

March PAC Minutes

1. Call to Order, Land Acknowledgement, President's Remarks and Welcome.

2. Treasurer's Report

\$12 233.89 in the Regular Account

\$3 303.56 in the Gaming Account

3. Gate Closures Discussions

There were two emailed comments in favour of re-opening the now closed gate and one in favour of keeping it shut.

Brief background: there have been ongoing issues with dogs (and consequently dog feces and holes) on the grass field, random strangers interacting with kids during recess and lunch and we have several children at the school who are flight-risks.

The PAC was approached by Student Support Workers and Teachers to help with all of the openings on the playground.

This topic became an agenda item that was discussed at two meetings. In December 2022 a binding vote was held in favour of making the playgrounds less accessible to the general public. A letter was written by the PAC Executive in January stating what was voted upon - we wanted the North side closed and the East side to have a gate instead of the opening. We were told at our February meeting that a decision had been made by the VSB. The engineers decided that the St George side would be permanently closed. We had also asked for signage (explaining the gate closure on the East side) on the West side and this was not done. Whether we followup or not is a decision for the group.

We have received quite a bit of feedback regarding the gate on 8th, which can still be opened and closed and is currently locked with a padlock.

During the day it is shut because it is close to the basketball court and it keeps kids from running onto 8th after their balls (now they must ask the supervision aid to retrieve them). Anecdotally there have now been less dogs on the field as the gate makes Dude Chilling easier to access, as well as the new dog park.

Question - Can it be closed tighter (right now big enough for kids and some adults to squeeze through)?

Comments that have come in - one was in favour of the locked gate and one was asking for it to be unlocked during school day

Parents in attendance brought up safety concerns and a proposal to re-open the gates.

Can we have increased safety for kids during the day while making it more accessible to the community out of school hours? There is also danger involved with children now climbing the fences and squeezing through the small openings where they used to be able to access the school grounds via the gates.

Concerns were also brought up regarding the inconveniencing of neighbours, including the elderly, who now must walk all the way around the school instead of being able to take a

shortcut through the school property, outside of school hours. The closures will affect families who live on the East side of the school, in their use of the playground and their access to the Farmers Market as they will now be forced to walk around to access the blacktop area via the West gate.

Some parents would like to reopen the gates outside of school hours. This would involve having someone responsible for unlocking the gates in the morning, then locking them for the day. They would then be unlocked at a little before three for school pick up and remain unlocked over night. At this time, there is no one available to take on this daily task.

Some parents are happy about the gate closures as there are no more unsavoury characters walking through the grounds, potentially interacting with our kids, no more motorized vehicles passing through. Supervision Aids now are able to focus on the children as opposed to also keeping an eye on who happened to be walking through the grounds.

There will always be safety concerns - we need to figure out what will be more safe vs less safe.

There will always be issues with climbing the fence - kids do tend to climb. Jonathan would like to remind parents that they need to talk to their children about the dangers of climbing fences.

We are only two weeks into this so there is still processing to occur - can we agree to give it a solid chance until the end of the school year? There are always growing pains with change - people need a chance to get used to the alternate routes.

It is 45 metres from the gate to the alley and 90 m from the gate to 8th. It is an extra 180 m to now go around.

Jonathan's thoughts - There has now been a massive reduction in calls to parents to bring fresh clothes for kids who've been in dog poop. There are no more motorized vehicles passing through and a reduction in the number of dogs on the grounds. One of the reasons that the field gets closed each summer is to repair the wreckage caused by dogs.

This now protects and contains neurodivergent kids who are runners.

To clarify, the ask to the VSB was for the same gate as is at Nightengale - hinged and can be opened and closed securely. The VSB decided to remove the gate. The message is to people that it is no longer a thoroughfare to keep the kids safe.

We are not banning dogs, we are discouraging them - the priority is safety of kids.

Perhaps we need to contact the city to build up or increase the number of speed bumps in the alley as now families are coming through the alley as an alternate way to school.

Can we wait until Spring to see if people are able to adapt and if not, can we revisit at end of June and/or September next year?

5. Spring Fling

We decided to try the hybrid event for kids who can't sit still through an entire movie. The selection of shorts was well-received and kept the kids' attentions. A dance was held after. We raised a total of \$1300 with no food donated. All feedback has been good.

6. Jedi Update

Swelled to 3 members and has now dropped to 2 members.

Had a great first Jedi drop in on Monday. There were at least 3 people they had not met before, along with some old faces. Going forward this will happen monthly. This is for anyone to meet other people and to help with isolation, inclusion issues, intersectionality issues - this will help people know where to turn for help.

An idea was brought forward to have meetings at different times. The current plan is to hold outdoor events once it warms up on alternate meeting dates as the committee does not have access to school rooms outside of school hours.

The Buddy Bench has not yet arrived. Installation will cost \$100 and Variety will pay for this.

The plan is to have an unveiling and make sure kids know what it is all about.

7. Introducing MTP Choir

This new program starts April 5 with Melissa Hamilton as the liaison. Libby will be our choir director and they have access to the music room with a piano. There will be the director along with a pianist - if there are more than 20 participants, a rehearsal assistant will be added. The maximum is 50 children. Because it is a district wide program parents can pay or get a bursary.

K kids were not included due to there typically being a junior and senior choir (with juniors doing better with practices at lunchtime). As they decided to go with just one choir this year, practice will be after school and this may be too hard on the Ks. They will see how it goes, though, and perhaps include K in upcoming choirs.

Thank you to Melissa for all of her hard work in organizing this!

8. PAC Funding - Budget for Each Teacher

Each year PAC typically allocates \$100 per teacher for any classroom needs. Teachers do need to go on our website and fill out a form to apply for this funding. If we were to give out the money it would be hard to keep track of where it is going. The teachers will be reminded to apply to get their money.

Question regarding food for kids and families who need it - the school gets donations so it is not necessary at this point for us as a PAC to donate snacks.

9. Principal's Report and Questions

Will there be summer school at MTP this year and when will registration open?

Yes we will have summer school at the school but it is not run by the school. You will register online with the VSB where you can pick your classes and where you want to take them. Some are free and some cost money. If anyone needs funding, it may be available.

They had the Spelling Bee and it was very fun. The kids did very well and were supportive of each other. Jonathan would really like to thank the former student who came to organize it.