

MINUTES

Honoré Mercier Elementary School Governing Board

Monday, February 3, 2025 @ 7:05PM | Meeting called to order by Verena Garofalo

In Attendance

Verena Garofalo (Chair)	X	Robert Panetta	X
Cynthia Canale - Principal	X	Merika Ramundo	X
Marco De Crecentis	X	Peter Tsatoumas	X
Diego Di Stefano	X	Saffiran Ali	R
Lino Faratro	X	Sally Behjoudi (Alternate)	X
Giuseppe Fazzari	X	Sonia Ranellucci (Alternate)	X
Laurie Giangaspero	X	Romina Mancini	XP
Veronica Graniero	X	Mario Pietrangelo	R
Andrew Martinez	X		

X = Present / R = Regrets / XP = Present Public

Assign minute-taking duties: Saffiran Ali

Assign time-keeper duties: Merika Ramundo

1. Additions to Agenda

— No additions to agenda.

2. Approval of the Agenda

— Motioned by Diego Di Stefano, seconded by Joey Fazzari. **Motion Passed – Unanimously**

3. Adoption of Minutes

— Tabled for corrections.

4. Business Arising

4.1: Updates regarding outdoor space:

- No updates yet.
- **Q: How will a decision regarding the space be made?**
- *A: Principal will discuss priorities for the space and what is needed with the Staff Council and with the school staff.*
- **Q: What is the timing for the creation of the outdoor space?**
- *A: Hopefully a decision will be made by March – what is needed and what the budget will be.*

4.2: Explore new catering options:

- **MOTION:** Governing Board will contact the three (3) caterers approved by the EMSB and ask each to present their offerings: actual food that is prepared for students, containers used, etc.
- Motion to approve Diego Di Stefano, seconded by Merika Ramundo. **Motion Passed – Unanimously**

4.3: Rules of Internal Management:

- Governing Board members will review the Rules of Internal Management document and inform Merika Ramundo, Diego Di Stefano, Lino Faratro and Verena Garofalo of any questions, additions, comments before the next GB Meeting (March 10, 2025). Once approved, the Rules of Internal Management will be read by each member of the GB (returning and new) at the beginning of each school year.

5. Principals' Report

Principal Canale extended a warm welcome to Mrs. Laurie G., our newest Governing Board (GB) member.

1. Lockdown Drill – January 9, 2025

I want to sincerely thank all staff, students, and parents for their ongoing support and collaboration. Our lockdown drill was successfully completed in under five minutes, demonstrating our school's preparedness and commitment to safety.

2. Parent-Teacher Interviews

Parent-teacher interviews will take place on Thursday, February 27, 2025. A detailed letter with all the necessary information will be sent out.

These interviews are primarily intended for:

- Students on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Students experiencing academic challenges

As was the case last year, the interviews will be conducted virtually. More details will follow.

3. Sign-In and Visitor Passes

I recently met with Home and School Chair Mrs. Spadafino, along with our front office secretaries, to reinforce the importance of our sign-in procedure.

- A sign-in document is located at the main entrance.
- All adults entering the building—including parent volunteers, school board members, and other community stakeholders—must sign in.
- A visitor pass will be issued to ensure safety and accountability within the school.

4. Governing Board Email Address

At our recent EMSB Principal's Meeting, all principals were instructed by the regional directors that Governing Board bodies will no longer have their own email addresses.

Moving forward:

- Any parent or community stakeholder wishing to contact GB members may do so by using the official school email address (Honoré Mercier email) or by emailing the principal directly.
- Any GB-related inquiries will be forwarded to the Governing Board as needed.

5. Registration Numbers for 2025-2026

I have already conducted tours for families who were unable to attend our Open House evening.

- As of now, 24 families have expressed interest in enrolling their child for the upcoming school year.
- We will closely monitor these numbers and hope to see stable enrollment by the end of February.

6. Fearless Girls Leadership Workshop

Following up on a question raised at the Governing Board meeting regarding the selection process for this workshop:

- I met with Mrs. Farella in an in-office meeting to discuss her concerns.
- She agreed that teachers should select participants for this Empowerment workshop, as they know their students best.

6. Teachers' Report

1. Veronica Graniero:

- Holiday concert went very well.
 - It raised \$2400 – a xylophone was purchased and there is money left over.
- Harry Potter Book Club
 - 51 students between from grade 3-6
- Staff Appreciation Week
 - Thank you to Home & School

2. Peter Tsatoumas

- Basketball @ Lunch started for grades 5 and 6

3. Andrew Martinez:

- Winter camp was January 23-30-31. It was an incredible experience and students really enjoyed it.

4. Laurie Giangaspero

- Cycle 1 has started work on STEM projects

7. B.A.S.E. Report

1. January PED Days:

- Muti-sensory activities
- Dinoversaire
- Chinese New Year: tradition and culture, noodle soup, red envelope + treat

2. Upcoming February PED Days:

- Sledding at Delorme Park, breakfast and lunch
- Winter theme activities, pizza lunch

3. Hockey League:

- Grades 4-5-6
- Open to B.A.S.E. and non-B.A.S.E. students

4. Latin dance:

- Grades Pre-K, K-1
- Thursdays

5. February highlights:

- Black History Month education
- Feb. 12: Lantern Festival

— Feb. 14: Masquerade Ball

8. Central Parents Committee Report

Highlights from EMSB Parents Committee Meeting on January 9

1. Budget Building Process

- What is it?
 - All governing board and the EMSB PC must complete the budget building process annually.
 - Locally, each governing board must prioritize what they think the school board should be spending funds on at their school – assess local needs.
 - At the EMSB PC level this process is done on a board-wide level.
 - The forms from the government have not been received yet however governing board can prepare and discuss this topic. Some questions to consider:
 - a. What priorities were submitted last year?
 - b. What do you want to change this year?
 - c. Are there things that should not be cut?
 - Why is this process important? Recent announcement regarding budget cuts in the Ministry of Education. 2.6 million dollars cut at the EMSB. Background: December 22 article: <https://www.montrealgazette.com/news/provincial-news/article634893.html>
 - EMSB PC discussed budget cuts. A question to be brought forward:
 - a. What specific scorecard or metrics are being used to evaluate the areas targeted for budget cuts?
 - As a Parent Committee, we need this information to assess how these decisions will impact our children's education and well-being.

2. Letters to EMSB senior administration from EMSB PC

- Two letters addressed to the EMSB's senior administration were drafted and presented by the EMSB PC executive for approval. The two letters addressed the following topics:
 - Educational Projects Survey: Follow up letter outlining significant issues with the last year's educational projects survey process. Asking senior administration to address concerns brought forward in the initial letter dated January 14, 2024. Response requested by February 14, 2025.
 - Service email account for school governing boards: Letter of concern regarding the use of personal or school principal's email address to conduct governing board business. EMSB PC strongly recommends assigning official, dedicated email addresses to each governing board. Response requested by February 14, 2025.

3. Draft Calendars (Teachers) for the Youth, Adult and Vocational Sectors for 2025-2026

- Approved and sent to for EMSB PC for consultation – draft shows that first day of school is Tuesday after Labour Day. This is rare but does happen. The calendar follows the normal allotment of days and union agreements and the first day happens to fall in September.

4. Parent Commissioner's Report

In their report to the Council of Commissioners, the Parent Commissioners did mention their concerns regarding:

- School Websites: Parents emphasized the importance of up-to-date and accurate school websites as key tools for communication and promotion. Concerns were noted about update delays, occasional inaccuracies, and the balance between standardization and personalization of sites across the system.
- Service Account Emails for governing boards, and Educational Project Surveys (see letter item above)

Motions passed at Council of Commissioners meeting:

- Health and Safety in the Workplace – CNESST Retrospective Plan - Choice of Limit per Claim and CNESST Dues for 2025.
- Proposal to Rescind Policy DG-26.1 – To Facilitate the Disclosure of Wrongdoings (policy is obsolete with the adoption of Bill 53 on November 30, 2024) - approved and sent for consultation to the Central Management Advisory Committee – Resource Allocation Committee (CMAC-RAC) and be sent for information to the local unions and associations.
- 2023-2024 audited financial statements
- Draft Calendars (Teachers) for the Youth, Adult and Vocational Sectors for 2025-2026 – approved and sent to for consultation to: English Montreal School Board Parents Committee (EMSBPC); Central Management Advisory Committee - Resource Allocation Committee (CMAC-RAC); Association of Montreal School Administrators (AMSA); Montréal Teachers Association (MTA)
- Approval of list of partners for the recruitment and personalized accompaniment of international students for the Adult Education and Vocational Training programs: Academie Internationale Inc., Ahmon Institut de Montreal, Can-Share Connection

Reminder: Council of Commissioners meetings are livestreamed and recorded and can be viewed any time on the EMSB website. <https://www.webtv.coop/channel/CSEM-2D-EMSB/10>

English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) Report

- Workshop on parent governance coming up on January 21 from 7:00-8:30pm (<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BAfZDJmNQ/>)
- Second iteration of survey being conducted by EPCA and Santé Québec. Last year's survey on mental health was filled out by 14,000. This year's survey will focus on mental health, screen time, special needs. Information from these surveys gets transmitted to government ministries – data makes an impact. Look out for this survey and please consider taking part.

9. Treasurer's Report

Funds were recently spent on GB Holiday dinner and flowers for Ms. Morena's retirement.

10. Commissioner's Report

Mario sends his regrets.

11. Home and School Report

- Following up on Mr. Andrew's question about the profit made during the Book Fair: The total amount earned was \$3,742.13 in Scholastic dollars, which can be used to order items from a catalog for the classroom.
- Cabane à Sucre is scheduled for March 11th and has been reserved with the company.
- For Valentine's Day, each student will receive a packaged vanilla cupcake at lunch, and an inflatable heart mascot volunteer will help distribute the cupcakes.
- Felix and Norton cookies have been ordered. Parents will receive an email with information about the pick-up schedule on February 12th.

12. Email approvals

12.1: January 24, 2025: Grad Committee Raffle

12.2: January 24, 2025: Grad Committee Fundraiser, 3 options voted on separately

13. New Business Overview

13.1: The ABAV (Anti-Bullying and Anti-Violence) document for 2024-2025

- Although it was motioned that the GB would contribute to the building of the ABAV document and this was a point in the agenda in the last few GB meetings, the ABAV document was presented, without the time for GB members to provide feedback. It was therefore agreed that GB will be given the time to elaborate on the definition of bullying in the school agenda's Code of Conduct, as this was stated as being the main tool used in the school for accountability.
- MOTION TO APPROVE the ABAV document, as presented by Ms. Canale for the 2025-4-2025 school year by Veronica Graniero, seconded by Robert Panetta. **Motion Passed – Unanimously**

13.2: The Honoré Mercier School budget (and forecast for next year)

- Ms. Canale presented the school budget
- Ms. Canale has to investigate where the RotiRoti \$500 is from last school year.
 - This is usually reserved for the Grade 6 Grad
- MOTION TO APPROVE the 2024-2025 School Budget and Forecast for next year, as presented by Ms. Canale passed by Joey Fazzari, seconded by Diego Di Stefano. **Motion Passed – Unanimously**
- MOTION TO APPROVE a \$0.25 raise in lunch fees, from \$2.25 to \$2.50 next school year by Robert Panetta, seconded by Joey Fazzari. **Motion DID NOT Passed – Against: 5, Abstain: 3, For: 0, 2 voting members were not present.**

13.3: The ACGC document (Academic and Career Guidance Content)

- Grade 5: Started to explore what they want to do in the future

- Grade 6: Focus on transition to high school

13.4: 2025-2026 Registration numbers

- This was covered during Ms. Canale's Principal's Report

14. Varia

N/A

15. Next Governing Board Meeting Date(s)

- Monday, March 10, 2025
- Monday, April 14, 2025
- Monday, May 12, 2025
- Monday, June 16, 2025

* All meetings at 7pm unless otherwise noted.

16. Questions

N/A

17. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn the meeting 10:20 pm
 - Motion to Approve: Robert Panetta, seconded by Veronica Graniero
 - **Motion Passed - Unanimously**


GB Chair


Principal