

**W.E. Gowling School Council  
Meeting Minutes  
December 8, 2020**

Virtual meeting (Google Meet)  
5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

**Attendees:** Tara Beechey, Peter West, Chelsea Ottaway, Ashley Lewchuk, Monica White, Debbie Younger-Lewis, Caretta Williams DeAveiro, Stephanie Pieri, Colleen Weatherdon, Melissa Bunn, Jeremy Sager, Susan Pfister, Amberlea Williams, Lauren Matys, Cameron Ketchum, Monate Praasma, Shawn Hocking, Arianne Richeson, Cameron Ketchum, Rebecca Pitt, Jessica Gibbs, Keri Sadowski, Larissa Sansom, Mandy Suh, Matt Jackson, Tom McKenna, Laura McGavin

**1. Staff update**

- Gowling has been approved for a fourth kindergarten class, reducing class sizes to approximately 20 students per class.
  - We have a new kindergarten teacher and Board-assigned ECE for the class.
  - The new teacher is a specialist in kindergarten.
  - Students in the new class are being integrated this week.
  - Thank you to parents who advocated for smaller class sizes during COVID.
- Families with students enrolled in virtual school continue to request a return to in-person learning, but there is no movement at this time because class numbers are capped.
  - For any urgent needs, the school administration will consider requests individually.
- Thank you to School Council for purchasing the Je Lis reading app for French teachers.
- Reminder to arrive on time for class each day. Gowling continues to have many late arrivals.
- The current support model is expected to also support students in the virtual school, which is proving to be a challenge.
- Gowling has split recess into two groups to reduce numbers of students out on the yard.
  - Paid lunch monitors now supervise nutrition breaks, leaving four duty teachers available to watch the yard.
  - With half the students, supervision is better. Students have more space to play, and all play zones have access to both the field and the pavement.

**2. Fundraising update**

- Council raised about \$800 through the Crerar Honey Farms fundraiser.
- FlipGive is at around \$625 raised through the app, with more funds coming because of Christmas shopping. Please help spread the word to other parents.
- Council still needs to decide on an approach for selling Gowling Griffin wear through Entripy.com and hopes to get going with this in the new year.
- We recently received \$86 from Mabel's Labels.

**3. Christmas Eve Bowman's Restaurant event**

- Peter West, owner of Bowman's and a Gowling parent, was considering holding a Christmas Eve event in his restaurant parking lot, with social distancing.
- Peter approached Council about partnering to raise funds for Council through this event through a raffle basket, craft vendors or other idea.
- This event isn't going ahead at this time but School Council will be looking at other opportunities to partner with Bowman's in the new year.

#### **4. Mental health panel presentation, "Parenting during the pandemic"**

- Council is planning a special panel presentation on mental health on Jan. 12 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. on Zoom. We are holding this event in lieu of our regular School Council meeting.
- We have a fabulous speaker panel lined up and there will be lots of time for parent Q&A.
- Save the date and watch for registration info to come soon.

#### **5. Teacher representative update**

- A Gowling teacher is looking to connect with Council on Twitter. We do have a Twitter account and plan to start tweeting more regularly.
- There is no time limit on teachers spending their \$250 classroom funds, though it helps with reimbursement if they spend the funds sooner rather than later.
- Teachers would like to put information about the Food Drive on Facebook and/or Twitter.
- Teachers asked if it's possible to get the \$250 prior to spending out of pocket.
  - This isn't possible as we need a receipt or invoice to reimburse for a specific expense.

#### **6. Greening Committee update**

- Parents are welcome to reach out to the School Council email if you have any ideas for schoolyard greening.

#### **7. Grant update**

- Thank you to Kim Douglas for helping with the Indigo grant this fall. No other grant updates at this time.

#### **8. Finance update**

- Council received the School Cash Online funds (almost \$3,100), plus about \$500 from a school account. Fundraising funds have also come in, along with a \$200 donation from the Carlington Community Association.
- We paid about \$1,270 for the schoolyard stencils, purchased a Raz Kids subscription, and paid about \$800 of classroom spending for teachers.
- With the commitments we approved in September, we have about \$3,700 available.
- We're still in good shape financially, but considering we aren't able to hold the Craft Fair this year, we may not be able to offer the \$250 of individual classroom funding next year.

#### **9. Miscellaneous updates**

- Gowling doesn't need more clothing donations. The school does need new or gently used boots for grades 4-6, especially for boys.
- Ottawa Mission will have a hot food truck each Monday from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Shillington.
- Arianne Richeson offered to take on social media communications for Council.
- Peter West offered to create a website for School Council.

**Next meeting:** Mental health panel, Jan. 12, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.