



School Advisory Council Annual Report – June 2021

School	Grosvenor Wentworth Park
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Please list SAC members including names, membership type (i.e., parent, community member, staff), and role (i.e., Chair, Vice Chair).

Co-Chairs: Jemima Perks / Margo Gall

Admin: Brendon MacGillivray / Paula Little

Staff Member: Kristen Bishop

Staff Member: Heather Day

Community Member: Becky Cookson

Community Member: Marion Gates

Please describe a summary of work undertaken by the SAC to improve student achievement and school performance.

Please note: Contributions to this report reflect a variety of voices from our council and different individuals submitted components.

Student Success Planning to Support Student Achievement: Overview

Providing information to our SAC with respect to how the school is responding to the needs of students is an important component of the reporting that comes from the school staff. Attending school based members of the SAC recognize that not everyone is familiar with the language of school. Staff work to provide understanding and insight into such things as how policy comes to life in a school, differences between school based and external sources of data, shedding light on the various supports within the school and within the system that the school can utilize to support students,

Over the course of the previous school year SAC minutes reflect discussions related to coaching support for staff members, unpacking the inclusion model and what it means for Grosvenor, sharing the reasoning

behind purchases that support teacher growth (Heggerty Phonemic Awareness System) and in turn student achievement to name a few. SAC members were instrumental in supporting enhancing the school capacity to move towards achieving a one to one ratio of tech to students for our Grades 2-6. This timely support enabled all students to have access to technology in the home learning environment.

Professional Development Focus: Keeping SAC up to date with RSSP PD focus.

How do we support the students at our school who come from traditionally marginalized groups? This is a question that we asked ourselves and worked to answer this year.

For a long time we have known that there is a significant achievement gap for students from marginalized backgrounds. In the HRCE, the focus for the past few years has been to raise the bar and close the gap, specifically supporting our students of African and Aboriginal descent. This year, we dedicated our professional learning to examining instructional practices to ultimately support the success of our students.

In our first two PD sessions this year, as a staff, we examined the Inclusive Education Policy and the Guiding Principles within this document. We worked together to choose one of the guiding principles and to identify an action step to move our practices forward to support our African Nova Scotian students. The principle that was chosen was: "Inclusive education practices use evidence of students' strengths and challenges to determine a system of supports and monitor the effectiveness of those supports."

We agreed that in order to properly plan, we need to know as much as we can about our students' strengths, challenges and interests. We created a system to document this information. Our families also helped us in this process by providing us with the strengths, challenges and interests that they see at home in their child/ren. This information has been instrumental in planning for our students and meeting them where they are in order to move them forward. We also plan to use this information at the beginning of next year, in order to give our classroom teachers a snapshot of their new students.

In the spring, we were introduced to our newly developed Treaty Education curriculum. We spent a full day examining the resources and materials that have been provided by the HRCE. We worked in teams to enrich our understanding of the Indigenous culture in Nova Scotia (Mi'kmaq Ways of Being and Knowing, Treaty Education and Netukulimk). We recognize that this is only the beginning of our journey to understanding and we acknowledge that we have work to do within our system, within our schools, and within ourselves to build foundational understandings.

Throughout the next year we will be invited to engage in more professional learning opportunities to deepen understanding and practice. This will influence our actions to ensure that we act with each other in order to support students' well-being and achievement to feel safe, accepted, and valued so they can best learn and succeed during their time in school and beyond, particularly our students of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous ancestry.

Covid-19 – Keeping Students and Staff Safe during a Pandemic:

Prior to the start of the school year a detailed operational document related to COVID-19 was sent out to EGWPS families and staff. Before it was distributed to the school community, SAC members thoroughly reviewed the draft document and provided feedback on clarity, potential questions parents may have, and any missed information. SAC members provided dozens of questions and comments to help create a final operational plan that attempted to address a wide range operational issues that arose due to COVID-19.

Pre-Primary: Summary of Discussion

SAC Co-chairs and the Principal fielded parent concerns about the pitfalls of our pre-primary students being off-site during this school year. These issues included having no access to the Excel program and separation from the school building and community. Concerns were also raised about the specific location of the pre-primary site - in a strip mall on a busy road, with a busy parking lot, next to an NSLC store. Discussions were had about how we could mediate these concerns and make Excel available to our pre-primary students. We were reassured that pre-primary students regularly walked up to the main school building and playground. We were also told that in a normal school year, unaffected by COVID-19, the students would also be included in assemblies and other school events and that older Grosvenor students could perhaps visit the pre-primary site as “buddies”. After our discussion, the principal put forward the concerns of the parents to the appropriate staff at HRCE. In the spring of 2021, it was announced that two new modular buildings will be placed on EGWPS property during the summer, adding 10 new classrooms to our school. The addition of these classrooms means that our pre-primary classes will now be back in our school buildings and pre-primary students will have access to the EXCEL program.

Diversity: Summary of Discussion

Over the course of the 2020/2021 school year the SAC engaged in several discussions about diversity in our SAC membership. In recent years, in order to more closely represent the diversity of the EGWPS school population, a diversity community member position was created. Recently, the label of “diversity member” was called into question by a member based on the idea that lumping so much diversity onto one member was not actually feasible or effective. It stimulated a deeper discussion on the importance of SAC member representation and sensitivity to the widely diverse school population - from people with mobility issues to people from different cultural and economic backgrounds to people of colour. We talked about some of the diversity that already exists within our primarily European-white membership including one member having a child with special needs, another who works in the learning centre, and another who grew up in a low-income family. From this important discussion, we agreed that we are committed to making sure our SAC membership always consists of people who help represent and support Grosvenor-Wentworth’s diverse population. We decided to keep the diversity position labelled as is. We also committed to seeking a diversity of voices to fill any of our SAC roles as they become available in the years ahead.

Communication and Engagement: Summary of Discussion

Several times throughout the school year the SAC addressed the issue of our communication with the school community. Our goal was to make SAC more accessible and visible to the school community, as well as to make the role of the SAC clear. In order to meet this goal several steps were taken:

- Meeting dates and links to SAC agendas and minutes were included in communications to the school community and published on the school website. Attendance at meetings by anyone in the school community was also encouraged in these communications.
- Parent co-chairs were introduced to the school community at the beginning, and again in the middle, of the year in school newsletters. Their contact information was made available in those newsletters and was published on the school website. Parent co-chairs were also introduced to staff at a staff meeting (pre-covid).
- A slide with information about the SAC and its role, as well as the names and contact information of the parent co-chairs, was included in the virtual curriculum night and pre/primary orientation slideshows that were sent out to the school community and all incoming pre/primary families.

Despite these efforts, only a few parents attended meetings but they did offer comments and questions on tabled issues important to them. One parent in particular commented that after attending the meeting the role of the SAC was more clear to her and she understood better what issues to bring to the SAC vs what issues to take straight to administration. We were encouraged by this feedback and hope that by continuing these communication efforts we will see more participation in the future.

Traffic Safety: Summary of Discussion

Grosvenor-Wentworth is located on Downing Street. This street is dangerous for children during drop off and pick up. Prior to this issue being brought to SAC, 311 and community police liaison had been called numerous times by the school administration, bus drivers, and Downing Street residents.

Issues brought to SAC:

- Illegal parking impeding school busses resulting in late student drop off and pick up. In turn causing tardiness for student pick up of runs following Grosvenor drop off.
- Illegal passing of loading/unloading school busses.
- Children being let out of vehicles and darting across the street in front of oncoming traffic.

Solutions discussed by SAC and implemented:

- Illegal/legal parking and safety reminders regularly sent to parents in emails/newsletters.
- Principal contacted police who now come on Wednesdays as part of their regular rotation to help mitigate congestion, issue fines, and educate traffic offenders.
 - - SAC parent/community members have reached out to our District 10 Councillor, Kathryn Morse, requesting a traffic study from the public safety department. Due to the most recent Covid shutdown, the request was put on hold. Ms. Morse has a meeting with their CAO June 16, 2021 and

will discuss the issue with them and get back to SAC by June 18th to decide the best approach to resolve the issue. The proceeding recommendations were given to her. Currently sourcing safety cones to be placed in the no parking zones.

- Investigating the possibility of having a crossing guard at the entrance to Downing street. Hundreds of kids cross there, while cars and busses turn onto Downing street. By providing a crossing guard it would hopefully make parents more comfortable dropping their children off on the Castle hill sidewalk, if they knew they would get across safely. Fewer parents would feel the need to enter the congested Downing Street and ultimately leave room for busses. This initiative is still ongoing and we hope to have a solution by the end of the school year.

Please list any significant milestones and success stories that the SAC would like to highlight.

- Building SAC capacity to ask deeper questions about school data and how the school/system responds to student need through the use of data.
- Building capacity for SAC to understand how TST is used to support staff and in turn students.
- Collaboration throughout the year, but in particular, the beginning when building and communicating a reopening plan was so important.
- Traction with community partners with respect to student safety as it applies to traffic concerns.
- Growth in understanding the implications and application of the Inclusion policy and how this lens can be used to ensure SAC voice reflects community member.

Please describe any related sub-committee work undertaken by SAC members (e.g., School Options Committee).

Engagement: An additional meeting will be held in June to discuss ways to support students through the summer with literacy development. A host of ideas are being considered including developing partnerships with the Halifax Regional Public Library. The school has SAC funds available and my use these funds to support students over the summers months to attempt to stave off any summer regression.

Well-Being: A number of our SAC members support the school's Breakfast Planning group.

Statements of Revenues and Expenditures:

Expenditures supporting the school improvement plan (e.g., providing resources to support math and literacy instruction).

Technology: Chromebooks & iPads

Expenditures supporting policy development and implementation (e.g., supporting and promoting new policies).

Purchases made through teacher request process:

Music: Variety of Covid-19 friendly musical instruments

Library: Collection acquisitions in support of promoting inclusion and reflecting student population.

EAL: Dual language library books.

Expenditures covering operational expenses; up to 20 per cent of provincial SAC funding may be used as operational expenses, if necessary, to encourage and support member participation).

Please return to School Administration Supervisor by Monday, June 21, 2021. Thank you.