

# Westmount Charter School AGM - May 2023

**Date:** May 10, 2023

**Location:** Video Conference

**Time:** 7:00 PM

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Chair: Roti Akinsanmi

## **Council**

Vice-Chair: Kim Anthony

Treasurer: Navdeep Kailey

Secretary: Thomas Chan

Communications Director: Kathy Good

Fundraising Director: Laura Teterenko

Parent Engagement Director: Ashley Wilford-Matthews

Special Events Director: Ameet Kooner

Director-at-Large: Terri May

Director-at-Large: Melissa Wolsey

## **Administration**

Superintendent: N/A

Principal Elementary Campus: Hal Curties

Principal Mid-High Campus: Graeme Finlay

Student Council representative: N/A

## **1. Opening Remarks and Approval of the Agenda**

Navdeep Kailey motioned to approve the agenda, 2nd Ameet Kooner. Agenda approved.

**Land Acknowledgement (Navdeep Kailey)** - In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live, work and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, Tsuut'ina, Nakoda nation and the Metis Nation of Region Three, and all the people who make their homes in Treaty Seven region of Southern Alberta. We would like to express our gratitude and respect for the land we use, pledge to end systemic racism, commit to advancing reconciliation, and partnering with indigenous people in our work as School Council.

I do want to take a moment here just to share something for my personal learning on the traditional territories. I recently learned about Weaselhead Flats Park in Calgary, a beautiful natural area located at the mouth of the Elbow River in the southwest. My son had a field trip there, which prompted me to dig deeper into its history and significance. I discovered that it is situated on the reserve of the Siksika Nation and is named after Chief Weaselhead from the Siksika Nation's history. This park offers picturesque hiking trails, cross-country skiing, wildlife, and educational opportunities for students to learn about wildlife and wetland habitats. It's a valuable place for both nature lovers and those interested in Indigenous history, making it a meaningful discovery for me. I wanted to share this with everyone to encourage exploration and appreciation of this special place in our city.

**Opening Remarks (Roti Akinsanmi)** - Moving on to the next item on the agenda, I'd like to share my reflections on the past school year, which has been centered around the theme of

collaboration. It's been a year marked by deep collaboration across various stakeholder groups. Starting with the Student Council, we've had dedicated individuals like Nathan and our Laiba consistently attending our meetings, even amidst their busy schedules with exams and other commitments. Their updates and active participation have been invaluable in keeping us informed about school developments. I particularly remember the impressive commitment shown by Laiba, who stayed engaged throughout one of our meetings, and it was a source of pride for me as a parent to witness the active involvement of our students.

Beyond the student council, our school community has witnessed enthusiastic participation from numerous parents who volunteer for various activities, including fundraisers like the casino fundraiser and Stampder Parking. While I must admit that Stampder Parking wasn't quite my forte, I commend the dedication of individuals like Kim and Laura. This level of involvement from students, volunteers, alumni, and even our principals, Graeme and Hal, who consistently join our monthly meetings, reflects the profound collaborative spirit that has been cultivated. I'd also like to acknowledge the Board Members, including Simon and Peter, who bring their passion and commitment to the school community. In closing, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved, emphasizing that our collective efforts in collaboration are sure to yield positive outcomes as we continue fostering this spirit, particularly within the student council. Despite the late hours and voluntary nature of our work, I believe this commitment will only serve to strengthen our school community's sense of unity and purpose. With that said, we have some exciting reports to look forward to tonight.

Thomas Chan motion to approve the 2022 AGM minutes, 2nd Ashley Wilford-Matthews second. Minutes approved.

## 2. Principals' Report

[EC Principal's Report](#)

[Mid-High Principal's Report](#)

### a. **Elementary Campus Update (in addition to Principal's Report) - Hal Curties**

First and foremost, I'd like to highlight what we were able to resume in the school year after a three-year hiatus. These included Bow Valley nursing home visits, in-person coffee talks, Earth Day assembly, Jump Rope for Heart, LEAD classes, costume parade for Halloween, parents on campus regrouping, Remembrance Day assembly, upcoming school play, "Robinhood", Terry Fox Run, casinos, and student-led conferences.

We owe our gratitude to the Westmount Charter Elementary Fundraising Society for their dedicated planning and hosting of October's Bingo, the proceeds of which will fund initiatives such as "You Are Strong," a friendship skills-based program. This year, we made progress in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, recognizing and celebrating various cultural and religious celebrations within our community. Other highlights include Elder Starlight's visit and our continued observance of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Days. We also acknowledge the invaluable support from the School Council, for help funding such things as our professional development. Finally, the revival of the Healthy Hunger program, thank you to Laura and Derek Teterenko. In a broader sense, our heartfelt thanks go out to all parents for their support in various activities throughout the year, including Feed the City Challenge, Jump Rope for Heart, Terry Fox Day, and numerous volunteer efforts. Thank you.

**b. Mid-High Campus Update (in addition to Principal's Report) - Graeme Finlay**

Good evening, everyone. I want to express my profound gratitude, which echoes the sentiments shared earlier, for our incredibly supportive School Council. Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of working at various schools, but I can honestly say that the level of support, positivity, and collaboration we receive from our School Council here at Westmount Charter School is unmatched. It has been an absolute pleasure, and we are deeply grateful for your unwavering support. In my report, I've focused on highlighting some of the events and experiences at our school that would not have been possible without the support of our school council. These activities significantly enhance the educational journey of our students.

- **Grade 6 Kamp Kiwanis** - This excursion offers our students a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the outdoors and engage in various activities not typically available in an urban setting. For some students, it's their first time away from home, and for others, it's their inaugural experience sleeping in bunkhouses with sleeping bags. These memories are cherished by our students and are often shared during high school graduation events
- **Barrier Lake Field Station Kananaskis** - With over 50% of our high school students taking biology, this overnight field trip offers them the chance to conduct their own experiments in a fully-equipped research station. It provides a hands-on learning experience that goes beyond the classroom
- **Guest Speakers** - Our School Council has consistently arranged for guest speakers who address important topics for both parents and students. Speakers like Paul Davis, who discussed internet safety, and Ryan Straschnitzki, a survivor of the Humboldt Broncos tragedy, who shared powerful messages of resilience and mindset, have left a lasting impact on our students
- **Classroom Enhancements** - School Council plays a vital role in enhancing the learning environment by providing classroom supplies for our dedicated staff. Teachers receive a small allocation of funds, which they use to improve their classrooms. These supplies, ranging from puzzles and games to fidgets and clipboards, enhance the educational experience for our students. In addition, School Council's support extends to promoting teacher wellness and appreciation. Through initiatives like coffee carts and small acts of kindness, our staff's well-being is enhanced, leading to a more positive school environment that benefits our students

In closing, I want to emphasize the immense impact of our School Council's support. It strengthens the sense of community within our school and enhances the overall educational experience for our students. I can't thank our School Council and parents enough for their unwavering dedication and support. Your efforts, whether during Stampeder parking, bottle drives, or countless other activities, make a significant difference in the lives of our students and contribute to making Westmount Charter School a truly special place. Thank you.

### 3. Reports from Council

#### a. Treasurer's Report - Navdeep Kailey

Heartfelt thank you to, all the parents for the generous donations. Also like to thank our school admin team for consistently supporting me and collaborating. The report is an interim report, because our year end August 31<sup>st</sup>.

- **Revenues** - Direct donations were \$17,000, Stampeders parking raised \$5,500. bottle drives totaled \$1,700 and Healthy Hunger raised \$2,000. We won't know the totals for the WestJet and 50/50 raffles for a couple weeks. Fundraising totaled \$26,000
- **Expenses** - Total expenses are sitting at \$3,814. We expect additional invoices to be coming in
- **Our current bank balance is \$61,364**

#### b. Parent Engagement Report - Ashley Wilford-Matthews

- **Coffee Talks** - in-person coffee talks resumed, alternating with online meetings, providing options for parents
- **Parent Engagement Sessions** - June we had a two-part anti-racism presentation by the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre from University of Calgary. A Virtual Kindergarten Meet & Learn was held in October, helping new parents and kindergartners connect. In December, we had an excellent presentation from Jill Foreman, an occupational therapist who specializes in emotional regulation and anxiety, and Dr. Pickle (Gordon Hamilton), who had worked with students last year on math puzzles. Paul Davis delivered a presentation on internet safety in January. Last week the Center for Sexuality held a session for parents from K to 6, which as well attended. They will be doing another presentation this month for parents in Grades 7 to 12. June will have Charter Board Member Peter Khu presentation on TAAPCS ("The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools"). Future parent engagement sessions for the Fall are being planned, including discussions on giftedness and inside-out philosophy

#### c. Alumni Report - Kim Anthony

We want to express our excitement about the new initiative we have undertaken this year regarding school alumni relations. While this might be a novel venture for the School Council, it's not new to the administration, and we're truly grateful for the groundwork they've already laid. We've had productive meetings with administration to assess our current alumni engagement and set goals for the future.

Our primary aim is to develop a plan that fosters a strong and meaningful connection between our alumni, current senior high students, and teachers. We've received feedback from alumni expressing their desire to reconnect with teachers, visit the school, and engage with current students. We believe this interaction is mutually beneficial, as teachers also want to stay informed about their former students' journeys. Lots to come in the next year.

**d. DEI Report - Terri May & Melissa Wolsey**

In the realm of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”), our school council has made significant progress in the latter half of the year. We've designated members to serve as liaisons between parents and the school leadership team, fostering ongoing engagement with DEI initiatives. The school has been proactive in acknowledging and celebrating various cultural and religious holidays at both campuses through newsletter announcements, classroom activities, and guest speakers. Additionally, plans are in place to review and ensure the inclusivity of the school's library collection. Furthermore, we've actively sought input from parents regarding DEI matters. Several key points emerged from these discussions, including:

- Testing costs as a potential barrier to Westmount
- Need for better communication about speaking to classes about cultural holidays.
- Considered creating handouts to explain cultural events in classrooms.
- Explored the possibility of providing translations on a case-by-case basis.
- Discussed addressing the unfamiliarity of some families with the Canadian school system and acronyms.

**Comment (Hal):** A TLA with Mandarin to English translation skills provided valuable assistance during a parent conversation, and there is a desire to continue finding translators for such meetings to support parents,

**e. Social Events Report - Ameet Kooner**

- **Year-End Celebration** - Last year, we hosted our first annual year-end celebration, and it was a great success with an estimated 350 to 400 attendees. The event aimed to celebrate our school year and bring together students, staff, and families. We offered various activities for students, including bouncy castles, games, face painting, and a photo booth, creating a fun and engaging atmosphere. Food trucks were on-site to provide meals, and the dunk tank became a highlight, fostering a unique interaction between students, principals, and teachers.

In terms of finances, the event generated approximately \$2,500 in revenue, while expenses, including party supplies, raffle prizes, and portable toilets, totaled just over \$3,200. Looking ahead to this year's event, we plan to address the lessons learned and hope for even greater success with the continued support of volunteers and our school community.

**f. Fundraising Report - Laura Terenko**

First and foremost, I want to express our immense gratitude to the parents, staff, and support staff who generously supported these initiatives, whether through financial contributions or by dedicating their valuable time and effort. The overwhelming support from our community has been pivotal in the success of these endeavors, and we recognize that without this collective support, our achievements would not have been possible.

- **Stampeder Parking** - Fortunate with the weather, experiencing only one challenging day. School Council successfully raised over \$5,000 through season
- **Bottle Drive** - Throughout the year, we organized bottle drives in October, January, and April, in addition to offering bottle pick-up services through Skip the Depot directly. We have collected ~\$3,600 from these drives, with a cumulative total of over \$14,000 since 2018. Additionally, we've diverted 8,500 kilograms of waste from landfills, emphasizing the environmental impact of our efforts. A special thank you to Jill Foreman for her role in organizing volunteers, coordinating signage, and facilitating the pickups during the bottle drives
- **Healthy Hunger Lunch** - feedback has generally been positive, although there was one vendor that didn't fully meet our expectations. A survey will be circulated to gather input on new restaurant choices and preferences for future events. Each lunch typically raises between \$500 and \$700, resulting in an estimated total of \$2,900. We plan to continue and potentially adjust the frequency based on the survey responses
- **WestJet and 50/50 Raffle** - The WestJet raffle nearly sold out and raised ~\$13,600, while the 50/50 winner will receive around \$5,300. Thanks to Raffle Box for their support
- **Direct Donations** - We also had a successful direct donation campaign that supports various aspects of our school community

**g. Communications Director - Kathy Good**

As the Communications Director, I mainly serve as a liaison between the School Council and the school for message dissemination. I don't have a formal report, but I want to express immense gratitude to Kathleen Shykula, who handles communications at Westmount. She ensures that all our information reaches parents and the community, handling last-minute and well-planned messages and assisting with wording edits

**4. Elections**

Five positions are up for elections: Secretary, Communications Director, Social Events Director, and two Directors at Large. Kathy Good motions to adopt Zoom polling for electronic ballots, 2nd Ameet Kooner. Motion approved.

- Kathy Good nominated for the Secretary position and acclaimed for the next 2-years
- Terri May nominated for Communications Director position and acclaimed for the next 2-years
- Melissa Wolsey Social Events Director position and acclaimed for the next 2-years
- Ameet Kooner nominated for the Director at Large position and acclaimed for the next 1-year
- Thomas Chan nominated for the Director at Large position and acclaimed for the next 1-year

## **5. Closing Remarks**

Like to thank everyone who participated in the AGM.

**Meeting Adjourned - 8:00 PM**