

APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

Agenda

Welcome & Introductions – Lisa Parker

1. Adoption of the Agenda and May Minutes – Lisa Parker
 2. Principal's Report – Tracey O'Toole
 - Construction Update
 - Kindergarten Yard Update
 - Pool Update
 3. Treasurer's Report – Sarosh Nanavati
 4. Vote on the APA 2017/2018 Budget
 5. Election of 2017/2018 Executive Council – Lisa Parker
 6. Motion to spend up to \$3,000 on Itinerant Music instruments (repair or rentals) – Tracey O'Toole
 7. Committee Updates
 8. Open Question Session
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APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

Minutes

Attendees – approximately 40 parents

1. Welcome & Introductions – Lisa Parker
 - Allenby Parents' Association – Meets every other month, and the executive meets monthly
 - Volunteer parents lead key areas, liaise with administration (ex. Fundraising, safety, health & wellness, programs)
 - Everyone Allenby parent is a member; we're always looking for help, please get involved
 - Parents and community are an important part of the school
 - Goal is open communication and to get more people involved

2. Adoption of the Agenda and May Minutes – Lisa Parker

Motion put forward by Lisa Parker

 - Seconded by Gillian Uy
 - Voted all in favour, none opposed.

3. Principal's Report – Tracey O'Toole

Construction

 - We've been in full construction mode since May 2017.
 - Goal was to have construction not impact learning in September and we've met this goal; thank you for your patience in May and June when students were in other learning spaces (outside, library, staff room) to accommodate construction.
 - Allenby is in an old building and updates are necessary. There are currently three construction projects underway:
 1. Hot water to steam conversion
 - This is the biggest project, which includes the removal of the old boiler – which caused fluctuating heat throughout winter from very hot in some parts of the building and very cold in others
 - Work is extensive: every heat-related or hot-water-related pipe that runs through building was replaced; walls, ceiling torn down to facilitate this work
 - Work continues every night from 6 pm to 1:30 am, plus work every weekend
 - Expect heat to be available by third week in October

APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

- Testing heat will continue until winter break – tweak heat based on daytime experience
- Best option is to send children to school in layers
- 2. Fire alarm replacement – every sprinkler and light is updated
 - Old fire alarm is still active; on Monday evening (Oct 2) will move onto new system
 - Testing next week for 2 hours after daycare ends (6:15 pm)
 - Expected to finish alarm work by end of October
- 3. Roof repair
 - Work was scheduled during summer but rainy summer meant we had less working days; work was delayed until late August, early September
 - No longer any smelly Kettle onsite; work continues and children hear banging, which will finish tomorrow (Sept 28)
 - Expect work to continue for three more weeks; will no longer have an area sectioned off on school property

Pool Update

- Needed to be acid washed after hot water to steam boiler conversion; pool is being filled so students can swim; hopefully by Wednesday
- In the meantime, our swim instructors have been doing safety with students

Kindergarten Yard Update

- Project had been slated for summer, however work hasn't started yet
- Money secured by parent council (section 37 funds – given back to areas of community where there is large development) as well as parent fundraising
- Delay is based on lengthy legal process to get funds in hand
- Everything is now approved; ready to schedule the construction
- Tracey will reach out to parent community when we have more information on timing and logistics
- Logistics for the work being done during school months, rather than the summer (e.g., pick up, drop off, lunch when area is not available) need to be considered before anything goes ahead

APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

Curriculum night

- Please come out on Wednesday, Oct 5, 6:30 – 8pm
- First half hour is with Tracey in gym where she'll provide a whole school perspective in terms of what's happening at Allenby, as well as information on how to support your child during the year
- Followed by 2 classroom sessions
- Will hear from teachers about inspirational math, where every class participated in math activities to engage students

Math focus

- Commitment from Tracey to have all teachers go through Jo Boaler teacher program, which some teachers piloted last year and had an overwhelmingly positive response

Communication

- Please read weekly Allenby newsletter (distributed by email on Fridays; go to www.allenbyparents.com to sign up)
- Follow us on twitter (many teachers tweet daily class activities under school handle)
 - @AllenbyPS_TDSB (school)
 - @AllenbyPS (APA)
 - @DavidHeathTO (APA safety rep – tweets on traffic safety issues along Avenue; please retweet, as local politicians are paying attention to this key issue)
- Parent asked for text message option, as provided by daycare
 - We don't offer this option because of the volume of tweets happening every day from our whole teacher body
- To reach Tracey O'Toole (Principal) or Deborah Zamin (Vice Principal) please use their direct email, not the general Allenby email box (it is not monitored and is filled with spam)
 - Tracey.O'Toole@tdsb.on.ca
 - Deborah.Zamin@tdsb.on.ca
- Every teacher receives email; not every teacher will respond through email, some may pick up the phone and call you
- How can I find out which teachers are on Twitter? I'd like to know what's happening in my kids' class but don't want to sort through it
 - Communication to parents happens outside of Twitter, but Tracey is encouraging all teachers to move to Twitter to promote collaboration and knowledge sharing across teachers

APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

- Anecdotally, some parents find that following their child's teacher on Twitter helps provide a quick snapshot to see what goes on during the day and gives specific things to talk about when their children get home
 - Ask your children targeted questions (tell me about something you learned today, high point, low point) to avoid getting the "nothing" or "fine" or "recess was the best part" answer
4. Treasurer's Report – Sarosh Nanavati
- We are fortunate to have strong fundraising programs and offer many additional programs to students as a result
 - We have a surplus from successful fundraising campaigns in past years
 - Our goal this year is to continue to bring surplus down, but maintain a cushion in case one year is not as successful in fundraising as another (e.g., rainy fun fair day, etc)
 - We also want to ensure that parents who participate in fundraising will have their kids benefit from the funds they raise in the years they are at Allenby
 - Our goal is to bring down surplus by \$40k this year
 - Every year, APA provides budget to each teacher a fund for classroom spending (\$400 per teacher). We are updating the letter this year to ensure this money supports 21st century learning – want to make sure spending aligns with goals (e.g., not buying posters, manuals, atlases, etc.) and instead support hands-on learning, mindfulness Mondays, STEM learning.
 - APA Budget developed in May was created in consultation with the school and aligns to school budget; Tracey will share her budget in November (currently developing funding by committee with teachers); many programs are jointly funded by APA and the school.
5. Vote on the APA 2017/2018 Budget
- Motion to approve final year-end statements as presented put forward by Sarosh Nanavati***
- Seconded by Meredith Palmer
 - Voted all in favour, none opposed.
- Motion to accept budget as presented put forward by Sarosh Nanavati
- Seconded by Jen Lenk
 - Voted all in favour, none opposed.
6. Election of 2016/2017 Executive Council – Lisa Parker
- APA Treasurer – Sarosh Nanavati
APA Secretary – Valerie Midmer & Jennifer Lenk

APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

APA Director of Fundraising – Meredith Palmer, Serin Benadiba & Melissa Ng-A-Mann

APA Director of Communications – Anika Malik

APA Director of Community Awareness – Krista Chaytor

APA Director of Health and Wellness – Amber Christie & Louise McCrindle

APA Director of Safety – David Heath

APA Director of School Programs – Lindsay Goldberg & Samantha Atkinson

APA Co-Chairs – Gillian Uy & Lisa Parker

- Voted all in favour, none opposed.
- Contact information will be available for all executive members on the APA website

7. Motion to spend up to \$3,000 on Itinerant Music instruments (repair or rentals) – Tracey O’Toole

- Itinerant music is a program provided by the Board that gives students in grade 5 and 6 the option to play a band or strings instrument; students may choose to participate in this optional program; it takes place twice a week during school hours
- Worked hard last year to determine a way students can select which program to follow
- We’re fortunate to have program at Allenby; not all schools have it
- Program is historical; we can’t increase based on interest
- Instruments were purchased by parent community
- Allotment each year to school to go towards instrument repairs (\$700)
- School has rented additional instruments in past
- Last year, school spent \$2000+ on instrument repairs
- School budget is for whole school; focus is not on one program for a specific grade (e.g., last year, parent council paid for grade 4 give back program)
- Not sure we’ll use the whole \$3000 requested; we already have a list of repairs needed; expect we’ll use the whole amount
- Instruments are well maintained but some are many years’ old
- Includes cases to help preserve instruments as much as possible

Discussion:

- Do we ever hold students and families accountable for damage to instruments?
 - Yes- but it’s the older instruments we’re concerned about
- How many instruments need repair?

APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

- Can't answer this now as we don't have strings instructor yet (we do know for band; approximately 6-8 instruments need to be replaced; look in to replacing them as money put into repairs is not well spent; 6 instruments have gone for repair)
- Cost estimate includes a whole range of costs (fixing tuba is very different than fixing a violin)
- Should we buy instead of rent?
 - Rentals manage repairs much more effectively; includes a service plan; kids' excitement with shiny new instrument
 - John Fisher PS rents instruments every year, at a cost of \$12k, so renting all instruments is an expensive option
- Should APA / school look at a 5-year plan, as clearly it's a popular program at the school
 - As a community, we've been advocating to maintain the program
- If TDSB decided not to continue program down the road, would we have the option to continue outside of school?
 - Yes
- We have a music rep on APA – having someone focused in this area will help us develop a long-range plan
- Should parents who have children in the program contribute funds?
 - At this point, program is TDSB funded; although instruments aren't funded by TDSB

Motion to spend up to \$3000 on Itinerant Music instruments (repairs or rentals) put forward by Tracey O'Toole and Lisa Parker

- Seconded by Paula Riczker
- Voted all in favour, none opposed.

8. Committee Updates

Fundraising

- Events are best opportunity to connect with Allenby community
- We are trying new things this year – theme this year is Family Fun
- Three events throughout year – Fall (in past this has been a parents' only event - Big Night Out); Winter (Lip sync); June (Fun Fair)
- Fall – will hold a Family Night Out – Nov 30, at Allenby in the gym
 - Ticket cost will be low; make it affordable and include as much as community as we can;

APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

- Will be engaging students and families in coming weeks to get ready for the event (creative activity leading up to event; something the whole family can do together)
- Communication will start in mid-October
- All three events have committees, need volunteers and sponsors
- Fall event includes a silent auction; if you can provide a product, service or family experience – please reach out to Meredith Palmer (mhpalmer2929@hotmail.com)
- Watch newsletter for updates

School programs

After 4 Program

- Registration for After 4 program is open until Oct 6; please register before then
- See descriptions on Amilia, our online cash system (different than school cash online, TDSB system)
 - In past, after 4 programs weren't as expensive... are my kids choosing more expensive programs?
 - Cost has gone up, but not much (\$5 to \$10 goes to Amelia; rest goes to program vendors)
 - Some programs are more expensive than others (e.g., coding and skateboarding)
 - APA will share feedback with vendors and look for options in future program offerings
 - Note that After 4 is not a fundraiser; it's to help get the community out and giving kids experiences
 - APA will also help us subsidize families who may not be able to meet the cost APA of the programs; the office reaches out to APA to facilitate this; the APA doesn't know who these families are
 - Lisa will mention that subsidies are available in upcoming Chair's message

Spirit Wear

- Spirit Wear is also on sale now, buy through Amelia by Oct 6
- Toques are almost sold out; everything else is on demand
- APA sent home shirts to JK students but not all JK students got one; parents please contact Lisa Parker (lisa_m_parker@yahoo.ca) or Gillian Uy (gmuy@icloud.com) and they'll follow up
- Some JK parents shared that they didn't know where shirts came from, so Lisa and Gillian will follow up with a communication to the JK parents

APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

Pizza Lunch

- Pizza lunch on Friday – parents were able to order hot lunch through Rose Reisman for the same day; this won't happen in future

Safety

- Core mandate is keeping Allenby community safe
- This file is very fluid and is issues driven, proactive and reactive
- We have an internal focus (drop zone – previously kiss 'n ride; we're looking for volunteers)
- Our external focus advocates for safer ways for kids to get to school, by championing local traffic issues, crossing guard program, reduce speed limit and narrow lanes on Avenue Road between Eglinton and Lawrence by painting a buffer zone between driving cars and sidewalk (voting at City council on Oct 2)
- Traffic safety was the number one priority focus for student safety last year
- What can you do as a parent to support our safer streets campaign?
 - If you see an accident, please take a photo and video; tweet about it and include @davidheathTD or retweet David Heath's tweets
- Key activities the school and APA are working on to make streets around Allenby safer so our kids can walk to school:
 - Following up with city on traffic study; how we can have an impact;
 - Putting forward the need for photo radar on Avenue road, including making deputations to City Council and Parliament
 - Regular meetings with the Board, Mayor, Transportation department, Councillor Carmichael-Greb and Police services
 - Signage at Castlefield and Avenue Road (no longer able to drive through – many cars still go through but please don't call the school whenever you see an infraction; they are aware)
 - Drop Zone signage
 - Partnering with Toronto Police services to patrol Castlefield and Avenue; we now have data on number of tickets to determine next step; last year, sign changed twice
 - Arranged a visit from Mayor John Tory last Friday regarding traffic safety

Discussion

- Tree covering the sign that flashes and says school zone 40
- Hope from parents that enforcement won't decline after the first week and month of school

APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

- What education can we give the students to support traffic safety around the school?
- Do crossing guards have training? Concerns about crossing guard at Roselawn and Castlewood.
- City of Toronto will be taking over the Crossing Guard Program; looking for more crossing guards

Health & Wellness

Lice check

- Friday is lice check; we still need some volunteers to greet students (you're not actually checking for lice; you're just managing the kids in line)
- Lice recheck- any student identified with lice will be rechecked on Monday morning before school at 8:30 (done by school, not parents; this is an earlier time than in the past)
- Having lice check on Friday is deliberate to give families the weekend to deal with it
- Charitable giving committee
 - Looking for charitable giving committee members

9. Open Question Session

- Can we use any of the Section 37 funds to support our drop zone?
 - Asked councillor in spring but were told we can't redesign curbs; we will push again;
 - Note that section 37 funding has very specific things tied to it
 - They've used it to make Orchard View wider near library
 - Could potentially pitch it as "community safety"
- Can class reps send something out on drop zone because people don't sign up
 - Yes – we're doing this already
- Can we put a curb/barrier so that people can't physically cross Castlefield?
 - This wasn't part of the traffic study
 - Working to declare Avenue Road from Eglinton to Lawrence a pedestrian safety zone
 - There are 3 schools and 3 daycares in this stretch of Avenue Road
- What is the school's policy on medication administration?

Short term prescriptions – administering medication

- For medication that an adult needs to administer, parents need to fill out a form that includes a doctor signature (this is a Board requirement)

APA General Meeting Wednesday September 27, 2017, Allenby Library, 7-9 pm

- This is different than medication a child can administer but needs adult supervision
- Tracey will communicate more in her principal update
- What about medications that need to be administered at a specific time
- Jamie in office monitors timers

Epipens

- Now every teacher has a package with photo of the students with allergies in their class and their epipen is kept in the child's classroom,
- Photos are also located in the Occasional Teacher" packages as part of their classroom briefing – so any teacher in the classroom is aware
- Students with epipens need to carry on their body
- Allenby has fanny packs including epipens for teacher on duty in school yard, lunch room and gym