

Northern School Council Meeting Minutes

November 21, 2024

ATTENDEES

Council Members In-Person: Omar Becerril, Sarah Flint, Shelagh Durno, Kristina Turner, Anna Rutledge, Stephanie Nacawa, Julie Buckareff

Council Members On-line: Ali Pajang, Keith Tong, Jessica Miklos, Wendy Li, Catherine Wong

Student Representatives: Humza Jadoon and Savannah Royes

Council Member Regrets: Harp Thind, John Bakous, Gavin McCulloch

Principal: Adam Marshall

Teacher Representative: Jenn Marr

Community Representative: Bronwen Alsop

Online attendees: Beth Lauer, Karen, Abby Dwosh, Leela, Mahdyieh Mohammad, Mila G, Alexis D, Ruth, M Hu, S.K.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Omar Becerril

- Welcome to all attending.
- Quorum is confirmed.
- Land acknowledgement
- **MOTION:** Approval of the agenda: motion to approve: Kristina; seconded: Anna. Carried.

CO-CHAIR'S UPDATE

Jessica Miklos

- Thanks to families who donated to the annual fundraising campaign. School Council met their fundraising target for the year.
- Thanks to Shelly Laskin for welcoming Northern parents to the recent ward forum. It was a good opportunity to meet our Superintendent, Jennifer Chan.
- Rachel Chernos Lin's election to City Council leaves a vacancy in the School Trustee position for Ward 11. On December 11th, the TDSB will meet to decide whether to appoint a new Trustee or to hold a by-election to fill that position.
- A SEAC town hall was held on November 4th. This was a forum to hear about barriers to education for special education students. A lot of perspectives were shared. You can find a summary of the event in the Co-Chairs Report on the Northern School Council website.
- The Grade 8 Open House is on Wednesday, November 27th. At this event, we may start to see the effects of the removal of technical and commercial boundaries on attendance next year. If you are interested in helping Jessica and Omar staff the School Council table at this event next week, please reach out to us at nss.school.council@gmail.com.
- An updated School Statement of Needs (SSON) has been posted on the School Council website. This document is used in the event the Board needs to hire a new principal at Northern and it is updated every year. The SSON will be submitted to the Superintendent

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in January. You can review the SSON on our website

<https://nsscouncil.com/school-council/> to make sure your priorities have been reflected in the document.

- Several School Council committees have updated their Committee Terms of Reference, to help plan for the resources needed throughout the year.
- Several Council members took a tour of the Northern courtyard and back field. The goal of the tour was to develop a list of items needing improvement where we may be able to apply for development funds to help improve our outdoor spaces. This ties into the discussion of students needing alternative areas to eat lunch. The following opportunities were identified:
 - The bleachers are falling into disrepair as they are made of wood.
 - The retaining wall around the back field is deteriorating.
 - There is currently no access to the courtyard. School Administration has set aside money to provide this access. Parent advocacy might be needed as we go forward.
- Caring and Safe Schools Committee is working to ensure that all staff and students know what to do in the event of an emergency during the school day.
 - Information folders will be reviewed with staff on the PD day on November 29th and will be placed in each classroom.
 - The committee is exploring the possibility of running a lockdown drill during non-instructional time.
 - Emergency response kits are in the works with some details still to be worked out.
- The Parent and Community Engagement Office has developed new suggestions for school councils to get involved in the School Improvement process. Volunteers are welcome to help review this process.
- Upcoming Northern events:
 - December 5th, 6th: United Way Fashion Show
 - December 12th: Winterlude (music showcase)
- The full Co-Chairs report can be found on the School Council website, www.nsscouncil.com/schoolcouncil/.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT AND ASK ADAM

- There is no update on the automated attendance system. Adam will try to have an update for the next meeting.
- **Why aren't the air purifiers in classrooms being used?** Currently, they aren't required to be used anymore. It is up to a teacher's discretion. The purifiers are still located in classrooms, but they can be noisy and it can be hard to hear other voices when they are on. It is up to teachers if they want to use the air purifiers.
- **Is there a way to highlight achievement in sport in a fair way (for example, football vs. other sports)?** Adam: All sports, clubs and arts updates go in the weekly bulletin.

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Football has 160+ participants and there is a historic presence at spirit/homecoming days. Going forward, the administration would like to have at least one female team participating as well (e.g. rugby, soccer).

- **Commencement** will be on June 26th, 2025 at the University of Toronto. We still need confirmation from UofT to ensure they will not need their facilities for their own graduation ceremonies. For the past few years, this has not been an issue.
- **Prom** will be held at Parkview Manor, off of Don Mills and Eglinton on Friday, May 30th, 2025. Last year at the Eglinton Grand created some anxiety around the lack of space, given the large class size. There is a large class again this year and the new venue will provide more space.
- **The past PD Day topics included:**
 - The School Improvement Plan
 - Moderated marking
 - Follow-up from the first PD day
 - Reminders for lesson planning
- **Topics for the next PD day include:**
 - Emergency procedures review. There are a lot of new teachers at Northern and the staff have raised some good questions. The Administration is currently building answers to these questions and will be rolling out an emergency folder that will be in every classroom that has procedures for most situations.
 - The discussion on moderated marking will continue.
- **Construction update:**
 - Room 143 had a final coat of paint. Next up is epoxy on floors and finishing the HVAC system. We are hoping the room will be available in January, and while not 100% done, it will be safe and usable.
 - Rooms 312 and 318 are currently occupied. There are three new staff due to the required teacher/student ratio. There are two split classes in those rooms. The HVAC is still not fully done and they are currently using space heaters.
- **Secondary Schools without a Boundary/Northern admissions 2025/26**
 - There was a meeting last week with Northern administration, TDSB staff and Shelly Laskin. Feedback from Northern will go to the Board tomorrow.
 - We are concerned about 100s of students coming from anywhere in the city. It works better to have a larger core of students from a predictable area around the school. This is an on-going discussion and they will be talking to parents next week.
 - Northern's boundary is very small. We will be a secondary school without a boundary, with the exception of our small catchment area. We expect approximately 80 students from the catchment area. 110 students are expected in the DHH, LD Core and Gifted programs.
 - For the next three years, applicants will be prioritized:
 - If you have a sibling at Northern.

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- 30% will be allocated to students in the technical program, which is dependent on the number of other students
- Addresses that traditionally feed into North Toronto Collegiate will also be prioritized at Northern. We expect approximately 40-60 students coming from NT areas
- Lastly, a system-wide lottery for any remaining spots, first students within the TDSB followed by students outside of the city.
- The normal size of Grade 9 class is typically 415-435 students. Northern has had 120 more over that in the last few years. The Board is working to get that back closer to past numbers. Northern will be a closed school this year. In the past, students were choosing to come to Northern through the Technical and Commercial boundaries, which will be removed. The change to the boundaries was done to promote equity, so all students will have fairer access to these secondary schools.
- Admission priorities for Northern for the next three years can be reviewed here: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Going-to-High-School/Secondary-Schools-Without-a-Boundary/Admission-Priorities>
- **Is there a limit to the capacity in the Northern building based on fire regulations?** There is, but it's well beyond 2200 students.
- **What if DHH or LD core students want to come to Northern, but the school is at capacity?** The DHH program has never hit its limits. Gifted and LD Core are different. The decision is made at the IPRC table. Central Spec Ed makes that decision.
- **What is the maximum number of students at Northern?** Northern has just renovated 4 rooms which means 30 seats/room. The Board wants Northern at 90% capacity, so around 1900 students.
- **How many Technical students do we currently have?** We are close to 30%.
- **Grade 8 Information event** is next Wednesday, November 27th. There will be the traditional feeder schools' afternoon session with students. It is important to promote the school because it is better to be over-enrolled than under-enrolled. There will be an evening session for families around the city.
- **School Improvement Plan:**
 - The Department Head team have started the process, with achievement and wellness as part of the process. The team is looking to adopt a character-based program and have been considering what they like, legacy pieces, 90 years of history, who do we want to be and where we want to go. We are exploring open-ended themes/mantras:
 - always with integrity
 - building bridges
 - own your actions
 - high expectations for all
 - community with care

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- empowering all
- find and feed your passion
- everything with tenacity
- Careful Footprints
- Mantras will go in the Weekly Bulletin. Northern wants to share it with families too so they can use the same language. As an example, headphone use in school could be explained using language from the mantras.
- We continue to focus on academics but also help to prepare the students for the future. We are building the framework of language which can be incorporated daily when talking to students about behaviour or what they want to accomplish or why we volunteer. We are hoping our graduating students take these themes with them. We would like to change the way students communicate with each other.
- The Leadership team read a book called *Legacy: What The All Blacks Can Teach Us About The Business Of Life*, about the culture they built and the values that make them successful.
- School improvement plan is moving away from broad guidelines. The Board has a multi-year strategic plan through 2028, with the following five strategic directions:
 - **Truth and Reconciliation:** Our Staff is driving the process with 100% buy in.
 - **Belong:** Working towards having leadership across the school as diverse as the student body.
 - **Achieve:** Move as many students to a level 3 standard. Continue to pursue curriculum fidelity and moderated marking.
 - **Thrive:** Strive for 16 credits by 16 (so students have achieved all required credits in grade 9 and 10) Graduation rates are higher for students who meet this standard.
 - **Revitalize:** The classroom is the third teacher. If you look around the school, can you find places on your own? Is there proper signage to help you find the librarians, books? Staff/colleagues offer constructive criticism when they go into a classroom or office on what they experience. Our rooms need to be more than just workspaces. We will capture best practices and make changes to some of our spaces.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Approval of the prior meeting Minutes: motion to approve: Kristina, seconded: Sarah. Carried.

Budget and Funding Committee Update

Sarah Flint

- We have surpassed the fundraising target and raised \$10,050 as of this past Monday.
- The Campaign runs until the end of the week.

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- \$250 came through the tax receipt account. This wasn't advertised much and next year we can promote it more.
- We have \$14,815 available to spend this school year.
- The Budget Committee approved: \$660 girls volleyball trip, \$550 for PALs' t-shirts and the following staff wish list items that were less than \$1000, totalling \$2790: springs (Physics), document cameras (Math), stools (Pottery), pots and pans (Nutrition Program), fans, air resonance machines (Physics). The Committee is working with Adam and Lorraine to fulfill these items.
- The Committee is waiting on cost estimates for emergency supplies for around the school.
- The following funding requests have been received and are for review by Council:
 - \$1500 for Buddies for spring leadership training retreat
 - Staff request of 10 DSLR cameras (Photography). The Budget Committee recommends purchasing 2 cameras (a total of \$1400). Julie will check pricing with her connections at Henry's and Downtown Camera.
- The Committee decided not to fund storage bins for Ceramics at a cost of \$1300. There is an issue with art projects going missing. Adam remarked that before bins are purchased, alternative solutions should be pursued, like use of lockers to store kits/tools. Julie offered to work with the teacher to find alternative solutions.
- **Motions:**
 - I move that the Budget and Funding Committee release \$1500 to the Buddies for their retreat in Spring 2025.
Motion to Approve: Sarah, Seconded: Anna. Carried.
 - I move that the Budget and Funding Committee release \$1400 for two DSLR Cameras for the photography program.
Motion to Approve: Sarah. Seconded: Omar. Carried.
- **School Council Budget 2024/25:**
 - Three categories of funding: Student Enrichment, Staff/Classroom Enrichment and Parent Enrichment and Engagement.
 - Budgeted disbursements for this school year total \$15,800
 - The draft budget is available on the School Council website if you want more details.
- Please encourage teams, clubs, and groups to apply for funding
- Anna: Club funding through SAC is no longer to be used for snacks. Can School Council fund snacks? Adam: Too many clubs asking for funds for food. It shouldn't have been happening. Snacks will still be provided for some after-hours events.

GAC Committee Update

Anna Rutledge

- John Moyer has returned to Northern.
- GAC has confirmed the dates for events for the rest of the year.

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- On December 9th, there is a workshop in the Northern Library on the gradual release of responsibility to students. There will be notes afterwards. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Social Committee Update

Kristina Turner

- Walks in Mount Pleasant Cemetery every two weeks, alternating between Saturdays and Sundays. The next walk is Sunday, December 1st.
- A survey was conducted to see what parents are looking for in School Council events. Feedback is still welcomed - you can find the survey on the School Council website.
- ELL/DHH had a potluck dinner that was well received - maybe we could carry that idea over to other Northern groups to help bring parents together.
- The Northern Fashion Show is on December 5th and 6th. Parents will sit together so please join us. It's more fun if we go together.
- In January, we are planning an indoor bowling night. Join us - it's a lot of fun and adds to your experience at Northern.

Website Committee Update

Keith Tong

- The Committee facilitated the transition of the system over to our current council members. We have full access to the web hosting platform and development tool.
- The front page has changed. We simplified the way it looks.
- The request form has been updated, added recovery emails, added the events survey, added Council meeting documents.
- We were also able to activate the website stats but still need to look into the data.
- We created a calendar of items that need updating to make it easier to stay on top of updates.
- We adopted a new logo when we updated the SC website. It is in line with the design of the website - more modern and streamlined and the "Northern" is larger and more readable than in our old logo.
- **Motion:** School Council should adopt the new website logo for all communications and on all platforms. Motion to Approve: Stephanie. Seconded: Anna. Carried.

Education Committee Update

Omar Becerril

- If Parents are interested in joining the Education Committee, reach out to John Bakous.
- Trustee Laskin, at the last meeting, called attention to special education, increasing price for permit fees on school properties and literacy and numeracy issues at our schools.

Student Representative Update

Savannah Royes

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- United Way week was a great success with funds raised. Students set up fun booths, photo stations, bake sales and raffles and a Great Race for Northern associations.
- SAC shop for school merchandise is now closed
- Super Council is a newly formed council for the Northern association heads. The first meeting was October 17th. The goal is to build more community across associations and to try and bring more diversity into associations and clubs.
- PALs held a fun cultural fair day with different foods and games.
- The Fashion Show is coming up on December 5th and 6th. You can buy tickets online.
- The Buddies' toy drive starts on November 11th and runs to December 6th. You can donate new toys to the drive.
- OSSLTs: students have finished writing literacy tests in Grade 10
- Sports: Fall sports have wrapped up. Football teams had great success. All Northern sports teams did amazing. Winter sports teams are wrapping up tryouts.
- The Holocaust assembly was on November 6th with a Holocaust survivor. The Remembrance Day assembly on November 11th was commemorated by the School Band, the Dance Club and other student groups.
- Parent Teacher Night went smoothly thanks to the help of PALs and Buddies.
- Post-secondary Information night was well received by the Grade 12s who attended.

Community Representative Update

Bronwen Alsop

- Bronwen has children at Allenby and Northern, her youngest is in the DHH program. Bronwen helps advocate in the community. Reach out if you need help with anything.
- DHH: interpreters are an ongoing issue. Shelagh worked tirelessly to get this resolved. We hope to have an update soon regarding interpreters.

Other School Council Updates

- **Thank a Teacher Campaign**
 - Consider thanking Teachers who have made a difference to your student.
 - Campaign runs to the end of the calendar year.
 - Will send out reminders in the month of December.
- **School Statement of Needs:** we encourage all parents to review this document and make sure the things that are important to you are reflected in it. We welcome any feedback.
- **Events survey:** thanks to Kristina (social events) and Anna (education topics) .
- We used to have an **Academic Resource Committee**. We are looking for parents interested in helping organize events for other parts of the school. Please reach out if you are interested.
- The next School Council Meeting is January 16th, 2025

Motion to adjourn: Kristina. Seconded: Julie. Carried.

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Items for follow up:

- Absentee Calls System: looking into fixing issue of calls arriving at end of day - Adam
- Julie to see if she can get any assistance with Henrys or Downtown Camera for new DSLRs
- Council to consider fundraising help for more cameras
- Julie offered to work with the Ceramics teacher to find alternative solutions to buying new storage bins.
- Follow up on courtyard and other outdoor issues that need fixing.

Upcoming meeting dates

- Thursday, January 16, 2025
- Tuesday, February 11, 2025
- Thursday, April 3, 2025
- Thursday, May 22, 2025