

ROPS School Council Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2026

6:30 PM Start

In Person Attendance

1. Jessica Houle
2. Marcelle Robinson
3. Amanda Toal
4. Christine Ballard

Online Attendance

5. Brenda Cohen
6. Andrea Mendrinos
7. Sandeep N. Das
8. Devashni Murugan
9. Rachel Cameron
10. Zehra Kaynak Tan

Land Acknowledgment/ Welcome from the Principal

The land acknowledgement was read by School Principal, Jessica Houle.

Last meeting Recap, Meeting Minutes

Ms. Houle provided a revision of the meeting minutes from the January meeting. Key highlights from January included: Drumming workshop, Music Fest, EQAO results for Grades 3 and 6, and the Treasurer's report indicating a \$9,000 reserve. Motion to approve: Brenda moved to approve the minutes; the motion was carried.

Principles Report: Well-Being & Bullying Prevention

- **School Operations & Communication:**
 - New Website Launch: Ms. Houle announced that HDSB is transitioning to a new, professional website platform. River Oaks will receive its update this week, aiming to streamline communication and improve navigation for parents.
- **Staffing Update:** It was noted that Gemma (VP) sent her regrets and was unable to attend. Former VP support is temporarily in place.

- **Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan (2025-26)**
 Data Review (Have Your Say Survey - Grades 4-8): The Principal presented specific school-level data from May 2025. Key findings include: Student Engagement: 60% of students report enjoying school, while 33% do not.
 Sense of Belonging: Only 54% of students feel accepted by their peers.
 Bullying Statistics: 52% of students reported being victims of verbal or social bullying (gossiping/exclusion).
 Comparative Analysis: Ms. Houle confirmed that River Oaks' scores are approximately 12% lower than the board average. A concerning gap was identified between teacher kindness (93%) and student satisfaction with bullying response (47%).
 2026 Goals & Strategies: Inclusion: Implementing anti-oppressive and anti-racism practices.
 Accountability: Consistent use of the Discriminatory and Harmful Language Protocol and the Bullying Response Protocol.
 Community: Strengthening student-teacher relationships through emotional validation and indigenous rights education.
 Next Steps: The full Intervention Plan will be posted on the new school website for parent review. A follow-up survey will be conducted in May/June 2026 to measure progress.

Treasurer's Report

- **Current Status (Treasurer's Report Summary)**
- **Balance Overview:** The school council account currently holds a reserve of approximately \$9,000.
- **Recent Expenditures:** A deposit has been successfully processed for the upcoming Fun Fair (specifically for the bouncing castles and related event rentals).
- **Outdoor Athletic Equipment:** Ms. Houle proposed a plan to replace the outdoor basketball backboards and nets, noting they are currently in poor condition.

Voting Status: While there was general enthusiasm for this improvement, a formal vote could not be conducted during this session due to the absence of a quorum (minimum number of voting members).

Next Step: Ms. Houle will obtain a formal quote for the equipment to present at the next meeting for a final decision.

- Long-Term Maintenance & Future Planning

Hard-top Resurfacing: Discussion took place regarding repainting the lines on the pavement. However, this project is temporarily on hold until the HDSB confirms the removal of unused portables.

Strategic Approach: To ensure fiscal responsibility, the council agreed to wait for the board's resurfacing cycle to avoid wasting funds on areas that may soon be under construction.

Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Events

- Parent Engagement Night: Paint Night

Event Dates: Scheduled for March 26th (with a potential second night on April 2nd due to high demand).

Status: Ms. Houle confirmed the event is fully booked. There was a discussion regarding the "School Cash Online" system and waitlist instructions.

Coordination: The instructor (Connie) will provide all necessary supplies (paint, canvases). Jessica will issue further community messaging to clarify registration steps for those on the waitlist.

- Proposed PIC Conference: Executive Functioning (April 16th)

Status Update: Ms. Houle informed the council that the proposal for the April 16th event is currently undergoing a mandatory vetting process by the Superintendent and the Board.

Timeline: The event is on hold pending board approval. Once the vetting process is complete, further details regarding the format and presenters will be shared with the council.

Fun Fair Planning & Volunteer Requirements

- **Committee Update & Planning:**

Project Lead: Brenda confirmed that the Fun Fair planning committee is officially active.

Kick-off Call: The first formal planning meeting is scheduled for March 24th (following March Break). A "call for volunteers" blurb will be sent out to the community to invite new members to the committee.

Logistics & Permits: Brenda has received the required documentation list from the Town of Oakville. Deposits for major rentals (e.g., bouncing castles) have already been processed. The committee aims to keep the format consistent with previous successful years

- **New Volunteer Policy: Vulnerable Sector Checks (VSC)**

Legislative Change: Ms. Houle informed the council of a significant change in provincial law. All volunteers must now provide a new VSC every 5 years (previously, an annual offense declaration was sufficient for longer periods).

Impact on Fun Fair: Every parent or guardian volunteering at the Fun Fair (supervising children or interacting with students) will be required to have a

valid, updated VSC on file. Application Process: Turnaround time is approximately 3 weeks. The cost is \$30, and applications are submitted online. Ms. Houle can provide a standard support letter on school letterhead for those needing it for their application.

Action Item: Council members are encouraged to spread the word early so volunteers have enough time to complete their checks before June.

Other Business

- **School Communication & Social Media**

Inquiry on Facebook Groups: A question was raised regarding a parent-managed Facebook group for River Oaks.HDSB Position: Ms. Houle clarified that the Halton District School Board does not manage, support, or monitor independent Facebook groups due to strict student privacy and photo-sharing regulations (SynthID/Copyright concerns). Official school

communication remains focused on the school website and the "Bruins Bulletin."

- Sign Board Update: Concerns were expressed regarding the outdated messages currently displayed on the street sign. The Principal noted the physical challenges involved in manually updating the letters (e.g., holding the glass open). Action Item: Council members offered to form a volunteer group to assist with regular updates to ensure the sign reflects current school events. Permission was requested to update the sign before the upcoming Easter break.

Next Meeting will be on May 4, at 6:30pm. (Hybrid Model)

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30.