



Cedarcrest Elementary School
1505 Muir, St-Laurent, QC H4L 4T1
Tel: (514) 744-2614



Commission scolaire English-Montréal
English Montreal School Board

CEDARCREST SCHOOL
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday December 8, 2020

Attendees:

Maria Arfanis, Maria Argyriou, Raymond Ayas, Lorraine Belanger Karen Der, Lydia Kansou, Sandy Milonas, Tia Nicholls, Georgia Stamatopoulos, Helene Zereik, Elena Zervas

Absentees:

None

1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Welcomes and opening remarks for the third meeting of the 2020-2021 academic year from chair Tia Nicholls. The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.

2. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Member Lydia Kansou asked to revisit the locker and shoes issue (6c) from the last meeting and add to the Agenda.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Motion to adopt today's Agenda as amended was put forth by Raymond Ayas and seconded by Lorraine Belanger. The motion to adopt today's Agenda as amended was carried.

4. REVIEW OF THE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 10, 2020

Members had no revisions or additions for the minutes.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the November 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes was put forth by Helene Zereik and seconded by Raymond Ayas. The motion to approve the November 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes was carried.

6. BUSINESS ISSUES

a. Sexuality Plan Approval

- This Quebec Ministry of Education distributed to the schools its Sexuality Education Plan for 2020-2021, a copy of which was circulated to members. It requires Governing Board Approval.
- The themes covered this year include “Pregnancy and Birth”, “Sexual Growth and Body Image”, “Comprehensive View of Sexuality”, “Emotional and Romantic Life”, “Sexual Assault Prevention” and “Identity, Gender Stereotypes & Roles, and Social Norms”.
- It is mandatory for Grades 1 through to 6 and will be taught in English.
- The Principal noted that the themes seem very deep and blunt but assured members that all content will be carefully tailored to the age of the students. Not every theme will be covered for each grade.
- The students’ teachers have been trained by the EMSB to deliver some of the material covered in the Sexuality Education Plan.
- Some themes are taught by the school nurse or a nurse from the School Board. Other themes are presented by Board approved organizations like SHINE which is part of the Missing Children Network.
- Member Raymond Ayas enquired what recourse there is for parents who may not deem the themes covered in the Sexuality Education Plan to be appropriate and want to opt out.
- The Principal responded that it is a compulsory subject mandated by the Quebec Ministry of Education. However, parents can request an official form of exemption that is on the EMSB web site. The Principal noted that parents must have a specific and valid reason for an exemption. For example, a parent could apply for an exemption on the theme of Sexual Assault Prevention because their child experienced sexual abuse and they believe the theme will be too traumatic.
- Member Raymond Ayas believes that parents should be made more aware about this exemption. He also enquired how parents can be better informed. The Principal replied that the EMSB will be sending all parents the same letter regarding the mandatory Sexuality Education Program in January.
- Member Raymond Ayas thinks that parents should have a clear letter from Cedarcrest advising them of the exemption. Chair Tia Nicholls responded that Cedarcrest as a neutral body cannot issue such a letter.

- Responding to Mr. Ayas' concerns, member Helene Zereik remarked that based on her children's feedback over the years, the presentation of the material has always been well done, respectful, and dealt with relevant contemporary issues. If parents truly have concerns about the themes, they will surely contact Ms. Zervas who can then point them to the EMSB exemption.
- Member Lydia Kansou also reassured that the material taught was not anything her children didn't already know about.
- Member Raymond Ayas questioned why Governing Board even has to approve the Sexuality Education Plan if schools are mandated by law to teach this material.
- If the Sexuality Education Plan is compulsory, member Raymond Ayas would prefer that the students' teachers cover all the material without outside personnel or organizations like SHINE.

Motion to approve the Quebec Ministry of Education Sexuality Plan with all themes presented only by Cedarcrest teachers was put forth by Raymond Ayas. The motion was not seconded or carried.

Motion to approve the Quebec Ministry of Education Sexuality Plan as presented by Ms. Zervas i.e. theme content delivered by Cedarcrest teachers, nurses and Board approved organizations like SHINE was put forth by Sandy Milonas and seconded by Maria Arfanis. The motion to approve the Sexuality Education Plan as presented by Ms. Zervas was carried by a majority of members. The objection of member Raymond Ayas was duly noted.

b. M Transport School Bus Tracking Tool Approval

- Cedarcrest has been selected to be part of a pilot project for a new School Bus Tracking Tool from M Transport to enhance student safety.
- Parents would download this tracking tool onto their devices.
- The tracking tool would notify parents when their children get off the bus and arrive at Cedarcrest and when they get on the bus to go home.
- It would alert parents if the bus was late or if their children are near their home stop in real time. For example if bus #204 left Cedarcrest 20 minutes late, parents would be notified of this delay on their device.

- Students swipe their bus cards on an IPAD every time they get on the bus. They swipe it again when they get off the bus.
- There are built in safety features. For example if a K or Grade 1 student scans their bus card when they get off the bus at their home stop, the IPAD will alert the bus driver that this student must be met at the stop by an adult. It is very useful at the beginning of the school year when drivers are not familiar with the students or in the case of a substitute bus driver who would not know the students at all.
- The M Transport tracking tool is governed by Canadian laws. All information is on data encrypted servers. M Transport and the EMSB have access to the information.
- If Governing Board approves participating in this pilot project, the trial period would begin in January.
- In Phase 1 of the pilot project, the bus driver gets the IPAD and trains on the new software.
- In Phase 2 of the pilot project, the parents get the app to download onto their devices. However, due to Covid and the impracticality of disinfecting the IPAD after each bus card scan, not all the functionalities of the tracking tool will be available. However, parents will still get real time alerts if a bus is late or delayed.
- Member Raymond Ayas stated he is extremely pleased with this development. He lobbied very hard at the Board level for such a program when he was Parent Representative for the Transport Committee.

Motion to approve Cedarcrest participating in the M Transport School Bus Tracking Tool pilot project was put forth by Raymond Ayas and seconded by Georgia Stamatopoulos. The motion to approve Cedarcrest participating in the M Transport School Bus Tracking Tool pilot project was carried unanimously.

c. Shoes

- At the last meeting, parent members had noted that changing from outdoor footwear to indoor footwear in the classrooms would not be feasible once the winter weather began and there would be snow and puddles in the hallways. Parent member Lydia Kansou noted that her daughter had been in wet socks the whole day and enquired about the current protocol for changing in and out of winter gear. The Principal responded that at the recent Staff Council meeting, teachers were told that students can keep their indoor shoes in their lockers and switch from their outdoor footwear to indoor footwear at their lockers.

7. REPORTS

a. Principal's Report: Elena Zervas

- All the 16 classrooms will have an air purifier. The other 4 air purifiers will be installed in other spaces like the library or staff room.
- Member Raymond Ayas enquired about who would be responsible for the maintenance and utilities bill associated with the purifiers. At the last meeting, it was relayed by the EMSB that if Home and Schools undertook the purchase of air purification systems they would be responsible for all upkeep. The Principal confirmed that Cedarcrest Home and School would not be responsible.
- The Principal had a meeting with the Regional Directors. The December 17 and 18 classes will be online. There will be no Daycare services on those days. The time slots will be segregated in such a way so that families who may not have enough devices for each child will still be able to share and attend the class. Most teachers are planning fun activities for those 2 days.
- In the event of any future closures, Cedarcrest has received 70 requests for devices. The school is working to acquire all the devices. Devices will not be distributed for the December 17-18 classes.
- Cedarcrest was just informed that it was not chosen as an Emergency Services Daycare for essential workers in the community. It is good news for Cedarcrest; the 4 months that it was an Emergency Services Daycare last spring had a deleterious effect on equipment like the IPADS which were constantly Lysol wiped.
- In closing, the Principal applauded students for their positive morale. Student life has not changed much despite the pandemic. The school atmosphere is happy and welcoming. The Principal commended Staff and administration, thanked Home and School and wished everyone happy holidays.

b. Teacher's Report: Maria Arfanis

- On behalf of the teachers, Ms. Arfanis thanked Home and School in advance for this Thursday's Breakfast with Santa. She also wished members happy holidays.
- Cycle 1 had a theater workshop on November 30th. It was a fantastic animated presentation enjoyed by the students. A similar workshop will be scheduled in March and April for Cycle 2 and 3. Grade 2 had a Cosmodome workshop.
- On January 20, DJ Malik for Virgin Radio will be hosting two Anti-Bullying sessions at Cedarcrest.
- Online workshops are also planned for Black History Month.

c. Commissioner's Report

- There was no Commissioner Report.

d. Parent Committee Report: Helene Zereik

- Interim Director Russell Cooperman was present at the virtual meeting but left shortly after Question Period.
- In essence, the schools that have no mechanical ventilation will get the purifiers.
- Per the Council of Commissioners, the EMSB is paying for the purifiers but when pressed, they did not have any specifics.
- She raised the issue of schools being reimbursed for Covid related expenses i.e. soap, paper towels, disinfectants, cleaning products etc.
- There will be an online registration tool for Kindergarten.
- They are also having a hard time deciding when to hold the midterms for the high school students.
- There was a general consensus that meeting the teachers virtually in the fall went very well.

e. Daycare Report: Georgia Stamatopoulos

- There was no daycare report to present. Things are going well at Daycare and the students are happy.

f. Home and School Report: Tia Nicholls

- Home and School will help pay for the McDonald's pancake breakfast for Thursday's Breakfast with Santa. It will also pay for the popcorn and candy cane treats for students and provide four \$50 Maxi Gift Cards for Cedarcrest families in need.
- Chair Tia Nicholls also mentioned that Le Doré has a meal assistance program to give to families in need.
- Home and School's recent Holiday On-line Catalogue Fundraiser did well as per the Dieleman representative.

8. QUESTION PERIOD

- Members Lydia Kansou and Helene Zereik noted that the Grade 4 vaccinations were cancelled. In response to their query, the Principal confirmed that this year's Grade 4 students will get their vaccinations next year.
- Member Karen Der enquired whether it would be possible to bring back Student Council. The students could be mobilized to do some of the fundraising or event set up that Home and School cannot currently do at the school. Students could stay in their respective class bubbles and each class could be responsible for a specific event or task. For example, Student Council members in Ms. Gianna's class could work on the yearbook. Members in Ms. Milonas' class could work on fundraising. Members in Ms. Vathilakis' Grade 5 could take care of Grad decorating etc. Home and School had a lot of fun ideas for Halloween and Breakfast with Santa but none could be implemented because of the visitor restrictions. However, if Home and School could work with a Student Council that respects Covid guidelines, perhaps the school could engage the seniors to implement some of the ideas Home and School has for various events or fundraisers. Both organizations share a similar mandate of fundraising and giving back to the school community. The Principal responded that with staff and students now acclimatized to all the changes and new guidelines due to Covid, this is something that the school can consider.
- Member Tia Nicholls asked if the students do homework during Daycare and if there is a tutoring service. The Principal responded that at least 1 hour is allocated for homework. She has tutors available and students can ask for help as part of the Daycare Service. However, if a student requires regular tutoring help, parents should communicate with the school to see what can be arranged.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of Governing Board is scheduled for **Tuesday February 9, 2021 at 6:30** via Microsoft Teams.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Minutes By: Karen Der