MINUTES

Honoré Mercier Elementary School Governing Board

Wednesday, October 15, 2025 @ 6:40PM | *Meeting called to order by* Verena Garofalo

In Attendance

Cynthia Canale - Principal	X	Verena Garofalo - Chair	X
Marco De Crescentis	R	Sally Behjoudi	R
Angela DiLella	X	Lino Faratro	X
Laurie Giangaspero	X	Giuseppe Fazzari	X
Veronica Graniero	X	Merika Ramundo	X
Elisa Infusini	X	Sonia Ranellucci	X
Andrew Martinez	X	Saffiran Ali (Alternate)	R
Nancy Omobono	X	Adriana Giannini (Alternate)	X
Mario Pietrangelo	R	Felicia Spadafino	R
		Diego Di Stefano	XP
		Romina Mancini	XP

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

Assign minute-taking duties: Adriana Giannini

Assign time-keeper duties: Giuseppe Fazzari

1. Additions to Agenda

14.1 Yoga fundraiser

2. Approval of the Agenda

2.1 Motion to Approve: Lino Faratro, seconded by Veronica Graniero

Motion Passed – Unanimously

3. Adoption of Minutes

3.1 Governing Board members to approve of minutes from June 16, 2025.

4. Business Arising

4.1 Selection of a GB Secretary:

- No GB secretary has been appointed. Adriana will act as a delegate and take the minutes for this meeting. The meeting is also recorded using Teams AI notes.

4.2 Internal Rules of Management:

- The HM Governing Board Rules of Internal Management for 2024-2025 were approved in 2024. The document was updated and sent by email to all members. All new and returning members are to review the document and raise any questions or propose amendments before final approval. Approval or modifications to the document will be discussed at the next meeting.

4.3 ECA Dossier going back to Administration

- Reminder: At last year's June GB meeting, a motion was approved that the Extracurricular Activities dossier be under the responsibility of the HM administration as it was in the past.

4.4 New lunch provider:

Parents and staff members are asked to provide feedback regarding the new lunch provider Le Bistro:

- Mr. Andrew indicated that lunches arrived in insulated thermal bags until the warm meals are distributed to students. Distribution by the HM lunch staff has been very organized. Ms. Veronica added that the packaging (clear plastic seal) leads to condensation, which is not ideal for certain meals that can get soggy. Ms. Canale added that the provider is always on time for lunch delivery.
- Merika, Adriana and Sonia gave feedback from the parent-student perspective. Merika indicated that the online order platform is easy to use, convenient and that there are sometimes specials announced directly on the site. A 20% discount was recently offered, making lunches more affordable for families during busy weeks. Adriana agreed that the site is easy to use, as are cancellations which can conveniently be made the same morning before 7am. The provider does not have to be emailed, but the client is automatically credited in their cart. All parents agreed that while the students' feedback indicates that the meals are fair to good, with certain meals being more popular, it is too soon to give feedback based on the few meals purchased.
- Ms. Canale proposed to send a Google Form to parents to collect feedback in a few months. Comments will be shared with GB and can help make informed decisions about the provider. All members agreed; the topic will be revisited in February or March once comments are received.

5. Principals' Report

5.1 Welcome and Congratulations to our Governing Board 2025-2026:

- Mrs. Canale extended sincere congratulations to all members, parents, and staff for their involvement in this important committee. Thank you, Mrs. Garofalo, for your patience and collaboration with the e-votes. Mrs. Canale thanked our teachers for the strong interest they demonstrated. Due to their high level of engagement, we have appointed teacher alternates to the board. This committee plays a vital role in making decisions that directly impact our school and students.

5.2 Budget Update:

- Mrs. Canale reported that we are currently facing significant budget reductions imposed by the government, creating a challenging financial landscape for our school. She expressed appreciation to the Home & School Association for their kind and genuine support during this difficult period. The entire Honoré Mercier team is deeply grateful for H&S collective efforts and collaboration, as well as to all parent volunteers.

5.3 Open House:

- Open House will take place on **Tuesday, October 28th, 2025**. Tables for both the Home & School Association and Governing Board members will be set up. Mrs. Canale thanked the Open House Committee for working hard to ensure a successful evening.
- Pamphlets have been created, and during yesterday's meeting with the Home & School team, and they will assist in distributing these pamphlets to help spread the word in the community and encourage enrollment.
- One important point discussed is our goal to encourage local daycares to share information about the programs we offer, as Kindergarten 4 and Kindergarten 5 enrollment is critical.
- Thanks to Ms. Veronica and all staff for sending images, videos, and blurbs in both English and French to help boost interest on social media.
- Governing board members mentioned that some schools have made professional promotional videos and shared these on their social media pages to promote open houses. A bilingual promotional video will be investigated for 2026, as will the possibility of getting donations for the taping and editing. Some members suggest putting some fundraising aside to cover the costs of the video. Verena and Merika volunteered support for storyboarding and speaker training in preparation for the future video.

5.4 Extra-Curricular Activities (ECAs)

- As discussed during last year's Governing Board meeting, the school has taken back responsibility for the Extracurricular Activities dossier. Thank you to the Governing Board members for their valuable contributions.
- This year, we welcomed a new provider, Animation Kidz. After a thorough selection process alongside Mr. Marco, we decided to proceed with Animation Kidz while maintaining partnerships with Cortese Soccer and Angelo Di Bella Karate.
- Animation Kidz offers the additional benefit of an on-site coordinator and provides a diverse range of STEAM-focused activities during lunch and after school. Expanding the variety of extracurricular offerings was an important objective, especially in response to parental feedback from last year.
- This is a positive step forward, and I will provide further updates at our next meeting as developments occur. (Please see Annex: Report provided directly from Animation Kidz.)

5.5 Grade 6 Graduation Committee:

- As outlined during our initial Home & School meeting, Grade 6 teachers have prepared a detailed dossier covering key aspects of this year's graduation ceremony. Given the smaller Grade 6 cohort this year, the teaching team will oversee the following as usual:
    - Graduation ceremony and plaques
    - Hoodies

- Yearbook
- DJ services
- Photographer
- Breakfast
- Venue booking

The Grade 6 Graduation Committee, a sub-group of Home & School, will handle:

- Fundraising initiatives
- Decorations (following student theme selection)
- Loot bags
- Food arrangements
- Gym setup and cleanup on the event day

- As always, details and pricing will be presented to the Governing Board for approval before proceeding.

6 Outdoor Classroom Project

- Regrettably, due to ongoing substantial budget constraints, we will not proceed with the outdoor classroom project this year.
- However, teachers have proposed alternative uses for the donation fund, and these proposals will be submitted to the Governing Board for consideration and approval.
- Members brought forward the idea of using the funds for a similar project that would be determined and indicated that anyone who has made donations in the past for the specific outdoor classroom would be advised of any changes prior to using the donation. Romina shared that it is requested by some parents that part of the yard be covered in turf, as soccer is a popular recess-lunch activity. While the costs can be very high, Ms. Veronica will bring the request to a future staff meeting to get feedback. Ms. Canale adds that any permanent installations such as turf require approval from material resources at the school board and regional directors. If a request is made, detailed plans must be submitted for review and approval.

7 Fire Drills / Emergency Drills

- We have completed three of the four mandated EMSB fire drills. For clarity, two drills must occur during regular classroom instruction.
- The first drill was communicated to parents via memo; subsequent drills are unannounced to ensure adherence to safety protocols by varying staff groups. The third drill took place on Tuesday, October 14th, 2025, during lunchtime, involving a different group of staff.
- The final drill will be scheduled shortly during after-school daycare hours, considering weather conditions and involving different personnel. We thank staff and parents for their ongoing support in maintaining student safety and preparedness. As we approach the lockdown drill, we will communicate with our parents accordingly. This exercise is intended to prepare rather than an alarm.

8 Field Trip Fees:

- Due to recent government funding restrictions, some field trips now require families to contribute a nominal fee. We recognize the potential impact and sincerely appreciate your understanding. As budgets are finalized and further information becomes available, we will continue to provide updates to the Governing Board to maintain transparency.

9 Gymnasium Capacity. FYI:

- Standing only (no chairs or tables): 564 people
- Standing with tables (no chairs): 445 people
- Seated with chairs only (plus a few front tables for presenters): 445 people
- Seated with tables and chairs throughout: 340 people

6. Teachers' Report

Andrew Martinez:

- Motion put forward to enter the grade 5 and 6 students in the GMAA Mini-Volleyball Tournament on November 19th, 2025. Lunchtime volleyball will be starting in the coming weeks in preparation for the tournament. The event will be held at Laurier MacDonald or Pearson High School. Up to 38 students can be eligible to go to the tournament. The cost will be $18-$20/student, to cover school bus fees. The inscription cost is approximately $500 per team. Motion to approve: Joey Fazzari, seconded by Veronica Graniero. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Veronica Graniero:

- The 1/2 split class and the grade 2 class will be entered in the CBC Music Class Challenge. Students will meet three times a week, and filming will take place in early November. The school has won the competition in the past and was recently in the top 10.
- The music lunch club will be open to grades 4, 5 and 6. Students will meet on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

7. Daycare Report

Mr. Marco sent his regrets.

8. Central Parents Committee Report

Nothing to report. The CBC has not met for the 2025-2026 school year.

9. Treasurer's Report

Nothing to report.

10. Commissioner's Report

Mr. Pietrangelo sent his regrets.

11. Home and School Report

Sonia presented a fundraising request on behalf of the Grade 6 Grad Committee:

- Movie night: To be in the HM gymnasium on Novembre 14th 2025, at 6:30 pm (duration to be determined, approximate end time 8:45). The movie night will be advertised as a cozy family event in which attendees are asked to attend in pajamas. Parents may bring comfortable chairs; students are encouraged to bring blankets to sit on the floor. Gymnasium mats will not be used to prevent wear and tear and further cleaning due to snacks/beverages. Snacks and beverages will be sold within the first 30 minutes after doors open at a cost of $1-$4. A movie will be selected from the link of approved movies for the school.
- Tickets will be sold in advance and taken by volunteers upon entering the gym. Snack and beverage coupons will be sold at the door before entering. Bathrooms and halls surrounding the gym will be supervised throughout the duration of the event by parent volunteers. Grade 6 students will be helping at all stations and will be accompanied by grade 6 parent volunteers. Mme Elisa congratulated the committee for implicating the grade 6 students in running the event.
- Motion is put forward to hold the HM movie night fundraiser for the entire school, with a portion of the proceeds going toward grade 6 students, on November 14th 2025, at 6:30 at a cost of $5/child (bag of popcorn included), $8/adult, $25/family of 4 and other package to follow for families of 5 or 6. Motion to approve: Merika Ramundo, seconded by Lino Faratro. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Romina presented two Home and School fundraising requests/motions:

1. Pasta Doro: Four types of pasta and arancini will be available for purchase at a cost of $15/bag and $12/6 arancini, respectively. Funds will go towards various school activities. Pasta will be distributed to parents during parent-teacher interviews. Motion to approve: Joey Fazzari, seconded by Andrew Martinez. **Motion passed unanimously.**
2. Raphie Rockstar Magic Show: To be held on Saturday, January 24th, 2026, at Laurier Macdonald High School (LMac), which can accommodate 340 people in their auditorium. The show will include a 10 min live DJ set, 10 min live singer, intermission, followed by the one-hour magic show. The total cost to hold the event is $1 500. Being a former student of HM, Raphie has offered a special price (the show typically costs >$2000). Tickets will be $25/person. Home and School will investigate sponsorship to include a treat and beverage with the ticket, to be provided at intermission. Ms. Canale confirms that the date is approved by LMac. Funds will be used for various future HM activities. Ms. Veronica indicates that we should ensure enough parent volunteers at the door to respect LMac rules and that food is not brought into the auditorium. Motion to approve: Lino Faratro, seconded by Nancy Omobono. **Motion passed unanimously.**
3. Raphi Rockstar Magic Show Giveaway: A giveaway will be advertised for the HM Open House. New parents attending this year's open house can enter to win 4 tickets (or more if family of 5 for example) to the family event that was just approved. All members are in favour.

12. Email approvals

The following list of six events or activities were approved by evote:

12.1 August 30, 2025: Welcome Day charges

12.2 September 8, 2025: GMAA Cross Country

12.3 September 9, 2025: OSM Field Trip

12.4 September 16, 2025: HM Band Program

12.5 September 21, 2025: ECAs

12.6 September 30, 2025: BASE ECAs

In the future, evotes will only be used to emergency approvals.

13. New Business Overview

No new business.

14. Varia

14.1 Yoga fundraiser

- Merika presents a yoga fundraising initiative similar to the yoga classes held last school year by Nadia, a former HM alumni and yoga teacher, in the school gymnasium. This year, new pricing, tax receipts and extended advertising to the broader East end community are brought forward. REISA would like to help reach English speaking residents in the community in promoting the yoga classes.
- Ms Canale confirms that hosting this initiative at HM was verified and approved at the school board.
- People attending the class have the possibility of paying on a drop-in basis at $10/class or by purchasing a $100 card for the year (with tax receipt) through the Canada Helps webpage (the card is valid for 24 classes). HM teachers and staff can attend classes for free. EMSB staff can benefit from a 50% discount. One class will be dedicated to raising funds for grade 6 students. A 4,5 % service fee is applicable through the Canada Helps page (exact amount to be validated). All money going through this site must first be processed by the school board and then distributed to the school. All cash payments for drop—in classes will be handled directly by the school.
- A motion is brought forward to hold the yoga fundraising classes on Wednesday evenings in the HM gym, starting November 5th, 2025, at the costs mentioned above and for a duration of 24 classes (23 classes plus the additional grade 6 fundraising class). All proceeds will be allocated to health and wellness initiatives for staff and students, with staff council determining specific uses of the funds. Motion to approve: Sonia Ranelluci, seconded by Nancy Omobono. **Motion passed unanimously.**

15. Next Governing Board Meeting Dates

- Monday, November 10, 2025
- Tuesday, December 16, 2025
- Tuesday, February 17, 2026
- Tuesday, March 24, 2026
- Tuesday, April 14, 2026
- Tuesday, May 19, 2026