

**Annual Report for 2009-2010 for the Governing Board
Roslyn Elementary School**

4699 Westmount Avenue
Westmount, QC H3Y 1X6

Members of the Board

Antginas, Christine		Parent
Carson, Emily		Parent
Dionisopoulos, Thanasi		Parent
Doré, Christianne		Teacher (2009)
Faregh, Neda		Parent
Fernandes, Melanie		Teacher
Kelly, Kirk	Chair, regional delegate	Parent
Lockhart, Chris	non-voting	Community rep (left Oct.)
McMorran, James	non-voting	Principal
Migicovsky, Charlotte		Teacher
Moroska, Mary		Staff
Murphy, Joanne		Teacher
Norris, Tara		Parent
Primiano, Laura		Teacher
Richardson, Karen		Parent
Sauvé-Frankel, Ginette	non-voting	School commissioner
Spiridigliozzi, Tina	non-voting	Vice-principal
Zmanay, Ysanne		Teacher (2010)

Number of meetings held 7

September 21, 2009
November 9, 2009
December 14, 2009
February 8, 2010
April 12, 2010
May 10, 2010
June 14, 2010

Chair's remarks

Thank you to the parents, teachers and staff who volunteered their time to be part of the governing board. Thanks also to Roslyn's school commissioners for her dedication to the school and to sustainability, to our excellent community rep who unfortunately had to resign to pursue a new job opportunity, and to the Principal and Vice-principal who were always open to new ideas, always prepared and a pleasure to work alongside.

Activities, Programs, Services, Issues

1. Enrichment program – Governing board endorsed the continued existence of the enrichment program that offers gifted students an opportunity to work with university graduate and undergraduate students in a topic area

- where they are very strong. Courses for 2009-2010 included English literature, mathematics, geography, computer science and science/engineering.
2. Roslyn's enrolment and public profile: Governing board discussed the looming problems with enrolment and how falling enrolment would negatively affect the services offered to students. There was agreement that the board and other school organizations needed to be proactive in addressing this potential problem. As part of a possible solution, the board discussed and agreed that the public profile of Roslyn seriously lagged the school's actual performance and endorsed efforts to improve its public image.
 3. Web site: Governing board endorsed efforts to rethink and reengineer Roslyn's web site as a key component of efforts to reposition the school more in line with its multiple strengths. It was agreed that this would be done as much as possible with parent and community volunteers. The web site was subsequently completely redone at no cost to the school. Parents and community members have remarked on the professional quality of the work and how it very much puts Roslyn in a more favourable light.
 4. End of year social: Governing board endorsed strongly the idea of holding an end of year celebration to coincide with Open House in spring 2010 and asked Home and School if it could possibly canvass its members to see if there might be volunteers to take this on. The celebration was successfully held and many new and/or potential parents remarked on the very positive energy and strong community spirit of the school and suggested that the event would help them decide that Roslyn was right for their children.
 5. High school entrance exams: Governing board discussed the current practice of three high schools in Region 3 using three different sets of tests and requiring each an application fee. A motion was passed asking the EMSB to explain the testing policy and the need for three separate admissions requirements in the face of declining enrolments across the Region and the increased competition from private schools for the best students. There was also concern that, inadvertently, the policy might be discouraging families from lower socio-economic backgrounds from applying.
 6. French second language programs and review of EMSB network: The board had a number of discussions on the enrolment projections that show falling enrolment throughout the EMSB system. There was consensus that the Council of commissioners must address this problem directly by closing the smaller schools that lack resources and are doing their students a disfavor by staying open.
 7. Bill 104 petition: Governing board passed a motion that the Quebec government allow more freedom of choice for parents in their selection of schools.

8. School fees: Governing board approved an increase in lunch fees of \$5 per student per year and also an increase of \$5 to the school activity fees per student per year.
9. Email policy: the Board developed and approved a policy that provides a regulatory framework for Roslyn to move as much of its day to day communications with parents from paper to email.
10. Web content: the Board developed and approved a policy that provides a regulatory framework to get the necessary approvals for people seeking to have information placed on the Roslyn web site.
11. Field Trips: The Board formally approved the requests for field trips as required by the EMSB.
12. Budget building exercise: the Board discussed the upcoming budget for the EMSB and reported back to the EMSB on areas where the board felt that increased funding was required.
13. Criteria for principal: The board expressed complete satisfaction with the leadership provided by James McMorran and Tina Spiridigliozzi. A number of minor changes were made to the criteria for principal to reflect the enrichment program and other concerns and the revised document was approved and forwarded to Executive Director's office.
14. Safety and security: efforts were made to enlist the help of the City of Westmount in a thorough review of signage, parking and general traffic safety around the school. Surveillance has been modestly increased, revised parking rules are in effect and pavement markings have been refreshed. There is still work to be done here, particularly in the enforcement of the time that cars are allowed to idle while waiting for students. There was also discussion about the installation of a public announcement system that linked the classrooms and the central office. Because the school was so solidly built, it would be very expensive to drill the necessary conduits for all the wiring and equipment.
15. PYP for Roslyn: The Board considered a report from the Principal and Vice-principal on their research into a possible PYP for Roslyn. It was decided that the school already offered almost all the benefits of a PYP without the onerous fees and loss of control over the daily schedule that such a move would require. It was agreed to defer this for another review in future years.
16. Class d'acceuil and homework program: Board approved the expenditures to continue these very worthwhile activities once the monies were finally allocated to Roslyn from the Ministry.
17. Multi-purpose room in the basement: The Board had asked the EMSB to assess the possibility and approximate cost of converting the front of the basement to a multi-purpose room that could be used for lunch, rehearsals and indoor play space on rainy days. The Board replied after a long delay that they were fairly certain that all the existing walls were bearing walls and that the cost of re-engineering the basement to move the support out to the exterior walls was prohibitive.

18. Playground: The Board endorsed Home and School's offer to pay for the painting of games spaces throughout the playground. Approximate cost is \$4,500
19. Pass program for grade 5: the board endorsed the return of the pass program for grade 5 students to help them deal with some of the social pressures that adolescence brings on.
20. Gambling: there was discussion about the possibility of a program to sensitize children to the dangers of gambling. This was talked about at a number of meetings. The final decision was to defer any such program for discussion in 2010-2011.
21. Budget: the budget for 2009-2010 was given final approval in September and the draft budget for 2010-2011 was approved at the Board's last meeting in June.
22. Literacy: the principal discussed the additional steps that were being taken to support literacy efforts with funding from the EMSB. The Board approved.
23. Success plan: The Board approved the school's success plan brought forward by the Principal for 2010-2011.

Sub-committees and their mandates

No sub-committees were authorized by the Board for 2009-2010.

Informing the school community

The Bill 104 petition occasioned a good deal of communication from the school to parents.

Families of children selected for the enrichment program received communications about the program and a form asking for their agreement for their child to participate.

Two letters from the governing board chair were published in the Roslyn Review, which appears 6 times a year.

Apart from these activities, there were few formal efforts to inform the school community – this is an area where some improvements could definitely be made.

Recommendations

We live in a society that takes an intrusive cradle to grave approach to education; every "t" that must be crossed and every "l" that needs dotting is described and prescribed in the regulations surrounding governing boards. Schools need more freedom to invest their resources as they see fit and governing boards need more initiative than simply following the path laid out by the Ministry. I feel it's important for the Board to identify critical areas in need of change in the school and to take on the responsibility at the Board level to make those changes.

Tying funding to enrolment and then restricting the ability of English schools to attract students is a long-term recipe for mediocrity in English schools unless the Council of commissioners is prepared to make the difficult choices and close under-populated schools. Otherwise as enrolment falls, resources will be lost and English schools will move towards of lowest common denominator of quality rather than continuing the excellence we see in some of the EMSB schools now.

Finally, the new Board began a number of worthwhile initiatives in 2009-2010 that merit continuation:

- complete the shift to email communications with parents
- continue the refinement of the Roslyn web site and continued efforts to ensure that Roslyn's communications tools are designed to meet the needs of the communities it serves and that they are faithful to strengths and qualities exhibited by the students, teachers, staff and parent community.
- continue and grow the enrichment program
- improve safety and security for students around the school in partnership with parents, the police service and the City of Westmount
- get a rationale from the EMSB for the existence of 3 entrance exams to the three local restricted-admission high schools and consider next steps
- support efforts and seek increased funds to increase literacy in language and mathematics
- revisit the need for a gambling sensitization program at Roslyn