
Tantramar Regional High School
Parent School Support Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday March 23rd, 2021, 6:30 pm

Attendance: - Susan Lafford, Mary Gillespie, Natalie Miller, Tammy Fury, Becky Whittam, Andrew Wilson, Marjorie Doherty, Ellie Mae Paynter, Michelle Folkins, Christina DeHaas and Eleanor Reiffenstein

Regrets- Charlotte Purdy-Weir, Tabatha Field

Guest: Star Hicks

Absent- Andy Lovelace

Approval of the Agenda- Ellie Mae Payner approved the agenda; motion was seconded by Natalie Miller.

Approval of the Minutes from January 19th, 2021 – Tammy Fury approved the minutes; motion was seconded by Christina DeHaas.

Business arising from past minutes

- On question from Andrew Wilson, Susan Lafford clarified that students who don't attend school will continue to be supported through online learning if they have a medical note (in which case they are considered part of vulnerable population). They will also soon be offered the vaccine if they fit into complex medical needs group.
- Budget: Schools get \$1/student for PSSC = \$426 for this school year for TRHS. Can be used for reimbursing of travel expenses, costs for meetings and parent workshops, and communication costs directly related to PSSC responsibilities (see PSSC handbook).
 - o In the past have paid for electronic sign at top of hill (communicates with parents/students)
 - o This year: sign was paid for without prior approval of PSSC
 - o Next year: will ensure a vote/agreement prior to payment going out.
 - o Q (Mary Gillespie): Why doesn't district pay for it? A (Susan Lafford): because it was a fundraised item via the Beautification Committee which is now defunct.
 - o Proposal to use remaining funds for sign internet costs if required; any leftovers will go to donuts & coffee for staff.
 - o *Mary Gillespie made a motion to use any leftover funds in PSSC budget to provide refreshments for staff. Seconded by Andrew Wilson. All in favour.*
- Susan Lafford discussed the questions posed to district from previous minutes regarding switch to Red Phase.

New Business

1. DEC Updates – Michelle Folkins.

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- In December capital improvement prioritized list was released. TRHS mid life upgrade came in at #29 on list. Salem and Marshview came in at #41. Usually only 5 projects/year can be tackled.
- By April 1: will have capital improvement list for TRHS itself. PSSC should review and sign off on priorities at April meeting in preparation for May DEC meeting.
- In January: motion was made to write letter to Minister of Education to do feasibility study. Letter received in response suggested the person hadn't read history of what had been done in the area. Still in limbo.
- Becky Whittam asked to clarify the letter but no response was possible. Letter will be sent out to PSSC when available.
- Sackville Schools 2020: Were previously in discussions with Minister over Green paper. Pandemic shut down all discussions.
- Upcoming municipal election: Michelle Folkins is re-offering. Haven't heard about other candidates.

2. Teacher's report

Introduction: Susan Lafford

At last meeting: discussed Distance learning days. Shortly after, received a memo from department with specific things teachers were to incorporate, including trying to connect more with home-learning group when it made sense. i.e. activities as a group, discussion. Suggested teachers get online with classes for 10 minutes/day.

Teacher report: Star Hicks

Grades 9-10 English. Synchronized learning with help from Heather Welling (tech support). Hurdle to get the kids adjusted. Rocky start to get everyone online at required times. But eventually made big difference in class discussions; got deeper, more discussion, easier to motivate kids with bigger class. Wouldn't work in all classes but did work with these groups. Issues at first: getting kids hooked on it. Kids now signing on and letting her know if they won't be present online. Kids are taking responsibility and it has improved over the month. Debriefed with students to get feedback. Kids wanted to see each other. iPad in back of classroom so kids at home can see classroom & upfront. Converse via speaker. Chat projected on screen behind teacher.

Obstacles: Wi-Fi not always consistent. Students getting up/out of bed. That improved through time.

When we go back full time: Teachers may leave Teams meeting as option in case kids are home sick etc. Still following covid protocols. If unwell, stay home, participate at home. Kids in vulnerable group: will they be able to connect still when we return in April? Questions being posed to District now.

More communication involved in synchronous learning; more emails than normal for teachers and principal.

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Q (Becky Whittam): Are all teachers required to do this? Or is it a choice depending on subject/curriculum?

A: (Susan Lafford): Advice had been to treat group as a whole and not split into red/blue. Discussing a play in English class lends itself well to this but math may not. Biology lab may not. Tried where we could; had blended learning support teacher plus Heather Welling plus Chris Ryan one day/week. They could go into classes to help teachers. Teachers had half a day to do some planning. Moving into next phase with all students present at once: likely a quicker transition with those that have been able to blend well.

Natalie Miller (Biology teacher) also added that she makes her own videos for students to watch at home (mini lesson). When in class, students are doing a lab or activity of sorts. She does have students engaging from home on some things but not same as Star Hicks' English class.

Teacher report: Natalie Miller

Second semester: concentrating on connecting with students/getting info to them. Using D2L Brightspace. Got a Tantramar-wide course on D2L where they post daily announcements via video, connect to Instagram account. Also has info on Athletics, guidance, extra curriculars, course selection, etc. Teacher directed, students can't contribute to it.

District sent out applications for Innovation and Engagement grants. Teachers could receive \$1000 grants, or teams of teachers could receive \$2500 grants. Our school received 3:

John Estabrooks and Joceline Young: Tantramar Business Solutions (print shop in school).

Mariebelle Leclerc-Hallé and Ben Brown: Diversity of identities in Canada and around the world.

Natalie Miller and Melanie Ball: purchase of additional grow towers for tower gardens (biology and Cul Tech to grow fresh produce)

3. Principal's Report

Operational Plan Update & Return to School Plan Update

Announcement last Friday about full time return to school for high school students (as of April 12). Operational Plan needs to be updated to reflect full number of students at once. Students will have to wear masks full time except when eating/physical activity. Have asked about distancing requirements. Currently 1m apart in classroom at minimum but won't be able to do that when all students are back. Details left up to schools to figure out. School staff will be vaccinated on Friday (all Moncton-area schools). Plan also indicates students >16 will be vaccinated if a local case occurs, after April 12.

Removing the distancing protocol is confusing. But some aspects of teaching will be easier with all students together.

Continue to have support for remainder of school year from educational support teachers including ESL support teacher. Also working with teachers/planning/practices to benefit ESL students.

Chris Ryan's time will increase for last 8 weeks. Background is assessment and experiential learning.

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School Improvement Plan (SIP) update

SIP included experiential learning but this has been very difficult with COVID. Hoping it will improve next year; Natalie Miller is facilitating personal interest courses; there has been a recent uptake in these courses.

Planning for 2021-22

Course selection: coming up. Concern over planning for next year. Need to build in support time/intervention classes for next year to make up for students who struggled this year.

Alternative education proposal with Heather Welling for whole family of schools: how to offer programming to students with chronic attendance issues, social emotional issues, etc. Will hope to share at next meeting.

4. Student's report (Eleanor Reiffenstein)

Student Representative Council (SRC) has been doing spirit weeks to keep kids involved. Currently doing silent auction as fundraiser. Good success (\$600 so far). Money went to Pizza party for spirit team.

When everyone returns to school the SRC will do another theme week. Planning covid-friendly ideas. Outdoor theatre, outdoor movie? Brainstorming ideas.

Students are anxious about returning to school full time. Worried it will disrupt learning due to readjustment. SRC will do everything they can to keep everyone happy and full of school spirit.

Using D2L page; SRC is posting fun comments and memes every day for the week.

5. Member items for discussion

School ventilation – District and province haven't addressed this issue. TRHS is not being looked at for any type of issue because we have a ventilation system.

Susan Lafford: Indicated it is difficult to get information on ventilation from facilities director due to complexity of report. Suggestion was made that the PSSC send a letter if we want answers on TRHS ventilation, i.e. Is the TRHS ventilation system in good working order? Do the windows open? Susan Lafford noted that classrooms on outside of building have windows that open; windows are about 20x40inches, don't all have screens. No direction has been given to open the windows, though teachers do open them especially from May-September. Inside of the building some classrooms don't have windows.

Michelle Folkins indicated that the PSSC should write a letter with their questions around ventilation to the DEC. Immediate action around schools shifting to all kids. Michelle can bring it to the DEC at meeting on April 20th.

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Motion: Christina DeHaas moved that the PSSC write a letter asking for action around ventilation in regards to health and safety issues. Becky Whittam seconded motion. All in favour.

Letter will be written by Christina DeHaas, Becky Whittam and Mary Gillespie with deadline April 19th (or sooner).

Andrew Wilson discussed an initiative coordinated by an Education Support Teacher working with some of the area schools: creating a new journal for Tantramar family of schools where they can showcase their work and shine a light on innovation; it is a place for educators to connect and network and share ideas. Title is **Innovation in Education**. First issue coming out in the next month or so. Currently there is participation from every school in Tantramar area except for the high school.

Susan Lafford indicated that she was contacted during exam week about this hasn't had a chance to action anything yet. TRHS will be contributing to it. It was suggested that perhaps an article about the Grow Towers or other innovation grants would be warranted.

Forward Agenda: Review DEC facilities improvement list

Mary Gillespie moved to adjourn meeting; Christina DeHaas seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Next Meeting: Tuesday May 11th at 6:30pm