EQUINOX HOLISITIC ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL
Council Meeting Minutes June 14, 2017
2nd Floor Staff Room | 1:40 pm – 2:30 pm

SCHOOL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES
(In Attendance)

Co-Chair: Matthew Hall
Co-Chair & Secretary: Angela Matich
Co-Treasurer: Cherokee MacLeod
Co-Treasurer: Jillian Dempsey

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVES
(In Attendance)

Principal: Mark Lasso
Vice Principal: Chris O'Shaughnessy

ADDITONAL MEETING ATTENDEES
Barbara Holloway, Heather Bell, Stephen Lye, Shelagh Smith

VOTING PROCESS
All parent attendees were able to vote on anything presented during the meeting. Whether a vote was passed or not has been recorded below. Before each vote, the School Council motioned for the vote and one of the meeting attendees seconded it.

OPENING
The School Council meeting opened by reading the TDSB acknowledgement of the Traditional Territories/Ancestral lands of Aboriginal peoples. Next, Angela led the group through an opening circle where everyone was invited to share their name, their children's names and grades, as well as one thing they are looking forward to this summer.

VIRTUAL MEETING PARTICIPATION
The School Council used a conference call option during this meeting to encourage more parents to participate. Both Matt and Cherokee used this feature to call in and participate. Overall it worked very well. It was noted that a conference call speaker device may further improve sound quality. This is something the council will investigate for the 2017-2018 school year.

MAY 10, 2017 MEETING NOTES
The meeting notes from May were approved. All meeting notes from this school year are available online at www.EquinoxSchool.ca for reference.

PRINCIPAL & VICE PRINCIPAL UPDATES

- **Staff for Next Year**

  Staff movement is still in motion and the school administration is unable to confirm anything at this time. The only change that has been formally announced is that Mark will be moving to Church Street Junior Public School this September. Both Equinox and Roden Schools wish Mark

DRAFT

all the best on his new adventure. Ms. Catherine Pollock from Regal Road Public School will become Roden/Equinox's new shared Principal.

- **Updates - School Yard Trees, Phone System & IT**
  Over the summer and into fall five trees located on the North West side of the property will be replaced because they are over 50% dead. The school phone systems will also be cleaned-up and updated. Lastly, the IT system is scheduled to be upgraded. Hopefully all this work will be completed in 2017. The new IT system should greatly improve overall internet access at the school.

- **School Budget**
  Mark explained that he has setup the 2017-2018 school year budget with a small cushion to support Ms. Pollock as she transitions into her new role. He confirmed that this will in no way negatively impact any of the existing school programming.

- **Intensive Primary Literacy Program**
  The new Intensive Primary Literacy Program was a big success this past year with 100% of participating students showing improvement. Chris confirmed this literacy program should be back next year. The Intensive Primary Literacy Program was initiated and led by Armaity Homavazir and Corinne Brown. Program results were presented to the Superintendent John Chasty in May 2017 and at a Special Education Teachers meeting in June 2017 with the Special Education Consultant for the schools.

- **Thank You**
  Mark presented both Equinox/Roden School Councils with a picture book each to thank them for their work this past year. These two books will be added to the school library for students to enjoy. The books were: Ada Twist, Scientist (Roden) and Beautiful Hands (Equinox).

STUDENT COUNCIL
Angela confirmed that the Student Council is planning a student end-of-year event and student welcome back event this fall. Those details are still being confirmed. Their school-wide garden project, where every student is invited to plant a seed in the outdoor garden, is being pushed back to this fall.

In response to a question, Angela confirmed the Student Council is a large group of both male and female student volunteers between grades 4 to 8, approx. 20+ students in total. These Student Council members act as representatives for the lower grades. They regularly visit the lower grades to ask for ideas and feedback. Angela also acknowledged all the great work Tera Dabner is doing with the Student Council this year.

SUMMER GARDEN WATERING
The Equinox School Council has asked Mark for two keys to access the new water tap located in the Outdoor Kindergarten Classroom. One key will be given to Heather Bell and the other to Barbara Holloway. Equinox needs parent volunteers to sign-up to help water our gardens over the summer, otherwise they will die. Please sign-up **here** for a shift.

DRAFT

EQUINOX HOLISITIC ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL
Council Meeting Minutes June 14, 2017
2nd Floor Staff Room | 1:40 pm – 2:30 pm

GARDEN SIGNAGE
Mark confirmed that he has existing custom wood signage for the fenced garden; however, it still needs to be installed.

Some in the group thought it might be nice if the Student Council took over that fenced garden space. They could then help decide the placement of the new signs and this fall add more plant life to that garden area. Currently, that garden space is being destroyed by misuse. Hopefully if the students took ownership over it, it might be better cared for by them.

STAFF APPRECIATION BREAKFAST
The Equinox/Roden School Councils are collaborating on a joint school staff appreciation breakfast on Monday, June 19th. It is being catered by the social enterprise The Paint Box in Regent Park at a cost of $20/pp. The councils will still need to purchase a few extra things, such as juice, cream, etc. Both councils will try to use their existing napkins, cups, etc. before making any new purchases.

Angela confirmed that no more volunteers are needed for this event from Equinox; however, parents are more than welcome to donate baked goods.

EGG FUNDS (VOTE)
In February, the funds raised through the sale of eggs between January to June were voted by the School Council to go to the Student Council as their working budget. In June, the School Council was then to re-examine if the Student Council would continue to receive these funds.

Currently, the Student Council still has ample egg funds left to spend. More than enough for them to finish their planned events for this year and into the fall.

Angela reminded the group, that according to TDSB and Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines, School Councils must state what they are raising funds for prior to raising them. This ensures clear communications and transparency of fundraising. The egg funds raised over the summer need to be clearly allocated so anyone buying eggs knows what they are supporting.

She proposed that the egg funds raised between July to September be allocated towards the three professional Cultural Performances this upcoming year. It is an activity all Equinox students get to enjoy. This past year, the School Council covered the cost of approx. $1,400. The previous 2015-2016 school year students paid out of pocket.

The group voted to allocate the egg funds between July to September to the Cultural Performances.

Chris confirmed he has booked the Beat Box Boys for the fall. They had to be booked early because they book up fast.

In response to a question, Angela explained that early in the school year both Roden and Equinox School Councils said they could only afford three performances and not six because it would be too expensive.

DRAFT

EQUINOX HOLISITIC ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL
Council Meeting Minutes June 14, 2017
2nd Floor Staff Room | 1:40 pm – 2:30 pm

THE P.I.N.E. PROJECT UPDATE
At the last May 10th, 2017 School Council meeting three action items were agreed upon regarding the p.i.n.e. project, as well as approving to cover the shortfall for the p.i.n.e. project. Below are updates on those three action items.

- **City of Toronto Bylaws & Regulations**
  Mark and Marcia had a good conversation with Andrew from the p.i.n.e. project about the community's concerns regarding adhering to the City of Toronto bylaws and regulations. He was very receptive to our concerns.

  ***During the June 14th council meeting, Mark reminded the parent community of TDSB's existing processes. Parents with a concern regarding their child's field trip experiences should speak with the teacher first. The teacher will then address the matter and if it can't be addressed by them, it will be escalated accordingly. ***

- **Exploration Committee**
  Matt reminded the group that the School Council is creating an Exploration Committee. Please contact the School Council if you are interested in participating on this new committee: chair@equinoxschool.ca.

  Mark reiterated that each year the teachers at Equinox try to find and use the best programs the city has to offer, such as the p.i.n.e. project and Brickworks. During that process they consider relationship continuity, leader to student ratio, and visions and practice. He also explained that year-to-year program service delivery quality varies, depending on the guides provided.

  In response to a question, Mark explained that the teacher community felt that this year the Brickworks program was teaching below Equinox student level of environmental knowledge. One parent suggested Equinox approach Brickworks to elevate their program to meet our students/school's unique outdoor education program needs.

  A few parent meeting attendees shared that several years ago the Equinox School Council also created a group to explore other outdoor education program options available; however, that data would most likely be outdated by now. The School Council has decided to repeat this past exercise after receiving numerous comments from the parent community, during the p.i.n.e project survey, asking what other options are available. Angela confessed that the School Council has no idea what is out there. Through the creation of this exploration committee, the parent community may become better informed when it comes to outdoor education program options.

- **ECO STEWARDSHIP DEFINED**: Equinox will explore creating its own pledge/definition of "good" Eco Stewardship this fall. This Eco Stewardship definition will help further educate and remind students, staff and parents/volunteers how to respect and preserve the sensitive environment while still being able to actively engage, learn and have fun.

BUDGET UPDATE
At present, the School Council has $2,449.18 left in its budget that is unallocated. This total is higher than anticipated because the p.i.n.e. project shortfall was lower than expected this school year.

DRAFT