

# École Sir William Osler

## Parent Council Meeting Minutes

**Date / Time :** January 21, 2025, 6pm

**Meeting Location:** Virtual Meeting – Google Meet

**Meeting Chair:** Caitlin Buchel

**Minutes Taken By:** Rebecca Simpson-Litke

(16 participants)

### **Chair Greeting & Land Acknowledgment** (Caitlin)

- We continue to work on our SWO PAC land acknowledgment.

### **Adoption of Minutes**

- Adoption of minutes from November 19, 2024 – moved by Avery, seconded by Lauren, approved

### **Treasurer Report** (Mme Ostermann & Sabrina)

- Lunch program account is currently \$14,186.60
  - \$14,577.73 in December – no revenue since last report (2<sup>nd</sup> half fees due Feb 1), wages paid \$391.13, no composting cheque for December
- PAC account is currently \$19,571.25 (\$15,000 is a provincial grant – needs to be spent on greenspace this spring)
  - \$17,580.16 in December – revenue from wine raffle \$1991.09, no expenditures
  - Some expenditures coming in motions tonight (see below)

### **Principal's Report** (Mme Ostermann)

- **Drills** – 5/10 fire drills completed, 1/1 evacuation, 2/3 lockdown, 1/3 hold & secure
- **Fun Lunches** – IHOP breakfast Feb 21, 8am – orders due one week in advance – need volunteers to help serve pancakes
- **Winter Bazaar**– \$501 made/donated to Wpg Harvest
- **Construction** – meetings every 2 weeks, keep being reassured that we are on schedule despite some delays – should be completed by end of July, occupancy beginning of August, furniture in mid-August, September start – renovation on daycare side took much longer than expected, so a bit apprehensive about this timeline – daycare building was supposed to be ready in September, but we're now mid-January and they're not done – they are making progress, but there is still a lot of construction going on/to be done
- **Greenspace/Fundraising** – received on Friday the updated division policy on fundraising (see division website and link below) – changes and uncertainty are frustrating – it seems what we have been doing for fundraising is still fine (anything not paid for by the division) – we can't do play structures, but we can do ground enhancements
- **Grade 7 Catchment**
  - Dominique has been asking about catchment boundaries for the new ESWO grade 7/8 since ground was broken on the expansion.

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- September 2024, Dominique asked Division about catchment boundaries for the new ESWO grad 7/8 including who is feeding in, is this just for our kids, etc. and was told that it would be on the agenda for the next superintendent meeting – she asked again in November 2024, but was later told the issue was tabled until January.
- Dominique received a phone call from Division in December, saying that JB Mitchell and SWO students will feed into/stay at SWO – Superintendent Henderson took this to the board of trustees and an amendment was made to say that SWO students need to stay here, but JB Mitchell would have choice.
- On Thursday, January 16, Dominique spoke with Superintendent Henderson in the morning, and he confirmed that current ESWO students would all stay at ESWO for grade 7/8 regardless of address. In the afternoon, Dominique heard through a parent that Superintendent Henderson's office was calling ESWO parents directly; parents in morning calls were described as information gathering. By the end of the afternoon, parents were reporting they were told by the superintendent's office that the division revised its decision so that all families would have a choice for the 2025-2026 school year.
- Dominique was not contacted by the division to inform her of the change in decision nor the January 21 meeting being canceled until the letter sent to all families and an emailed notification of meeting cancellation.
- Another meeting has been proposed for Feb 5, 7pm to look at what type of programming will be offered at ESWO grade 7/8 for 2025-2026 school year.
- The initial letter about catchment was a big shock for everyone. Mme. Toews called Dominique to her classroom on January 15 because her students were discussing the initial letter sent by the Division about grade 7/8 and had a lot of questions. Dominique came to answer as many questions as she could.
- Dominique has suggested to the division that we do catchment in relation to postal codes. This is done in the rest of WSD and helps create community and neighbourhood connections, convenience for families, etc.
- There are lots of big changes in the division and many things happening at once, which can be exciting. However, it does mean that decisions and information can be somewhat fluid and change quickly. Dominique sends out information as soon as she gets it, but sometimes info comes to her last-minute and sometimes it changes – even over the course of a day.
- **Communication Plan** – there has been a concern about lack of communication and transparency between school and parents.
  - The school uses the school website, seesaw, calendar, newsletter, and emails to contact families in multiple ways, given that people have different. Divisional meetings can be scheduled somewhat last minute, and Dominique sends this info out as soon as it is received.
  - Dominique wants to address issues and encourages people to raise them with her directly so that she knows what they are and can work to address them.

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- Dominique is open to streamlining or making a communication plan for families and so a survey will be created and sent to parents to ask them about preferences for communications, knowing that there may be many different opinions.
- Lauren offered to create this survey.
- **PAC meetings** – current exec (Caitlin, Avery, Rebecca, and Amy) have been in their positions for a number of years and worked hard. In part, because no one else has been willing to take on these roles.
  - We may need to get some new volunteers to step up if we want to continue to have a PAC – executive elections are May 20
- **Difficulties Lately** – several teachers and staff have needed to take leaves for various reasons (including three classroom teachers who are currently on some form of leave), so in addition to the above issues, things have been challenging lately in general.
  - Comment from Caitlin and others – thank you to Dominique and all our teachers for all you do!

### Teacher Representative (Mme Toews & Mme Sara)

- Welcome, thanks for coming!

### Review of Recent Expenditures (Caitlin)

- Caitlin has receipts from the staff lunch – thanks to Marlis for taking care of this! We had previously approved up to \$600, but we also had a lot of people to feed.
  - Motion: To reimburse a revised total of \$633.94 to Marlys Funk. Moved by Jennifer Ayotte, Seconded by Avery, approved.
- Flowers for Mme Heinrichs
  - Motion: To reimburse Erika Donald \$67.20. Moved by Jennifer Ayotte, Seconded by John Paul. Approved.

### PAC School Directory Update (Caitlin)

- The division has moved away from being responsible for collecting this info, but there was still a desire for this from our community. Thanks to Jennifer for putting this together!
  - Fill out Google Form (see email), and then the list will be sent out.
  - Question: If a child has two sets of parents, should they each fill it out?  
Answer: Can do, but Jennifer will call to confirm.
  - 45 families have already filled this out. A few didn't include the child's name. Do we want an email reminder? Yes.

### Greenspace Committee (Lauren/Meghan/Caitlin)

- **Gagaball pit** – we haven't paid for this yet because there was a little damage to the panels when installed – clarifying who will address this damage – boards will need to be removed when we pour the floor in the spring, so the question is whether this will cause

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more damage and who will be responsible – still consulting on this before we pay our bill

- **Enchanted Forest** – Many trees are in the yard! Thanks to the team of parents, volunteers, kids, Kids' Inc. for help with this.
  - Meghan followed up with an arborist and is proposing that we bring in a person who will chip the trees and haul the results away.
  - \$125/hr for 2 hours. Meghan will obtain a formal quote from the arborist and submit to PAC exec and Dominique.
  - This will be under the \$350 we previously approved, so once we receive a formal quote for the amount above, we can engage the arborist and pay the invoice.
- **Greenspace Plan**
  - Had previously created a multi-phase vision:
    - Phase 1 – outdoor classroom & berms (completed)
    - Phase 2 – sticks & stones (not yet completed and quotes are now old meaning quoted costs have likely gone up significantly) – logs, boulders, etc. that kids can play on – landscape architects have been asked whether this is good for Grade 7 & 8 – the answer was yes, they are more likely to use this than play structures
  - The total of all the playground elements (past, future) is well into the 6 figures.
  - Expansion happened in the middle of these phases, so landscape architect plans have changed, and we negotiated with the division so that they would pay the cost to re-do the plans.
  - Division must replace what they took down so they will replace the play structure but note that our previous play structure was not accessible (did not have concrete approach or a cut out in the wooden beams) and division will not pay to make it accessible.
  - Our \$15,000 provincial grant has been extended – we can use it as soon as the division is ready to move forward. With the grant, and after the gaga ball pit expenses, we will have about \$45,000 to use on this next phase of greenspace.
  - Please note that this is less than half of what it cost to complete phase one of the playground (berms and outdoor classroom) and there has been a lot of inflation since then.
  - Important to draw on the division's and landscape architects' expertise to see how our money can be used. Then bring that info to PAC to understand where current families' priorities lie now as the last survey of parents was done a number of years ago.
  - Would like to seek guidance from the school division's building division – new play area has been mapped out adjacent to where the old structure will be

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reinstalled – what are their timelines? what will be in and out of scope of what the division will pay for? – need clarity here

- We also need to discuss plans with daycare, as they are also working on their outdoor space – they can apply for things we can't, and are often more successful than PACs for certain things
  - Plans will be impacted by the new fundraising policy (see link below) – we are not allowed to fundraise for play structures but there are also corporate giving programs that we can apply for, which work similarly to grants – no sponsorship strings attached, aside from an acknowledgement somewhere
  - Parents are keen to know what the next step is and to provide feedback – once we know more about the division's positions, we can come back to PAC and ask for parent input and priorities – Lauren is happy to help take on communication with parents once we're ready for that
  - Lauren and Meghan would like to be included in upcoming meetings about this plan, happy to help with grants, etc.
  - Next steps:
    - Follow up with division and landscape architects
    - Greenspace committee to meet with PAC exec
    - Follow up with parents and PAC meeting with what we know options
    - \$15,000 grant does need to be spent ASAP
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- **Fence Sign** – does our SWO sign exist somewhere? – it was taken down and put in storage for safe-keeping – may need to be touched up as some of the paint was chipped/peeling and possibly relocated to fencing in a different area as that fence may not remain after building project is complete.
  - **Grade 6 Overnight Camp** – Lauren can seek out more info from local camps – needs principal approval – Dominique looked into day camps instead of overnight, due to potential issues with adults sleeping in same buildings as children – might PAC consider helping fund kids who want to do but whose families struggle with the cost of this? Encouragement to bring this to PAC if/when plans for camp move forward!
  - **Balanced School Day** – Lauren asked if ESWO could consider a Balanced school because short 15 min recess doesn't allow kids to get deep into play – a balanced school day involves two longer breaks in the day for nutrition and outdoor play. Dominique has spoken with Principal at École LaVérendrye and was considering it for ESWO. Feedback from Division was that Balanced School Day with grade 7/8 may not work well. Dominique will do more research about how this goes with grades 7 & 8 and can report back to PAC.
  - Thanks to Meghan and Lauren for all of their ideas and work on these things.

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### Fundraising Update (Avery, Caitlin, Dominique)

- **Wine Raffle** – less successful than in years past – generated gross of \$5000 in 2023, last year \$3200, this year \$2620 – still good because it's low financial risk and good return – Funding Change platform charges 13% fee, so \$1990 goes to us this year – this is still our most lucrative fundraiser of the year, but our margin is narrowing – we may want to consider something else next year – need a group of folks to take something new on, or find something that is very simple to implement
- **Glenlea** – no pressure for families to participate – delivery date is Monday, May 12, around 7:30am – will call for volunteers to sort plant orders
- **Coffee & Donuts** – thanks to Jennifer A for taking on this new fundraiser!
  - Harrison's for coffee, approved to sell for \$20/bag, money needed a week in advance
  - Krispy Kreme, \$15/dozen, money needed 2 business days in advance
  - Profits for both are \$7 per unit, both need order numbers a week in advance
  - Order forms – online? Google form (could be used by not SWO people)? Permission Click? – Dominique will check with Sabrina
  - Orders due Feb 24
  - Motion: To amend delivery date to March 7. Moved by Lauren, Seconded by Andrew, approved.
- **Healthy Hunger** – Is this new lunch app profitable? – we can make it a fundraiser, but haven't so far – one issue is cost to families, division feedback says experiences involving food in particular should be available to all – we make a small amount of profit by rounding prices up a small amount – want to keep it accessible for families
- **New WSD Fundraising Policy** – many schools are without a PAC so there were concerns about equity within the WSD that some schools were at a disadvantage. Some parent concerns about the new policy discussed at PAC.
  - We are no longer able to fundraise for play structures because the new policy prohibits fundraising for anything that is typically paid for by WSD – which now includes play structures.
  - We are hoping that we can still do sticks and stones because it is not a traditional play structure, but we cannot fundraise for any kind of play structure for older students.
  - Given how incredibly expensive play structures are to build, there is concern about how the division will pay for play structures needed for all of its schools.
  - <https://media.winnipegssd.ca/media/Default/medialib/igdf-fundraising-in-schools.2758fc12996.pdf> NEW BUSINESS

### Committee for Land Acknowledgment (Caitlin)

- Carolyn R has volunteered to work on this – if anyone else is interested in being part of this working group, email Caitlyn

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### PAC Meeting Schedule (Caitlin)

- Some parents have asked if PAC meetings good be scheduled on a rotating basis (E.g. on a different day each month or at different times so that more people can attend).
- Note than inconsistent days may also make it difficult for people to commit to serving on PAC Exec and for those who already attend meetings regularly.
- This school year's last three PAC meetings will remain as scheduled to ensure that those who have created a schedule that allows them to attend, will be able to do so.
- Will discuss plans for next year at AGM

### Communication Plan (Caitlin)

- Lauren will help with a survey of parents as to preferred methods of communication – create a document outlining plan

### Concerns about Plan for French Immersion Catchments

- How do we catch up to the programs at River Heights (drama, music, band, sports teams, etc.)? – what is the plan for this programming/staffing? – Dominique does not have answers to these questions yet, but SWO does have a good reputation – teachers do want to come here, so staffing shouldn't be a problem if we have funding. Hopefully, answers will be shared at the soon to be scheduled Divisional meeting at ESWO in early February.
- SWO staff are also concerned about construction delays and whether this plan is realistic given the marked delays thus far. Currently, Dominique attends construction meetings every two weeks and has been told that they are on schedule for completion/move in of furniture to be completed by September 2025. Still, it's easy to understand why parents are concerned about timeline.
- Do we know whether there will be a policy that families in future will have to stay at SWO (i.e. no choice)? – this year, families will have a choice – Dominique has made the case that families should have a choice, especially when they live close to River Heights, for example – better to look at postal codes – information is changing rapidly – don't know about future years yet, but asking questions
- Will grades 7-8 be considered dual track at SWO? – no, we will still be milieu –Superintendent Henderson's current plan is to remove distinction between milieu and dual track – there is no longer going to be an overlap of catchment areas
- Is the division doing away with schools of choice? Going with catchment instead? – yes and no – by Feb 10, you have to register for your catchment school – on March 3, you can submit an application for a school of your choice to see if you can be admitted – if you're already in SWO, you won't be kicked out, even if you're closer to another school in your catchment
- How do they decide if you can go to your school of choice? – if there is space, you can go
- How will the division fund all of the programming and services – especially if we cannot fundraise for it?
  - Lunch program is a good example. The division doesn't want to put more costs on families. We have reduced the fees this year but WSD wants us to stop charging anything and they are paying EAs to cover the lunch program.

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- Problem at our school is that we only have 3 EAs for ~ 190 students, which really isn't sufficient adult supervision. In addition, staff get sick, EAs are needed for field trips etc.
- Division's suggestion is to take learning support teachers away from teaching/support roles to supervise lunch program (obviously problematic). Thus clarity is needed regarding exactly how much Division will fund for new programs etc.
- Mechanisms for expressing concerns:
  - Parents should have a way of airing concerns, sharing at PAC, preferably using formal mechanisms
  - While petitions can get action, it is not the division's preferred road to action (as per the Superintendent's email) – however, people can sign up to attend school board meetings (one option), PAC can submit formal questions, approved by PAC with motions, etc. (see below)

### South District Advisory Committee Meeting Update (Andrew)

- Dominique sent out an email to people about Divisional meetings – all parents are allowed to attend though some schools have reps (Kirsten is our amazing rep for the French Immersion Divisional Meetings).
- Andrew Buchel decided to attend the South District Divisional Meeting on November 19. Three school trustees were present and the superintendent (in addition to others)
- To PAC's knowledge, this was the first time a parent from our school attended and so Andrew was asked if he would be ESWO rep to these meetings.
- Many of the topics we're raising came up in heated discussion – ex: fundraising policy, lunch programs, etc.
- There is a formal mechanism for us to raise issues directly with the board of trustees – these are our elected officials representing us, and they should be guiding the policies of the division
- We have an opportunity to come to any advisory committee meetings (including ESWO PAC) and make formal motions to be raised, voted on, and submitted directly to trustees. Trustees must then discuss these with the school division, and they must report back – so we do have a direct line to the trustees in this way
- We've mostly been raising things through Dominique, and she takes them through the school staff route up to Division and then reports back to us.
- If parents are still concerned with info, we can take advantage of these other avenues to ask questions of the division – Superintendent Henderson is at trustee board meetings – this provides an alternative to petitions, for example, which is in keeping with what was asked by WSD.
- Andrew will go to the rest of these meetings for this year and will raise motions on our behalf
- We've also always had a rep (Kirsten) for the French Immersion Advisory Meeting (next one happening Feb 19) – some of our questions might be good to ask here as well



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- Caitlin will draft some motions for us to consider at the next PAC meeting based on the discussions raised here.
- If you have questions, email Andrew ([andrewbuchel@gmail.com](mailto:andrewbuchel@gmail.com)) or contact Caitlin
- See link for scheduled divisional advisory committee meetings and other info about trustees and these meetings. <https://winnipegdca.civicweb.net/portal/>

### **Meeting Adjourned** (Caitlin) 8:38 pm

- Moved by Brenna, seconded by Lauren, approved
- Next meeting February 18