

## **Salem Elementary Parent School Support Committee**

Minutes for Meeting #1

September 12, 2018

### **Chaired by Lindsay Murray**

**Attended by:** Lindsay Murray (Chair), Andrew Wilson, Brian Neilson (Home and School Rep), Laura Noel (Secretary), Lindsay Chapman, Miranda Forestall, Shelly Anderson, Nancy Mahoney, Laura Reinsborough, Maria Kyriakidou, Deidra Riddle (Teacher Rep), Ada Phinney (Principal), Keisha Holesgrove.

#### **1. Welcome (Lindsay Murray)**

Declarations to be signed by all PSSC members with name, address, phone number, and email address.

#### **2. Election of Secretary (Lindsay Murray)**

Laura Noel nominated by Nancy Mahoney. Seconded by Miranda Forestall. I accepted.

#### **3. Overview of Policy 711 (Ada Phinney)**

New policy which began at the end of the last school year. Includes restrictions to unhealthy food at school excluding those in children's packed lunches. Details can be found on the District website under "District Policy". School cafeteria has been permitted to use up remaining items this month from last year (eg. frozen items). Of note for many is that chocolate milk has been removed from the cafeteria. It affects all food associated with the school including fundraisers. There seems to be some "backing off" on some areas, with "common sense" suggested.

Laura Reinsborough: It is a challenging policy to adhere to, but with great intentions of what it attempts to achieve. Through her work in Food Security, she has insight and information about what it entails and some funding ideas for school related projects. Question: How can we help school implement Policy 711? How can we help create a healthy eating environment at Salem? A subcommittee would be a great place to start.

Brian Neilson: It will affect Home and School fundraisers, but they are already thinking of a school cookbook fundraiser which could tie in how to make better, healthier food choices.

Laura Noel: Who gets information on Policy 711 changes to the parents? Ada: It is a district policy, so ideally, they would. It does not affect packed lunches.

#### **4. Farms to School Update (Ada Phinney)**

Laura Reinsborough: October is "Farm to Cafeteria" Month. Subcommittee needed?

Ideas included growing food to eat in the school, Salad Bar Program, partnerships such as with Open Sky, Portage Farms, Kent. Possible "Farm Day" with tractors, etc. coming to the school. This could also fit with Policy 711. The Community Garden could be a resource. A school in Sussex has 'farm to table' in its curriculum. Grade 4 Farm Day in Oxford, NS in the spring could be a good template for ideas.

Shelly motioned to start a subcommittee on 'Farms to Schools' and Nancy seconded.

Laura Reinsborough to chair/spearhead this committee with Deidra Riddle, Miranda Forestall, and Keisha also volunteering.

**5. Review School Improvement Plan (Ada Phinney)**

Growth last year was surprising and result improved over the year. Goals have not yet been made for the year, but will happen later this month. Goals likely to include engaging students, collaboration, and wellness. PSSC will be involved with the positive working and learning environment goals.

Andrew: this ties into the physical changes in classrooms for English Prime grades 1-2 and 3-4.

Ada: Yes, Reconfigured spaces tie in (tour of newly reconfigured rooms happened after the meeting), 'deep learning', conference (?) here in October on this topic, and meeting with local educators Chris Treadwell, Mike Fox, other principals in the Tantramar region.

**6. PSSC Goals for 2018-2019 year**

Discussion as to whether goals were met last year. Goal ideas can be brought forward during next meeting as well.

One clear goal was 'Local Food' as it fits with the Farms to School, Policy 711, and interest. Subcommittee formed earlier in the meeting.

Another goal suggested by Nancy Mahoney was 'Support for parents of Grade One French Immersion students learning to read English at home'. Nancy had heard from parents that they were having trouble helping their child/children at home as they didn't have access to things like level readers that were specific to their child's ability. Meetings or support sessions were suggested. Second subcommittee suggested. Nancy and Lindsay Murray to send tips to Deidra Riddle to add to newsletter. Miranda to talk to Allen and Kate at Sackville Public Library to see what is available with respect to Level Readers.

**7. Review of PSSC Annual Cycle (Lindsay Murray and Ada Phinney)**

Plan to change the Annual Cycle as sometimes the necessary information isn't available for that meeting now. Lindsay Murray to talk to our District Representative, Michelle Folkins, about her availability, send out a doodle poll for which day of the week works best for PSSC member, and then send out the updated schedule. It will look more like:

Early Fall (September)– Review of School Improvement Plan and School Profile (review data from previous Spring meeting)

Late Fall (November) - School Report Card, School Improvement Plan, PLWEP

Mid Winter (February) – Compare with District and Province

Late Winter (April) – Any arising business

Late Spring (early June) – Review School Improvement Plan, School Profile

**8. Flex Grouping in the English Stream (Ada Phinney)**

Physical changes have been made to allow for flex grouping for English Prime students in Grades 1-4. Grades 1 and 2 have an open flex group room at the front of the school (in part of what was the library) and Grades 3 and 4 have the same type of room in the basement section of the school. Allows for children to learn in their "zone of proximal development" or the "sweet spot of their learning". Essentially, children at the same level for a particular subject such as reading

or math, can now work together regardless of age or grade level in an open environment with several teaching an in the space they need such as low table, bouncy ball seats, and wheel-y chairs. Both research and anecdotal evidence suggests that kids are enthusiastic about the changes and progressing in their studies. It increases confidence, engagements, and personal learning. There are 5 teachers for Math and X# for English. It is still evolving and there is constant assessing and re-evaluating. Other schools locally are also using this style of classroom/teaching such as Port Elgin and Shediac Cape Schools. There is growth for every child, but of course on every “gap can be removed”. But, this is expected in all classrooms.

Brian Nielson: Is their anything we as the PSSC and parents can do to support the teachers? Ada: teachers are overall doing very well and are happy.

Andrew: Communication important. Addressing questions, providing re-assurement important with new programs. (?Seesaw) Deidre Riddle: Newsletters have gone home, information meeting tonight in gym at Parent Teacher meeting, etc. Communication going well.

Lindsay Murray: Came in during the school day and saw them in action. Was really impressed and encouraged. The students seemed to love it. Very progressive and meeting different learners needs with exercise bikes, wheely chairs, and they were reading!

Ada: Mme. Christie to pilot alternate seating (wheely chair, balls, etc.) study. More difficult with the French Immersion classes, but still some “flex groups” for math (eg. Mme Gaudet, Grade 3). Shelly Anderson: Q/A piece would be great in monthly newsletter. Deidra Riddle: Will do it!

Also noted: The library has been reduced to a ‘Micro-library’ and is not yet complete, so children are not yet bringing home books. Should be completed soon and we will know more in next meeting. There will be some culling, but still working out how new library will look and feel. May even include cart or some sort of “mobile library”.

**9. New Business/points for the floor**

None reported.

**10. Wrap up and next meeting date**

Lindsay will send out doodle poll and date for next meeting shortly.

Tour of the new Flex classrooms was given.