

Earl of March School Council Meeting

Monday, November 20, 2023

7:00 pm

Library, Second Floor

Attendees: Melissa Adams, Anthony Anderson, Sheila Ball, Aneliya Borisova-Terzieva, David Che, Steve Collins, Megan Cornell, Josephine Davidson, Louise Foley, Tracey Frost, Teisha Gaylard, Kristen Lafrance, Ramashan (Ram) Manikavasagar, Jaime McDonald, Caitlin McIlveen, Katherine McCran-Leach, Roop Mukherjee, Maria Short, Kathryn Smith, Yaron Starosta, Maryam Tadi, Gie Zheng

Regrets: Mante Molepo, Jeffrey Zhang (Student Senator)

Call to Order: 7:00 pm

Welcome and Introductions - Roop Mukherjee, Co-Chair (Intermediate)

Review of Agenda

No changes to the meeting agenda. It was noted that there were items on the November agenda that were carried over in error from the October 2023 agenda, namely reference to approval of May 2023 and September 2023 meeting minutes and 2022-23 School Council Report.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Yaron Starosta moved to approve the minutes from the October 2023 meeting. Louise Foley seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Some attendees noted they could not access the minutes via Google Drive. Roop noted that in future, meeting minutes would be sent out as attachments.

Special Guest - Alysha Aziz, Trustee

Alysha was originally to attend the meeting in person but due to coming in close contact with someone with Covid, she opted to participate virtually.

Questions were solicited from Council members and submitted to Alysha prior to the meeting.

Question - How to address overcrowding at EOM

- Alysha - overcrowding at EOM is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to schools in Kanata. A.Y. Jackson and West Carleton are experiencing the same issues with overcrowding.
- The Board was asked by the Province to propose a ranked list of school projects; it was felt that there was a better chance of asking for and getting two school additions instead of asking for a new school in Kanata.
- Alysha noted that an addition to EOM is a potential option, not a done deal.
- An addition would be a band-aid solution.
- Government listens to constituent outcry - Alysha encouraged parents to write to politicians.

Question about students attending EOM who do not live in the school's catchment area

- General comment from the floor that it is known/discussed within the community that not all who attend EOM live within the school boundaries.
- Alysha - Cracking down on students from outside EOM boundaries would need to be addressed with the superintendent.

Question about new Stittsville High School

- Question from the floor: It is rumoured that the new school will be populated one grade at a time, starting with Grade 9. This means the school will have empty space. Could this offer a possible short-term solution to overcrowding in Kanata schools? Alysha took note for follow-up.

Portables at EOM - general comments

- Not accessible for students with physical disabilities.
- No washrooms in portables.
- Holy Trinity High School has portapacks that are better than the portables at EOM.
- Alysha recommends looking at the Board schedule to see when the facilities report is released.

What are the main issues/concerns that have been raised by other school councils in the area?

Suggestions on how councils can work together to have them addressed?

- Alysha suggests a letter-writing campaign to the province.
- Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) is an ongoing resource, as well as advisory committees.

What are Alysha's priorities as she moves into her second year as school trustee?

- Advocacy

Allocation of Vice-Principal at intermediate level (VP intermediate position is divided: 75% administration and 25% learning support)

- General feeling of Council is that the enrolment numbers merit a full-time administrator.
- Megan Cornell noted that in the accommodation review that resulted in Grades 7 and 8 being moved to EOM, the intermediates were supposed to have a full-time principal.
- Vice-principal staffing is based on student enrolment.
- Question about ratios - how does W. Erskine Johnston compare?

Portables and air-conditioning -What do the Board's health and safety regulations say about maximum temperatures and air conditioning in portables?

- Alysha is expecting to hear back from OCDSB Facilities with their report.
- Alysha's understanding is that the Board is unable to provide air conditioning to all portables at this time.
- Question from the floor: Does the Board not have a standard, for example if it reaches a certain temperature in the portable, that there is a protocol to be followed to move students and staff from portables to an air-conditioned space? Alysha made a note to follow up on that point.

Safety issues (traffic and pedestrians)

- Joint responsibility between the Board and the City of Ottawa.

- There are no crossing guards at EOM. Caitlin McIlveen noted that she asked about having crossing guards assigned to the school last year and this year. Caitlin also noted that she has seen improvements in safety since access to the staff parking lot was closed and the walk-a-block program was implemented.

Bus issues

- The parent of a Grade 9 student noted that her family lives 3km from the school but her child is not entitled to a bus pass. Alysha indicated that OSTA determines distances and perimeter changes. Would need to contact OSTA directly with concerns.
- City of Ottawa is looking to cancel Bus Route 268, which is a busy bus used by students to get to EOM. Alysha recommends emailing the City councillor.

Question about staffing of resource room for Grade 7 and 8 students

- Concern expressed by a parent that their child was not able to access the resource room as per their IEP due to lack of staff.
- Alysha - we need to keep highlighting to the Province that we need more Educational Assistants (EAs) and Learning Support Teachers (LSTs)

Concluding remarks from Alysha

- She made notes and will follow up on the outstanding items.
- She is committed to supporting parents.

Discussion following Alysha's departure from the meeting

- General dissatisfaction from attendees that despite having been provided with our questions in advance, Alysha did not have answers for many of the items.
- Caitlin - role of educational assistants has changed since she started working as an educator - more behavioural coaching done now. Caitlin spoke about the role of the learning resource teacher and learning support teacher.
- Steve - very few, if any, cross-boundary transfers are accepted. Also, verifying addresses to crack down on students who are outside EOM boundaries will not solve overcrowding. If it is an issue, it is a small contributing factor.
- Steve - "the squeaky wheel gets the grease". In his opinion, we need to focus on what is going to happen in September - only room for one more portable at the school. A new school is a long term issue. Pressing issue is what is going to happen for September 2024 and we need to push for answers to that question.
- Steve - already had to cap enrolment in the Foods and Nutrition course. Some science courses are being taught in non-science classrooms. As of fall 2024, mandatory technology courses are going to put additional pressures on classroom resources. These issues are going to continue.
- Steve - Of the current 31 portables, about 7 or 8 don't have air conditioning. If students and staff are sick or uncomfortable because it is too hot inside a portable, he doesn't hesitate to move them elsewhere.

Action items discussed and noted by Roop

- Invite MPP Karen McCrimmon to speak at a Council meeting.
- Register a delegation to speak at an upcoming Board meeting.
- Draft a letter to politicians at all levels.

- Reach out to other school councils in the area, particularly feeder schools to Earl, to make them aware of issues.

Student Council Report - Jeffrey Zhang, Student Senator (Grade 11)

Note: Written report shared for inclusion in the minutes as Jeffrey was unable to attend.

Student Council:

- Student Council recently had a very successful Halloween Spirit Week. School-wide events were held at lunch including apple bobbing and pumpkin decorating. Various spirit days were held during the week and a school-wide Halloween dance was held.
- Student council has been selling SPC (Student Price Cards), which give students discounts at various stores.
- Student Council working on Battle of the Grades November 27-December 1. This is usually the biggest student council event of the year. It is a competition between grades to earn points through fun events and collect donations to the Kanata Food Cupboard.

Student Senate:

- First meeting of the year held on November 2, 2023. It was an introductory, orientation-style meeting. Met student senators from across the Board. Discussed values and vision for the Student Senate. Welcomed the Director of Education, Pino Buffone, as a guest and to listen in.
- Updates from the Board as a whole (courtesy of Student Trustees)
 - Continuous OSTA updates: for those in areas facing bus shortages (particularly those in rural zones), Student Trustees have received continuous updates from the Board's representatives in OSTA leadership and the situation is improving despite driver shortages.
 - Indigenous Student Trustee: motion moved at the October Board Meeting to potentially welcome an Indigenous Student Trustee; role would hold greater focus on reflecting and advocating for Indigenous perspectives in education. Further consultation to come.
 - New Schools/Capital Priorities: the Board submitted this academic year's capital priorities (what the board plans to spend their money on), and there were five major recommendations made. Includes an addition/expansion to Earl of March.

Secondary Admin Report - Steve Collins, Principal

- EOM Peer Tutoring Program is up and running. This is 1-on-1 free tutoring for Grades 7-12, at lunch or after school. 65 students are receiving support from 65 Earl students. This is staff-supervised but student-run.
- Schools received their budgets on November 10. EOM identified school priorities in curriculum support, technology support and course equipment support at both intermediate and secondary levels. Some purchases are:
 - Curriculum: updated textbooks/literature, intermediate French resources, intermediate math manipulatives, adding to novel choices, science molecular model kits and other science resources, musical instruments, resources for our English Language Learners

- Equipment: spin bikes and other phys. ed. equipment, ceiling camera for foods room, tools for tech classes, intermediate science lab equipment
- Technology: desktop computers for manufacturing class, full lab, laptops for Developmental Disabilities Program, 15 Chromebooks for the library
- Vertical Team Meetings in November: Science Grade 7, 8, 9 teachers; English Grade 8, 9 teachers; Geography/History Grade 7, 8, 9 teachers; Math Grade 7, 8, 9 teachers; Fine Arts Grade 9 - 12 teachers
 - Benefits of team meetings: increase awareness of curriculum, best practices shared, course priorities shared, identify learning gaps, why teach what and when, building stronger interconnectedness among team members to ensure student success. More meetings to come.

Important Dates:

- November 21 - Grade 9-12 Midterm marks available. Report cards will be sent to parents/guardians electronically. You will need your child's OEN to access them.
- November 24 - PA Day, no Grade 7-12 classes on this day.

Senior Staff Report - Anthony Anderson

Canadian World Studies - Graham Kappel

- Mr. Kappel's Politics class and Mrs. Scheepers's Social Justice class hosted a talk from MPP Karen McCrimmon.

Library Learning Commons - Laura Johnstone

- Scholastic Book Fair was once again a great success, earning over \$1200 in Scholastic books for our Library. Had some amazing moments watching students interact with the books (Shopping Spree raffle winner even did a happy dance in the hall!). Thanks to all the staff who brought their classes and the students who volunteered to help. Special thanks to parent volunteers Louise, Emily, Naveenta, and Kristen.
- Teen Advisory Group is currently working on a holiday library promotion – stay tuned on Instagram! The Teen Advisory Group is a group of student volunteers who work with Ms. Johnstone to provide a teen perspective on what students need and want from the Library. Interested students applied during our Volunteer Recruitment in September and October.
- Earl Reads Book Club will be on Wednesday, November 22 during Secondary lunch in the Library Media Room. New members welcome!
- Students and parents are invited to check out our Library website at https://earlofmarchss.ocdsb.ca/academics/library_learning_commons and follow us on Instagram @eom_library. Students are also encouraged to join the NEW Library Google Classroom – our Classroom code has changed, and is now **cjasj5o** – for updates about resources, library events, book clubs, opportunities, volunteering, and more.

Technology Department - Anthony Anderson

- Received the full CNC machine and five smaller CNC machines. The full one needs to be installed and the hope is that it will be up and running by the end of the year.

Question from a parent about incidents of intolerance and how students can report them. This parent has been hearing about incidents happening at the Grade 9 level.

Answer: Steve noted that anonymous social media posts are hard to police. He encourages parents to be aware of their children's activity online. OCDSB has an anonymous reporting tool called *OCDSB Cares*. Caitlin indicated that intermediate staff regularly hear from students directly about issues. Restorative practices are used when incidents happen.

The same parent wondered if a survey could be administered to students about their experiences with intolerance. Another parent wondered how we would act on the results of a survey. Steve replied that the annual School Climate Survey captures this kind of information.

Question: Do Grades 7 and 8 classes do community circles?

Answer from Caitlin: Yes, most do.

Intermediate Admin Report - Caitlin McIlveen (Intermediate Vice-Principal)

- Presentation by Get REAL happening today (November 20) for Grade 8 students and tomorrow (November 21) for Grade 7 students.
- No cell phone policy continues. No cell phones in classrooms or cafeteria.

Intermediate Staff Report - Tracey Frost (Grade 8 teacher)

- Halloween Dance and Haunted Hallway were a big success. The Haunted Hallway was designed by the Grade 8s for Grade 7 students to go through, with money raised going to the Kanata Food Cupboard.
- Grade 7 Arrowhead trip has been approved.
- Grade 8 trip to Quebec City is being planned.
- Students attended an Ottawa 67's game.
- Caribou Math Contest - almost 90 EOM students participated. An EOM student placed first.
- Teachers are developing a summer reading program.

School Council Report - Roop Mukherjee, Co-Chair (Intermediate)

- 2023-24 School Council Membership - Shannon Wang volunteered to step down as a secondary member on Council so we would have the required balance between intermediate and secondary representation and not exceed the maximum.
- Principal Profile - still seeking feedback from Council on the document.
- Discussion regarding fundraising will be added to the January agenda.
- No December meeting. January meeting will be virtual. Steve will send out the meeting link.

Motion to adjourn the meeting moved by Yaron Starosta. Seconded by Louise Foley. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Next Council meeting is January 15, 2024 at 7:00 pm. Meeting will be virtual.