

FINAL DRAFT
Alta Vista Public School (AVPS)
Minutes - School Council
Wednesday, December 21, 2022 7-9 pm

1. Welcome and Introduction (Melissa Extross, Chair)

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

3. Approval of last meeting minutes

Last meeting's minutes were approved.

4. Chair's Report (Melissa Extross)

Lost and Found Day

There is usually a Lost and Found Day in June, however it was decided to do one in January with lost winter clothing as they would be useful during the cold period of the year. Instead of laying out items in the gym as it is usually done in June, the Lost and Found bins would be moved to the front foyer so parents can have easier access to them. This would be done on January 11, 2023.

Menstrual products in bathrooms

Last year, a student reached out to the school about having menstrual products set up in the school. It was done in the second floor bathroom but since this year the second floor bathroom is inaccessible, now they will be put in all bathrooms, male, female and unisex. The school receives free samples and students have been restocking using these samples. The school board is supposed to supply the school with products but they haven't been received as of yet.

Scholastic Credits

During the Book Fair, we raised quite a few scholastic credits. We hope to use the credits in the school year that we earned them. At the Book Fair, a board was set up which included teacher book requests. Since those requests were thrown out following the book fair, Mr. Paré will ask teachers again for a list of what books they are still looking for and we would like to get those books purchased immediately in regards to those lists. Since we do not have a librarian this year, purchases will be made according to those recommendations or other books that council would recommend. In the last few years, there was a push for more diversity focused books and the previous librarian, Karen Myrah, did a wonderful job of building the catalogue.

5. Administrative Report (Dennis Paré, Principal)

Construction Updates

Construction is proceeding as we would expect, hopeful for work to be done by the end of February, no updates in regards to timelines just yet. The whole second floor is closed and is being worked on. On the PD day, many HVAC units were moved to the second floor with the lift. We are waiting for the upstairs phase to be finished. If it is finished by the end of February we have to make some decisions about moving students during the school year in order to facilitate the start of the third phase of the project. Those talks have yet to happen. The lone class that was upstairs was moved down with the rest of the classes on the first floor prior to moving the HVAC units.

Holiday Hampers

The Holiday Hamper Program was wildly successful this year. We received an incredible amount of donations to share with our families. It was touching to help so many families and share that kind of joy.

We provided well over 15 families with a hamper that included toys, puzzles, games, as well as \$250 in gift cards to Walmart. From a finance perspective, there were some concerns because the school collected close to \$4000 in gift cards, unexpectedly. It was too much money to have in the school without really tracking the money. Someone donated two \$100 bills and asked for a tax receipt, which they were entitled to get but was still an unexpected ask. Next year we will need to rethink how we will do this because we need to account for this and handle funds safely. We would like to track money better.

For some families, it would be easier to use School Cash Online. There is a 3% finance charge. It is something that will be brought up with the finance team at the school board because while Mr. Paré loves helping the community, he never wants to see his staff to be in a position where there could be an allegation of wrongdoing with donated money, because that is not the intent of this endeavour.

Project with the Multicultural Liaison Officer (MLO)

Our MLO from previous years, Fatima Akbal, is no longer with our school. MLO's are assigned to schools that have a diverse community. Each school has access to an MLO. This year, we have a new MLO, Susan Ragmo. She works with us every Tuesday afternoon in person if she can make it. She works in other schools as well. We have access to her on Tuesday afternoons and for the rest of the week we can put in a request for her. Her role is to help bridge cultural gaps, which is important because we all have biases and blind spots that could potentially create barriers for members in the community to having access to the school in an equitable way. The MLO helps bridge those gaps.

Our MLO speaks Arabic which is very helpful since there are many Arabic speaking families in our school. A few weeks ago, Susan offered to start a group for girls to have an opportunity to socialize and develop skills for self-advocacy and leadership, discussing topics of importance to them.

We have a teacher, Hannah Plalainik, who looks after Grades 3, 4 and 5 English class who is supporting this group. The group is open to everyone but we are targeting newcomers and, girls who are Muslim or Arabic speaking, but any girl can come. That group was available to students and it was pretty successful for the groups in Grades 5-8. Susan is hoping to start another group for a different age groups, and a group for boys, but this is dependent on how frequently we can have Susan come to the school.

There are not enough MLOs in the school board, so Susan is covering more schools than she normally would. We want to reach any family regardless of background or lived experiences.

Christol Barrett-Kilongozi ran Black History Month and Asian Pacific Islander History Month in the past and nobody has volunteered to take that over, but there are five weeks remaining for someone to take over this task. Jillian offered to volunteer help towards Black History Month and Asian Pacific Islander History Month since she had experience working on these events in previous years of teaching.

6. Dr. Nili Kaplan-Myrth, OCDSB Zone 9 Trustee

Dr. Nili Kaplan-Myrth was elected as Zone 9 trustee at the last election. Alta Vista PS was rezoned from Zone 6 to Zone 9 so we are now covered under Dr. Kaplan-Myrth. They are here to introduce themselves and how they plan for their trustee term.

Dr. Kaplan-Myrth is the trustee for the Alta Vista and Capital areas. They can be contacted by email at nili.kaplan-myrth@ocdsb.ca (best way to contact). Twitter: @nilikm.

When there are issues for schools, students, families, and if there is a need to pull in the trustee, they can be there. They would also try to loop in the superintendent since they know more about the system. There are plans to hold strategic planning sessions this year as the existing strategic plan is due for review. These strategic planning meetings are an opportunity to say what our priorities are, advocating priorities, etc. Further information can be found at <https://www.ocdsb.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=55478&pageId=38965516>.

Dr. Kaplan-Myrth will send us information about the upcoming sessions. There will be one meeting in January 2023, two in February, virtual and in-person meetings taking place in various high schools. These meetings will be done in small group sessions as well as one-on-one. The main goal is to have diverse voices heard from families across the school board.

If there are issues that you want to see, from your community perspectives, Dr. Kaplan-Myrth is happy to work with you.

For future meetings, Mondays and Wednesdays are when they are best available.

Dr. Kaplan-Myrth is a parent of three kids and a family doctor. They are also on the Equity Committee and Special Education Committee on the board, as well as on the Hiring committee for the new director of education, to make sure there's an equity lens.

Dr. Kaplan-Myrth was an anthropologist before being a family doctor. They studied marginalized populations, health and illness cross-culturally.

Issues brought up by the AVPS Community:

Facilities:

Currently, the building is going through a renewal, a new HVAC system is being replaced, room by room.

AVPS is not an accessible school. There are accessibility updates that we would like to see happen. Front door doesn't have a ramp, you need to come through a side door to enter the school.

In the school area (this may not be under the purview of the trustee) there are traffic issues around the school that the community deals with every year. Communication has been made with the City Councillor about the traffic issues and people parking on streets and reducing the street size, especially during the winter, as well as making illegal stops in front of the school bus zones.

Sports in the school:

There is less support from the school board. In comparison to the Catholic school board where sports are running 100%, we are not getting the same opportunities. From an equity point, some students don't have an opportunity to do sports outside of school and this is their only way to participate in this type of program. Many parents feel the same way about these programs.

According to Mr. Paré, there are intramural and interscholastic sports running, however there is noticeably a decrease in the amount of interscholastic sports seen from our baseline prior to COVID, and prior to the labour issues. Giving insight on the systemic issues that the school is facing, the primary reason for decrease in sports being offered is the labour issues, specifically, the availability of replacement staff is very limited. We have a very challenging situation when we have to replace staff because we don't have access to a deep bench of replacement staff. The district has taken a system-wide approach to coordinate which interscholastic activities are happening and when they are happening. We never have them on Mondays or Fridays because there is a high rate of absenteeism. We need our students to have an adult in front of them who is an OCT qualified teacher, or a registered ECE or a trained EA. We often have emergency replacement people who may not have all those qualifications. Interscholastic sports puts a strain on our replacement staff availability and the district is prioritizing providing replacement staff for regular leaves (i.e. sick leave, personal leave, illness in the family). There is more absenteeism this year and there is more illness out there. The district has chosen to prioritize that when a teacher gets sick, there is a qualified teacher available to replace them. To date, the school has participated in every interscholastic opportunity that has been made available district wide.

An additional factor is that all intramural and interscholastic sports occur during the personal time of the teacher or educator who is deciding to coach. They are not paid for coaching a sport, it is entirely volunteer work.

Another issue is transportation and the unavailability of school buses. There is a driver shortage and it is hard to find school buses right now.

It was brought up whether it would be possible for the board to communicate clearly to parents that there are sports teams that are being cancelled this year. Teachers and staff are constantly being approached by disappointed students and parents over the lack of sports available this year. As well, they limited tournaments to only Tier 1. Eliminating the Tier 2 tournaments really disadvantages our already disadvantaged populations. We try to supplement this at school during lunch hours. From the board, if we want extra tournaments, they are to be done on weekday evenings and weekends, which is an equity issue.

Dr. Kaplan-Myrth will bring up at the board in January to communicate clearly to parents about the situation with sports teams this year.

Crossing guards: One parent was concerned that sometimes there is no crossing guard available, and whether there is a system in place to have messaging to communicate if a crossing guard will be there or not, since parents heavily rely on there being someone helping their children cross the street safely to the school.

According to Mr. Paré, it is the Ottawa Safety Council that takes care of crossing guards.

Dr. Kaplan-Myrth will contact OSC about mapping whether there's an absent crossing guard to help parents plan getting their children to school safely.

7. Teacher's Report (Kathleen Connelly)

Kindergarten:

Division Lead: Alanna McNally

Many Kinder classes are starting to explore how animals prepare for winter. Themes include hibernation, migration and adaptation. They have also been discussing how people prepare for winter, in order to compare.

Classes are also discussing celebrations from around the world, including Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah and others. Students are invited to bring in a photo of a celebration they enjoy participating in, or an item that represents a holiday/celebration that is important to them.

Students have also been engaged in various art projects using loose parts, paint, and recycled materials. Often, materials are left out for open-ended play and students participate in "imagination stations" where they can express their creativity through the arts. They are then

given opportunities to present and share with their classmates in order to learn from one another and share positive comments and feedback with peers.

Primary:

Hour of code in Grade 3 (Ms. St. Laurent) - Students worked for an hour straight learning to code. The projects they worked on got gradually more complicated and all students persevered and really got the feel of what coding is all about.

Grade 2 - EF2A and EF2B have sent their Cléments (Flat Stanley) through the world. We look forward to receiving pictures of our little dudes and dudettes back. You can see the pictures on the bulletin board in the front hallway of our school.

Junior:**Division Lead: J. Kurita**

EF4A and B students are learning about Canada. They built a salt dough map to show different elevations and the physical regions of Canada. They also used the school Ozobots to take them on a trip around Canada.

Intermediate:

Division Lead: Julie Bourdages

We are starting to Code using MicroBits and hoping to use our brand new robots in January (purchased by School Council). We used our Gears and Pulleys in class. These were bought by School Council 2 years ago and were not used because of COVID.

On November 30th, Grade 8 students walked to Canterbury to attend the first Act of musical at "Little Shop of Horros." (McRae)

Grade 8 High School presentations from Ridgemont, Hillcrest and Canterbury will begin at the end of December or early January. Students will learn what to expect in high school, what a schedule looks like, what courses are compulsory and which are electives, etc.

Physical Education:

New skating initiative - We've teamed up with the Alta Vista Rink Crew to build a permanent skating storage area in the skating shack. The goal is to eliminate any barriers to participation so ALL AV students have access to the rink this year. The goal is to get all Junior and Intermediate classes out once a week. We'll need parent support for skate tying!

A huge thank you to former AV parent Keith Sherlock for building the shelves and to all the rink crew who worked together to make this dream happen. We are incredibly grateful. We are always in need of adult sized skates (in good condition) - donations welcome.

Extra-curricular Activities:

Teams and Clubs are thriving this year! Check out the display in the front entrance - we're adding all teams/clubs as they happen. You can also find photos on the school website under 'Teams & Clubs'

AV Sports Teams:

Leads: Kathleen Connelly/ Beth Rutland

Intermediate Girls Volleyball competed in a friendly tournament at Ridgemont HS on December 6th. They placed 2nd in their pool and narrowly missed the Bronze medal.

Intermediate Boys Volleyball team competed in the same tournament at Ridgemont High School on December 8th and finished with a Bronze Medal.

Regional Tournaments for both intermediate boys and girls will be end of January.

All sporting events are in the calendar on the AV website.

Intramural Basketball is up next January

Junior Volleyball and Basketball tournaments have been canceled by the board due to staffing shortages.

8. Treasurer's Update (Kathleen Wrye, Treasurer)

Financial update

Many successful fundraisers. The balance in council records is \$32,500. This accounts for \$5,100 in teachers requests that have been reimbursed this week, with the exception of the PE equipment.

Coordinators for the Family Movie Night, Book Fair and Gifts of Giving will update on their respective events as they have all been very successful. The big fundraiser for us is Pizza and Subs and we won't know updates until February 2023.

Voting Items

Scientists in School, \$500 - Approved

Starr Gymnastics for Kinder, \$230 - Approved

5 sets of headphones for Grade 1 (not clear what total amount is requested) - Deferred

Basic materials for Primary classrooms, \$1,000 - Deferred

Bus for Intermediate Cross Country, \$305 (reimbursed October 19) - Approved

New Skating Set-up, \$500 - Approved

Rocks and Rings (Indoor Curling for Grades 2-4), \$600 - Approved

Organizing Supplies for School Council, \$300 - Approved

Deferral for the Saidat Show to the next month (not more details)

Wild Bird Sanctuary, can't use the Outdoor Education Fund. Deferred to January meeting.

Total of \$2,435 in items passed!

9. Committee/Event reports and updates

Scholastic Book Fair update (Mais Kiryakos)

This was the most successful so far at Alta Vista. We sold \$10,974 worth of books, which is \$3k-4k more than before. We got \$6,029 worth of Scholastic credits this year, so we have a total now of \$8,500 of credits to spend. Thank you to volunteers - students and teachers were happy it was back!

Gifts of Giving update (Elizabeth Paradis)

Grand total of funds raised is \$1,692.30. Given that it was last minute, more than expected and the first time running the event for Elizabeth and Nathalie co-leading. Others on the committee were Ana and Shelly, and Tia was the teacher helping. Seventeen parents ended up volunteering on both days. High school students, Student Council and students from Grades 4-5 helped as well.

Thank you to Jillian for making the poster which we can hopefully re-use and update it for next year, and thank you to Lynn for helping with advertising on social media.

It was confirmed that we can share the amount of funds raised on social media so the school community can see how much was raised to help our sister schools.

OCASC (Regan Braund)

Regan attended the OCASC parent council meetings on behalf of AVPS Council. The Arts advisory committee (Nancy Dean, Chair) have their next meeting in January 2023 to plan for the coming year. They asked us to reach out to school council asking, "How is Art thriving in the school?" "How is the Arts Advisory Council supporting the school or could better support the school?" In addition, if there are any members of any of the school councils who would like to be a representative, let them know. Input can be provided directly to Regan and she will bring this up at their next meeting.

Parent Involvement Committee

Discussion from parental reaching out grant (PROgrant). Schools can apply for up to \$1,000 on that grant, meant to engage more families in the community through our school. What kind of proposals might come forward? There was discussion on the need for translation services at the school, how the grant can support those types of requests, like an engagement toolkit. More info in January 2023.

The Parental Involvement Committee will present a report on the 2021-2022 Speaker series early in the new year- 106 schools participated and over 2,500 individuals attended those sessions. Issues that were moved over to the next meeting were Supports for Parents versus Supports for School Councils.

Family Movie Night (Dean Blachford)

We made a profit of about \$700 for the movie night, about \$450 of that was from the Bake Sale. The remainder was from kitchen sales (Thank you Reuben for running the kitchen). With expenses, we made just a little over \$1,100 overall.

The Bake Sale was outsourced, first with Kathleen Connelly's group and the second by the Grade 8 End-of-the-Year Party group. It was great that Dean and Tia don't have to worry about them. This movie night was more calm in terms of numbers.

Environmentally, we were careful about which items were going into garbage and which items were going into recycling. Since the school does not compost, the compostables went into yard bags and then home with Dean into his compost.

Since they were short on parent volunteers, they didn't run the popcorn machine. When people noticed the popcorn station wasn't running, parents came forward afterwards about offering to volunteer, as well as emailed.

Tia and Dean talked about improving volunteer sign ups.

Kathy noted that money can be tagged for certain fundraisers then let teachers know that money is available and to approach school council about approving related purchases.

High School volunteers were fantastic. They explained where the bathrooms were and other house rules during the event.

Mais offered a tip for volunteers, of sending a "threatening" email that if there aren't any volunteers, then certain activities would need to be canceled, like with the popcorn machine situation. It would also be helpful if the shifts weren't too long. Aiming to have target numbers for volunteers was another helpful tip offered by another parent.

10. Discussion items and New business

Reminder:

Winter Break is scheduled from December 26-January 6

The next movie night will be on Friday January 27, 2023. The movie will be "Turning Red."

11. Next meeting: January 18, 2023 (virtually)