



2019



2020



Clearpoint Elementary School Governing Board Minutes of Meeting

Written by: Dov Bensimon

Location: Clearpoint Elementary School		Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020		Time: 6:35-8:38 p.m.
Attendees Governing Board (GB) Members:		Attendees GB Substitutes:	Attendees Parents/other:	Absent:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Estok • Dov Bensimon • Katherine Wiebe • Liz Lopez • Marie-Flore Gignac • Rebecca-Anne Belmonte • Stuart Kemp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill Mang • Louise Sudia • Miranda Tubbeh • Sandra Fisher • Suzanne Larkin • Tassie Fyon • Wayne Clifford 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audrey Lambert • Catalina Clavero • Maria Benavides • Tayba Huot • Wendy Mendoza 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 80 participants attended the meeting, including those explicitly listed here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marc Lucke • Danny Trotto • Garry Saunders • Sabrina Lazier • Tatiana Mendez

Agenda		
1. Welcome	4. Principal's Report	7. Public & Member Question Period
2. Approval of the Agenda	5. New Business	8. Adjournment
3. Approval of the Last Minutes	6. Commissioner's Report	

1. Welcome

- Liz opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. by welcoming everyone to the August virtual meeting of the Clearpoint GB.

2. Approval of the Agenda

- Mr. Estok asked to give his report after the approval of the minutes of the last meeting. Including this change, the proposed agenda was accepted unanimously, after a motion by Suzanne which was seconded by Rebecca.

3. Approval of the Minutes

- The minutes from the last meeting (25 June 2020) were approved unanimously, following a motion by Suzanne, which was seconded by Rebecca.

4. Principal's Report :

- Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. Mr. Estok mentioned that the focus at the school has been on getting ready for next week's start to the new school year. Staff was congratulated for their efforts in helping to establish new protocols and procedures. Teachers have given a huge amount of their time to help develop the parent guide that was sent out earlier this week. Parents

were thanked for their patience. Parents are understandably concerned and anxious about the start of the school year. Mr. Estok has done his best to answer all questions and concerns raised. He mentioned that parents have been left out of the process, which is not fair, and a 2-hour meeting doesn't do justice to the process of collaboration either. The school is interested in hearing what parents think. The school has had to adhere to lengthy guidelines from the Minister of Education and Public Health.

5. New Business

- **Review of parent guide and school start** : questions were sent in ahead of this meeting, and these will be addressed at this meeting. If time allows for additional questions, they will be addressed as well.
- Regarding parents who have applied for an exemption for sending their children to school, online schooling is being managed by the school board. These students will not be taught by teachers at Clearpoint. This teaching doesn't include Units of Inquiry from the IB program. If some of the material from the IB program is available online, it will be accessible. This question must be discussed by the staff at school. Fees are being looked into as well, as to whether or not they would have to be paid.
- Regarding online learning, there are guidelines from the ministry about this. Technological support is part of this and will be provided by the school board. For exams, there are only two compulsory exams, and these are for grade 6 students only in English and Math. Arrangements would have to be made through the school board for students to write these exams if they are doing on-line learning.
- Clearpoint is an older building and so the ventilation system is not modern. Only one portion of the building has a filtered exchange system (the gymnasium). The rest of the building has air drawn in through the windows and vented through the roof. Mr. Estok had a conversation with the school nurse about this. Her opinion is that despite the fact that the ventilation system is not modern, the best way to ventilate is to keep windows open and air circulating. It would be possible to control the amount of air intake for the air coming in for the system in the gym.
- The Minister of Education has the authority to decide if a school closes in case of an outbreak. If there were a local closure, that decision would be made in conjunction with Public Health. Online learning would be implemented rapidly if the school had to be closed.
- Ministry exams for grade 6 for English and Math will be compulsory in the spring of 2021.
- Students are still permitted to bike to school.
- For laptops that were loaned to students in the spring, these will be collected and information will be sent to parents about how to proceed with these.
- If there is a COVID-positive student in the school, there is a process to inform parents. If a student has a suspected infection, a decision will have to be made to isolate that child and ask the parents to pick them up. Parents will be provided information to contact Public Health and follow their directives after that. The parents are then responsible for following instructions given to them by Public Health. If a test comes back positive, that information will be shared with parents. Siblings of the student having students will not be isolated. Students will be isolated based on symptoms only, unless Public Health gives indications to the contrary.

- There will be increased supervision of students during recess and lunch time. There are ongoing discussions amongst the staff to ensure that these times unfold safely. Controlling where and when students go outside will be part of the considerations too. Physical education and dance classes are being encouraged to be held outside and areas will be designated for those as well.
- There are not individual student desks in each classroom. Tables are large enough to have students seated far enough apart according to guidelines from the Ministry of Education. These directives do not require a given distance between students for a given class. The staff will try and ensure that students do not touch each other.
- There are no partitions between desks – that has not been part of the planning so far.
- The school has been given new guidelines regarding workplace health and safety. There is more sanitizing of classrooms. The school has not been given extra manpower to do this, however, so janitorial staff will have a change to their routines. Frequently touched areas, like light switches, will be cleaned often. There are other tasks that janitorial staff will not be able to do. Some of these tasks will inevitably fall to teachers and support staff. If a piece of equipment is used from one class to another, the teacher will have to sanitize that. Some of this will fall on the shoulders of the daycare staff as well.
- Realistically, it will not be possible to completely eliminate the possibility that children will touch one another. The staff will do their best to remind students about not touching each other and keeping distancing from each other. Health guidelines are constantly changing. Students within a given class will be considered to be in a bubble. Contact with other classes will not be allowed.
- Communal sharing of school supplies (markers, pencils, etc.) will no longer be done, except for some items that could be sanitized easily. If an item cannot be easily sanitized, it will not be shared or used. Teachers are encouraged to set up a system of bins, if they can do so, as a way of ensuring each student could have their own item. The aim is to minimize the amount of material shared or brought from home so as to minimize risk of transmission.
- There will not be assemblies or extra-curricular activities until further notice that such activities are safe to resume.
- Teachers will be explaining to parents how they will be running their classroom during curriculum night that will take place the week of September 7th. It will take place virtually. Parents will be able to ask teachers questions about protocols in their classroom.
- One model of teaching is to have one French day followed by an English day with teachers switching. Another model would be to do one week of each subject. The teachers will decide with their teaching partners which model they will be follow. Music and dance will be given in each homeroom with the teachers travelling from class to class.
- Bathroom breaks will be monitored as best as possible, as staff is able to manage. The aim is to avoid having large groups of students going to the bathroom together. The busiest periods are recess and lunch.
- It is not yet known how winter clothing will be managed if cubbies are not given. That will be examined in the coming weeks.
- For students with seasonal allergies, it will be a judgement call as to whether or not a student will be sent home. Guidelines were given to the school to help and assess if a child has symptoms that warrant being sent home. If a child demonstrates the onset or aggravation of a cough, they could

be sent home. If a child has a fever of 38 C or higher, they will be sent home. If they experience difficulty breathing or loss of smell or taste, they can be sent home as well. A combination of other symptoms could also justify sending a child home.

- If a student wishes to wear their mask all day, they will be allowed to do so. They can be given a “mask break” as well, if they wish. Students will be shown how to wear masks properly.
- Protocols will be established for the school yard to ensure that groups are kept separate. Consideration will be given to sub-dividing the school yard.
- Regarding protocols for students on buses, students in grades 5 and 6 need to wear masks on the bus. The school encourages all students to wear masks on the bus. It will be challenging to ensure that is respected since there will not be more supervision on the school bus. The drivers will need to inform the school if a student is not complying with directives.
- Teachers in kindergarten and pre-K have bought appropriate sized shield for the children. Discussions will be had with parents of those students as to how the children should wear them.
- If a student doesn’t follow sanitary protocols, they will get reminders from staff. There are indications all over the school showing where to walk in each hallway. There are signs in the hallways and in the classrooms. There are routines built into daily activities. Expectations of the students will be made clear to them and the school anticipates that the vast majority of students will willingly comply.
- The school has a supply of re-usable masks for students that may have forgotten theirs or have masks that get dirty. This will be provided to grade 5 and 6 students especially, since masks are mandatory for them.
- At daycare, children from different bubbles may mix, as they may on the school bus. At daycare, there will be an attempt to divide children according to classroom groups, but this will not always be possible.
- Funds that have been given to support schools has been used to get personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer. The school has not seen an increase in its local revenues to use funds as the school sees fit. Steel picnic tables with umbrellas have been ordered to increase the amount of space teachers can use. Reusable student masks have also been purchased with funds given to the school. Teachers have been given latitude to purchase equipment to make their classrooms safe. Custodial services are managed by the school board: the school would like extra caretakers, but it is not the school’s decision to make.
- If a child presents symptoms related to COVID-19, not everyone in the school will be in quarantine. They will have to be picked up by their parents. In the event of a positive test, quarantine measures may be required, but this will depend on Public Health. Public Health will do an investigation into each case to determine quarantine measures. The school depends on the expertise of health officials for these decisions.
- Everyone has concerns about school starting up and the risk associated with it, but it is important for children to be back at school. This is not to minimize issues being discussed at this meeting. There will be risk, since that will be impossible to eliminate completely. The school will do its best to follow the directives that it is given. The school will also rely on parents to keep their children home if they present symptoms. Teachers have concerns as well, but are also eager to reconnect with the students and get back to teaching successfully.

- Students that are doing online learning enter it for the school year. That said, circumstances can change and it may make sense for some students to come back to school, but that will depend on space in the school.
- It is important to keep harsh chemicals away from children. Hand sanitizer was an optional item for children's school supplies. There are prescribed cleaning products from the school board to be used in schools. Hand sanitizer is also provided by the school board. There is also another type of hand sanitizer installed near each entrance. These are all non-toxic. Students can come to school with their own wipes, but the school will be using the products provided by the school board. All of the classrooms but two have sinks in them, so children will be able to wash their hands with soap and water in class. It will be difficult to ensure that all students sanitize their hands quickly.
- There are organized responses to the planned return to school. For the past 3 weeks, the school has been following the directives that it has been given and preparing to get ready for school.
- The school will take action to send children home if they present symptoms. It may not be perfect and some children may be sent home unnecessarily, but the school will try and judge as best it can if this is necessary.
- Adults will help children with hand sanitizers, especially for younger ones. Frequent use is encouraged. This will be done before and after eating, after coming in from outside, etc.
- School times will not change; the day will start and end at the same times as in past years.
- Use of masks is strongly encouraged by the school when students are in common areas, even if it is not required by law.
- Class sizes are determined by usual norms and go from a maximum of 16 students in pre-K to around 22 students in grades 3-6. An exact count of students per grade was given.
- The number of students opting for online learning changes daily, but is currently estimated to be around 15.
- **Date and time of the Annual General Assembly (AGA)** : it was proposed to hold the AGA on Tuesday, 8 September 2020, and to hold it virtually. Suzanne moved to accept this date and it was seconded by Katherine. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. There are new guidelines as to how to hold an AGA (including virtual voting), which will have to be reviewed soon. This information will be communicated to parents.

6. Reports:

- **Commissioner's Report:** The full report is included as an annex to the minutes of this meeting.

No other reports were presented because of time constraints.

7. Public questions

- These were addressed in the series of answers provided in section 5, "New Business".

8. Adjournment

- After Mr. Estok thanked staff and parents, the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Annex A – Report of the Commissioner

Commissioner’s Report Governing Board – August 2020

I trust you and your family have had a reasonably good summer during very unusual conditions beyond our control. We will soon be welcoming students back to our schools after a prolonged absence and under new stringent safety conditions.

The Council of Commissioners of the LBPSB and its subcommittees have continued to meet during the summer shutdown using Zoom Webinar and other virtual means. Video recordings of recent Council and Executive meetings have been posted at: <https://boardsite.lbpsb.qc.ca/council-of-commissioners/webcast-archives>.

While the Francophone sector has already begun to operate under the government-imposed newly organized system which utilizes Service Centres as a replacement for School Boards, the Quebec English School Boards continue to exist, at least for now. They are in the midst of what may become an extenuated legal battle following the Quebec Government’s expressed desire to appeal a recent decision which gave the English Boards a glimmer of hope. This costly legal process has prompted the initiation of a “Go Fund Me” campaign to help ensure the maintenance of the rights of the Anglophone population.

A degree of uncertainty exists regarding the nature of the scheduled November elections for Service Centers and possibly English School Boards but I am now in my 25th year of retirement as a former employee of the English school system and will not be seeking reelection beyond my current (or possibly extended mandate.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my opportunity to reconnect with a few former colleagues, meet wonderful and competent new colleagues, professionals, students and parents and learn what an excellent organization the Lester B. Pearson School Board has become. I hope to be able to continue to maintain many of the friendships that I have developed over the past six and a half years as Commissioner and wish you all the best as we enter this anxiety-filled chapter of resumption of school activities of our new reality.

The next public meeting of the Council of Commissioners will be held on Monday, Aug.31st.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Clifford, Commissioner – Ward 12