

## John English SAC Meeting

Wednesday, September 11, 2013, 7:00 pm

### MINUTES

Marie Cook, Chair, facilitated the meeting

#### **Principal/Vice Principal's Report**

Mr. Howe welcomed the group to the meeting, including the new parents to the school.

He gave an overview of the school population as it stands for the school year. There are 830 students currently enrolled. Since the projection of classes was done in the spring, there were a couple of shifts in classrooms, but the population is as it was projected to be.

There have been many changes in the faculty; Mr. Howe went through the departures and arrivals.

Construction update: There is ongoing waterproofing of the lower gym going on. It is expected to be finished by the end of September. The Parent Kiss and Ride is still operational even though the construction is taking up a lot of the parking lot. Other construction in the school: two kindergarten classes were retrofitted with washrooms over the summer to accommodate full day kindergarten.

The first day of school was hectic, mostly being due to the arrival of full day kindergarten students, which is new this year. Thus, the school has 5 additional buses stopping on the street in front of the school (previously there were 2, now there are 7 each day).

The class size cap for primary grades is 20 students. John English classes are within that number so it is not anticipated that any changes will need to be done. However, in the upper grades, there is one Grade 7 french immersion class with 37 students. There will likely be changes there; the staffing department of TDSB will have options for Mr. Howe shortly after the SAC meeting date.

A parent asked about how half of a class is taking industrial arts and half are taking visual arts. There are elements that are being taught in each class type. The split is to allow the kids to have more access to the teacher. There are getting the full curriculum, albeit in different ways.

Full day kindergarten is going well: Mr. Howe feels that having the classrooms renovation complete in time for the first day has helped it to be smooth. Mr. Howe has visited the classrooms and has found the children to be happy and doing well.

The school website is up and running and is updated every other day. There is a lot of information about programs being offered in the school so parents are encouraged to visit the site for information.

Curriculum Night will take place on Thursday, September 19: there will be a community service carousel showcasing a variety of community organizations: Toronto public health, Lamp, the Healthy Bites lunch program, the John English Phys Ed department will be selling uniforms. Teachers will be in their classes from 6:30 – 7:30 pm.

Mr. Howe would like a list of email addresses in order to send some communications directly home (to save paper, and to ensure the newsletter is received by the parents). The teachers have a spreadsheet and will be collecting email addresses for this purpose and also for the purpose of class representatives sending messages from the SAC and teachers to parents.

There were paid programs at lunch offered last year (Chess, Dinosaurs, Building). Mr. Howe would like to know if the SAC/parents would like to offer them again. These are offered for children in grades 1 – 8 pm. There was general agreement. Lisa from Healthy Bites suggested they be put on a Monday or a Friday, so that the programs don't create a conflict for those in the lunch program.

There was a general reminder from Mr. Howe for parents to call the school if your child is going to be absent from school. The number to call can be found on the school website under "Safe Arrival Line".

The EQAO scores will soon be come back (Grade 3 scores went up), Grade 6 (stayed the same), while the math scores have gone down by 6 – 7 %. Mr. Howe attributed the dip to an influx of English Language learners in the program (some with no English language comprehension at all). A parent asked why these students wouldn't be exempt, Mr. Howe let us know that there is an expectation that all children are included and instead, this point would simply be taken into account when examining the results.

The front door is now locked in order to be in compliance with a school board initiative. However, Next Door family resources, LAMP, etc. still use an area of the school that is not locked, which leaves an entry point into the school. A parent asked about when the school will be fully locked down. There is no easy answer to this. There are about 145 schools in the TDSB (out of 500) where there are community programs that have access to an area of the school which prevents the school from being totally locked down. Mr. Howe has followed up on this with the Board and they have said they are going school to school to find individual solutions.

A parent made an observation that forms that went home noted that families shouldn't bring any food with peanuts in it; when in fact it should have said food should be nut-free (all nuts). Mr. Howe agreed that should be changed.

### **Teachers Report – Madame Smith**

The teachers are doing a lot of assessment, and there is a variety of projects underway. Everyone is really enjoying their class so far this year.

The musical at the school is currently being planned: Auditions are starting in October.

Sports teams underway: Grades 3 – 8 Cross Country, Football for grade 6 – 8 girls and boys, Softball for Grade 8 boys. Coming up soon will be: Volley ball for boys, Basketball for the girls, and then intramurals will then start.

Ms. Briar has asked that there be parent reps – SAC – activities represented at Curriculum night.

Instrumental Music will begin the third week in September. Currently the music instruments need to be tuned. The program is a lottery, 30 children in total, with an allocation for each classroom.

### **Board Business**

The Class Reps Network is a group of parents that disseminate information about the class, the school, the community to parents who volunteer to join the email list for each class. There are some classes without reps – a list was passed around with looking for volunteers for some classes.

### **Treasurer's Report**

There is currently \$17K in the parent council account. Reconciliation has not been done yet and there is money owing to the school for programs from last year. So, with a budget of \$7K, decision needs to be made about which programs need to be funded for this upcoming year.

### **Fundraising**

An overview of the ideas that the committee is considering for this year was passed around. Included are ideas such as QSP, Chapters Night, Poinsettia, Dance-A-thon, Movie Night and Basket Raffle.

There is a new option (which was suggested last year by some parents) for some families to participate in a fundraising contribution to the SAC in lieu of pay as you go fundraising. While there was a lot of discussion about whether this idea is a good one, and the care that will be needed to be made with the wording of the request, there was consensus that it should be attempted this year. It is a pilot program this year that will hopefully cover the cost of fundraising across many sectors of the school community (not just the ones concentrated on the organized fundraisers).

*QSP* will start in October 3 - 17

*Book Fair* (Tuesday Nov 12 – Fri Nov 15) Scholastic reps are needed if you are interested. The fair is the same week as when the parent interviews will take place. One book fair is French (Tuesday, Wednesday) and then there are three days of English (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday) held during the day. Please contact the SAC if you would like to volunteer.

### **Programs**

*Healthy Bites* – over 200 kids in the programs this year. Lisa is looking for parent volunteers for the program and also for grade 7 and 8 volunteers. Please contact Lisa if you are interested. Student volunteers can fill out a form in the cafeteria.

*Parent Safety Program* – There was a brief introduction of the committee which takes care of safety issues on behalf of the SAC. If there is an immediate safety concern, it should be brought to the attention of Mr. Howe. The committee works more to help with non-urgent safety issues, in areas where parent engagement is needed. A Health & Safety rep is being sought for issues concerning parents around the school. Please contact Chair Marie Cook if you are interested.

### *Schoolyard Enhancement*

Great progress has been made in the school yard over the past two years: new equipment, seating, sand play, etc. Play lines were repainted. Also the gardening has been worked upon. Mr. Howe, Trustee Gough, did a walk around of the property and together made some recommendations. The fencing along Mimico Avenue was replaced, the storage shed was repaired and painted. A repositioning of the baseball field will be done. Each classroom will have balls and play items for recess.

The PALS program which is run in conjunction with the Public Health Department is accessible to the committee. Leaders come in a couple of times a month, and lead some games. Mr. Howe is waiting to hear from the Public Health Nurse on this program. On another note regarding use of the schoolyard, the Co Op games (led by the Grade 7 and 8 students), once or twice a week, this will likely take place again this year.

Fall clean up is going to take place in the gardens.

A subcommittee MAY be formed so that things can get worked on throughout the month.

### **Other Business**

School Trustee: Debbie Wagdin from Trustee Gough's office (local BIA and community representative) introduced herself and Trustee Gough's involvement in the school (please check the link to view [Trustee Gough's website](#)).

Communications – a new parent observed that the website was not up to date (kindergarten still says there is ½ day kindergarten at JE, the lunch times are not up to date). Didn't understand staggered entry for JK, he felt that starting with a full class of 25, instead of a few children per day.

Ukulele – Jane Chapman was not present however, the program, which is done during school time, teaches children in Grade 3 how to play the ukulele. The program is sponsored by SAC. There is also a lunchtime program which is offered on a pay as you go basis to advanced uke players. The program will start soon in the classes.

SAC Positions – There was an organizational chart review and open positions were announced.

[SAC Website](#) - sign up for e-news for email notification

### **2013/2014 meeting times:**

Thursday, October 10, 2013

Wednesday, November 13, 2013

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Wednesday, February 12, 2014

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Wednesday, May 7, 2014

Adjourned.