

Malvern Home and School Council Meeting - Minutes

13 September 2012

1. Welcome

Casey Fleming, one of this year's co-chairs, welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially those with new grade 9 students who are new to the school. He reminded everyone of the format of the meeting, which is largely about information sharing. Parents with specific concerns about their students or their children's teachers are encouraged to speak directly to the school administration.

The Home and School Council is involved in a number of different ways, but our primary activities are the Boardwalk Ball, Commencement, and funding 2 large scholarships and 10 smaller ones for graduating students.

2. Students' Council Report

Duncan Tooley, this year's SAC president, and Gracie James, External Affairs, gave a brief presentation to the Council on September's activities and events.

- a. Student Price Cards are now on sale
- b. September 20 is the Board-wide Toonie Tuesday to raise funds for East Africa relief.
- c. September 28th is the Terry Fox Run; pledge forms will be going out soon.
- d. The week of September 26th is Frosh Week, a grade-9 only week with lots of fun events, including jello eating and donut eating contests, a BBQ, and the grade 9 elections.

The SAC is investigating the possibility of bringing back dances to Malvern, and have submitted a proposal for a Halloween Dance. It will not be a formal event. Line Pinard has given approval, but there are many details that still need to be worked out. It would be held at the school on the Thursday before Halloween. It will include a breathalyzer.

The SAC is also investigating the possibility of graduation rings. They've just started researching possible suppliers and costs. This would not be an SAC-sponsored purchase; students would have to purchase the rings themselves. SAC may fundraise to help support the costs, and asked for the HSC support of the idea.

Vicki T. suggested that they might consider pins or bracelets in lieu of rings, if it would bring the costs down.

3. Home and School Update

The Council's secretary from last year has now moved on and we're in need of a new one. Volunteers appreciated! It isn't onerous as Line edits the minutes from rough draft.

4. Approval of the June 2011 Minutes

As Malvern is now a Platinum Eco-School, parents are responsible for printing out their own copies of the minutes for future meetings. Parents are also urged to check the website (schools.tdsb.on.ca/Malvern) as there is always lots of information available there.

Vicki moved; Brenda Rutherford seconded. Minutes were passed.

5. Principal's Report

Line noted that this is her 8th year at the school and she still loves it! She introduced our new VP, Kimberly Woods, responsible for students with last names A through L, and our returning VP, Fermer Santos, responsible for students with last names M through Z.

Staff representation on council this year is Claudine Tyrell, who works in Guidance and is the ACL for Student Success and Elizabeth Barsby, ACL for Math. She also introduced Mike Izzo, who was attending the meeting, who works on School Climate issues such as safe schools and equity.

The Grade 9 Handbook has been a great success. Line thanked Ginetta Peters, as well as Casey Fleming and Diane Wyman and Emily McRae, last year's secretary, for all their hard work on it.

The first week has gone much more smoothly this year. Not a single incident of hazing has been reported to the office. The plan to combat last year's problem was multipronged:

- Claudine coordinated the peer leaders, who were very visible in their red shirts, and who have been available to help new students all week
- Claudine also did outreach work with our feeder schools, ensuring that incoming grade 9 students understand their rights
- Diane and Claudine coordinated the volunteer parent supervisors
- The police were more visible
- Grade 9s were dismissed earlier than other students during the first week of school
- Lots of safe schools work was done during the year last year with staff and students

Some parents noted that they had heard rumours that hazing would be happening the second week, so Line agreed that everyone would keep their eyes and ears open.

Our enrolment projection for the year was 995; we are currently at 990 but are still registering students. Line will be requesting more staff. We are particularly tight in all of the grade 10 subjects, and in senior math and science.

5 new teachers have joined the staff: Lisa Di Viesti (Science), Jenna Grzela (Guidance), Basil El-Wazani (Geography and Business) Shahnaz Khan (ACL for English), and Janine Romeiko (French and History)

OMF report: The Onward Malvern Foundation is a group of alumni, parents, and friends of Malvern. They are an arms-length organization, and help fundraise for major items like music, band uniforms, and physical education supplies. They were instrumental in the campaign to save the pool. They are having their first meeting September 27th at 6:30 in the library and are in need of current parent to join.

Physical plant: our building is 108 years old. Over the summer 10 new wireless points were installed in the school and it has greatly improved the school's connectivity. A set of notebook computers on a cart has been purchased to facilitate classroom use of the Nelson pilot material, as well as other online resources.

A new PA system will be installed shortly.

At the first assembly, it was made clear to students that all electronics in the class are "with teacher permission only" and that there are consequences for breaking this rule. Teachers give students a warning for the first offense; second offense results in the item going to the VP's office; on the third offense, parents have to retrieve the device.

Grade 9 parents should be added to the blast email list by the end of September.

A student was robbed this week and there were similar issues last year. Our kids are targets because we live in an affluent neighbourhood. Please warn your kids to be aware of their surroundings.

Our literacy results in provincial testing have always been well above provincial average, but we've struggled more in math. Math results have been improving for the last several years, however. This year we saw a small dip, but we are still well above provincial average.

November 4th is the cenotaph unveiling. There will be a ceremony, Malvern street will be closed, and the Lieutenant-Governor has been invited. More details will follow at the next meeting.

Malvern maintained its Platinum Eco-School designation, no mean feat given the age of the school and the fact that we have a pool. We lost points for our paper recycling and are taking steps to improve that; we gained points for our outreach work with feeder schools.

September 16th is school photo day.

September 30th is the co-curricular fair. All schools teams and clubs set up displays and give new kids a chance to see the multitude of ways to be involved at Malvern.

October 7th is Red and Black Day. Miss Gage will be coordinating this again this year.

Parents were reminded about the school website, which contains tons of information. Of particular note is the Tackler, which allows parents to see the daily announcements.

6. VP report

Fermer talked briefly about the Nelson digital pilot project, which is running for one more semester, from September to January.

28 September is Grade 9 parents' night from 6:45 to 8:30. Grade 9 parents are invited to the school to see samples of student work and leadership, the music students perform, and classroom visits with the ACLs and various staff are on offer.

Kimberly introduced herself. She will be responsible for students with last names from A to L. She comes to us from George Vanier, where she spent the last 6 years. She's continuing the work of Diane Sharpe on professional learning communities and teachers are already in work groups, working on various projects such as ways to improve students' critical thinking skills and student success.

7. Safe Schools report

Mike Izzo, one of the Canadian and World Studies teachers, as well as an e-learning teacher, gave the safe schools update. He and Claudine Tyrell have started the Malvern School Climate Council, which is a central group concerned with safety and equity issues. This fall's focus was on hazing and working to prevent a repeat of last year, focusing on effective, community-based responses. He particularly thanked Line for restructuring the timetables, revising school policy, and reaching out to the community, as well as Claudine for her work with the peer leaders, grade 8 outreach. They were part of a team effort, but were the key leaders of our effort to make the grade 9 transition better.

Mike then gave us a quick demonstration of the new Malvern School Climate website. School Climate is an umbrella term which covers safety, equity, health, and social justice, but focuses on the relationships among all of these and their impact on student success. They are looking for 2 parents to sit on the Council. The website is intended as a communication tool. As clubs and organizations that come under the umbrella of School Climate get going, they will fill in their individual tabs (Brick by Brick, Best Buddies etc)

They are currently in discussion about what this year's focus will be; cyber-bullying is a possibility.

Our annual Social Justice Conference dates are to be determined. During these two days, regular classes are replaced by workshops. There will be speakers from groups like Free the Children – the speaker they are sending this year has visited the school that Malvern built in Africa. This event is a great vehicle for students to address issues at Malvern and beyond. They are looking for parent volunteers to help coordinate and run the logistics of the event. Ginetta Peters did it last year.

5 October is Student Vote.

8. Treasurer's Report

Vicki noted that we have just over \$8,000.00 currently in the bank, which is where we were at this time last year. Our only financial commitments in the short-term are the two \$750 scholarships and the Bill Mighton scholarship. HSC committed to the latter for four years only.

9. New/other Business

Casey reminded everyone of the importance of participating in our kids' educational experience and urged everyone to pass the word.

One parent raised a concern about underrepresentation of boys on school clubs and groups. Line responded that all of these are volunteer activities and very much peer-influenced, but her sense is that they were pretty balanced.

Pamela Anderson asked about a swim team this year, given that Ms Kee has retired and Cori Skuffham is on leave. We have teacher volunteers happy to help, but we are in need of a coach. Line is following up some possibilities and we will post an appeal on the website.

Another parent asked about the trip to the Galapagos; Ms Koumarellas (Science) will be taking this over.