



# Dunrae Gardens Elementary School Governing Board

235 DUNRAE AVENUE, MOUNT ROYAL, QUÉBEC, H3P 1T5 TEL: (514) 735-1916 FAX: (514) 735-7051

## Dunrae Gardens (DG) Governing Board (GB) Minutes for October 24, 2023

### **Attendance:**

Cathy Auger  
Bertin Bateng Tcheunkwa  
Noémie Battista  
Alison Beck  
Cynthia Canale (Principal)  
Vanessa Contenta  
Pietro Gasparini  
Alexandra Lynn Hindler  
Despina Kouremenos  
Tina Lanni  
Mélessane Mathieu  
Marie Anne Polonia (Chair)  
Lena Stuart  
Diana Theophilopoulos  
Karolina Weclas

### **1. Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm.

### **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was modified as follows:

Strike out:

3.4 Daycare Committee, and renumber the points as set forth below.

***Motion to adopt the agenda as modified above (Karolina Weclas, Vanessa Contenta)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

### **3. Governing Board Operations**

#### **3.1. Election of the GB Executive**

##### **3.1.1. Chair**

***Motion to appoint Marie Anne Polonia as Chair of the GB for the 2023-2024 academic year  
(Karolina Weclas, Lena Stuart)***



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### 3.1.2. Secretary

***Motion to appoint Alison Beck as Secretary of the GB for the 2023-2024 academic year  
(Karolina Weclas, Lena Stuart)***

### 3.1.3. Treasurer

***Motion to appoint Noémie Battista as Treasurer of the GB for the 2023-2024 academic year  
(Marie Anne Polonia, Vanessa Contenta)***

***Unanimous approval***

Marie Anne Polonia reminded the GB members of their role and of the expectations with respect to collegiality.

### 3.2. Appointment of community representative

Marie Anne Polonia reviewed the role of the community representative. No potential member was mentioned, but the topic may be revisited at the discretion of the GB.

### 3.3. Appointment of the Committee Chairs (Marketing, PPO, DGFA)

The Board discussed the roles of the various committees.

DGFA: Diana Theophilopoulos is nominated as Chair of the DGFA

PPO: Vanessa Contenta is nominated as Chair of PPO

Marketing: Vanessa Contenta is nominated as Chair of the Marketing Committee for the moment, but this may be changed later if another suitable candidate is identified.

***Motion to approve the appointments set forth above (Karolina Weclas, Tina Lanni)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

### 3.4. GB Internal Rules of Management

This point is tabled to the next meeting to allow such document to reflect decisions made in the present meeting. When ready, a document will be sent to the GB by Marie Anne Polonia and potentially approved electronically.

### 3.5. Day and Frequency



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The GB unanimously agreed to tentatively schedule the meetings of the GB on the last Tuesday of most months, as follows:

- November 29, 2023 (Zoom);
- January 31, 2024 (Zoom);
- March 28, 2024 (In person);
- April 25, 2024 (Zoom);
- May 30, 2024 (In person); and
- June 13, 2024 (In person).

All meetings will occur at 6:30 if held on Zoom and 6:00 if held in person.

### 3.6. GB Approval of June 14, 2023 Minutes

***Motion to approve the minutes of the GB meeting of June 14, 2023 (Karolina Weclas, Noémie Battista)***

***Motion passes.***

### 4. Principal's Report (presented by C. Canale)

- Meet the Teacher night occurred in-person on September 7, 2023. Parent-teacher interviews will also occur in person.
- Attestation day took place on September 29, 2023. DG has 317 students currently enrolled.
- A school assembly took place on September 14, 2023, to discuss school values and expectations.
- On September 21, 2023, Lauren Hill Academy came to speak to the Grade 5 and 6 students.
- On September 22, 2023, as part of DG's indigenous education initiatives, there was a three-hour workshop presentation by Kawisente, who brought sacred items from wampum belts to rattles, drums, medicines, animal skins, dolls, and more. It was a fruitful educational session about the traditions, symbolism, spirituality, and ways of the local indigenous community. Students had the chance to touch many of the sacred items, and to sing songs about the three sisters (corn, beans, and squash). They were enthralled.
- There will also be a Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day Assembly on September 29, 2023, with Honoured Guest Amanda Shawayahamish.
- In honour of International Day for the Elderly, which took place on October 1, students received nine grandparents in a four-series workshop. All grandparents were volunteers drawn from DG's own community. The grandparents told stories and discussed with the students. The experience was valued by students, who left with increased appreciation for the grandparents' experiences.
- The Terry Fox Walk took place on September 27, 2023, raising \$2736.
- Picture Day was held on October 16, 2023, with sibling pictures and retakes happening on October 24, 2023. Principal Canale suggested that, in the future, Picture Day and retakes occur further apart so that parents have the opportunity to assess if a retake is indeed needed.
- On October 11, 2023, Pre-K and Kindergarten students had the opportunity to have their vision tested.



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- To date, three fire drills have been held as follows: September 25, 2023, during class; September 29, 2023, during class; and October 12, 2023, during lunch. One more fire drill will be held during daycare after school.
- Registration for ECA will be held this week.
- There will be numerous activities for Halloween. The Halloween Maze will be held on October 31, 2023. Each class will decorate their own pumpkin, which will be displayed near the Office. Also, DG will provide all students with treats and candies.
- Grade 5 and Grade 6 students are part of the Student Council this year.
- Enrichment programs, including Caribou Math, have started.

### 5. Business Arising

#### 5.1. Field Trips

The following is a list of field trips reserved for the 2023-2024 academic year:

- Apple picking – September 29, 2023
- Camp Rep – Cycle 3 — October 26-27, 2023
- CEPSUM – Cycle 2 – October 27, 2023
- CEPSUM – Cycle 3 – March 15, 2024
- CEPSUM – Cycle 1 – May 31, 2024
- CEPSUM – preschool – June 7, 2024
- Maison Theatre – Grade 2 – April 4, 2024
- Cirque – Grade 2

Noemie Battista applied for a Culture in Schools grant to be used to pay for a presentation by Daniel Prenovost, who presents world instruments workshop to students. She is currently waiting to see if the grant is approved.

In addition, the Preschool Team applied for funding to be used to pay for activities with Bébites Mobile and with the Écomuseum.

Last year, the trips to Ottawa and Quebec City did not take place. It is still in discussion if these trips will occur this year.

Causing added complications with respect to field trips are the costs of buses, which are alarmingly high. There has been a \$500 increase since last year, from \$800 for two buses, to \$1,300 for two buses. As a result, the costs of all field trips have increased. This is a Quebec-wide issue. One of the benefits of the increased costs, however, is that the service associated with the buses appears to be better this year, with less constraints being placed on the school by bus companies.

The GB discussed concerns surrounding the increased cost of field trips:

- Should students continue going to CEPSUM given the cost, given that there are other cultural activities?
- Should parents be consulted about added costs that will be borne by them?



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- Should fundraising efforts be undertaken to cover the added cost?

Other concerns surrounding field trips were also discussed. For example, some Grade 6 trips were cancelled during Covid have not been held again, but perhaps they should be. Also, the principle of equity of field trips between the grades was discussed and will be further discussed by the GB toward the end of this academic year, when the next academic year is being planned.

***Blanket resolution to approve the Culture in Schools programs/initiatives set forth above for the 2023-2024 academic year and to authorize Principal Canale to plan field trips for the 2023-2024 academic year (Lena Stuart, Noémie Battista)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

### 5.2. Culture in Schools

This point was discussed above.

### 5.3. Education Project

Strategic tools are used by a school to define an educational project. In October and November, there will be a process of anonymous consultation, during which parents, staff and Grade 6 students will be consulted using questions developed by the EMSB to find out their opinions about DG pertaining to academic and social matters. The information obtained will be provided to the GB and to the EMSB. They will also be compared to the results at DG from last year and to current results across schools. All this will be looked at and then used to build an educational project.

***Motion to begin the consultation process for the educational for the 2023-2024 academic year (Pietro Gasparini, Alexandra Lynn Hindler)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

### 5.4. P.E.L.O.

It is unclear if P.E.L.O. will happen. To date, there has been very limited interest. There have only been eight people who have indicated that they are interested in Italian, four in Spanish and three in Greek.

Last year, all P.E.L.O. courses were given online. This year, both the Italian and Greek teachers are only available for online teaching. The Greek teacher, however, is willing to teach in-person, after school.

In the past, the parents on PPO indicated that they were not pleased with the classes taking place online because they found that it difficult to learn a language online. It was hypothesized that perhaps some of the lack of interest in PPO was because teaching will be online.



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The GB discussed potential conflicts between the timing of P.E.L.O. and ECA. This will be confirmed and addressed separately.

Principal Canale will send out a memo to parents to confirm that while Italian and Spanish will be taught online, Greek may potentially be in-person and to gauge interest.

***Motion to send out a survey regarding interest in P.E.L.O. and to approve the implementation of the P.E.L.O. program for the 2023-2024 academic year, depending on interest (Vanessa Contenta, Pietro Gasparini)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

### 6. E-Vote Report

#### 6.1. Field Trips 2023-2024

Discussed at point 5.1 above.

### 7. New Business

#### 7.1. Fundraising Requests

##### 7.1.1. DGFA Big Box Fundraising (Sale of Handcrafted Cards)

As part of this fundraiser, parents would buy or sell a box of 35 handcrafted cards. A box sells for \$35, which includes a profit of \$12 per box. This fundraising opportunity has received good feedback from other schools. Unfortunately, this initiative is impossible to roll out before Christmas. Proceeds would go to the Fun Fund.

***Motion to approve the fundraising request for the DGFA Big Box Fundraising (sale of handcrafted cards) in 2024 (Alexandra Lynn Hindler, Tina Lanni)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

##### 7.1.2. Grad Committee

There was an e-vote to Grade 6 parents, where they were given the following three options for how to cover costs for graduation events:

1. Voluntary contribution of \$125 per child
2. 50-50
3. Fundraising

A majority of parents agreed to pay \$125 per child.



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***Motion to approve the fundraising request from the 2023-2024 Grad Committee to collect \$125 per Grade 6 student from their parents (Alexandra Lynn Hindler, Vanessa Contenta)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

## 8. Reports

### 8.1. Central Parents Committee (CPC) Report

Lena Stuart presented on behalf of the CPC.

### 8.2. Dunrae Gardens Family Association (DGFA) Report

Diana Theophilopoulos presented on behalf of the DGFA.

She noted that the DGFA has an entirely new executive this year, and it has been a learning process, with a shuffle of the Executive needed early in the year. As a result, certain activities were delayed, including certain fundraising activities and ECA. Nonetheless, the DGFA expects to have another successful ECA, and most students have enrolled in Pizza Day and TCBY.

Furthermore, approximately \$700 was earned from the Uniform Sale, and there will be further such fundraisers during the year. Parents are encouraged to continue to bring in uniforms for future Uniform Sales.

Finally, it was noted that the DGFA needs to solicit a large pool of parents, and parents are encouraged to actively participate in the DGFA.

## 9. Question Period

A question was posed about the grant application that was submitted with respect to the field last year. Principal Canale indicated that there has yet to be any response, but that she would discuss the matter with the EMSB.

## 10. Varia

The mural on the DG building was approved by the Town of Mount Royal. The final image which will be depicted will be a boy and girl on a 'flying carpet' book, with flowers in the background to symbolize the 'garden city'. The mural likely will be completed by the end of the week. The GB suggested that it may be advisable to allow the mayor and members of Council to have a photo op in front of the mural, subject to Mr. Mike being comfortable with them doing so. This photograph could then be submitted to local newspapers and to the EMSB for its newsletters.

It was also indicated that work is proceeding on updating the pictures on the DG website. This project is supported by the EMSB. A DG parent is also providing valued assistance.



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The GB was reminded that DG Open House will take place on December 7, 2023, and GB members as well as other DG parents are encouraged to volunteer.

### 11. Adjournment

***The meeting was adjourned (Karolina Weclas, Tina Lanni) at 8:18 pm by unanimous consent.***

Approved by the GB on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Alison Beck  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marie Anne Polonia  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cynthia Canale  
Principal