

**St. Andrew's Junior High School
Parent Council Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2011**

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Chair:	Lisa Slan	lkslan@rogers.com
Treasurer:	Raymond Cheung	Raymond.Cheung@workpolis.com
Secretary:	Lidy Lee	lidyleeamini@yahoo.com
Communications:	Tanya Goldberg	tgoldberg@blg.com

Principal:	Andrew Howard	andrew.howard@tdsb.on.ca
Vice Principal:	Deborah Drape	deborah.drape@tdsb.on.ca

Attendees: Please see Appendix

1. Welcome **Lisa Slan**

2. Guest Speaker **Alyson Schafer**

Alyson Schafer, one of Canada's leading parenting experts and host of TV's The Parenting Show, spoke about the benefits of handing over greater responsibility and autonomy to our teenagers of today. More information on Alyson can be found at www.alyson.ca or @alysonschafer on Twitter.

3. Parent Council Overview **Lisa Slan**

Among the various activities of Parent Council, fundraising is where the most time and focus are placed. It is council's aim to spend as much of this year's fundraised dollars in a timely manner so that families who helped raise the funds can benefit while their children are still students at the school.

4. Principal & Vice Principal Update **Andrew Howard**

a) Positive opening

- Students came into bright shiny hallways and clean uncluttered classrooms – thank you Mr. Pageot and the custodial staff for all of your hard work and dedication
- The teachers had a restful summer and have come back with tons of energy, enthusiasm and new ideas. They are a tremendous group of individuals that I feel very fortunate to be working along side. I want to thank them for the great start and the much anticipated year ahead
- It goes without saying that Ms. Shimmerman, Ms. Mahabir and Ms. Markus are the glue that hold this place together. Their incredible organizational skills and knowledge of the various board systems are two of their many traits that helped this school year to begin so smoothly. However, the most endearing of their qualities are their caring, nurturing nature that they display day in and day out to all of our students, staff and parents. They are a tremendous team that we all feel very fortunate to have here at St. Andrew's.
- No glitches in opening day entry to classes/quickly into their routines – lots of happy faces and positive comments by students and parents (a lot of new students registering toward the end of August and the beginning of September). There were some time tabling issues to overcome due to computer malfunctions and programming problems, but all has been worked out for the most part. A huge thank you to Ms. Wong, new Guidance Counselor for all of her hard work.

b) New additions to our staff/returning staff from leaves – WELCOME/WELCOME BACK!

- Esau Della-Schiava – D&T, Science
- Yurie Kimm – Music (Strings)
- Cathy Pisor – Special Needs Assistant
- Patrizia Conrad – English/Physical and Health Education
- Taline Baltayan – French/Drama
- Renee Veenkamp (LTO) – English/Social Studies/Drama/Special Education for Karen Kadish
- Phil Sun (Occasional Teacher) – Business & Computers/Math/Drama for Lewelyn Lee
- Patricia Howe (Occasional Teacher) – Special Education/GLS-GLE/HSP for Andrea Stella

c) Our total enrolment is 550 students— significantly higher than the projected enrolment head count for September by the Board. In grade 5, 2, in grade 6, 8, in grade 7, we are looking at approximately 230 grade 8, 223 and grade 9, 91. Our biggest gain is in grade 7 while our biggest decline is in grade 9. What does this mean?

d) Welcome Back Coffee – it was an excellent opportunity to meet many new parents and say hello to many returning parents

- thanks to Lisa and the rest of the school council executive for organizing this enjoyable event

e) Volunteers in the school – Although your children are now of the age that they don't want mom or dad around while they are at school, there is always the need for volunteers. Therefore, the volunteer program at St. Andrew's is an important one. There have been some parents who have already begun to inquire as to whether there would be volunteer opportunities available. It goes without question that the support from this community is crucial as it creates an environment where partnership between home and school allows us to provide the best possible educational environment for our students. Any parent wishing to become a volunteer but has not yet begun the process should come to the office for further details.

f) Safety – Safety at St. Andrew's is the number one priority:

- 6 Fire Drills – 3 in the fall and 3 in the spring
- 2 Lock Down Drills – 1 in the fall and 1 in the spring
- Visitor badges being worn by visitors to the school
- Supply teacher badges being worn by occasional teachers
- Front door only for entry into the school
- New hall passes for every teacher – consistent
- Newly revised supervision schedule – increased supervision throughout the day including a teacher on duty for each lunch period
- Visible presence by administration at break, in the hallways and during both lunch periods
- Guest speakers on equity, anti-bullying etc. early in the school year to set a positive tone for the school

g) Preparing for Curric. Night—a flyer and schedule has gone home this evening electronically and a paper copy will be coming home tomorrow inviting all families to curriculum night on September 22nd. We are looking forward to a wonderful turn out. A reminder, however, that this evening is set aside for parents to come in and meet the teacher and here about the curriculum direction for the class in the various subject areas. It is not an evening to talk individually to the teacher about the progress of individual children. A parent-teacher conference will take place during the allocated time in December.

If parents wish to speak with a teacher prior to this time, they are required to call the school to set up a time to speak with the teacher on the phone or to meet with them in person. If a parent is unable to attend the evening or has multiple children in the school and cannot make it to each classroom, he/she can always pick up the handouts from the teacher which will give a concrete description of the presentations.

h) School Needs – At the current time, St. Andrew's is in need of some new computers for and some textbooks for the large number of registering students.

i) The Plan for 11-12:

- Consistent assessment procedures will be in place for all students in all grades (CASI)
- The literacy/numeracy committee will once again create a vision, direction and plan for the school as we move forward
- The family of schools literacy, numeracy and ESL coaches are attending monthly staff PD sessions to assist St. Andrew's staff in looking at areas such as common language, descriptive feedback, assessment and evaluation procedures etc.
- Teachers will continue to be afforded additional opportunities to attend PD opportunities both within the school and within the board
- Mentors have been put in place for new teachers to the school as well as those teachers who are still in the early stages of their career.
- I will continue to be a representative on the FOS literacy committee and transitions to High School committee to ensure our students are prepared and so that I too, can continue to grow in the area of literacy and provide new ideas, sources and resources
- Significant money will continue to be spent on new resources and PD opportunities
- Teachers will be afforded time within the school day to plan and work together
- Students at-risk will be identified early and a plan to move these students from level 1 to level 2, level 2 to level 3, or level 3 to level 4

j) New Initiatives:

- Character Education – this used to be an important aspect of many schools in the TDSB, but has been adopted by all schools and is reflective in what we do every day at school. We will be revitalizing this program with many new and exciting activities. A team of teachers will be working together with a group of students to design an implementation plan that will work for St. Andrew's. Stay tuned for more information.
- Student Leadership Council / Athletic Council– these will continue to be active bodies within the school.
- Peer tutoring program – this fabulous program will continue and be under the excellent supervision and organization of Ms. Wong

k) Parking lot – reminder to all parents that the pick up and drop off loop in the parking lot is a huge safety concern. It is imperative that parents drive to the back of the parking lot and begin their drive back up toward Fenn letting their children out of the car and continuing along their way. There is not to be any stopping or parking along Fenn, on either side of the road, during pick up and drop off times. For the safety of our students and for the easy access to the parking lot, and spots, for our teachers, these rules need to be followed. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

5. Fundraising Initiatives

Lisa Slan

There are six fundraising initiatives planned for this school year:

- 1) *Donation Request* – a voluntary donation request of \$50 (suggested) was mailed to families as part of the summer package
- 2) *SPC Cards* – on sale during lunch periods from September 12th-23rd. Cards cost \$9.00 and offer students discounts to popular retailers. Volunteer coordinator – Jude Cockburn
- 3) *Magazine Drive* – the kick-off assembly will take place on September 22nd and the program will run until October 11th. Volunteer coordinator – Buffy Markakos
- 4) *Bake Sales* – the first bake sale of the year will be our Halloween Bake Sale on October 31st. It will be sponsored by our Grade 7 students and families. Volunteer coordinator – Mable Chan
- 5) *Pizza Lunches* – order forms were mailed to families as part of the summer package. The first of 6 pizza lunches this year will take place on November 9th. Volunteer coordinator – Annie Levitan
- 6) *Birthday Book Program* – letters will go home twice during this school year to parents asking to contribute a book to our library in honour of their child's birthday. The first letter will go home in October for students with July – December birthdays and the second letter will go home in February for students with January – June birthdays. A sticker is placed inside the donated book cover acknowledging the student. Volunteer coordinator – Edward Asmar

6. Other Business

Lisa Slan

a) St Andrew's Blog – the St. Andrew's Blog, featuring school news and events, is up and running at StAndrewsJHS.ca. We are working out a few glitches with user subscriptions. Anyone having trouble accessing the blog or who have signed up but are not receiving the email bulletins can email Tanya Goldberg at tgoldberg@blg.com.

b) Volunteer Opportunities – there are many volunteer opportunities available throughout the school year. They will be posted in our blog as they come up. A form parents may fill in to inform Parent Council of their interest in volunteering was sent out as part of the summer package.

c) Mr. Howard reminds parents that a school year calendar, printed on blue heavy stock paper, has been sent home with students. This is a valuable resource for parents and students to be informed of the special dates and events for the school year.

d) The next Parent Council meeting will be on Monday, November 7th. Subsequent meetings are scheduled for January 16th, April 16th and May 28th.

Appendix – List of Attendees

Lisa Slan
Lidy Lee
Raymond Cheung
Tanya Goldberg
Andrew Howard, Principal
Deborah Drape, Vice Principal
Leslie Greenspoon, Teacher Representative
Maureen Karaiwanoff
Lara Bafaro
Pippa Dutchburn
Wendy Petcoff
Denise McLean
Hedieh Jananbakht
Arash Salehrad
Julie Herckenrath
Susan Martin
Annie Levitan
Jane Petroy
Mable Chan Ossias
Raya Anvari
Milene Riccardi
Michelle Paguia
Liz Hanna
Shelley Friedman
Lisa Halman
Roxana Teodorescu
June Smyth
Jude Cockburn
Keith Tse
Peter and Jane Hammond

