23			