

Westmount School Association

October Minutes

Oct 28th, 2024

Attending: Marisha Caswell, Meredith Pike, Teri Colter, Megan Gray, Laura Moeller (via phone), Jenn Hanscomb, Sarah-Lynn MacKenzie, Vanessa Thomson, Tara Wight, Lynn Perris, Greg White, Vicky Terrio, Allana MacDonald Mills, Runa Gosh Seal

Regrets:

1. Welcome: Marisha Caswell, President, welcomed everyone at 6:07.
2. Approval of Minutes: Motion: to approve the minutes for the September 2024 WSA meeting
Approved: Tara Wight
Seconded: Vanessa Thomson
3. Review of Pending Action Items: A) **Gaga Ball Pit** – Meredith and Laura will purchase driveway markers to alert snowplow drivers where the gaga ball pit is.
Action item: Meredith and Laura to purchase wood, paint, screws and reflectors.

B) **Basketball Nets** – The netting for the basketball nets has been purchased and installed. Laura has extra netting at her house. **This item is completed.**
4. Principal's Report: **Teri Colter**, Principal
The student population is at an all time high of 415, and new students are being registered regularly. All classes have met their soft caps, and in some cases, their hard caps.

This week the school is celebrating both Halloween and Diwali. There will be an afternoon dance on Halloween. Hindi students created a rangoli display near the front office to celebrate Diwali, and classes will be learning about this holiday through the week.

There is an assembly on Friday, and a Remembrance Day assembly next week.

The school lunch program started this week. The first meal was 45 minutes late, and received mixed reviews on the size of portions and taste. Everyone is anxious to see how the program evolves, and expect some bumps in the road for the first while. Currently they are working on gathering information about the meals for diabetic concerns. Teri noted that the program will seek feedback, and she will pass along information about how to do that as soon as she receives that information.

5. Treasurer's Report: **Christa LeBlanc**, Treasurer
Christa was not available for the meeting but reports that there was little change from the last report.
Lynn Perrin has agreed to shadow Christa and take over the role of Treasurer when Christa is done.
Motion to nominate Lynn as shadow treasurer:
Approved: Teri Colter
Seconded: Jenn Hanscomb
6. Event & Fundraising Reports: **A) Dimitri's Pizza & Hot Lunch** – Joan Lombardo received a thank you gift for her work on Hot Lunch over the years, and Dimitri's was thanked and notified of the lunch program changes. **This item is completed.**
- B) Micro Garden Fundraiser** – We made a small amount on this fundraiser.
Action: Tara will confirm the amount collected.
- C) Bingo** – Planning for the bingo event on Nov 28th is underway and going well. Vicky noted that her school (Elizabeth Sutherland) has a bingo machine we can borrow now and going forward. The gaming permit has been obtained. We will again ask families to donate items for the prize baskets, and there will be a raffle for kid callers prior to the event. We will also ask families to bring mittens for the comfort closet.
We discussed whether we wanted to identify what we are raising funds for with this event, and it was decided that we'd make explicit that funds are being raised for field trips and activities.
We also discussed a call out for volunteers for the event. We discussed that the organization of events is community building in itself, and that we should do a call out for volunteers outside of the WSA group in order to encourage diverse participation.
It was noted that next year will be the organizers last year to put on the bingo event.
Action Item: Bingo event planning continues.
- D) Nourish Your Roots** – Nourish is now providing grants to schools for food initiatives; Marisha is working on this grant. Grant applications can be made until Nov 24th.
Action Item: Marisha will apply for the NYR grant.
- E) Movie Night Wrap Up** – Movie night was a success. We made \$408 on the event and made some notes for the event going forward including more pre-event popcorn prep, keeping movies to under 90 minutes, and having 300+ pieces of

candy (see movie night instructions document). We had a very good turn out and families had a good time.

F) Other events – We discussed the January 30th and April 24th dates for possible events. We decided to have another movie night on January 30th, and to tentatively hold the April date for a multicultural event that we could co-organize with Shelley Chapman that could involve food and traditional dress and games. We agreed that this would be a great event for the community, but also that it might take a lot of work. We will continue to discuss this.

The January movie night will need to be discussed at the November meeting. We also decided to raffle off a good parking spot and seats for the winter concerts, as discussed. We will have to organize these pieces at the November meeting.

7. Funding Requests: Nothing at this time; iPads and field trips will be the sought out at future meetings.

8. Other Items:

A) Spirit Wear – Tara is waiting to hear back from possible vendors for school Spirit Wear.

Action Item: Tara will research options and report back at the November meeting

B) Diversity & Inclusion: Megan met with Shelley Chapman (EAL) and Dina Awad (YMCA Settlement worker) to discuss recruitment efforts towards a more diverse WSA membership. She also received helpful suggestions from Cherry (parent).

Some possible obstacles to recruitment were highlighted:

- lack of childcare during meeting times
- lack of understanding around what the WSA is and does, including lack of knowledge around what some of the initiatives are
- possible intimidation factor for parents may who have difficulty following some of the language in the conversation, and feel they cannot contribute because of it
- continuing need to build relationships between individuals

We discussed possible strategies to respond to some of those needs:

- it was agreed that children could attend with parents when needed
- we discussed sending out a summary of the meeting each month as a way of disseminating information and inviting feedback
- we discussed sending out a paper recruitment notice / survey following the bingo, highlighting the need for diverse voices at the table and exploring what possible barriers might be

Action item: Marisha will write a meeting summary to send to the school community. Megan will put together a Diversity Profile for 2024. Megan will put together a recruitment notice / survey to send out following the bingo

E) WSA Email – Megan will follow up on creating an email address for the WSA where documents could be centralized.

We also discussed social media and increasing our presence as a way of disseminating information and community building. We have a facebook group with a small following. We also discussed the need for terms of services for such a group. Immediately following the meeting Jenn put together a draft Terms of Service notice.

Action Item: Megan will add the facebook group info to our monthly recruitment email. Teri will add it to the weekly newsletter.

9. Motion to Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 7:00
Approved: Vanessa Thomson
Seconded: Jenn Hanscomb

Next meeting: Monday, November 25th.