

OTTAWA-CARLETON ASSEMBLY OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

Meeting of Thursday February 18th, 2010

Fisher Park PS Library

ATTENDANCE :

Total Membership: 86

Member schools

A. Lorne Cassidy ES – Kim Clausen
Adrienne Clarkson ES – Carrie Eaton
Agincourt Road PS – Norah Vollmer
Broadview PS – Carrie Myres
Cairine Wilson SS – Janet Patch
Canterbury HS – Diane Beckett, Bob Weist, Nadine Clarke (SSC)
Castlefrank ES – Richard Perkins
Castor Valley ES – Heather Wilson
Churchill Alt. S – Pam Dilworth-Christie, Dave Fortier
Connaught PS – Madelaine Stewart-Dmaj
Elmdale PS – Stephanie Bolt
Fallingbrook Comm. ES – Peter Kokkovas
Forest Valley ES – Janet Patch
Glebe CI – Deborah Lemkow
Glen Cairn PS – Mike Hickey
Glen Ogilvie PS – Cathy Galligan
Henry Larsen ES – Susan Heckbert
Henry Munro MS – Patricia Cole
J.H. Putman PS – Maria Di Rosa
Jockvale ES – Jamesee Winchester
Katimavik ES – Nihan Kavaslar
Knoxdale PS – Paula Shaver
Lisgar CI – Beth Doubt (SEAC)
Manordale PS – Cathy Babyak

Manotick PS – Michaela Stuart
Merivale HS – Anne Teutsch
Metcalf PS – Kevin MacPherson
Ottawa Technical LC – Daniel Oickle
Pleasant Park PS – Nancy Schenk, Sabrah Talib, Lisa Hagedorn
Regina Street PS – Sarah Neville
Rideau Valley MS – Sue Carswell
Riverview Alt. S – Gabe Thirlwall
Roberta Bondar PS – Brenda Agard Alleyne
Roch Carrier ES – Brett Wilson
Rockcliffe Park PS – Joel Berger
South Carleton HS – Sue Carswell
South March PS – Chris Bridgen
Stephen Leacock PS – Enang Akan
Steve MacLean PS – Jen Carter
Summit Alt. S – Richard Deadman
Viscount Alexander PS – Michael Barnes
W.O. Mitchell ES – Brenda Verch
Woodroffe Avenue PS – Maria Di Rosa
Woodroffe HS – Christine King

Non-member schools

Hopewell Avenue PS – Geoff Hall
Sawmill Creek ES – Gennifer Stainforth

Guests and other persons in attendance:

Juliet Hamilton (OCASC Recording Secretary), Emeka Ndukwe (CCEE), Cheryle Watson (OCDSB), Jennifer McKenzie (Trustee, Zone 10), Riley Brockington (Trustee, Zone 11)

CALL TO ORDER: 7:05 p.m., Anne Teutsch in the chair.

AGENDA: Approved with no changes:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes of Jan. 21, 2010

Chalk-It-Up

Presentation and Discussion: Cathy Dempsey, Assistant Treasurer, OCDSB
Budget Talk: The OCDSB Budget for 2010/2011

From your Executive
Follow-up Items
Updates

MINUTES of January 21, 2010: Accepted with one amendment to attendance list.

CHALK-IT-UP

Mathletes

Jenni Knorr (jenni@theteachingtable.com)

- Was a Junior-Intermediate teacher until Mathletes visited her school, then enthusiasm for program led her to join them. The school council arranged and paid for the Mathletes visit.
- Mathletes promotes and celebrates math in a way students get excited about. Activities are both educational and motivational.
- Will come into school for a full day of math fun. They bring all the necessary manipulatives. Everything is based on the curriculum. Students rotate through different activities.
- Aimed at grades 4 to 6. Use grade 7 and 8 students as volunteers.
- Woodroffe Ave. PS – What is the cost? A: Varies according to the number of students. Can have a maximum of 200.
- Fallingbrook Comm. ES – How do you measure follow-up success? A: Have used surveys and everything has been positive. Every school they've been to has asked them back. Have been to over 200 schools.

S-Trips

Glebe CI – Deborah Lemkow (lempower@rogers.com)

- S-trips are unsanctioned school trips. This is mostly a high school concern.
- Sanctioned school trips are organized by the school, have parent volunteers, prohibit alcohol, require signed permission slips, and cheques are written out to the school.
- S-trips are run by outside organizations. They come to the school and promote trips, handing out flyers, sometimes with student help. Have sometimes even held meetings at school. Can look like school trip, but won't have adult supervision, more likely university students. Alcohol use is not encouraged but does occur. There have been several incidents of concern.
- Encourage schools to publicize sanctioned trips on website and use Synervoice to warn of S-trips.
- Anne - Principals doing their best to keep S-trip people off school property. OCASC will get more information and put it on the website. (ACTION – Anne)
- Canterbury HS – Related concern is having military recruiters at the school, but principal has no issue with it.

Grade 8 Grad

Rideau Valley MS – Sue Carswell (carswell6@xplornet.com)

- School has had problems with the ceremonies. Parents have thought about doing something in the evening. Wondered what other schools have done? School wants it outside of school hours.
- Canterbury HS – Some schools use the facilities at MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre. A: Want something where students can be dressed up.
- Knoxdale PS – Rent space at a place like Walter Baker, have a buffet, dance with maybe a breakdancing demo, photo booth (photos go on CD that everyone gets).
- Forest Valley ES – Have early ceremony followed by brunch, then a dance in the afternoon. In Alberta, ceremony was followed by a tea with a buffet.
- SEAC – Rented lodge at Camp Fortune and buses to get the kids there and back. Had a BBQ and dance right after the ceremony. Evening events run risk of alienating girls who don't like to dress up – keep it casual.
- Steve MacLean PS – Have ceremony in afternoon, rent buses to take students to a restaurant, then back for an early dance, done by 8 pm.

Food and Beverage Policy

Katimavik ES – Nihan Kavaslar (nkavaslar@yahoo.com)

- Province has brought in new regulations governing food that can be served in schools. Will come into effect Sept 2011. How will this affect hot lunch programs?
- Anne – As well as hot lunch programs, high school cafeterias and fund-raising bake sales will also be affected. The OCDSB and OCASC will be following up on it and will have more info in the fall.

Consultation

Summit Alt S – Richard Deadman (rdeadman@deadman.ca)

- Following up on last month's Chalk-It-Up item on consultation on the Alternate Program. Wondering how OCASC will follow up on the issues that were raised. Has heard a lot about problems with consultation.
- Anne – Consultation was on OCASC's list of priorities for this year. Have met with Michele Giroux (Executive Officer) and Cheryle Watson, and have another meeting scheduled for early March. Also met with Chair of the Board Cathy Curry and the Director Lyle Thomson yesterday specifically on this issue. Board needs to show that parents are listened to and show empathy for those affected by changes. There is a lot to be done and it will take time. Can report back at the March meeting.
- Richard – OCASC needs to put some teeth behind it and say we won't support their process if they don't change.
- Viscount Alexander PS – Comes to a head on Feb. 23, when the Board is scheduled to make a decision on the Alternate Program. Know the review process was flawed. Is OCASC willing to say this was a flawed process and stop them from making a decision that will irrevocably affect six schools.
- Anne – Did state at Education Committee that OCASC rep wasn't happy with the process, but we do not control the decision.

- Viscount Alexander PS – Can OCASC say through a motion that we didn't find the process reliable for shutting down programs at 6 schools? Otherwise Board could say they hadn't heard there was an issue.
- Madelaine (OCASC rep on Alternate Program Review committee) – They know there's an issue. She went to the last meeting, wanted them to know she didn't feel research lead to the conclusion reached. Wanted Board to know she felt the consultation process was flawed, and that a flawed process can affect all programs in the future. Could start a working group on consultation within OCASC, and even devote a meeting to it.
- Woodroffe Ave PS – Need to learn for next time – if we knew process was flawed, why didn't we act sooner? Would a letter work?
- Madelaine – Did raise this issue at OCASC meeting in the fall, and posted a request for comments and input on the website, but got nothing. Found it very discouraging.
- Viscount Alexander PS – One improvement in the consultation process would be for the Board to provide reports that were easier for the public to read and understand.
- CCEE – Would like OCASC to take up this issue, since as an advisory committee CCEE cannot really push for it.
- Discussion continued around whether writing a letter to the OCDSB was warranted/appropriate/useful and whether OCASC reps present had enough knowledge of the process. A motion to write a letter was put forward by Riverview Alt S and seconded by Viscount Alexander PS. The wording of the motion was worked on during the budget presentation, and was voted on at the conclusion of that presentation. The motion read as follows:

That OCASC will write a letter to the OCDSB noting its concerns with the Board's consultation process. For example, the recent consultative process for the Alternative Elementary Program Review was perceived to be flawed. OCASC would like to express its wish to work with the OCDSB to strengthen the consultation process in the future.

- Results of vote – In Favour: 25 Opposed: 6 Abstentions: 2 – Motion carried

Charity Status

Woodroffe Ave PS – Maria Di Rosa (windward@magma.ca)

- She and Anne have gotten several inquiries about councils applying for charitable status. Woodroffe Ave PS has had charitable status since the early 1990s.
- Some of the questions people have are:
 - How much more work is it for the treasurer? A: 1) writing receipts, and 2) filling out forms for Revenue Canada at the end of the year.
 - What are the advantages? A: 1) United Way forms have option to direct donation to a council if they are a charitable organization; 2) parents give more if they can get a receipt; 3) greater accountability makes donors more willing to give; 4) have more control over the money.
 - How long does process take? A: Takes 6 months to become a charitable organization. Need to keep good books.
- One requirement of a council with charitable status is that only a limited amount of money can be set aside for next year unless it is earmarked for a specific big-budget item.
- Revenue Canada is willing to come to OCASC again and make a presentation.

- Anyone with questions can email Maria. She will write up some information and Anne will put it on the OCASC website.
- Stephen Leacock PS – Who writes all the receipts? A: Can have a group of volunteers write the receipts and then get them signed. Typically have two signers.
- Churchill Alt PS – Where do you put the money? A: No different than otherwise – some in a trust fund, some in a regular bank account.
- It's very important for council to buy insurance for extra protection.

Funding Gap and Other Issues

Woodroffe Ave PS – Maria Di Rosa (windward@magma.ca)

- At council meeting last night decided to take action on some issues that concern them:
 - funding gap and salary gap – full-day kindergarten is going to make this worse, going to start a letter-writing campaign
 - trustees and voting – at committee meetings, can all trustees in attendance vote or only those who are members of that committee
 - Board meetings – too many are held in camera
 - consultation process
 - Early French Immersion – back in picture, don't want it cut
- Any councils wanting to join them, or with ideas, contact Maria.
- Also have a concern about OCASC holding its Budget Corner and Spec Ed Corner at the same time, making it impossible for a rep to attend both.

Council By-laws

Pleasant Park PS – Nancy Schenk (nschenk@rogers.com)

- Want by-laws for council. Ask any councils willing to share their by-laws to email them to her.
- Jennifer McKenzie – Many schools post their by-laws on their website.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION:

Budget Talk: The OCDSB Budget for 2010/2011

Cathy Dempsey – Assistant Treasurer, OCDSB

- Budgeting is all about planning for the future.
- Project the deficit for 2010-2011 to be between \$10-18 million, so working with a guess of \$14 million. Going to be very difficult, so started the budget process early this year.
- OCDSB website has lots of budget information – accessible via link on left hand side of home page.
- Have had Price-Waterhouse-Cooper look at the situation. Also had a well-attended meeting with stakeholders in January.
- Much depends on the provincial grant announcements, which are scheduled to be made in March. After those are known, numbers will be recalculated. A budget package will be presented in April, and aim for a proposal in early May.
- The full PowerPoint presentation will be available on the OCASC website (ocasc.ca).
Some extra comments that Cathy made:

- Some of the moneys under non-grant revenue are very limited as to what they can be spent on, and can be clawed back if incorrectly or not completely spent. Also, interest income has come down significantly the last 2 years.
- Province is estimating that it will take about 8 years to recover from the present deficit situation.
- Last year had \$7 million deficit, but had \$7 million in reserves to put against it. This year don't have any reserves left.
- Getting enrollment projection accurate is key, since all grant money is based on enrollment.
- Education is very labour intensive; 81.1% of budget is salaries and benefits.
- Fixed Costs include items that are regulated by law or contract agreements, as well as utilities (which can sometimes come in under-budget depending on the weather).
- It's in the Uncommitted Costs that the Board can make some decisions.
- Possible budget change options are outlined on the website. Staff is putting forward a wide range of options, totaling more than the estimated deficit, so that trustees will have lots to choose from once the numbers are more certain and decisions need to be made.
- On March 2 staffing recommendations go to Human Resources Committee. At that point trustees can debate some of the options.
- Important websites:
 - OCDSB website: www.ocdsb.ca
 - Budget information: www.ocdsb.ca/au_bud_main.asp
 - Budget input: budgetinput@ocdsb.ca
- Hopewell Ave PS – Occasional teacher usage comes out of school operating budget, so why is it part of broader budget? A: Every school is allocated money for occasional teachers in school budget. This line is how Board reports to province. Ministry is very concerned with occasional teacher costs, which have escalated over the year.
- Katimavik ES – Do you have numbers from other boards to compare deficits with? A: Some have only just started this process. But can find prior years' budgets on the various boards' websites. Q: Are their deficits last year as big as ours? A: Some boards struggle more than others. Larger urban boards have more problems. All will suffer this year.
- Metcalfe PS – Do you have any more details on the impact of full-day kindergarten? A: Working through it right now. Transportation savings may exist, but right now it looks like costs will outweigh savings. None of this is in this budget proposal.
- Is any work being done on getting provincial grant announcements and board budget timing more in line? A: Have asked for multi-year forecasts. Last year the province gave some information for second year, which has helped this year. But as long as the province provides its grant info on time, the Board has enough time to come up with a budget. There is still the issue of having to set staffing numbers in March, but that is a result of a collective agreement – some boards don't have that collective agreement limitation to work around.

- Viscount Alexander PS – The cost per student works out to about \$1 per day over the year. Demographic profile of teachers is part of the issue, as more experienced teachers get paid more. Transportation is also a huge problem. We're at a disadvantage compared to other boards. OCDSB should publicize issue so broader community understands transportation issues that province should fix. A: Province has done a number of reviews of transportation. Board has raised it many times and Ministry is very aware of it. Consortium set up to help, but still leaves some issues. Still not properly funded.
- Lisgar CI – Can you explain how Board knew it was in trouble even before provincial finances tanked? A: We started off in the red, the province last year said we'd have less this year, then the province went into a deficit situation. Q: Full teacher salaries not funded, and it just gets worse. If it continues as it is, Board will eventually be able to fund only teacher salaries. A: Yes, constantly taking money from other areas to meet that gap. Q: Michael Clarke says it is new teachers who make the salary gap worse, rather than the experienced ones. A: That's true. The salaries for teachers with maximum experience are almost totally funded. Our board has to offer higher salaries to new teachers in order to get the French Immersion teachers we need.

(Motion for sending a letter regarding consultation to the Board was presented and voted upon here, but for continuity it can be found at the end of the Chalk-It-Up item on consultation earlier in these minutes.)

FROM YOUR EXEC

Follow-up Items – Anne Teutsch (Chair)

- Will have a vote on the new constitution at the next meeting. There will be a way to send in a proxy vote on-line. If no one from your council is coming to the meeting, please vote on-line. The requirement is for >50% of the total membership of OCASC to vote in favour of a change to the constitution.
- Principal Competition – Board has process every year to select new principals and vice-principals, and they invite parents to be involved. Need two parent volunteers. There is a considerable time commitment, and it is during the week-day: one day of training 2 weeks prior, then 2-4 days in a row. Occurs sometime in March or April. Anyone interested (doesn't have to be an OCASC rep – can be anyone at your school) please contact Anne (ocasc.chair@ocasc.ca). Names need to be submitted in March.
- PRO Grant – OCASC was successful in its grant application, and will receive \$22,000. Anyone who wants to join the team to help implement the grant would be appreciated. Database skills would be especially useful.
 - Norah – Presentation is on the website. Please use it with your council and send in any feedback you receive. If you'd like one of the OCASC grant team to come and run through it with your council, contact Anne or Norah.
- Beth (SEAC) – OCASC is hosting two presentations for parents of spec. ed. children, the first on Individual Education Plans, the second on Identification and Placement Review Committees:

- Information evening on IEPs: Thurs. Feb. 25, 7-9 pm Fisher Park library.
- Information evening on IPRCs: Wed. Mar. 3, 7-9 pm Fisher Park library.
- All parents are welcome. Dates were moved up because parents need to apply for access to system classes in March.
- Some items have come up over the year that we said we'd act on but that haven't been done. Wondering if anyone (either alone or as a small group) would be interested in taking one of them on as a special short-term project to get the info on the website:
 - Playgrounds – grants, safety issues
 - Grant ideas – places to go for grants
 - Hot lunches – will change with new policy, but still have another year left

NEXT MEETING:

- Thursday, March 25th, 7:00 pm at Fisher Park Library.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Items to report back on:

- March meeting about consultation.
- Letter to Board regarding consultation concerns.

Past minutes and more information about OCASC can be found at www.ocasc.ca.