

OTTAWA CARLETON ASSEMBLY OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

Meeting of Thursday April 16th, 2009

Fisher Park Public School

ATTENDANCE:

Zone 1

A. Lorne Cassidy ES – Kim Clausen
North Gower/Marlborough PS – Sandra
Acacia
Rideau Valley MS – Sandra Acacia

Zone 2

Castlefrank ES – Richard Perkins
Glen Cairn PS – Mike Hickey
Jack Donohue PS – Alex Ribeiro
Katimavik ES – Nihan Kavasler
Roland Michener PS – Sheila Smellie
Stephen Leacock PS – Enang Akan
W. O. Mitchell ES – Brenda Verch

Zone 3

Berrigan ES – Susan Klimchuk
Greenbank MS – Paula Sharer
Knoxdale PS – Paula Sharer
Merivale HS – Anne Teutsch

Zone 4

D. Roy Kennedy PS – Terrena Bennett
Regina Street PS – Sarah Neville
Woodroffe PS – Maria Di Rosa, Heather
Tyrie

Zone 5

Bell HS – Juliet Hamilton
Briargreen PS – Suzanne VanderHeuvel

D. A. Moodie IS – Sherri Smith
J. H. Putnam PS – Lillian Dinelle

Zone 6

Alta Vista PS – Lillian Thomsen
Canterbury HS – Bob Weist
Ottawa Technical LC – Daniel Oickle
Pleasant Park PS – Nancy Schenk
Rockcliffe Park PS – Karen Strutynski

Zone 7

Adrienne Clarkson ES – Carrie Eaton
Osgoode Township HS – Jeff Esau

Zone 8

Trillium ES – Tammy Martin

Zone 9

Glebe CI – Robert Keene

Zone 10

Churchill Alt S – Terrena Bennett
Hilson Ave PS – Tarin Richards
Lisgar CI – Kate Preston-Thomas
Nepean HS – Alix MacLean

Zone 11

Brookfield HS – Emeka Ndukwe

Zone 12

Glen Ogilvie PS – Trina Whitehurst

Guests and other persons in attendance:

Andrew Canham (Principal, OCDSB); Geordie Walker (Principal, OCDSB); Amy Hannah (Safe and Caring Schools Coordinator, OCDSB); Nadine Clarke (Chair, Secondary Schools Committee); Chris Bridger (interim council, new Briarbrook school); Jennifer McKenzie (Trustee, Zone 10)

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

AGENDA: Approved with no changes:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes of March 12, 2009

Chalk-It-Up

From your Exec

Nominating Committee for election of exec officers at May AGM

Education Committee Report
Secondary Schools Committee Report
Chair's Notes
Notes from the OCDSB
Consultation on Care of Children with Life Threatening Medical
Conditions
Connected Conversations
Budget Discussion
Guest Presentation: Geordie Walker on Community of Character

MINUTES of March 12, 2009: In Budget Report, figure for next year's deficit should be \$3 million. Accepted with amendments.

CHALK-IT-UP

Free Seminars

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

- Thursday April 30 at Rideau Valley MS library, free admission.
- At 6:30 Cathy Lumsden, psychotherapist, will give a talk, "Influencing Teens Towards Self Responsibility".
- At 8:00 Michael Cheng, staff psychiatrist at CHEO, will give a talk, "Mental Health Issues Facing Today's Teens".

Council Insurance

Suzanne VanderHeuvel – Briargreen PS david.vanderheuvel@sympatico.ca

- Wondering about getting insurance for council events. Are they covered by school's insurance?
- Many councils indicated that they buy separate insurance in early fall (this year cost was \$175). It even covers off-site council events such as ski trips.
- Action item – put info about insurance on OCASC website (Anne - Chair)

Speakers List on Website

Kim Clausen – A. Lorne Cassidy ES deeandlorne@rogers.com

- Looking for suggestions for speakers/presentations to invite to their school.
- Would be great to have such a list on the OCASC website. Find out from schools who they've had and were happy with. Action item – put info on website, send out OCASC News item (Anne – Chair)
- Suggestions from floor
 - If you have a very multicultural school, ask your Multicultural Liaison Officer to come and speak.
 - CHEO is very keen on providing speakers.

September Elections

Susan Klimchuk – Berrigan ES susan.klimchuk@rogers.com

- How do schools deal with having elections in September? Outgoing exec members don't want to make decisions over the summer.
- Not sure if September elections are a provincial requirement or just a guideline.

- Woodroffe PS has draft election in June to carry them through the summer, then hold real election in September. September elections give new parents the chance to get involved. Has worked very well for them for many years.
- Alta Vista PS finds out in June who is interested in staying on, targets new parents at a BBQ in September, and has elections in early October.
- North Gore had all their exec graduate last year, so filled a few posts in June, then filled the rest in September.

Covering Occasional Teachers

Kate Preston-Thomas – Lisgar CI kpt@istar.ca or 233-0038

- Have councils run into paying cost of occasional teachers to cover teachers away (ie on a field trip)?
- General response – it's not allowed.

Program Review

Kate Preston-Thomas – Lisgar CI kpt@istar.ca or 233-0038

- Heard at Business Services meeting that there is a new directive at the Board to do a district wide program review, looking at where programs are, where they should be, how programs are structured, alternative schools, special education, etc.
- No timeline yet; consultation plan will be presented at next Chairs Committee meeting.
- Schools should keep an eye on this, especially if they offer special programming.
- For more information consult the agenda package for the Business Services Committee meeting of April 15, 2009, Item 7: Accommodation Initiative 2009-2010, on the OCDSB website (ocdsb.ca).

Bulk Ordering of School Supplies

Nancy Schenk – Pleasant Park PS nschenk@rogers.com

- Looking into this, would like to hear from schools who do this.
- Churchill Alternative has done it for a while, and it is great. Parents pay \$25 and everyone gets the same stuff.
- Briargreen PS offered a word of warning – were doing this until three years ago, when, after paying the down-payment on the shipment, the truck caught on fire and everything was lost. It has taken them until now to decide to do it again. This time they will go with a local company.
- Another good thing to put on website (information/forum). Action item (Anne – Chair)

Lunch Monitors

Nancy Schenk – Pleasant Park PS nschenk@rogers.com

- Have concerns that kids are left alone too much as the teachers move between classrooms. What are other schools doing?
- Comments from floor
 - daughter in grade 5 was lunch monitor – put her in awkward situations
 - have seen two grade 6 students working together as monitors

- experiences have been mixed, but training is very important. Some student monitors go on power trips.
- student monitors used in older grades, not at the grade 1 and 2 level
- having grade 6 students monitor grade 4s didn't work
- parents are not allowed to do it
- will a student monitor be able to cope with difficult situations such as a child choking
- issue is related to supervisory minutes stipulation in teachers' contracts. If there are safety concerns, schools can take that to the Board. Board has the ability to increase supervisory time if situations warrant it.
- This is a good topic on which to get more information from Board staff. Action item (Anne – Chair)

Community Council for Ethnocultural Equity (CCEE)

Emeka Ndukwe – Brookfield HS wundek@yahoo.com

- He has sat on CCEE for last three years.
- CCEE is an advisory committee of the OCDSB.
- CCEE tends to be more reactive than proactive.
- Would like some OCASC members to join and provide proactive advice.
- Are discussing setting up a help line for all OCDSB stakeholders, which includes teachers, parents and students. Parents who are new to the country don't know how to deal with the system if there are problems.
- Are also discussing the need for an ombudsman as another route to deal with issues. Often the official channels (teacher, principal, superintendent, Director) get bogged down, or move too slowly, or parents are stonewalled. An ombudsman would be a direct channel to the Director.
- CCEE is holding an Open House in May. Action item – get date of CCEE Open House (Emeka – CCEE Rep, Anne – Chair)
- Comment – Would be a great idea for OCASC to have an ombudsman/help line that parents can all. Anne responded that yes, it would be a great idea, and ties in with ideas being discussed for next year regarding outreach.

FROM YOUR EXEC

Nominating Committee for election of exec officers at May AGM – Carrie Eaton (Vice Chair)

- The next OCASC meeting (May 21) is also the Annual General Meeting. It will take place in Fisher Park but not the library. The location will be announced later.
- New executive officers are elected at the AGM. Committee Reps are elected in November. Asked for two volunteers to join her on the nominating committee.
- 2009 Nominating Committee of Enang Akan (Stephen Leacock PS), Daniel Oickle (Ottawa Technical LC) and Carrie Eaton (Adrienne Clarkson ES, OCASC Vice Chair) was approved.
- Positions to be filled at AGM: Chair, Vice Chair, Recording Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Officer, Liaison Officers.
- Duties of these positions:

- Chair: Administers affairs of the Assembly; ensures all policies and actions approved by membership are implemented; presides at Assembly and executive meetings; prepares meeting agendas with advice from exec and committee reps; represents OCASC views to Board, Ministry of Education, the media, etc.
- Vice Chair: Fulfills duties of Chair when Chair is unable to; performs duties assigned by Chair or requested by executive committee or Assembly.
- Recording Secretary: Responsible for general correspondence of Assembly, including preparing and distributing minutes of Assembly meetings and executive committee meetings.
- Membership Secretary: Responsible for maintaining a current list of member school councils, including names and contact information for school delegates; registers attendance at general meetings, determines quorum and counts votes.
- Treasurer: Responsible for funds and other financial assets of Assembly and for making payments for approved expenses; maintains the books; presents a report and a budget at AGM; maintains a record of dues paid by member councils.
- Communications Officer: Prepares communications on behalf of Assembly; may undertake additional tasks regarding media/communications.
- Liaison Officers (LOs): Act as general contacts for school councils, and are involved in outreach.
 - Used to be organized by zones, but historically have problems filling all positions. Want to try having specialized LOs who are willing to share info in their areas of expertise, as well as general zone-like LOs. Hope to attract more people into the exec through this change.
 - Examples of possible areas of interest/expertise: starting school councils; fund-raising for councils; literacy or numeracy at the elementary level.
- Nominations from floor resulted in the following expressions of interest: Chair – Anne Teutsch, Vice Chair – Carrie Eaton, Communications – Lillian Thomsen, Liaison Officers – Susan Klimchuk.
- Anyone interested in putting their name forward can contact a member of the Nominating Committee. Nominations can also be made at the AGM.

Education Committee Report – Susan Klimchuk

- Met March 24
- Discussed intermediate program monitoring - looking at grade 7 and 8 programming. This is part of the cycle of regular reviews that the Board does.
 - One aim is to reduce the number of different school configurations. Right now Board has schools with five different configurations that include grades 7 and 8: grades 4-8; grades JK-7; grades 6-8; grades 7-8; grades JK-8. No other board has as many.

- Also want to reduce the number of teacher contacts (number of teachers students deal with regularly) at the intermediate level. Presently students have 2-3 teacher contacts in grades JK-6, 4 teacher contacts in a semestered high school, but up to 10 teacher contacts in grades 7-8. Students at this age struggle with organization, so this can be very difficult for them.
- Other goals: longer blocks of time for literacy/numeracy instruction; less movement between classes; a cross-curricular approach to program delivery; daily instruction in language arts and math; a shift in all middle schools to a 5-day cycle.
- Working toward the Board goal of having 90% graduation rate by 2020.
- Also revisited a motion regarding criteria used to determine nature and location of special education classes. Motion was originally tabled and deferred in June 2008 and deferred again in October. Now it has been postponed indefinitely. Decision was that issues of criteria be referred to the policy-development process.
 - Question from floor: Will schools lose specialist/overlay teachers, affecting courses such as tech? Answer: That's not the plan; the Board acknowledges that specialists are important.

Secondary Schools Committee – Nadine Clarke

- Want to let parents know that this summer Continuing Education is offering a grade 9 math preparation course for grade 8 students. Program is aimed at students graduating from grade 8 who have achieved average marks in math but struggled to do so, and who are planning to take academic level math in grade 9. Because of the jump in difficulty of math at the grade 9 level, these students would benefit from being introduced to the material ahead of time. The 3½ week course is being offered at AY Jackson SS and Sir Wilfrid Laurier SS.
- Minutes of all Secondary Schools Committee meetings can be found on the OCASC website.

Chair's Notes – Anne Teutsch

- The dates for budget presentations and delegations listed at the bottom of tonight's agenda have been changed. New dates are:
 - April 27 – Report on emerging budget pressures
 - May 11 – Presentation of staff proposed budget
 - May 14, 20, 25 – Public delegations

NOTES FROM THE OCDSB

Consultation on Care of Children with Life Threatening Medical Conditions –

Andrew Canham, Principal, Castlefrank Elementary School

- Board's existing policy covers seven different procedures and guidelines to care for students with fragile health conditions including anaphylaxis, diabetes, epilepsy and asthma.
- The policy is being reviewed and part of the consultation process is to get feedback from the public. There will be a link on the OCDSB website, and people are

encouraged to email with any thoughts, ideas and concerns (policy108.SCOREview@ocdsb.ca). The deadline for consultation is June 12, 2009.

- They are also in contact with various city groups, and have a focus group of school principals.
- Action item – put the information out on OCASC News (Anne – Chair).

Connected Conversations – Cheryle Watson, OCDSB

- Board is hosting a speakers’ series. Information is available on the Board’s website.
- May 13: Boy Smarts – Effective Strategies for Parenting Boys Speaker: Barry MacDonald 7-9 pm at Albert Street Education Centre
- June 3: Dr. James Cummins will speak about engaging English language learners – Adult High School
- In September Dr. Debbie Pusher will speak on parental engagement and connecting schools and families.
- Action item – put info on OCASC website (Anne – Chair).

BUDGET DISCUSSION – Kate Preston-Thomas

- Last year OCASC used a budget survey to get feedback from councils on what they saw as priorities, for her to use at Budget Committee discussions. Councils found it a very useful tool.
- There were difficulties with presenting the results in a statistically reliable way, so this year OCASC will not run the survey. But it will be available on the website as a tool for councils to use when discussing the budget. If your council does so, please let her know the results of the discussion.
- She needs to have feedback from councils in order to provide feedback at the budget table. Email her at kpt@istar.ca or call her anytime at 233-0038.
- There are many things in the budget that we can’t affect. This year’s deficit is around \$8 million. Timeline will be tight.
- The salary gap (difference between funding provided to Board for teacher salaries and money it pays out for teacher salaries) is \$10-30 million/year.
- OCASC has a seat at the budget table, but anyone can go and ask a public question. It’s a great way for councils and parents to raise concerns and ideas.
- If you want to bring an official delegation and present before the budget committee, contact the Board Coordinator: maureen.strittmatter@ocdsb.ca. All the trustees as well as representatives from many stakeholder groups sit on the budget committee.
- Discussion that followed included the following points:
 - Need to go after Ministry of Education about salary gap.
 - Issue is high demand Board has for French language teachers, needs to offer higher salaries to attract them.
 - French Immersion students are funded at a higher level – shouldn’t that cover those increased salaries?
 - Another way to affect the budget process is to collaborate with the Board on improving the consultation process. OCASC voted to do that last year.
 - Still need more lead time in general for Board consultations.
 - Anne – very keen on continuing to work with Board on those things.

- Action items – survey needs slight modifications before it can be put on website (Kate – OCASC Budget Rep). Then put it on website (Anne – Chair).

GUEST PRESENTATION – COMMUNITY OF CHARACTER

Geordie Walker – Principal of Safe and Caring Schools, OCDSB

Amy Hannah – Safe and Caring Schools Coordinator, OCDSB

- Emphasis on character development is being spearheaded by the Ministry of Education. The document Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 can be found on the Ministry website.
- As part of the focus on safe and caring schools, the Board has chosen a set of character attributes to strive for in relationships with and between parents, students, teachers, administrators, staff, trustees and the community: acceptance, appreciation, cooperation, empathy, fairness, integrity, optimism, perseverance, respect, and responsibility.
- Students see these expressed in ‘I’ statements on character wheels. Already translated into French and Arabic; more translations will follow.
- As well as academic excellence, schools are also striving for character excellence.
- Character development is being integrated into all areas of the curriculum, not being taught just as an add-on.
- Not a program of fear or punishment, but embedded in daily activities and meant to raise awareness.
- The program is not meant to take responsibility away from parents or indoctrinate students with new values.
- Suggest that councils ask their principal to discuss how character education/development is being handled at their schools. Each school also has one staff member designated as a character representative; they could also be invited to speak to council.
- Staff willing to make presentations if several schools organize a joint evening. Anti-bullying is part of this as well.
- Jack Donohue PS is having such a presentation on May 6, open to all parents (see noparentleftbehindjdps.com for more information).
- Questions/comments made during discussion:
 - How do you teach kids responsibility when the news is full of people evading responsibility? A: Teach them it’s not about what others do, it’s being responsible for their own actions; talk about small things they can do locally.
 - It’s more and more important to find common values as society gets more diverse.
 - An important link that’s missing is the connection with parents. Need to give parents extra tools. A: Recognize this. Goal this year is to get that discussion going. Would like to put resources on the website. The development of community partnerships is also important.

NOTE: June’s OCASC meeting will be a week early (June 11 instead of June 18).

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Next meeting: May 21 at 7:00 pm, NOT in the library. The specific location in Fisher Park will be announced later.

Action Items arising from this meeting:

- Anne – info about insurance on OCASC website
- Anne – speakers list on website, notice in OCASC News
- Anne – info/forum on buying school supplies in bulk on website
- Anne – get information from Board staff on the issue of lunch monitors
- Emeka and Anne – get date of CCEE Open House
- Anne – info about policy review regarding students with life threatening medical conditions in OCASC News
- Anne – put OCDSB speakers' series info on website
- Kate PT – update budget survey
- Anne – put updated budget survey on website

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