



# NORTHERN SCHOOL COUNCIL

## Meeting Minutes

April 3, 2025

### ATTENDEES

Council Members in-person: Jessica Miklos, Omar Becerril, Kristina Turner, Stephanie Nacawa, Sarah Flint, Gavin McCulloch, Keith Tong, Harp Thind, Catherine Wong

Council Members on-line: Anna Rutledge, Amanda Ricketts

Council Member Regrets: John Bakous, Julie Buckareff, Wendy Li

Principal: Adam Marshall (on-line)

Vice Principal: Jessica Pearson (in person)

Teacher Representative: Jenn Marr (in person)

Student Representatives: Savannah Royes (regrets) and Humza Jadoon (regrets)

Community Representative: Bronwen Alsop (online)

Superintendent of Education, LC1: Jennifer Chan (in person)

Trustee, Ward 11: Stacey Cline (in person)

On-line and In-Person Attendees: Abby, Beth L. Margaret Y., Ruth, SK, Tania K, Patricia C., Paul H.

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jessica Miklos

- Welcome to all attending
- Quorum confirmed
- MOTION: approve the April 3rd agenda. Motion to approve: Gavin McCulloch; seconded: Sarah Flint. Motion carried.

VP Jessica Pearson

- Land acknowledgement

### CO-CHAIRS' UPDATES

- Thank you to PFLAG for the presentation on Tuesday and to Kristina for the social events
- Welcome to Superintendent Jennifer Chan and newly-elected Trustee Stacey Cline
- There is a new Minister of Education, Paul Calandra, following the provincial election
- Preliminary repairs to the boilers at Northern have begun. No new permits will be granted in the evenings, weekends or summer so work can be done during these times. It is expected to take 2 years to complete the project. This may affect in-person School Council meetings.
- Policy updates: The Learning Opportunities Index Policy is available for comment for just one more day (April 4)



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- Boundary changes for Northern are being considered in light of the removal of technical and commercial boundaries. The plan increases the catchment area for Northern, but reduces the number of high school choices for some addresses that previously had two or more options.
- Northern is currently 95 years old and will turn 100 in 2030. We may want to consider a centennial committee going forward to help plan for this milestone.

### PRINCIPAL'S REPORT AND ASK ADAM

Vice Principal Jessica Pearson

1. Facilities update: Room 121 has been handed back today. Room 143 (tech) is close to being done
2. Administration is in the beginning stages of planning for staffing
3. Exciting events at school: battle of the bands and the talent show, Robotics competing at provincials
4. Enrolment update for the tech program - there are 65 tech students accepted through the Secondary School without a Boundary option for next year
5. Facility challenges: boiler work has started. There are contingency plans in place for fire alarms due to the welders to minimize disruption to students.. This is a two-year project.
6. Tracking January exams: no update at this time.
7. Is mental health covered in guidance visits? Northern does a fantastic job supporting mental health issues. There is a large support team which includes our Social Worker, Child and Youth Worker, the VPs and Guidance. The WellNSS committee creates a monthly lesson to go into period 1 classes. On one Wednesday each month, there is a focus on a mental health lesson. We have prioritized guidance in staffing and we have an extra guidance counselor. However, we will likely not have five counselors again next year.
8. Bathroom mural - can parents contribute or help out? Principal Marshall wants this project to be student-led.
9. Has the school implemented the ASL sign of the week signage around school? Principal Marshall wants this initiative to be student-led. It's important to have the students' voices on these projects. There's been some absences slowing this down. Likely a September start to this. We can consider looking to community partnerships to help with the heavy lifting of this initiative, but students will be driving the project.
10. Do the community police come to Northern to talk with the students about drugs? We have a strong working relationship with the police, but it is no longer the norm to come in and do presentations. These topics are integrated into the health curriculum now. Police officers have spoken at prom assemblies in the past about safety precautions around the prom.



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11. Does the TDSB run any international March break trips or summer programs? They do not. Families should look for private companies offering these trips.
12. Question regarding paying for supply teacher coverage for athletics vs. clubs - we should pick up this question at the next School Council meeting.
13. Did Northern lose a custodian? The Board pulls them to go to another school who needs them more when absences leave a school without any coverage.
14. Does Northern support students who no longer want to vape? Administration has recently visited CAMH to look at programs that could help. They are reviewing this to see what can be brought into the school to help students.
15. Commencement date has been confirmed in the school calendar (June 26, Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto)
16. Prom: the location has been picked, but the full information will come out in the school bulletin. Parkview Manor on Friday, May 30th from 6-11 pm.

### **SUPERINTENDENT JENNIFER CHAN**

#### **Background**

Superintendent since September, 2024 and with the TDSB for 25 years as a secondary school teacher, curriculum leader, vice principal and principal and worked at the Department of Education. Responsible for working with 25 schools - 5 secondary and 20 primary. The role is to support the principals and administrative teams at the assigned schools. Areas of focus include school improvement planning, operational issues, safe and caring schools, facilities, staffing, engaging central departments, fielding parent concerns and admission questions. Superintendent Chan mentioned that Northern has outstanding programs, teachers and administrators.

Superintendent Chan works with principals and families and looks thoroughly into any issues or cases, but is not always in control of the outcome. The Superintendent helps parents to navigate where to ask questions using the Parent Concern Protocol. The focus is on student success and meeting the needs of every single student.

#### **Boundary Changes proposed for Northern**

Current boundary review is just for the regular pathway, not gifted or other speciality streams. The current small boundary will be widened to offer more local access to Northern. There will still be the application process to get access if not within the new boundary. Gifted placements will continue to be done by the Special Education Department.



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### Questions

Can the Superintendent help with funding for facilities upgrades at school?

The Principal keeps the Superintendent informed, who behind the scenes helps push things forward.

What is the process to reach the Superintendent to raise a concern around school exclusion or modified days?

Reach out to the Principal and if you still need help, reach out to the Superintendent.

Can you give an update on AI policies at the Board level?

AI is being thought about, but there's not enough to share on AI as of now.

### COUNCIL BUSINESS

**MOTION:** Approval of the February 11 Minutes: Motion to approve: Gavin McCulloch:

Seconded: Sarah Flint. Motion carried.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### Budget Committee Update

Sarah Flint

We had \$18,663 in funds available to distribute this year and allocated \$2,000 to be held over for next year. That left \$16,663 to distribute this year. We have spent \$8,243 so far and have allocated \$3,105. We have \$1,173 for parent enrichment that has yet to be allocated. That leaves \$4,142 remaining to spend on student programs.

We'd like to consider distributing \$2,000 for the Robotics Club. The Club is currently competing on the first day of Provincials. There's a very strong chance they will make it to the World Competition in Houston. It will cost around \$60k to travel to and attend the World Competition.

The Budget and Funding Committee will be considering the current requests under \$1000 (as listed in the Budget report)

The Robotics Club is working hard to raise money. The Foundation has a campaign underway and the Club is currently fundraising on the Knight Owls website. If you want to sponsor the team or make a larger donation, the Foundation can process that.



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**MOTION:** Distribute \$2,000 to the Robotics Club to support their quest to attend the World Competition, contingent on making Worlds. Motion to Approve: Sarah Flint; Seconded: Kristina Turner. Motion carried.

### Gifted Advisory Committee

Anna Rutledge

There is a meet up this Sunday (April 6) at 1pm at the Brickworks. Meet at the Picnic Cafe for coffee, followed by a wetland walk with the Turtle Protectors as part of Earth day programming.

### Social Committee

Kristina Turner

- Walking Buddies this Saturday morning, April 5th
- ROM after Dark event: a social evening with food, drink and access to some galleries. The cost will be \$10 or less. Email Kristina to sign up.

### Website Committee

Harp Thind

We have tested the Instagram account with 3-4 posts. Overall we have had positive feedback. The goal is to send out quick reminders vs. people needing to visit the website. A new email and instagram account was set up for the live account, which will be available to the Chairs and the Website Committee to access at this time.

**MOTION:** Move the School Council Instagram account from the test to the live version. Motion to Approve: Harp Thind; Seconded: Kristina Turner. Motion carried.

### Student Representative Update

Jessica Miklos for Savannah Royes.

The Student Representative Report was reviewed.

### Teacher Representative Update

Jenn Marr

Teachers are busy marking mid-term report cards. Students should get outstanding work submitted.



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### Community Representative Update

Bronwen Alsop

- Thanks to the Council for hosting PFLAG.
- Looking forward to the new Trustee newsletter to help get more parent engagement, enthusiasm and advocacy.
- Recommends using success stories and how the funds are getting used to rally more support for donations in the community. Approaching local BIAs might be helpful too.

### New Business

Council Vacancy

Omar Becerril

There is a School Council vacancy, due to the resignation of Ali Pajang. Amanda Ricketts was identified and affirmed, as a Council volunteer, to fill the spot. Amanda has been attending Council meetings. Please welcome Amanda to School Council.

### Fundraising Policy

Stacey Cline, Ward 11 Trustee

As background, a survey went out in October 2023: 60% said that fundraising should be voluntary, 30% mandatory and 10% had no opinion. In May 2024, Staff was asked to investigate options. A motion regarding fundraising was recently passed by the Governance and Policy Committee. A full Board vote will take place on April 16th, with an interim meeting being held to hear feedback on April 9th. Parents can attend or provide a written submission. Contact Trustee Cline if you wish to attend the April 9th meeting.

No official percentage for mandatory contributions has been recommended yet. Trustee Cline has concerns with the fundraising proposal. School budgets are already differentiated by the TDSB by fundraising ability. It's a dangerous precedent for parents to make up any funding shortfalls. Parents want to know where the funding is going and don't want to be told. Some schools already give to other schools. Parents want to connect voluntarily with schools that have lower levels of fundraising.

The motion looks set to pass. Trustee Cline is against the motion and is reaching out to other Board members.

Trustee Cline will start hosting Trustee coffee mornings some time in May.



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### Items regarding the next School Council meeting

- We will defer the remaining agenda items to the next meeting.
- School boards across the province are underfunded and this issue has to be dealt with at the provincial level. Jessica Miklos will circulate a draft letter and will table it at the next meeting.
- May 22 School Council meeting will likely be online due to the boiler work at the school.

**MOTION** to adjourn: Jessica Miklos, Seconded: Kristina Turner. Motion carried.

### Upcoming meeting dates:

- Thursday, May 22, 2025

### New Items for follow-up:

- Question regarding paying for supply teacher coverage for athletics vs. clubs - we should pick up this question at the next School Council meeting.
- Does Northern support students who no longer want to vape? Administration has recently visited CAMH to look at programs that could help. They are reviewing this to see what can be brought into the school to help students.
- Prom: the location has been picked, but the full information will come out in the school bulletin. This will be announced soon.
- We will defer the remaining agenda items to the next meeting.
- School boards across the province are underfunded and this issue has to be dealt with at the provincial level. Jessica Miklos will circulate a draft letter and will table it at the next meeting.
- Trustee Cline: newsletter and coffee mornings
- April 16 vote on the new fundraising policy at the Board

### Items for follow-up from prior meetings:

- Caretakers: issues around losing one
- School Council: advocate for courtyard and other outdoor issues that need fixing.
- School Council: spend parent enrichment funds
- School Council to consider ways to advocate for better funding for facilities
- Principal Marshall to provide data on exam length this past cycle