

Parkside Montessori, School Council

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 3, 2025

6pm

** indicates items for which a written document/report will be attached/provided*

Attendees: Superintendent Sandy McDonald, School Trustee Joan Nellis, Principal Corrine Shmyruk, Vice Principal Terra Shewchuk, Feature Teacher Miss Kristen, Chair Keedra W., Vice Chair Danielle O., Secretary Desiree M. Parents: Yana-Lee, Olivia, Emily, Crystal, Danielle H., Terri, Blythe

1.0 Call to Order at 6:02pm

2.0 Review of Agenda*- (*motion to accept*) *Desiree M. Motion to accept, 2nd Danielle O.*

3.0 * Approval of Minutes from Feb. 3, 2025, Meeting, *Danielle O. motion to approve, 2nd Danielle H.*

4.0 Introduction of attendees and guests

4.1 Feature Teacher – Miss Kristen

First year at Parkside Montessori teaching grades 4,5,6. In her 8th year of teaching, used to teach at St. Mary's. Has really enjoyed Parkside so far, and the Montessori approach to learning. It has been interesting for her to compare Montessori education to the typical education system she experienced before. Emphasized appreciating having a very supportive admin team that's very easy to talk to, facilitates open communication and fosters a warm and genuine environment. The interactions she has with students have been different for her here in a very positive way as well. Noted how parents seem to truly care about their kids & participate in their educational journey at Parkside too.

Facilitating festival for Destination Imagination at Mother Theresa. Has been a great experience watching the kids take on their projects/challenges and the amount of energy they invest in them. Destination Imagination is a program where teams develop solutions to project-based STEAM challenges and then present their solutions live at tournaments/festivals. Pre-k to university level challenges. More information can be found [HERE](#)

4.2 Student Advisory representatives

4.2.1 Dance Proposal

Danielle O. motion to go ahead with a Spring Dance. 2nd Desiree M. Danielle O. will respond formally back to student advisory.

5.0 Executive Reports-

5.1 Monthly Executive updates and/or advisory from Council Executive-

5.1.1 Staff Appreciation Debrief

Admin thanked Council on behalf of staff. The care and detail put into the week by parents was very appreciated. Staff couldn't believe surprises kept coming throughout the week. The breakfast for Monday lasted them for 3 days.

Council exec. Adv. That the total cost for supplies and materials was \$370.75 and parent donations sent in through the sign up amounted to \$370.

Note for council record - Some items were donated by parents in the adhoc committee so to replicate the week in the future could be closer to \$500-\$600

6.0 Principal's Report and Advising Opportunities



Meeting Minutes

School Council March 2025

Parkside Montessori, School Council

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 3, 2025

6pm

** indicates items for which a written document/report will be attached/provided*

6.1 Superintendent's Update

Superintendent Sandy emphasized that he wanted to come to council to express thanks. Thank you to the parent representatives that presented to the division and for showing passion for the school. Thank you to school community for completing survey regarding potential to Parkside Montessori to grade 8. Came to share report from survey in person.

- Tremendous participation – just under 200 parents completed survey
- School has been growing, survey shows that. Peaks and trails off around grade 5.

Asked parents about the drive for Montessori and how they benefit from it

- Independence, confidence, love of learning, engaged in learning
- Multi-grade classrooms and the life-skills that kind of environment fosters
- Children thrive academically and socially in Montessori learning

What would we most like to see if it was extended to grade 8

- Keep them together, peer groups, minimize disruptions
- Ultimately, parents want to see students well prepared for the next steps of their education journey/adult life

Top 4 options class choices

- Not a lot weren't mentioned
- Hands-on electives were a favourite
- Many communicated a focus on technology/coding
- Classics: life skills, cooking, home economics, etc.

Key takeaways were: Creativity, practical skills & technological sufficiency

What structures would you consider if Montessori until Gr. 8 was possible

- K-3 school, and 4-8 was acceptable to some but expressed preference for one school
- 60/180 would consider a split school to keep them in Montessori learning

Examples of feedback parents gave regarding what else they wanted GPPSD to know:

- Survey emphasized parents were aware that there is the potential for there to be fees associated to secure Montessori learning
- Parents value the continuity Montessori to grade 8 would offer.
- Concerns about culture shock in a typical school, feel children would be better prepared in gr 9 than gr 7
- Emphasized the importance of the critical thinking skills, & social emotional growth children receive at Parkside Montessori

A parent in attendance advised higher fees could be a barrier for some.

Superintendent is curious as students get older and have more independence. How will their choices affect our (parent's) decisions in the future. How does the piece of students deciding they'd want to participate in programming Montessori doesn't offer fit into this puzzle.

Extension to gr. 8 – could necessitate having late entry upper ELMO – what would that look like, currently having conversations with Parkside Montessori admin.

If enrollment had 40 students in grades 6,7,&8, that's an extra 120 kids – challenges exist to maintain that culture that's so representative of Parkside Montessori.



Parkside Montessori, School Council

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 3, 2025

6pm

** indicates items for which a written document/report will be attached/provided*

Next steps – the Board will give consideration as they review capital plan, which is adjusted every year to balance priorities. There is a critical need for high school spaces. Kensington neighbourhood needs a school as Isabel Campbell is at 100%. Crystal Park School needs to be replaced. Tough decisions have to be made. We will receive another update in the future.

6.2 Miss Corrine and Miss Terra's monthly report

Feb events, MALT, lockdown, community kindness week, have a heart day, school spirit day, two talent shows, staff appreciation week, pink shirt day, PL Day– Division wellness, 5,6 basketball tournament.

General update – 456 parents received annual provincial survey by email. Now that they're being sent out digitally the participation is WAY up, School messenger successful and sends reminders.

There is also a survey that has been sent out re: input about what parents look for in a new superintendent. [HERE](#)

Miss Nancy will be leaving Parkside Montessori on March 14 to pursue a career in another field, so we will be getting a new admin assistant. Miss Nancy has been with Parkside with 8 years and we are very sad to see her go.

Based on parent feedback going to change the style of parent teacher interviews to parent only for 4,5,6. 1-3 will be student led but schedule will shift to be one family at a time.

Building fact fluency is a priority in Parkside Montessori's education plan. "March Madness" will be starting to focus on fact fluency. Every day in March every class will be learning the same strategies. Every day we will be practicing the previous days facts as a whole school.

Flashcards to practice these facts will be coming home with students for home practice.

Every day a social media post will go up with the strategies the kids are learning. (Thank you Miss Terra)

Upcoming in March we also have: Anything but a backpack day, shelter in place, green day, second set of report cards, another MALT, school spirit day and hot lunch. Spring book fair.

7.0 Trustee's Report- Joan Nellis, Trustee Liaison

Trustees held council of school's councils, Joan & school council chair were both unable to attend. Session topic was regarding what to do with dominant voices in meetings. Superintendent's last day is in December. Have hired a consultant to help find a new superintendent as it's such a critically important task. There are a lot of superintendents retiring throughout the province. Within 9 school divisions in the north zone, 6 are replacing or have recently replaced their superintendents. GPPSD competing with other boards to fill the position. Committee and board is working on it and it's going well so far. Reiterated to please fill out the survey. [HERE](#)

Just did assurance meetings with the schools. Admin discusses things that are working, things that aren't & plans for the future. Board gets a lot out of those meetings and expressed appreciation to Parkside admin for sharing their piece.

Other updates include board just reviewed financial update, maintenance update and safety update.

8.0 Old Business:



Meeting Minutes

School Council March 2025

Parkside Montessori, School Council

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 3, 2025

6pm

** indicates items for which a written document/report will be attached/provided*

8.1 Alberta School Council Engagement Grant (\$500)

2 other schools would like to partner with us for ASCA workshops, Maude Clifford and IV Mac. Joan advs. one that's been found to be most valuable is school council purpose. Confirm it's not one that has already been held by division this year.

Keedra – suggest what workshop to pursue and admin will communicate with other schools.

8.2 Planning for Upcoming Events

8.2.1 Movie Night

- Ask for \$500 budget from Guild

March 20th suggested but realized capacity at Parkside could be an issue. Should we do it at the COMP – parents in attendance in approval. Admin Consult with Dennis to see what dates could be available in May/June to host at COMP. Keedra will create a letter to go home for with a poll for parents/students to choose from 5 movies/& give an opportunity to express intent to attend. Table discussion to April.

8.2.2 Spring Dance

- Danielle P. advised had booked \$200-\$300 DJ with deal through Danica P. network in the past, generally closer to \$500-\$600
- \$300 budget for Concession based on previous years
- \$25 for glowsticks
- After talent show Admin suggested letting “DJ Otis” do a performance
- 8.2.2..1 Budget
- Danielle O. Motioned to ask guild for \$1000 for Spring Dance 2nd by Crystal G., no opposition

8.3 Summary of Current Guild Business

- 8.3.1 While firming up plans/digital rendering for Outdoor structure with GPPSD, Guild has been pursuing a secondary initiative of “Teacher Geek Maker’s Carts” explained them to parents in attendance who were very interested. Pledged funds for Outdoor structure will be set aside and Guild will pursue the purchase of the makers carts in the meantime. More information can be found [HERE](#).

9.0 New Business:

9.1 Parent Volunteer Surveys

Guild/Council have sent home sheets in the past where parents can advise an interest in volunteering, their availability/areas of interest as well as a survey for feedback on our fundraising initiatives. Is a very useful tool to have. Haven’t been sent out this year yet, Desiree will send them out this month through admin.

9.2 ASCA Resolutions & AGM Designate

Reviewed what ASCA resolutions are and the titles of this year’s current resolutions. Resolutions can be reviewed [HERE](#). Emphasized the importance of council members reading the resolutions prior to next month’s meeting to facilitate good discussion. Also emphasized



Parkside Montessori, School Council

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 3, 2025

6pm

** indicates items for which a written document/report will be attached/provided*

that any parent from any council can put forward a resolution so if they seem a bit out of scope of what ASCA can do, don't be afraid to express your opinion.

- Table to April to discuss and choose a voting designate for ASCA AGM.

10.0 Round Table

10.1 Highland Park Neighbourhood Garage Sale

10.1.1 Date of May 10 (tentative will know for sure by March 10)

- Admin suggests could look at hosting Pax Market potentially, will confirm if date works

11.0 Next Regular Meeting of the School Council of Parkside Montessori: April 7, 2025 @ 6pm

12.0 Adjourn



Meeting Minutes

School Council March 2025