

March Meeting minutes:

Executive Committee Business:

- Motion to approve the minutes from our last meeting: Approved
- Motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting: Approved
- Notice of Council Elections

Notice of Council Elections:

- We currently have vacancies to be filled: new Chair / Co Chairs / Vice Chairs
- We are in a transition period but now is a good time to get involved mid year ahead of September 2022
- We will be voting for council in April with more information to come. We need a set number of members who are then allowed to vote – we will not cap members this year. Then we will have a vote for the new Chair
- In this transition, you can be a member without having a defined role
- Call for volunteers – if interested, email howardschoolcouncil@gmail.com

Principal update

- Timetable changes April 4th - whole school morning / afternoon recess and lunch
- Kids will continue to eat in classrooms – kids are eating better, we have good supervision, and they are now able to talk. It's a better flow for the school
- Continue maintaining the exit doors – kids are used to it, it's more orderly
- Extracurricular clubs at lunch time (vball for grade 6)
- Concentrating on grade 5 and 6s because they have not had lots of opportunities for leadership
- We'll have outdoor classrooms for when warm weather hits
- Parents want more sports, but we're being respectful of teachers who have different comfort levels and demands on their time
- Catherine Ringler is gauging teacher interest, but we may ask parents if they want to step up
- Lobster trap: a couple of kids have had limbs stuck after taking off their boots. We are addressing this.

Suzy:

- We are getting a little closer to a lot more fun including field trips– we have a lot of exciting things being planned
- Medieval times for junior kids (grade 6 teachers planned for May 13th) – grade 4, 5 and 6
- International day of pink – April 13th
- Terry fox run – tba
- David Kruger (half time phys ed) Jump Rope for Heart
- June 28 – play day – more to come
- X Movement – virtual Thursday April 7th
- Grad – Friday June 24th
- Mme Maitland – fundraiser for Ukraine – bake sale Thursday April 7/8
- Pride Parade June 1st

Catchment changes update (Kathy Narraway)

- Howard is built for 577 students, but we currently only have 376 and it might be decreasing
- Catchment changes start in 2023, but will be optional for 2022
- Path for Howard kids – Howard – Fern – Parkdale Collegiate (English) or HumberSide (french)
- Howard should grow by up to 5 more classrooms but will still have a surplus of one more classroom (music room)
- Loblaw's development won't happen until 2030, and even then Loblaw's will likely build schooling in the complex
- For any child in the new catchment area that wants to come to Howard in 2022, they cannot attend FI as that is already set
- For high school, kids have a home school but can apply elsewhere (Ursula Franklin, Etobicoke School of Arts etc)

Equity Update: Midori

- Ward 7 Black Student Success Committee (BSSC) – we reached out at Queen Vic and Parkdale to offer support. We attended a meeting of the Ward 7 executive community, in trying to embed this work into all schools within this ward
- We're looking to have them involved in Anti Black Racism workshop in the spring, with other neighbourhood schools
- Two sessions – workshop and facilitated conversation
- Alice has asked Leroy (founder of Freedom School) to mediate
- June 1st – Howard's first pride parade!
- We are looking to expand our book offerings in the library
- We'll help out with the art supplies for classrooms to create banners
- Planning an annual remembrance event: ribbon tying event

PIAC / Ward 7 Update: Alice

- Still trying to get through email and zoom issues
- Special report combatting hate and racism – board report responding to their strategies on how to address ongoing incidents of racism
- <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Agenda-Minutes/Type/A?Folder=Agenda%2f20220302&Filename=5.pdf>
- Pandemic recovery: thanks to Howard admin stepping up to be parent reps
- <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/docs/FinalPandemicRecoveryPlanUpdate-March2022.pdf>

Question: how will TDSB get kids up to curriculum standards post pandemic?

- Monica: There has been a gap due to covid and being online. As much possible, teachers monitor and bring them to our Team. We put in informal supports, but will formalize if necessary. We are trying to give funds to teachers to get specialized programs (ex reading strategies)
- Suzy – we have been working with teachers and families. We have a lot of support systems thru TDSB, so we are going thru our spec ed process, on a private individual basis.

- TDSB is working to put something in place system wide. One thing is FI, last year, you were not penalized for not doing the French hours.
- Reach out if your child is struggling socially, behaviorally, academically, emotionally etc
- There are a lot of free, useful resources through the TDSB. We will be sending out these links through school messenger
- Report cards for the past 2 years – TDSB has asked to prioritize mental health
- Teachers have been given a clear message from TDSB – marks are not accurately describing – kids are not being held accountable about time online. Virtual portion assessment, if lower than in class, will not be used.
- Slowly we are getting to a more accurate assessment. In June, it will be accurate and indicative of where kids are.

Grad Update:

- Grad will be in person and is on June 24th
- Parents will be hearing more through their teachers and class parents
- Things in the works: graduation party and after party, year book, hoodies, potential legacy project

Covid Update (Andrea Thomas)

- School has done wonderfully well in managing through the pandemic in how we've kept cases low, in our school, community and families, thanks to teachers, staff, kids and parents
- In Ontario, cases are starting to go up again
- The hope is that it will be much smaller but we really don't know. Toronto is well positioned and covered through vaccination. The rate for child vaccinations in our neighbourhood is quite high. Families are following the science. Dispelling myths:
 - We don't think omicron gives great protection against future covid
 - A milder infection probably gives less protection than a severe infection
 - We might not be well protected against a new variant
 - Infection is milder in kids – this is not always true. We do see multi-organ impact
 - Still let's be cautious – we have individual choice and certainly the more masked, the better, especially as we head into another wave
 - Early data shows that new variant may be more severe in unvaccinated kids

Monica

- When we first came back, most kids and teachers wore masks, but now we are seeing more and more kids and teachers choosing moments to unmask. We have sanitizer stations up again. We are being respectful in not telling people to wear masks.
- Best guess: right after March break, everyone was masked. Right now, of 33 adults, maybe only 3 are unmasked regularly.
- TDSB will continue reporting class cases

Budget Update (Lesley):

- We are finally spending money again!
- We need to have a new approval process as things are opening up, for instance Pizza Potluck community events, we didn't through the normal approval process in November
- We will need to work through the approval for ad hoc requests coming in
- In November, we approved the usual annual spends (Fall Fete, Yearbook etc)
- How will we launch new committees for mid-year budget requests? Such as Earth Buddies?
 - We will need to determine who in the executive will be approving this
 - We will form a Small Budget Committee to deal with these mid-year budget requests
 - Contact HowardSchoolCouncil@gmail.com if you need more information

Question: How does one become a council member?

In September people get elected to council but we don't have a capped number of positions. Once the membership is elected or have been declared, then the executive (Chair, secretary and treasurer) are elected.

Council will need to reach out to committee heads, chairs and other people who think they are council members to ensure their participation after this transition.

Question: Who sets the bylaws for Parent Council?

TDSB has provided a template but it is currently non-functional and being reviewed by TDSB. Once it's finalized, we will produce new bylaws.

Question: Can you stipulate English and French co-chairs?

It would be difficult to do as it's hard to find co-chairs and we're trying not to place limits on parent involvement. Our council has always been very open to allow as many people as possible to join.

Next meeting: April 20th.