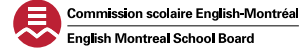




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Westmount Park School, Governing Board Minutes

Date: April 23rd 2024

Start time: 4:06pm

Present: Marco, Chrissy, Tina, Christine (teacher), Deborah, Rony, Shalani, Cristina (parent), Mujdat, Caitlin (PPO), Kassaye Berhanu-MacDonald (guest), Quazi Islam (guest)

Invited speaker: EMSB Chair Joe Ortona

1. Welcome:

1.1 Additions to the Agenda: None

1.2 Approval of the Agenda: 1. Tina, 2. Deborah, unanimously approved.

1.3 Approval of the Mar 2024 Minutes: 1. Tina, 2. Deborah, unanimously approved

1.4 Presentation by Mr. Joe Ortona - EMSB chairperson (20-25 min):

Joe Ortona's presentation gave historical context and detailed the status of each of the EMSB's court challenges to the provincial government. As Minister of Education, Francois Legault transferred EMSB schools to the French system without consultation and this is unconstitutional. EMSB has not made progress on challenging this decision because all attention shifted to challenging the following Bills created with Legault as Premier:

Bill 40: Abolition of school boards and drastically changing the governance of boards without consultation. EMSB's challenges have been successful at every stage – first stay, upheld by Superior Court when CAQ launched an appeal, 2021 case heard on the merits. Judge said that English Boards must be consulted to reaffirm constitutional rights. We are still operating as a school board with elections in Fall 2024.

Bill 21: Ban on religious symbols at work includes teachers and principals in public schools. CAQ used the notwithstanding clause that suspends some constitutional rights. EMSB Used 2-pronged attack highlighting two sections of the constitution that fall outside the notwithstanding clause. EMSB was initially successful with the first one:

1. Section 23: English school boards have authority in hiring teachers and the government can't impose arbitrary restrictions.

2. Section 28: Gender discrimination falls outside the notwithstanding clause; Bill 21 has disproportionate impact on Muslim women.

The government appealed the decision thereby suspending the judgement so that EMSB could not hire Muslim teachers during the appeal. The Superior Court overturned on appeal in a unanimous decision. EMSB is requesting a leave to appeal from Canadian Supreme Court (SC) and need to show it is an important question of national interest. Chair Ortona believes that SC will look at original court proceedings; the appeal court did not contest the evidence presented on the benefits of diversity in the classroom.

Bill 96: Clear violation of English School Board's right to manage because it imposes use of French language in operations. CAQ used notwithstanding clause again; EMSB made Section 23 argument again. Can't make unilateral amendments to the Canadian constitution;



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can't take away bilingual legislation and courts. EMSB received complaints from OQLF because Bill requires all non-pedagogical communication with parents in French. EMSB was first to challenge and has now been joined by 7 other boards (all English school boards except Lester B. Pearson who made a statement of support). Hearing on requested stay found 'no clear evidence of irreparable harm' from Bill and leave things as status quo. In legal terms, we did not get the stay but can continue to operate as usual. Chair Ortona described as a partial victory.

1.5 Public Question Period (Posed to Chair Ortona):

- Re the bussing issues in the past two years, is the EMSB sticking with Transco? The Quebec government intervened in the negotiations with the bus company, leaving EMSB out. Govt. gave bus companies 30% raises that were not shared with the drivers. This should not happen again because a collective agreement has been signed.
- Re allocation of resources/staff to schools, is there space for EMSB to adjust based on growing student population after census date at WPS? EMSB looks at the entire system, in a consultative process with intention to allocate resources where they are most needed. Chair Ortona believes that the needs are being met in the classroom, citing EMSB's success rate higher even than the private sector.

Parting words: *EMSB is not just an education institution but an Anglo rights institution.*

2. Business arising from the minutes:

2.1 Marketing objectives update - particularly on placing more signage in neighborhood, survey of community, Alumni visit etc.: WPS has an intern on Mondays and we have had 2 meetings. Can update next meeting.

2.2 Development of an outdoor classroom at WPS:

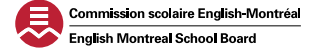
Opportunities to apply for government grant with Nicole Woodward. Can't use the park grounds so did a backpack version last year. Outdoor classroom already exists in City of Westmount. Need a fenced area on school grounds. Last year assessed cost at \$42K. Grade 2 classes are collecting materials to work outside. Others are developing curriculum. We need to coordinate with City of Westmount and EMSB to see how to proceed.

2.3 Allo-Prof website - <https://www.alloprof.qc.ca/en/auth/register> :

School will promote before the end of the school year. Next year will promote together with Learn Quebec at the beginning of the term.



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3. Business requiring approval:

3.1 ACGC Plan (Cycle 3 Academic and Career Guidance Plan): 1. Tina, 2. Shalani, unanimously approved.

3.2 Sexual Education Plan: This is compulsory education, and parents have to apply to opt out. GB members raised several concerns including the following:

- Need to teach about consent.
- Shocked about 'self-defense skills' as sexual assault prevention.
- Make more clear that there are other support staff such as behavioural techs to whom students can report incidents.
- Last year agreed to have a 2nd adult in class when teaching particularly about sexual assault.
- Training for teachers on these topics e.g. workshops offered through EMSB Educational Services, Learn Quebec, Ecole Montrealaise. WPS staff always working on PD.
- Marie Vincent has resources for parents on how to talk about consent, sexuality.
- Pregnancy & birth not covered in K4-K5 so better to take out of plan (rather than have as an empty column)

This is a standard curriculum from the ministry, and we are limited in making any changes.

Tabled for the next meeting to allow further discussion.

4. Items requiring discussion:

4.1 Fundraiser for Daniel Sathish Kumar family and discussion on what else GB can do to support: Discussed donation to heart and stroke foundation or St. Justine hospital in his name. The family went back to India immediately and did not want (to be present for?) a memorial at WPS. All students seeking emotional support after the death were seen in the school.

5. Reports:

5.1 Teachers' Report:

Whole School -

- Autism Acceptance walk/ Diversity celebration
- Earth month activities
- Fred Fox visit - motivational speech

K4 Nothing at this time.

K5

- Reverse integration with closed class to celebrate Autism Acceptance Month.
- Eid activities
- Mr Steve has been teaching the students about birds
- Going to the Science Center next week May 1st



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Grade 1

- Thank you to the school community for your support during our Popcorn fundraiser. We were able to raise over 1000\$ which will go towards this year's field trip to the Biodome and future projects. We are excited for our field trip on May 27th!
- In grade 1, we explored different Earth month activities and talked about ways to better protect our planet. We read books on recycling and took part in the Earth Month Upcycled Art activity within our individual classrooms.
- We learned about Eid and celebrated in our classrooms, and many students had the opportunity to share their own family traditions.
- We incorporated Nutrition month into our lessons and learned about healthy eating and the food groups through interactive lessons and art in French.
- Some grade one classes are building with recycled materials and planting this month.

Grade 2

- **McEntyre** art course: a 3 part course creating a Zine that will be presented at Victoria Hall at the end of May
- Working on Spring session of outdoor learning. Teachers received professional development - visited Willingdon Senior campus.
- Caterpillars have arrived! They are currently forming their Chrysalis. Hopefully we will have butterflies to release in the next two weeks.

Grade 3

- Mrs. Etheridge's grade 3 class is building a mini putt course (STEAM project)

Grade 4 Nothing at this time.

Grade 5 Nothing at this time.

Grade 6

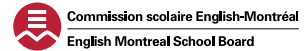
- Started our Transition to HS Program with the amazing Ms. Sharon (8 sessions in total with a Parents Zoom Session scheduled on May 6)
- Leadership Club will be creating another Autism Acceptance Bulletin Board like we did last year. Each grade received a different colored infinity symbol to decorate with either images or phrases of how we can show acceptance to our neurodivergent friends.
- Leadership Club with the guidance of our Talent Show Committee teachers have already started getting things ready for our school-wide talent show that will be taking place in June. Posters are going up around the school (made by leadership students) to advertise when auditions will take place.
- Ottawa Trip is approaching, students are excited to be visiting the Mint Museum, Parliament and Science and Technology Museum on Friday May 3
- Grade 6s will be going to the Holocaust Museum on May 13th.
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters did a one hour workshop about healthy relationships on April 18
- Graduates had their photos taken April 12th and received their grad hoodies

5.2 Daycare Report:

- * Daycare registration for the 2024-25 school year continues to rise in numbers. Parents who are still interested in registering their child, may schedule an appointment with Ms. Deborah in person, to register for the daycare program before May 3, 2024.
- * Parents have been credited for the April 4 snow day, and April 8 ped day (solar eclipse)
- * Daycare Ped day April 22- Students participated in creating their very own Tie Dye T shirts. They also enjoyed playing structured activities outdoors and in the gym.



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*Spring Session soccer activity planned by CORTESE SOCCER, every Friday 3:30-4:30 for grades 1-6.

* New educator to our Base team, Ms. Moumita Bardhan who is currently replacing Ms. Rey in the Pre-k and K group.

5.3 Principal's Report:

- Rock wall was put in place in the gym
- Montreal Canadiens hockey player Jordan Harris will be visiting April 24th. Thank you to Michael Cohen for helping organize. https://www.thesuburban.com/sports/habs-jordan-harris-visits-westmount-park-elementary/article_89cd432b-85fb-5e9f-bf16-bc425be161e0.html
- Tutoring program is expanding through MEQ and Rattrapage.
- Grade 6 graduation June 20th at Westmount High. Kindergarten graduation June 14th at WPS.
- Halo race for special needs kids on May 9th at Beaver lake.
- Grad portraits were taken on April 12th and sent home for orders.
- EMSB bought eclipse glasses for solar eclipse on April 8th. They were distributed the week before.
- Once soccer is over at daycare, we will continue it through the school.

5.4 PPO Report:

- **T-shirt fundraiser** was a success. We sold around 250 t-shirts. We will be putting in a restock order for the end of year which may or may not arrive before the year end picnic and are looking into school tote bags with the school message (back of the t-shirt).
- Our next **Pizza day is May 31**. This will be our last Pizza Day of the year. Last day for orders is Monday, May 27.
- June Pizza Day has been cancelled, instead we are going to try and offer a **Domino's WPS Family and Friend** night where families can order from Domino's and the school gets a portion of the profits. This is with the Domino's on Notre-Dame only. Proposed date: **Thursday June 13**.
- Year end picnic: Date confirmed for Friday June 7 or Friday June 14 (if it rains) 4:30-7:30pm. This will be a picnic where families bring their own food, however we will have some small drinks and snacks for sale. We are looking into an ice cream truck where scoops are \$2. At the year end picnic we will have a lost and found table, t-shirts for sale, games like the big chess, and possibly face painting. Will need to do a call for volunteers.
- In-school end of the year Freezie Day: June 12 or 13 (if it rains) at recess. Parent volunteers will set up a freezie station by the side door steps. Each child will be able to have a freezie.
- Financials:



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- Fundraising goal for the 24-25 school year will focus on fencing and the playground accessibility for all our students
- We granted funding to help subsidize 2x grade end of the year class trips

5.5 Regional Parent Committee Report:

1. Adoption of new policy on promotion:

a. Scope of establishing a standardized approach to making well-informed decisions concerning each student's academic progression.

b. Guiding principles are to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency in the administrative decision with respect to the transition from one cycle to the next (particularly from 3rd cycle of elementary school to secondary school and from 1st to 2nd cycle of secondary school).

c. Respecting the principle of equity and success for all.

d. Promoting consultation and partnership between all stakeholders.

e. "Placement" referring to the promotion of a student who has not satisfied the academic requirements with their peer group in favour of the social and psychological well-being of the student.

f. "Transition plan" referring to a plan which identifies the support mechanisms required to facilitate success at the next academic level and/or cycle.

g. Inclusion of a "promotion committee" comprised of school administration, teachers, resource teachers, guidance counsellor or equivalent and relevant school-based professionals whose function is to make recommendations to the principal regarding promotion/placement; principal retains authority to make final decision; principal establishes the promotions committee.

h. Possibility of promotion of students at the end of five years of elementary school exceptionally; principal-led decision also relying on the analysis of the school's multi-disciplinary team.

i. Shared responsibility for the transfer of information from elementary school to secondary school.

j. Automatic promotion vs. condition placement vs. exceptional placement vs. placement in work-oriented pathway between 1st and 2nd cycles of secondary school.

k. Students not to repeat inter-cycle; exceptionally may remain for a second year in the same class (measure to be used only once during elementary education); must take into consideration multiple facets of student's profile (academic, socio-emotional, etc.).

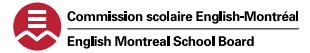
l. Overall, less emphasis on grades and the concept of compulsory courses, and more emphasis on an informed process involving multi-disciplinary consultation and consideration of a wider array of factors for each student.

2. Allo-Prof

a. Free resource offering electronic resources to support learning at the elementary school and, more significantly at the high school level for Quebec students.



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- b. Includes games, and videos meant to stimulate and engage young learners.
 - c. Available in both French and English though French content is broader and more varied.
 - d. Includes section for parents which provides resources and informative material; also includes opportunity to ask questions via phone or messaging to resource teachers during evening hours (5-8pm).
 - e. Includes section for teachers which provides free materials and resources.
3. Upcoming discussions:
- a. Proposal for a new school for students with behavioural challenges in the Nesbitt building close to St-Raphael school (and adopting their successful strategies).
4. Next meeting: May 2nd, 2024
- 6. Varia:**
- ...
- 7. Date of next meeting: May 21st, 2024**
- ...
- 8. Adjournment: 6pm**
- ...