



**Queen Margaret's School
Parents' Association (PA) Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2026**

Attendees:

PA Executive

Neemet McDowell (Chair) via Zoom
Darrel Siegel (Vice Chair)
Taren Phillips (Secretary)
Asti Williams (Community Welfare)

Regrets:

Michele Gergely (Treasurer)
Natalie Macgregor (Past Chair)

QMS Staff

Heather Bartfai, Director of Community & Donor Engagement
Hayley Picard, Director of Marketing & Communications
Jemima Monro

PA Members

Heather M. Lucy Z. (Zoom), Catherine R. (Zoom), Tace S. (Zoom)

- Call to Order 8:30am (Neemet)
- Territorial Acknowledgement (Neemet)
- Welcome and Introductions
- Attendance (recorded)
- Approval of Minutes from March 2, 2026
 - Taren - approved; Asti - seconded – all in favor.

Reports

Chair: Neemet McDowell

- Motion to apply \$22,650 to the school wish list. These funds will be used to provide support for several initiatives, including ECE, Junior and Senior schools, and spaces across campus where the community is hosted. This donation ensures we drain the gaming account to meet BC Gaming requirements while also leaving sufficient seed money to pay for remaining expenses for the end of this school year, as well as for the start of the next.

- Gaming update
 - With Lucy's help, PA is finishing up with Gaming reports from a few missing years.
 - Action item required for May - decide on Holiday Market Nov. 2026 raffle prizes, purchase and/or confirm donations for prizes by end of May.
 - Darrel^[PDI] to help set up online raffle vendor contract.
 - Gaming event application should be completed by June.
- PA positions open for 2026/2027
 - The PA is seeking interested parents/guardians to join the PA Exec as the following positions are open for next year - Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer. Any parents interested are asked to email the PA at gmspac@gms.bc.ca. Position details are attached at the end of the minutes, for reference.
 - Neemet would like to thank Darrel for bringing the PA into the tech-savvy space with hosting online platforms to streamline all this HMF, videos for PA meetings, etc. And as well for Michelle for stepping in as Treasurer this year.
 - Neemet is stepping down from the Chair position as it has been two years, and will provide transition support for the incoming Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer volunteers. Taren and Asti have kindly agreed to stay in their current positions. Michelle and Neemet will also continue as volunteers-at-large for next year.
- There is an opening for a parent to organize the Created-By-Kids fundraiser that runs during the Fall term, should the PA wish to continue with this fundraiser as Cynthia's child is graduating.

Vice-Chair: Darrel Siegle

- Met with Neemet to discuss transitioning out of the role of Vice Chair. Continuing to work on moving the Raffle online, which will help increase sales and revenue, and switching the hosting of the PA forms websites to the QMS server.

Secretary: Taren Phillips

- Will be preparing a guidebook for running the HMF, to ease planning for future events.

Treasurer: Michelle Gergely

- General account balance \$7,540.95
- Gaming account balance \$11,179.82

Community Welfare: Asti Williams

- Been busy writing cards, including two for new staff, two for new families, one condolence, one congrats on engagement and two thank you cards.

Guest Speakers: Alison Galloway & Elisabeth Ruiter

Alison Galloway, Junior School Principal

- I always appreciate time with parents who care deeply about the school. I am delighted to be working as Principal this year and to be surrounded by so many amazing teachers and students on a daily basis.



- I am working closely with Elizabeth Rüter, and we are very aligned in how we support students, staff and families. I'll share a quick snapshot of where the Junior School is heading and the thinking behind our priorities.
- This year we are focused on a few connected areas:
 - Innovation in learning
 - Strengthening social-emotional learning
 - Increasing student voice and choice
 - All within a culture of joy
- Our core belief:
 - Academic excellence and wellbeing go together
 - When students feel safe, confident and happy, they engage more deeply
 - We see this every day when students are engaged and joyful, learning flows!
- In classrooms:
 - Balance of challenge, curiosity, and hands-on learning
 - More outdoor experiences, new clubs, and opportunities to try new things
 - Students explaining their thinking and taking risks
- Strengthening academics:
 - Clearer scope and sequence in Math and Language Arts
 - Using student data to guide teaching
 - Supporting all learners while maintaining high standards
 - Focus on innovation and learning. Listening to what the research is telling us about learning and trying to stay up to date on improvements, i.e.: what is the attention span of an average student, increasing time for brain breaks, etc.
- Focus on the basics:
 - Homework guideline of about 10 minutes per grade
 - Building math fact fluency
 - Daily reading in every classroom with strong resources
- Supporting students:
 - More in-class support
 - Focus on differentiation
 - Early, proactive support with families
 - We are very lucky to have small class sizes, proud students and teachers.
- Social-emotional learning is part of daily classroom life
- Adding more hands-on learning opportunities and increasing the budget for teacher-led field trips
- Grounded in our virtues and Cowichan traditions
- Continued focus on resilience:
 - Through our risky play work. We are looking to augment our playgrounds
 - Helping students manage challenges, recover from setbacks, and persist
- Theme of joy:
 - We believe joyful teachers create joyful classrooms



- This strengthens connection and learning across the school
 - When you love what you do, things come easily!
- Strong schools are built on strong partnerships with families
- This year we are creating more ways to connect:
 - Coffee mornings
 - Family Art Nights
 - Community events
- We are also looking to expand this:
 - Parent studio nights
 - Coffee talks
 - Guest speakers
- We would really value your ideas
 - How would you like to be involved?
 - What feels meaningful for your community?
- Communication
 - Monthly Junior School Newsletter
 - Weekly classroom updates
 - Keeping things clear and manageable
- Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership. Feedback is always welcome, especially as we think about strengthening parent involvement. It is a privilege to lead the Junior School and to work alongside this community. Thank you!

Elisabeth Ruiters, Junior School Vice Principal

- This year we have introduced subject-specific captains (i.e. Spirit Captain, Service Captain, Band Captain, Athletic Captain, etc.) instead of “house captains” and this has been a great success!
- Our Student Council hosts monthly meetings where a class representative delivers feedback from their classmates and a discussion is facilitated by the Council Captains and administrator (Galloway, Ruiters, Powell).
 - There are pre-arranged questions for classes to discuss prior to the meeting and the teacher selects a representative that they feel is ready for the leadership opportunity. The representatives vary each month and there are clear criteria for the teacher to follow.
 - Grade 7 classes will be represented by two elected council captains for the duration of the year, based on a class election.
- We want to give students the opportunity to help make decisions and have a say in improving their experience at the school.
- Questions asked: How do we increase new student connections? How do we build connections with the Senior School?



- The weekly chapel service is now called the Community Gathering and focuses on sharing school and community values as well as traditions from around the world.

For Discussion and Updates

- PA Fun Fest, Wednesday June 10th
 - **Action Item:** Taren to book inflatables (Inflatafun) DONE
 - **Action Item:** Neemet to ask April for the food quote.
 - **Action Item:** Lucy to purchase freezies.
 - Cost estimate ~\$2000
- Annual Wish List
 - Motion to Approve the donation of \$22,650 for the Annual Wish List
 - Neemet - approved; Asti - seconded – all in favor.
 - A finalized list will be provided by Heather at May's meeting.
- PA Storage Organization - tabled until May
- Gathering ideas for ways to support the community of Tumbler Ridge. Taren to reach out to the school to inquire.
 - Update: The Chair of the Tumbler Ridge Secondary School Parent's Association was grateful for our offer to supply baked goods for their upcoming PA meeting on May 7th. Taren has made arrangements with their local bakery. ❤️

New Business

- The QMS Rugby team is looking for parent volunteers to help with the Royals Rugby Tournament, Friday April 24th to help run the concession and BBQ.

All meeting minutes are posted on the parent portal for reference, and any questions can be emailed to gmspac@qms.bc.ca.

Close Meeting

Next Meeting: Monday, May 4, 2026 at 8:30am in Karin Quinn Hall and on Zoom
Meeting Adjourned, 9:20am (Neemet)



Duties of the PA Executive

As per the Parents' Association Constitution and Bylaws

Chair

The Chair will:

- Speak on behalf of the Association
- Preside at membership and Executive meetings
- Ensure that an agenda is prepared
- Appoint committees where authorized by the membership or Executive
- Ensure that the Association is represented at school functions
- Ensure that the Association activities are aimed at achieving the purpose set out in the Constitution
- Be a signing officer

Vice Chair

The Vice Chair will:

- Assist and support the Chair in the performance of his or her duties
- Assume the duties of the Chair's absence upon request
- Accept extra duties as required
- Be a signing officer

Treasurer

The Treasurer will:

- Ensure all funds of the Association are properly accounted for
- Disburse funds as authorized by the membership or executive
- Ensure proper financial records and books of account are maintained
- Report on all receipts and disbursements at general and executive meetings
- Make financial records and book of account ready for inspection of audit annually
- Ensure that another signing officer has access to the financial records and books of account in the Treasurers' absence
- Submit a financial statement at the Annual General Meeting
- Be one of the signing officers

To review the PA Constitution, please visit <https://qms.bc.ca/parents/>

