

School Council
Meeting Minutes
December 3rd, 2020

Opening:

Kimberly Dempsey-Jones called the virtual meeting (due to Covid restrictions) to order at 6:30pm

Present:

Kimberly Dempsey Jones – Principal
Shawn Henderson – Vice Principal
Karen Kennedy – Co- Chair
Lisa Thompson - Co- Chair
Carly Ferris – Vice Chair
Colleen Kee - Treasurer
Amber Gallagher – Secretary
Jen Robinson – Teacher Rep
Jacqueline Clement
Brittany Hooker

Principal's report: Kimberly opened by offering her thanks to the families of Primrose for the overwhelming support for the Christmas Angel program, she stated that the response was so great that all wish list items have been fulfilled! Well done everyone and for the support for the Christmas Hamper program as well.

The reorganization occurred on Monday and at Primrose it went very smooth. There were a surge in grade 2 to 3s (from online switches as well as new registrants) so Ms. Burgess' Grade 1 class became a 1-2 split in order to keep all primary classes under the provincial cap of 20. These changes have led to 400 in person students and 80 remote learners It has not been directed by the board yet if they will reopen the survey for a February switch or not. Kimberly will keep us updated as she is.

Primrose had its first positive Covid test this week. Public health determined through tracing that there was no risk to any cohorts in the school and therefore things continued as normal. Public health has strict criteria to make these decisions that include a timeframe of spread 48 hours prior to symptom onset. If Public Health did deem the positive case had high risk contact within the school/busing system Primrose has a binder filled with information to make the tracing as seamless as possible. Kimberly is asking all parents to be diligent and continue to do the daily screening on their child, the provincial tool is clear and concise and will assist parents with screening appropriately. Please keep children who fail the screening home and the school will continue to do the protocols including handwashing and mask wearing that has been instilled since September.

Kimberly put out an email call for students who wanted to participate in a video about the salad bar program. 20 students volunteered and have enjoyed filming themselves at the school and the videos have been sent to the 3rd party doing the video for the Farm to Cafeteria. Primrose is the only school in

Upper Grand that has a salad bar and one of the few in the province thanks to an initial grant years ago from this organization. It is a well-loved program in the school.

Kimberly also sent out a big thank you to Mrs. Mackenzie who took her photography club in another direction due to Covid and encouraged students to take pictures for her monthly challenge, the kids are sending in amazing pictures that are being played during announcements in the morning!

Lastly Kimberly reminded everyone about the spirit days that Primrose is having every Friday in December!

Teacher Report: Jennifer Robinson gave the report and wanted to give a big thank you from the staff for all the new equipment that School Council purchased in the last few months in order to keep the kids engaged on the yard. They are all well-loved especially the pool noodles for tag!

Mr. Carson's Grade 6 class has the privilege of being the guinea pig for the new Covid friendly online version of the family transition program that normally occurs in the spring. Everyone is very excited for the program to start back up!

The Chrome book training mentioned in the previous teacher report has now been okayed to start back up in person which will be great for the kids. As well the OT is in the school again and it is going great.

Staff and admin have been diligently keeping an eye on all the students in order to make sure any issues that are cropping up are not getting lost in Covid times. Everyone is working together to creatively solve issues as they arise.

Staff are struggling with not being able to use their traditional, proven teaching methods like carpet time but are working hard to find creative ways to keep students learning and engaged. They are also working very hard to prepare for snow days and the directive that has been sent down to the board that material needs to be provided online on those days. Jen stated the first one this week went very well and the no pressure attitude was received well by students and parents.

Treasure Report: Colleen stated that teachers are starting to submit expenses, which is great. There are also a few Staples bills that are awaiting payment but otherwise nothing has really changed since the last meeting and the council is in good shape.

Q. Is money being withdrawn from the breakfast program account?

A. It is a very different grab and go program being offered this year, approximately \$250 has been spent to purchase those items, receipts are submitted to Food and Friends but any leftover will be pulled from the breakfast account, however there will be a time lag to that happening. Shawn is hopeful that things will start to change and a more comprehensive program can be created with the board and Public Health, who currently dictates what schools in our board can do.

Q. Will Covid effect future funding for the breakfast program as there are different grants for breakfast vs snack programs

A. Admin cannot see that happening as all schools are currently regulated by Public Health and are unable to provide more. As a side note it was stated that admin and teachers are currently confident that all students at school are food secure after accessing various programs in effect due to Covid.

Karen stated that she spent about \$2000 to purchase the playground equipment teachers felt students needed. Anything that pops up should be submitted to council as there are funds available immediately.

Other Business:

Snow Day Changes – The board has stated that all schools will close on “no bus days” due to the inability to combine classes if teachers cannot get into school due to the weather. They have also stated that teachers must provide asynchronous learning opportunities and if they desire, synchronise ones. There has been no clear expectations in regards to this but at Primrose both teachers and admin understand the challenges associated with working from home, kids online and access to technology and internet needed to facilitate this “pivot”. Teachers will provide material and some will offer Google Meets if their internet and circumstances allow it. None of this is mandatory, no child will be penalized for not completing assignments, it is merely an opportunity for those students/parents who wish to take advantage of it.

Playground Committee Update – Not much has changed since the last council update. Shawn has been in touch with Evergreen the company we are working with to get an initial design for the yard. The committee will be meeting next week to go over the ideas that were just received. As well Shawn wanted it known that Emily Carn from the board is aware and actively working on the drainage issue in our yard. It has not been sent to the backburner. He will keep us updated as things progress.

School Cash Online- Kimberly stated that the mitten tree link should be up and running but she will double check and a reminder email will be sent!

Parent Involvement Committee Update From Karen - This is the first year Karen has been able to attend and she stated there was a large variety of people in attendance. There was a presentation on engaging parents during Covid as everyone is aware that not having parent volunteers in the school is hard on both sides. Keeping parents informed and coming up with creative ways to engage is paramount. The Ontario Government is offering a \$500 grant to school councils to help accomplish this. Karen wondered if one way to accomplish this was to push the website more as it seems to be a bit underutilized and the response from Kimberly was for sure. They also talked about the survey the board put out on the stresses of Covid learning. Lots of people reported a hard time balancing work/loss of work and school. Depression was also stated to be increasing along with issues with remote learning and child anxiety. There were positives stated as well which included more family time, family meals and outdoor family activities. The board is taking this information and trying to come up with ways to keep parents involved in the hopes of mitigating some of the issues, Karen stated it was heartening to see the responses and that so many parents did care about their child’s education. Lastly there was information about the change to Bill 274 in regards to the hiring process of teachers. This bill was originally implemented so the “who you know” way of hiring would stop. This bill made it so that there was a central hiring pool committee, they interviewed candidates and the top 5 seniority were then given to schools requesting the need to hire. The schools then had to choose from those candidates without really getting to

interview them themselves. The changes to this bill are being well received from admins as it means teachers submit their application directly to the school. Admin then gets to hire people themselves, they get to interview them, see resumes and can pick candidates that are a good fit for their position/school. They still see the top candidate from the pool but they have the freedom to hire a teacher that has already been filling in etc. and is well loved and respected throughout the school.

Dufferin Joint Council Update – Lisa attended this meeting and stated there were not many schools in attendance but the superintendent Denise Heslip was. The Dufferin Parent Support Network gave a presentation and fundraising was brought up. There are some schools doing completely hands off fundraising like Scholastic online ordering and Mabel’s Label’s as well as Spirit Wear. It was suggested that some “soft” fundraising could begin but that directing donations to the Upper Grand Foundation would be best. This would alleviate support staff having extra work added to their already busy days due to Covid changes and people wishing to donate can still direct the money to specific schools and projects. The link will be added to the website for easy access. Primrose is hosting the next meeting Dec 14th. We are having Savannah Rogers of Rural Rescue do a presentation on choking.

Of final note it was discussed that parent members are needed on council and that Kimberly and Council via the Facebook page would try to get a few more people to come out. Council needs voting and non-voting members, all are welcome!

Adjournment:

Karen Kennedy adjourned the meeting at 8:15pm.

Next meeting is Tuesday January 26th at 6:30pm meet.google.com/fhb-reoz-zny

Minutes Submitted By: Amber Gallagher

Minutes Approved By: Executive & Admin.