

# SAC Meeting Minutes



Tuesday, February 11, 2025 • 6:00 PM • Google Meet

## Attendees:

Heather Napoli, Chair - Parent Representative  
Liz Hallett, Vice-Chair - Parent Representative  
Lauren Bowes, Secretary - Support Staff Representative  
David O'Brien - Principal  
Melanie Connors-Blades - Teacher Representative  
Shelley Mills - Community Representative

## Regrets:

NONE

## Approval of Minutes for Previous Meeting

No changes were made to the minutes of the January 21, 2025 meeting. All members in favor of accepting the January minutes as presented.

## Principal's Report to the SAC

David O'Brien presented the Principal's Report to the SAC. ESM has a current school population of 79 students, with one new student who will be joining our school on Tuesday, February 18.

10 new sleds were purchased this week, and students of all grades have been enjoying the snow at Recess and Lunch.



## ● Academics & Data

- ESM has received our Grade 6 results for Reading and Writing, which were collected in October. Results will be shared with the SAC at our next meeting once they have been shared with staff and parents. We will be analyzing that data as a staff in our next staff meeting, and results will be shared with parents following staff analysis.
  - Grade 6 Assessments are completed at the beginning of the school year, essentially "testing" students' Grade 5 knowledge.
  - Grade 3 Assessments will be completed later in the Spring.

- School-based assessments are used by teachers who work in a continuous cycle of assessment > planning > re-assessment > planning, and so on and so forth.
    - Assessments are used when looking at individual students, classes as a whole, for discussing between staff members in Teacher Support Team meetings and other collaborations, and as part of our school-wide reflection on our practices.
- **Maintenance & Safety**
  - Our Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) met on February 3, 2025. The following safety concerns were indicated and subsequently addressed:
    - Hole in the chain link fence behind the school near the blue climbing structure: HRM (3-1-1) was called and a work order has been issued
    - Bleachers in the back of the school have rotting wood: HRM (3-1-1) was called and a work order has been issued.
      - HRM is responsible for grounds maintenance at ESM.
  - The stump in the front playground had a protruding root that was obstructing the sledding course. ESM Parent, Matt Covey, brought his chainsaw to the school and removed the root so students could safely sled without hitting the root. Thanks to Matt for doing that for us!
  - The heating system in the Pre-Primary room has not been working properly. Plumbers and electricians have been in the school working to fix the problem, and it was discovered today that the pipes in the room are frozen. The pipes were exposed and space heaters were brought in to warm up the room and unfreeze the pipes. At this point, we are hopeful that the pipes do not have a crack in them, which will result in the flooding of that room. First On-Site and Black & McDonald will be monitoring the situation through the night.
  - New storage spaces have been created under the stairs on the North and South sides of the building.
- **Skating Program**
  - We have successfully completed two of our three scheduled skating events of the year? From the ESM Office, it has been a great success. The SAC has agreed to fund the program this year, so we'd like to hear your feedback.
    - SAC members in attendance have all been very happy with the skating program. They think it is a wonderful program for our school community, and they are always happy with the turnout.
    - Shelley Mills noted that Frankie Hollywood, whose nephew attends ESM, spoke highly about our skating program on on FX 101.9 - Today's Country.
    - Heather Napoli said that she likes the schedule change to January/February from November/December. It's a nice break during the long winter, and there's already so much scheduled during the holiday season.
    - David O'Brien and Lauren Bowes noted that there has been some discussion that the timing can be difficult, so it's possible that a small shift may need to occur, but that will be discussed next year when ice time is scheduled. Right now, STC is accommodating, and we believe we figured out the timing of departure from ESM to ensure optimal ice time upon arrival at the St. Margaret's Centre.
- **School Culture**
  - David O'Brien began the Roots of Empathy program today with the Grade 3/4 class. ESM Parent Amy Bishop and baby Ollie will be joining the class on a

weekly/bi-weekly basis for the program. The program is designed to develop empathy in children by using the development of infants as a teaching tool. Roots of Empathy has been proven to reduce aggression, increase sharing, caring, and inclusion, and promote resilience, well-being, and positive mental health. For more information on the program, visit the [Roots of Empathy website](#).

- We must, unfortunately postpone our Valentine's Dance, scheduled for Thursday, February 13, in anticipation of the winter storm advisory that has been issued. Several area schools have already postponed/cancelled their events. A message will be sent to families tomorrow to inform them of the postponement.
- Family Literacy Week at the end of January was a great success! Students had fun reading throughout the week and participated in a number of literacy focused activities.
- **Professional Development**
  - David O'Brien: Training for Principals
    - VTRA Training - Violence and Risk Assessment: this training helps school administrators in identifying potential risks in schools, and what to do when those risks have been identified. The program creates better relationships between schools, law enforcement, mental health supports, etc.

## **New Business**

- Liz Hallett asked if ESM has been affected by the recent Fire Hazard Assessments that have been in the news.
  - David O'Brien responded that ESM has been affected by the assessments and new guidelines/protocols that have been handed down by the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM), but not as much as other schools because we recently had our OFM walk-through in the Spring of 2024.
  - The Halifax Fire Department used to do all HRCE school assessments, and when that contract ended, the OFM took over. The OFM felt that Principals had not been properly informed of correct guidelines/protocols, so those were sent to RCEs and were asked to be distributed to all administrators across the province.
  - ESM was affected by memo sent by the OFM in the following areas:
    - Lighting - some additional lighting, which was being used by teachers to create a more welcoming/comfortable space (lamps, fairy lights, etc.) had to be removed because there was either too much or lights did not meet the CSA guidelines.
    - Wall Coverage - under the OFM guidelines, only 20% of walls can be covered in combustible materials. ESM had believed this only pertained to paper on the walls, but the additional information that was provided informed that it includes ANY combustible materials on or along the walls, including the books on bookshelves that lined the walls.
- Lauren Bowes reported that the first round of sponsorship letters have been sent out to local businesses, and we have received some positive feedback community partners who received the letters.
  - Sponsorships are important because they allow us to do things as a school that go above and beyond the scope of the various funding we receive from the NS Department of Education and the HRCE. Government funding is very strictly earmarked and must be used specifically for items/initiatives that are outlined by the government. Community sponsors allow us to fill in the gaps.
  - Community partners who have come alongside us to date were identified in the February newsletter and were sent thank you letters for their support. Going

forward, we will be creating a page on our website with a running list of local businesses who have supported us throughout the year.

- There will be further sponsorship letters sent out as contact information is obtained.
- Shelley Mills noted that at our first SAC meeting, the committee indicated that in order to maintain healthy SAC financials, the SAC will need the support of the Home & School Association in partnering on some of the initiatives the SAC began covering during the years of Covid-19 when fundraising was paused. She said she was happy to see the Home & School Association stepping up this year with new fundraising opportunities.
  - Lauren Bowes reported that the Home & School Association recognizes the need to make money rather than break even, and they have identified ways to work smarter, not harder this school year. The Grand in Hand fundraiser brought in \$1000 in December, and we are looking forward to doing another Grand in Hand in the Spring. Raffle baskets seem to be making more money for the Home & School than 50/50, so we are shifting focus to baskets during school events. The Spring Fling, which has been traditionally a “Thank You” event for families has been recognized as the largest event of the year, and because of that, we need to shift focus away from “breaking even.” And perhaps the initiative that will see the most funds added to the coffers will be retailing school spiritwear, which the Home & School Association has made a priority for this school year.
- David O’Brien reported that he’s often asked by the HRCE to list things that have surprised him (good & bad), and in his last report he noted that we have a full SAC, a full Home & School Executive, and a full slate of Breakfast Program volunteers. It seems that we are emerging from the volunteer drought left by Covid-19 isolation, and that is a happy surprise.

**Adjournment - 6:54 PM**