

MINUTES FOR VIRTUAL SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING DJPS September 24, 2020

Welcome, land acknowledgement.

ADMINISTRATION/TEACHERS REPORT: Principal Farrelly, VP Bozzo, Anna Gibson and Theresa Samuel present

Principal Farrelly:

1. School Information – we have 319 students attending in person and 194 students attending virtually. The reduction of in person students naturally resulted in a reduction of in person educators. Nine of our educators were moved to the Virtual School. All educators retain their position with Davisville and will return to us when the students do. Today, we received an additional allocation for a 0.5 clerical and 2 additional Lunch room supervisor positions. This will really help with the current reduction. These additional allocations are only for this year.
2. Virtual School – Connection to Davisville – all students and families who attend Virtual School have now been reconnected to the In Person School. We have a distribution list that we can now access so that families will still receive any email communication via School Messenger or the Sunday calls. Families are encouraged to take part in Council and are eligible for Council positions.
3. Virtual School – the cut-off date is September 30th. Please make sure to inform Alex so she can move your child into the “Virtual Hold” for the Oct 13th start date.
4. Masks – Parent update – effective today, all parents doing drop off or pick up who would like to come into the yard, will now need to wear a Level 1 or Level 2 medical grade mask while on school property.
5. Recess/Lunch – we had a very productive meeting with some parents and staff after school to discuss what we can do to encourage more active play during these unstructured times. Today staff received a survey to complete with their students to help guide what school based equipment will be available for student use. Four classes have already done the survey. The results so far are somewhat surprising to staff. Students expressed an interest in only playing with a few friends and not necessarily engaging in an organized activity. We are developing the process around sanitizing any equipment that is being shared at recess/lunch. Ms. Francesca has agreed to put some bins together now using gym equipment. Students will go into a “zone” which will have specific equipment into each zone. Students will rotate through the zones to give them an opportunity to experience all the outdoor areas and equipment. However, we are only able to use school based equipment. No recess items are to be brought from home at this time due to COVID 19 concerns.

6. SSON – Each year School Councils are asked to complete a School Statement of Need (SSON). This information is used to create a profile of what the community is looking for in a principal. This doesn't necessarily mean there is a move coming, but it is a requirement to be filled.
7. Curriculum Night – at this time, we cannot do any in person events. As such, we will not be hosting an in person event this at this time. We will be meeting with staff to discuss how we can engage our families in a more robust way. Ideas are welcome.
8. Picture Day – Will be happening on October 8th. All pictures will be done standing up. Class photos will be photoshopped to allow for social distancing. All orders will be placed online.
9. Terry Fox – We have a few teachers preparing a COVID 19 Terry Fox Run. The students have started to practice on the track during physed classes. Watch for more details to follow.
10. Transportation – Wanda
11. Health Screening – QR codes – Thank you for completing the Daily Health Screening using either the paper copy of the app. Tomorrow the new set of papers will come home. They will be yellow papers. Please watch for them coming home in backpacks tomorrow. Students who come to school without their screening completed will have a face to face screening with an administrator. If they “pass” the screening, they go to class and we follow up with a call home. Some families are putting the forms in a ziplock bag attached to the outside of the knapsack. That is very helpful. We are required to keep the screening sheets for TPH, so the completed forms will not be returned.
12. The Fanny packs have now arrived, but the masks have not. We were going to wait for the masks to hand them out together, but we will be going ahead and sending the packs home either tomorrow or Monday.

Vice-Principal Bozzo:

Transportation:

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue with transportation this year.

-as parents were advised to login to the Transportation Parent Portal, we have rec'd correspondence from parents that mention they cannot a) log in to Portal b) the bussing pick-up and drop-off information doesn't match the bus # they were previously using, therefore this has created the following:

a) incorrect seating plans as information is mismatched (Covid19 requirement)

b) many requests for student transportation changes

Please know that all changes need to be processed via Transportation Services (complete a change request form) and that these changes can take up to 2 weeks to process

Furthermore, students who previously attended the Before and After-Care Programs, have also needed to be changed from Daycare bus to Regular bus. Please note that these changes must be accompanied by a transportation change form and that they can also take up to 2 weeks to process.

There have been several parents concerned about “open windows” on buses. Transportation has been notified and they have communicated messaging with their employees.

Belongings/School Work from 2019-2020

Belongings/school work have been removed from last year’s classrooms and placed in a room at Vaughan Road. Students who have returned in person, have had their items returned.

We continue to discuss ways of returning items to Virtual School students and to students who have graduated from DPS.

Please let us know if you have any ideas to share.

Technology from 2019-2020

If you had borrowed a TDSB device last year for virtual learning, please return the device to the school by October 16 (email wanda.bozzo@tdsb.on.ca and Alexandra.adalis@tdsb.on.ca .

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Questions from parents:

Q: Many questions with respect to virtual school, including we have not received any information with regards to virtual school, no teacher as of yet, etc.

A: Information from virtual school is coming. There will be a virtual teacher and principal assigned to every class. They are still in the process of hiring and coordinating the new virtual school. Due to a large demand for virtual in September, there has been a lot of work needed to accommodate the large influx of students.

Please understand that we (admin) fought very hard to keep the email contacts for our virtual students and families to ensure that everyone feels connected to our community. However, we are not a part of planning for the virtual school.

Every virtual student will be linked with a virtual classroom, using Brightspace as the online tool.

Q: Will there be an extension for the deadline to move from virtual to in-person, since most families don’t even have a teacher yet?

A: We (admin) do not have the power to move the dates; these are set by the TDSB. The deadline has been extended for students to move from virtual to in-person until September 30th, and the students first day would be the Tuesday after Thanksgiving (October 13). The reason for the delay is that depending on how many students choose virtual/in-person, there may be required an adjustment for staffing. For example, if we had 30 students return to the school, we would qualify for another 1.5 headcount, and we would have to likely re-organize the classes.

OUTDOOR SPACE:

As mentioned, staff and parents had a productive meeting this week to discuss the outdoor space. We are fortunate that at VRA we have a large outdoor space. It has been segmented allowing for classes to have their specific dedicated areas.

Staff is looking at the possibility to have zones that the students-class cohorts could rotate through, allowing for students to have the opportunity to use sporting equipment in specifically designated areas in storage boxes. Students would take the items, and return them to the bin – staff would take the items out and spray them, and let them dry outside.

At this time, students should not bring their own equipment due to COVID fears.

Q from parent: Kids have mentioned that they are not allowed to run.

A: Students are allowed to run outside, in fact, many have rediscovered touchless games such as Octopus, shadow tag and we are seeing an active engagement outdoors.

CHAIR REPORT:

Council positions – nominations and elections:

- Nomination forms will be included in virtual package to be sent to parents/families in the coming week. A short description will be provided of the various roles. Nominations will be accepted until October 9th. We encourage anyone who has interest or questions to reach out to school council or admin for additional information.
- Elections will take place at our next Council meeting, Thursday, October 15th (likely virtually live).

Financial overview:

- To be completed and posted online following the pizza lunch refund, class enhancement investments such as touchless hand sanitizers, and any expenses that have been accrued over the past few months

- There were additional expenses that trickled in during the summer, which was expected. (ex. Graduation invoices).

Budget update:

- Items that were budgeted for this school year as well as items that have been requested by teachers before the sudden stop in March will be purchased in August for delivery to the school in September in time for the beginning of the new school year (ex. Tent and accessories, teacher classroom requests). Admin to reach out to teachers and ask for wish lists in keeping with our traditional budget line for specific class enhancements.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Q from Parent: What is the 20 minute indoor time that is associated with the lunchtime? Why are students not allowed to go outside?

Response: In order to ensure lunch time for teachers, as well as ensure that students are not all out at the same time, we have set aside 20 minutes of individual time where students spend the time in the hallway. This allows for the lunchroom supervisors to provide supervision during the 20 minute. Students then go outdoors for their lunchtime recess.

Follow-up Q: What do they do in this 20 minute interval?

Response: They can have individual / personal items (ex. book) with them for this personal time.

Q: Could they have lunch outdoors?

Response: We have looked at this in the past, specifically with the snack program. They found that food attracted wasps, and this may take away play portion of their lunchtime.

Q: Could they eat in the hallway / indoor during this 20 minute interval as part of their lunchtime?

Response: At the present time, it is best to have the students seated at their desk in their classroom with supervision to ensure that they eat quietly with no talking. Eating in the hallway would be uncomfortable and difficult to ensure that students are not talking, just eating.

Q: If my child is not feeling well today, but is fine the following day, can they attend school?

Response: Students can return if they no longer have symptoms over a 24 hour period, as the health check list would capture this. The policy is that if the students has symptoms

Also, the health check forms, in yellow, will be sent home for next week. We need to provide a weekly report to the health department. We hope that the yellow forms will be easier for us to navigate in the morning. Some students place their forms in a zip-lock bag and attach it to the outside of their backpacks which makes the process move faster.

Q: What are the safety protocols involved for the younger students? We saw a small child, probably JK, left on their own during the first week, close to the road, during the chaos of busing arrivals. And once someone finally gave him some attention, it was as a barrage of questions regarding the health screening, with this young child overwhelmed.

Response: Please understand that our first week was quite chaotic in light of all the new procedures. We have improved quite a bit, and the students are also adapting to our new processes.

Q: To whom can we direct questions for remote learning, considering we do not have a principal or a teacher?

Response: We are all still awaiting information; your virtual principal and teacher will be reaching out with information as soon as possible.

Q: Is there a TDSB calendar that we can view to help parents with identifying which day of the week it is, according to the weekly schedule provided by teachers.

Response: There is a TDSB elementary calendar on the TDSB website, detailing the days of the weeks (day 1, 2 etc as well as PA days, holidays).

Q: Will we have the snack program at Davisville this year?

Response: We have a meeting on Friday to discuss the school snack program. At this time, the TDSB nutritional group is considering individual snacks as part of the program dictated by nutritional services. Nachely and Treya would be coordinating the program – unfortunately, we are not able to have volunteers to assist.

Q: I would be remiss if I did not ask what steps are being taken to provide mental health support to students?

Response:

WB: Mental health is important, and takes precedent before curriculum. We have instituted some calming time for after lunch.

We are all working together with new and returning staff, especially in developing relationships and communication through teachers.

TS: Kids are bonding well; conversations revolve around it being ok to not be ok.

AG: We have ways to have some time to embedding energies and calm down time. We are also ensuring the health of bodies, hearts and minds.

WB: Students are also finding wonderful ways of playing games.

We also have public nurses and psychologist working with the TDSB that have developed areas to assist, such as speaking circles, low key talking to kids, allowing them to reconnect with other people.

Q: Will there be hooks installed for the junior classes, in light of the fact that they are currently using the back of their chairs for their backpacks? The winter season will be upon us soon, and jackets, boots, snow pants will need a place to be housed. Last year, it took several months to backpacks on chairs. Boots will be left in the hallway.

Q: How will that work, when students have to be in the hallway for 20 minutes – surrounded by boots/salt/muddy hallways?

Response: At this time, we are not immediately focused on the hooks. We can revisit in the future.

Q: Is there a TDSB process to address a class going into self isolation, specifically, would the class itself move to remote learning in this case?

Response: Still early days, and it would depend if the teacher was themselves ill.

Adjournment

Thank you and next meeting scheduled for October 15, 2020.