



# 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 January 30, 2024

### **Attendance:**

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

### **Regrets:**

Lena Stuart

### **Guests:**

Mary Kyres  
Kevin Moon  
Jahan Ara Peerally  
Richard Pigeon  
Sabrina Bitton  
Kimani Daniel  
Eleni Kalogerakos  
Joel Trudeau  
Dimitra Kanavaros  
Chetna Patel

### **1. Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm.

Given the number of guests, the Chair gave a quick reminder of the rules of GB.

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

The following modifications to the agenda were proposed:



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- Question period was moved to point 3 of the meeting
- Point 8, point of information for DGFA was added

***Motion to adopt the agenda as modified per the above (Pietro Gasparini, Karolina Weclas)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

### 3. Question Period

Several DG parents asked questions to the GB and to the Chair of the GB. Among other topics, questions were asked about how DG parents can attend GB meetings and obtain minutes of past meetings, if DG has the support staff that it needs to assist students, and about the relationship between the GB and the Dunrae Gardens Family Association (DGFA) and potential conflicts of interest. While most questions were answered during the meeting, the GB Chair undertook to obtain certain additional responses and to get back to the applicable parent. Such questions and responses are enclosed at Appendix A to the present Minutes.

### 4. Governing Board Operations

#### 4.1. GB Approval of November 28th, 2023 Minutes

***Motion to approve the minutes of the GB meeting of November 28th, 2023 (Pietro Gasparini, Vanessa Contenta)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

#### 4.2. Consultation Selection Criteria for the Appointment of a Principal

***Motion to move this topic to Point 10 (Noemie Battista, Vanessa Contenta)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

### 5. Principal's Report (presented by Principal Canale)

- The DG Open House took place on December 7, 2023. Thanks were given to all who participated, including students, teachers and parents. Right now, the school is registering siblings. New registrations will take place in early February. There are currently 68 families which have expressed interest in registering children at DG for next year, including: 26 in Pre-Kindergarten; 35 in Kindergarten; 2 in Grade 1; 1 in Grade 2; 2 in Grade 3; 1 in Grade 4; and 1 in Grade 6. This is in addition to the number of students who are currently registered at DG. If these tentative numbers are accurate, there could be a need to open another class.
- Ms. Fabiana Ciccarelli returned to her teaching post in Grade 5. She was welcomed back. Ms. Melissa Pizzioli, who replaced Ms. Fabiana since the beginning of the year, will be missed.



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- Mr. Éric Pauzé is currently on paternity leave and will be returning in March. He and his family were wished health and happiness. Ms. Fatiha Ghalmen was welcomed as his replacement.
- Ms. Alexandra Hindler will be leaving as well and was acknowledged for her hard work.
- There was a brief discussion by the GB of the effects of Bill 96 upon eligibility exemptions for studying in English schools for the upcoming academic year.
- There was a lockdown drill on January 17, 2024. Everyone's efforts were appreciated, and the students were well-prepared.
- January was Francophone Culture Month. At DG, music was used to showcase Francophone culture. The activities were very successful, and one special event was even attended by the Quebec Minister of Finance, Mr. Girard, and the entire EMSB Directorate. Mme. Noémie's efforts in spearheading these events were recognized.
- As part of our Safe Action School Plan, on January 26, Cycle 3 students attended a presentation by the SPVM.
- There will be significant renovations at DG over the summer. Such renovations will include the following:
  - o Renovation or replacement of flat roofs as well as roof skylights.
  - o Renovation or replacement of interior floors, as well as minor interventions on interior walls and partitions, including painting of premises.
  - o Renovation or replacement of interior doors and bringing emission staircases up to standard.
  - o Renovation or replacement of bathrooms, including interior finishes (ceramic, partitions, etc.) as well as the drinking water distribution and wastewater evacuation network.
  - o Renovation or replacement of heating appliances and systems (boiler and radiators) and ventilation system at gym.
  - o Renovation or replacement of plumbing fixtures (water heater, domestic water piping and fitting, sanitary drainage piping and fitting, and storm drainage piping).
  - o Renovation or replacement of electrical appliances and systems: main transformer, exterior lighting, distribution panel, etc.)
  - o Installation of an exterior retention basin for a rainwater management system.

It is therefore unlikely that DG will host any activities over the summer, but this will be decided by the EMSB. Principal Canale expressed openness to bringing the EMSB ideas about potentially replacing ripped up asphalt with other materials.

- Ms. Despina Kouremenos presented the following with respect to DG's enrichment program:
  - o The enrichment program is successfully progressing and participating students are enjoying it and are enthusiastic.
  - o In the November Caribou math competition, a Grade 4 student scored first provincially, nationally and internationally. Also, a Grade 2 student ranked first in the school board.
  - o In the January Caribou competition, a Grade 4 student ranked first in the school board and 4<sup>th</sup> provincially. Also, a Grade 2 student ranked first in the school, second in the school board and third provincially.
  - o The Global Issues Problem Solving Group is entering the competition phase, with an upcoming qualifying problem on Antarctica on February 2, followed by an additional problem on Autonomous Transportation on March 20. Successful participants will be invited to an international conference at Indiana University in June.



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- The Let's Talk Science competition is a recent addition to DG's enrichment program. It is open to Grade 6 students to encourage positive attitudes toward STEM. Eight DG students will be nominated, based on their high academic achievement and interest in the sciences.
- Mme. Noémie Battista presented about field trips. The following field trips were approved by Staff Council:
  - Due to the uncertainty surrounding the teacher's strike prior to Winter break, the field trip to Cirque de Verdun for Grade 2 students was cancelled.
  - Grade 1 will be going to the Cosmodome on April 26, 2024.
  - A change date is required for the Quebec City trip due to a conflict with ministry exams. A new date will be determined.
  - There are grants for activities through the Quebec government's Culture à l'École program. DG has had three such grants approved:
    - Preschool students enjoyed a program by Educazoo on January 12, 2024. The activity was fully covered by the grant and therefore was at no cost to parents.
    - Partial funding was also received for World Music activities with Daniel Pronovost. These activities are currently in progress and all students in the school are loving the program. Three dollars per child has been charged to parents.
    - Cycle 3 students are benefiting from a Comedy and Storytelling activity, which is mostly covered by the grant. Three dollars per child has been charged to parents.
- Certain key dates were highlighted for February 2024, including:
  - The 20<sup>th</sup> edition of Hooked on School Days will take place from February 12 to 16.
  - February is Black History Month, and in addition to teachers providing students with relevant resources, Malik Shaheed will come to DG on February 22.
  - On February 12, there will be no school.
  - February 13 will be Grade 6 graduation photos.
  - February 16 is the end of Term 2.
  - On February 29, report cards will be posted and there will be virtual parent-teacher interviews.

## 6. Business Arising

### 6.1. School Budget for 2024-2025

Principal Canale presented the different fees to be charged to parents next year.

GB approval is required with respect to Fund 3, which contains the projected amount that parents will need to pay next year, divided by grade.

Supplier prices remain volatile, so it remains unclear how much they will charge for next year. They will be contacted for more firm quotes beginning in March.



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Currently, there is a forecasted rollover surplus from previous years of \$17,191. At the June GB meeting, the final surplus will be discussed again, but it is possible that the surplus could be used to retain current fees despite fluctuations in supplier costs.

***Motion to approve the School Budget for 2024-2025 (Tina Lanni, Cathy Auger)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

### 7. E-Vote Report

N/A

### 8. Point of Information: DGFA

Maire Anne Polonia and Principal Canale have been receiving various concerns with respect DGFA. They have yet to have the opportunity to discuss those concerns directly with the DGFA but intend to do so.

It was emphasized that the DGFA is an independent body that has its own constitution and its own governance process. That being said, it was noted that the DGFA operates on DG premises and can affect DG and its reputation, and therefore the GB does have an interest in being aware of any significant concerns regarding the DGFA. Certain members of the DGFA expressed their disagreement with the above position and with the fact that certain concerns were brought to the GB prior to being brought to the DGFA.

There was discussion of the need for dialogue, outside of the DG GB meeting, between the Chair of the GB, the DGFA and Principal Canale.

***During discussion of the above topic, two separate motions were made to extend the duration of the GB meeting by 15 minutes (motion 1 – Diana Theophilopoulos, Pietro Gasparini; motion 2 – Karolina Weclas, Vanessa Contenta)***

### 9. Reports

#### 9.1. Fundraising Reports

##### 9.1.1. Olive Oil Fundraiser

The Olive Oil Fundraiser was successful, raising \$1,544.01.

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

No report was presented.

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



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No report was presented.

### 9.4. PPO Report

No report was presented.

### 9.5. Marketing Committee

No report was presented.

## 10. Consultation Selection Criteria for the Appointment of a Principal

Principal Canale recused herself for this topic.

It was noted that the criteria are generally similar year to year.

Marie Anne Polonia read the proposed glowing letter to be sent to EMSB to support Principal Canale.

***Motion to approve the Selection Criteria for the Appointment of a Principal (Noemie Battista, Alexandra Lynn Hindler)***

***Motion passes unanimously***

## 11. Varia

No topics were discussed.

## 12. Adjournment

***The meeting was adjourned (Noémie Battista, Pietro Gasparini) at 9:01 pm by unanimous consent.***

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

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

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

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



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## Appendix A

### Questions at the DG GB meeting to which Marie Anne Polonia responded following the meeting

Q.1

Are you abusing the position of chairperson that has been entrusted to you by the stakeholders of this community?

A.1

No

Q.2

Are there past executive members of DGFA on the GB? If yes, who are they?

A.2

Yes, Diana Theophilopoulos, Karolina Weclas and myself.

Q.3

What measures has the GB taken to protect itself against potential accusations of unethical behavior when it comes to the conflict of interest that may arise from holding two different executive positions back-to-back within the school. I refer to the past executive members of the DGFA who are now on the GB.

A.3

Being a past or present member of the DGFA Executive does not in itself create a conflict of interest for a GB member.

The GB is composed of 14 voting members : 7 parent representatives, 1 support staff, 5 teaching staff, 1 daycare representative.

Parent representatives of the GB are elected at a public meeting held every September at which every parent of a student attending the school may vote.

Finally, all GB meetings are public.