Northern School Council Meeting

Oct 1, 2026 6:30 - 8:00 pm (hybrid)

Attendees:
Council: Gavin McCulloch, co-Chair; Ali Soerensen; Cathy Wong; Ulrica Jobe; Kristina Turner, recording; Chris Maissan, Jessica Miklos; Amanda Ricketts Fredrick; Anna Rutledge; Margaret Yeung; Imran Khan; Jennifer Ng, Brenda Winter.

Parents:

Regrets: Aimee Sulliman, co-Chair; Keith Tong, Treasurer; Omar Becerril; Bronwen Alsop, Community Rep;

Meeting called to order at 6:35 pm by Gavin (quorum was reached)

Approval of Agenda
Approval of agenda - Motion to approve: Ulrica.; Seconded: Jessica. Carried.

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of Minutes
Approval of May 27, 2026 minutes - Motion to approve: Anna.; Seconded: Jessica. Carried.

Chair's Update - Gavin

1. Now that the Parent/Caregiver and Community Engagement Office (PCCEO) office is closed and in the absence of School Trustees, the resources are the Student and Family Support Office or the general TDSB Board phone number.

Subcommittee Updates

*If you are interested in joining a subcommittee, please visit our website to learn more or reach out to School Council via email (**nss.school.council@gmail.com**).*

1. **Election Committee: Tania**
   - **a.** One council vacancy – co-Treasurer. Information can be found on the NSS Council website: https://nsscouncil.com/election-process/
2. **Budget Committee**
   a. n/a

3. **Fundraising Update – Ulrica**
    a. As of August 31, 2026, Council had $10,833 in its bank account. The next council will move quickly to ensure that left over funds are spent appropriately to benefit the school. The beginning of the year fundraising request will be sent out to all parents soon by email. A silent auction was proposed – Margaret Yeung will propose some ideas.

4. **Social Committee – Kristina**
    a. Update on upcoming social events – Grade 9 coffee, post-secondary coffee, bi-weekly walks in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, etc. All events are in the weekly newsletter, and on the council website: https://nsscouncil.com/events/
    b. If there is an event or gathering that you'd like to see happen, please email nss.school.council@gmail.com and let us know!

5. **Website Committee** – **Chris**
    a. The website holds a wealth of helpful information for parents; for the upcoming election, we also asked School Trustee candidates to answer some questions and you can see their responses here: https://nsscouncil.com/school-trustee-elections/

6. **Gifted Advisory Committee** – **Anna R.**
    a. Anna highlighted upcoming event for parents of Gifted students – all listed on https://nsscouncil.com/events/ - October 27 (The Evolution of Gifted Programming at Northern at the Northern District Library), and others on December 9, February 11 and April 20.

7. **Community Update**
    a. Invitation for parents to apply to sit on the Special Education Advisory Committee as community representatives. Deadline to apply is October 15th.

8. **Academic Resource Committee**
    a. This committee was created to serve special education students. Northern's Academic Resource Department asked us to establish an ARC. Upcoming events: December 9 (Motivation Comes Later: Learning Strategies for Prioritization, Procrastination, and Caring Again at the Northern District Library).
    b. Other events to be determined once John Moyer returns from leave in November.

Principal's Report and Ask Adam

Adam shared the following updates:

a. **There is only one PD day** this fall - November 20 (four PD days have been removed from the calendar). Administration wants to work on the School Improvement Planning but it's hard to do without dedicated time. SSI (Secondary Success Indicators): numeracy – we want to keep pushing; English is much better. The makeup of our students is changing due to SSWAB.
b. **Student count** this year: 1,855 - on target for the Board's goal. 106 teachers this year – 8 less than last year. Support staff stable. Caretaking – same number

assigned – but not enough because of ours being pulled away to help other schools due to absenteeism. Special education – some gaps in staff which impacts staff response time (busy doing IEPs).

c. **Projects** – windows (in design phase), pool (full clearing done and new exhaust system), boilers not yet replaced – will be done April (new ventilation). Kitchen – stripped out, new ventilation system, small steps towards getting a tech foods program in NSS. We've asked Toronto Foundation to provide us with a griddle so we can do some easy foods, along with blenders, pizza oven. Timing to serve lunch to students within next 2 weeks. The lunch program is for 200 students (students in need). Some parents are available to help with this project when needed.
d. Jill Andrews visited the school today – she is the equity rep from the Board.

Ask Adam Questions:

1. **Curriculum nights** – teachers are not required to attend; those who know they will be absent are asked to advise the school so that parents are aware.
2. **New Attendance policy**: outlined the new policy that gives up to 15% of grades to attendance and participation. Adam noted that participation can look like different ways (eg doesn't have to look like speaking up in class, can show in other ways). The marks will not affect midterm grades. For students who are athletes, the school understands that their attendance may be affected by games.
3. Coordination of **parent-teacher interview** nights with feeder schools to avoid date conflicts: it's not possible for Northern to plan their parent-teacher nights around other school's calendars, unfortunately.
4. Rules around **community service** around non-profit sports organizations – not a problem, refer to Ministry guidelines.
5. Is the **TDSB racism, bias and hate portal** still active? Yes; five or six incidents were reported at Northern – primarily homophobic and racial slurs.
6. Update on **vaping** in bathrooms: the school intervenes when the hall monitors can go into the bathrooms. Education and messaging for the students will take place in November.
7. What is the maximum number of seats that were taken through **SSWAB** (Secondary Schools Without a Bounday)? It depends – the Board said there were 425 Grade 9s. Adam will continue to advocate for a larger school population number.
8. Are all the Grade 9 seats for **gifted** filled? Almost.
9. What is the **School budget**? Less than last year.
10. **EQAO** being a full exam mark for grade 9 – will teachers teach to the test and how will that impact learning? Board is very EQAO-based and it will impact pass/fail.
11. Some students are **not going to school** because they say the teachers are not doing anything that day or the teacher absent – do they still need to go to school? Yes – going to school will add to your participation score.
12. Will there be **guest or inspirational speakers** this year? Yes – the student voice decides who will be invited.
13. Acceptable **excused absences:** Adam will publish the answer once it's clear. If the parent excuses it, it's excused.
14. Can schools hire **contract cleaners** if we don't have enough janitors? No.

Other Business

None.

Adjournment

ii. Motion to adjourn moved by Kristina, seconded by Ulrica, all in favour. Meeting adjourned at 8.00pm.