

OTTAWA CARLETON ASSEMBLY OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

Meeting of Thursday September 17th, 2009

Fisher Park Public School

ATTENDANCE :

Adrienne Clarkson ES – Lisa Bloom
Alta Vista PS – Lillian Thomsen
Berrigan ES – Susan Klimchuk
Briargreen PS – Suzanne Vanden
Heuvel
Broadview PS – Carrie Myers, T. Robins
Cairine Wilson SS – Janet Patch
Canterbury HS – Anita Manley
Carleton Heights PS – Angela Arnold
Castor Valley ES – Heather Wilson
Connaught PS – Madelaine Stewart-
Dmaj
D. Aubrey Moodie IS
Fallingbrook Community ES – Peter
Karkouras
Forest Valley ES – Janet Patch
Glen Cairn PS – Mike Hickey
Glen Ogilvie PS
J. H. Putman PS – Maria Di Rosa

Jack Donohue PS – Alex Ribeiro
John Young ES
Katimavik ES
Lakeview PS
Merivale HS – Anne Teutsch
Metcalf PS – Kevin MacPherson
Nepean HS
North Gower PS
Osgoode Township HS – Jeff Esau
Ottawa Technical LC – Daniel Oickle
Queen Mary PS – Chris Ellis
Rideau Valley MS
Rockcliffe Park PS – Joel Berger
Stittsville PS – Rhonda Drakes-Blais
Trillium ES – Tammy Martin
Woodroffe PS – Maria Di Rosa, Heather
Tyrie
Woodroffe HS

Guests and other persons in attendance:

Juliet Balfour (Glashan PS); Donna Blackburn (OCASC LO; Barrhaven PS); Nadine Clarke (SSC Chair; Canterbury HS); Carrie Eaton (OCASC Vice-chair; Adrienne Clarkson ES); Juliet Hamilton (OCASC Recording Secretary); Bob Weist (Canterbury HS)

CALL TO ORDER: 7:10 p.m., Anne Teutsch in the chair.

Everyone was welcomed to the first OCASC meeting of 2009-2010. About 8 people indicated they were new to OCASC.

AGENDA: Approved with no changes:

Approval of Agenda
Approval of Minutes of May 15, 2009
Chalk-It-Up
From your Exec
 Amendments to the OCASC Constitution
 SEAC Committee Rep ratification
 Updates
Discussion Topic: PRO Grants

MINUTES of May 15, 2009: Accepted with no amendments.

Anne introduced members of the OCASC Executive to the Assembly:

Anne Teutsch – Chair;

Carrie Eaton – Vice-Chair;

Juliet Hamilton – Recording Secretary;

Dan Oickle – Treasurer & Liaison Officer;

Madelaine Stewart-Dmaj – Membership Secretary, Alternative Program Review Rep.

Nadine Clarke – Secondary Schools Committee Chair;

Lillian Thomsen – Communications Officer, Business Services Rep, Arts Advisory

Susan Klimchuk – Education Committee Rep;

Jeff Esau – Liaison Officer;

Donna Blackburn – CAYRAC Rep;

Alex Ribeiro – Liaison Officer;

She then gave a quick overview of how the meetings go:

- Will try and start at 7:00 pm from now on.
- Always aim for a 9:00 pm finish.
- Chalk-It-Up is a chance for delegates to ask questions of the group, bring forward issues to see if others have the same concerns, or share best practices. Chalk-It-Up is given 30 minutes on the agenda.
- Delegates are asked to sign up on the chalk board before the meeting starts, and to respect a 2-minute time limit so that there is time for questions.
- After the meeting people are encouraged to email the presenter directly with input/feedback.

The OCASC website (www.ocasc.ca) is a useful place to go for information. On it you can find:

- contact info for all executive members and committee reps
- forums to discuss issues and exchange ideas – need participation to be successful!
- event calendar – any school with a presentation or activity that's open to others can email the info to Anne (ocasc.chair@ocasc.ca) and she will put it on the calendar
- school council resources
- minutes and reports from both OCASC and Secondary Schools Committee

CHALK-IT-UP

Maggie Mamen Presentations

Heather Tyrie – Woodroffe PS (woodroffecouncil@gmail.com) and

Alex Ribeiro – Jack Donohue PS (rsvp@noparentleftbehindjdps.com)

- Both schools got PRO grants for a presentation by Maggie Mamen. She is a local child psychologist and the author of four books. She is a very engaging and humourous speaker.
- The topic is: “Negotiating With Your Child”
- Monday Sept. 21, 7:00-8:30 pm at Woodroffe PS
- Wednesday Sept. 23, 7:00-8:30 pm at Jack Donohue PS

- Presentations mostly geared to elementary aged children. JDPS did ask her to touch on dealing with teens as well.

Council Websites

Lisa Bloom – Adrienne Clarkson ES (lisa.steveb@gmail.com)

- Want to utilize website better.
- How many councils have a website independent of school/board? Several, including Jack Donahue PS and Queen Mary PS.
- Was it a problem? JDPS: not for stuff like the Maggie Mamen presentation, but more of a problem for specific council stuff.
- Are the volunteers who run the websites on council? Some, one a husband of a council member.
- Problem with having council website on school's server is that only staff can edit the site. Very restrictive.
- Chris Ellis (Queen Mary PS rep) has a server he's willing to let councils use. He will give OCASC the information.

H1N1 Vaccine

Juliet Balfour – parent at Glashan PS (julietbalfour@hotmail.com)

- Came as an individual, not representing council.
- Wondering whether other parents are worried about H1N1 vaccine. Would like people to talk about it before pressure comes to get students vaccinated.
- Discussion points:
 - would non-vaccinated students be barred from school?
 - vaccine is egg-based, and some students would be allergic to it
 - vaccine no different from regular flu vaccine
 - is most of the concern generated by the press?
 - concerned parents can talk to doctor, public health nurse, and manufacturer
- There was no interest in a presentation on the topic. Will start a forum discussion on it.

Bus Service

Suzanne Vanden Heuvel – Briargreen PS (david.vandenheuvel@sympatico.ca)

- Have had a lot of problems with the buses this September. Many are 15 minutes late in the morning, and up to 45 minutes late arriving for students in the afternoon. Several parents have moved their children to another school because of it. Have other schools had issues?
- Glen Cairn PS – not so much with the times, but with students not being eligible for busing because of a change in how the distance to school is measured. If board is suddenly assuming that students can take pathways to school, will they plow them?
- Berrigan ES – same problem with change in eligibility, and real frustration was complete lack of communication. Parents were given no warning that their neighbourhood would no longer be served by a bus.
- Briargreen PS – some new routes have buses making 3-point U-turns, and drivers weren't given chance to test routes for realistic timing.

- Metcalfe PS – no problems.
- Have people spoken to their principals? Yes, and been directed to OSTA (Ottawa Student Transportation Authority – a new partnership between the Public and Separate English boards). Encounters with them have not been impressive – often nonresponsive, sometimes rude.
- Is this something that OCASC can try and address? Action: Anne Teutsch.
- Castor Valley ES – school of 700 kids, all bused. Parents with issues deal directly with the carrier (several carriers service the school). They are much more responsive.

Milk Programs / Pop Machines / Healthy Food Programs

Anita Manley – Canterbury HS

- Would like to
 - see milk programs in elementary schools board-wide
 - get rid of pop machines in high schools
 - implement healthy food programs in high schools similar to the Jamie Oliver initiative in England.
- Discussion on milk programs:
 - Many schools have them, many don't.
 - Reasons against program:
 - too many volunteers required – won't let older students miss teaching time to help
 - no space
 - students have allergies
 - very dependent on custodians
 - waste involved – cartons, milk not finished by younger kids
 - participation sometimes not high
 - Ways schools make it work:
 - only one student/class goes
 - kids in Developmental Disability class run it
 - council runs it and the lunch program, major source of council funds
 - What if it was driven from the top down with everything thought out, making it easy for the principal? Could get high performing students involved.
 - Issue is question of coordination of effort. There are a suite of services that schools are buying that could be targeted. Another example is school supplies.
- Discussion on pop machines and healthy food programs in high schools:
 - School in the U.S. tried removing pop machines, and several students started selling pop.
 - There are healthy food initiatives running in many high schools already.
 - Will try and get info from the board. SSC is the place to pursue this further.

School Supply Kits

Heather Wilson – Castor Valley ES (wilsonheather@rogers.com)

- Provided opportunity for parents to buy customized school supply kits for the first time this year, and found it was very successful. Teachers and parents were very happy, and only one complaint was received.
- In a school with 700 students (500 families) 200 kits were purchased, even though very little notice was given in June. Thinks part of success was that parents were told any profit (\$3/kit) would be spent on numeracy and literacy supplies.
- Kits cost between \$50 and \$90, depending on what teachers requested. Company used was School Ready Supplies, an Ottawa company run by two women. Probably more expensive than buying supplies on sale, but parents were very happy to save the time and hassles.
- Success would depend on school's socioeconomic bracket. Not aware of any accommodations for financially stressed families.
- How it was implemented: the company approached her, she took it to council and staff and got a positive response so went forward with it. Recommends starting in January.
- Woodroffe PS also had success with school supply kits. The company they used was Tools for Schools. Everything is done on-line. Worked very well.
- Aside: Parents should think “green” when looking at school supplies: reuse and recycle whenever possible to reduce waste, look for less toxic options in items like binders.

FROM YOUR EXEC

Amendments to the OCASC Constitution – Anne Teutsch (Chair)

- Constitution has not been amended in a long time and many changes have occurred over the years. Mentioned at May meeting that Exec would work at it over the summer.
- Main changes:
 - to bring the wording up-to-date and consistent throughout the document;
 - to reflect the new purpose that came from last year's visioning process;
 - to reflect the new style of meetings, which have moved from being motions-based to discussion-based so that people are better informed and more involved before decisions are made on next steps;
 - to appoint committee reps with Assembly ratification, since they are the face of OCASC outside the organization;
 - to include a Code of Ethics for Executive Committee members.
- Discussion:
 - Concern about appointing committee reps – need time to consider implications.
 - In Article IV item 2 (electing Delegates), does “... wherever possible a parent ...” allow community reps? Yes
 - Connaught PS – would like to change (in Article V item 2) the maximum number of consecutive terms for Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer from three to four. Elections occur every year, so a term is automatically one year.

- Why do terms need to be limited at all? If people are good and keep getting elected, why force them out?
 - Limited terms build in succession planning instead of complacency.
 - Limit is only on consecutive terms. Person can always take another position for a year then rerun for the original position.
 - Problems do occur when one person has done a job for years and then suddenly leaves, with no one else knowing what to do.
 - Wording of Code of Ethics too ambiguous. Do we need it at all?
 - Meant to ensure Exec members: know they now represent all schools, not just their own; work for the good of the organization; leave their personal agenda and personal point of view behind when representing the organization; deal with disagreements and differing points of view within the executive, not in public.
 - OCASC has lots of turnover. Code of Ethics useful for new people to understand what kind of conduct is expected.
 - Should not be used to exclude those with different points of view. Needs to serve everyone.
 - Were working on Conflict of Interest Guidelines at one point. Could those be added as an annex as well?
- Old constitution still on website, and new version will be posted so people can compare them.
- Will have vote on new constitution at October meeting. Option of three, four or unlimited terms will be decided then. Any council with paid dues can vote. If people have questions or comments they would like to make in the meantime, please email Anne (ocasc.chair@ocasc.ca).

SEAC Committee Rep Ratification

- Beth Doubt is the OCASC rep at SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee). She has been elected Chair of SEAC and is now extremely busy, so would like an alternate to ensure information flows effectively between OCASC and SEAC.
- Nominee is Tammy Martin (Trillium ES). Assembly ratification vote was unanimous.

Updates

- **Accessibility Committee**
 - Initiative comes from the province to make all facilities, not just schools, accessible to those with disabilities.
 - Board is committed to full accessibility by 2025. It has put out a questionnaire on the board website (www.ocdsb.ca) which individuals and councils can fill out.
 - Dan Oickle (OTLC, Treasurer) will be the OCASC rep on this committee.
 - Question: Are environmental sensitivity issues part of this initiative? Some people have issues with room lighting, cleaners used, and general air quality.
 - May be covered in board's allergy policy.

- **Elementary Alternative Program Review** – Madelaine Stewart-Dmaj (EAPR Rep)
 - Madelaine’s report can be found separately on the OCASC website (www.ocasc.ca). Will also post a link to the survey the board is running.
 - Information about the Review can be found on the OCDSB website at http://ocdsb.ca/au_hi_program-reviews_EAPR.asp.
 - Committee hopes to make decision by January. The timeline is very short and there are multiple issues, so she would like as much feedback from councils/reps/individuals as possible (ocasc.membership@ocasc.ca)
 - Discussion:
 - Why the rush? A: It’s turn came up in the regular review cycle.
 - Start a forum on the topic.
 - Concern about how accessible the program is, especially to students outside the greenbelt. If they can’t offer it to most students, should they offer it at all?
 - Parents/councils with no access to the program won’t know about it. Shouldn’t survey focus on zones where the program is an option? A: Some of those parents may know about it and want it. Want a variety of feedback.

DISCUSSION TOPIC: PRO GRANTS

- PRO = Parents Reaching Out: Provincial money (up to \$1000 per school) to get more parents involved in schools. 41 of the schools in our board got grants last year.
- Lillian Thomsen of AltaVista PS spoke about her school’s experience with applying for and working with PRO Grants. Some of her comments:
 - Definitely worth doing. All needs to be done on-line. Give yourself extra time to deal with application process. Can take 48 hours for a response if you have a problem. After funds have been used you need to report back on-line as well. Keep all your receipts in case you get audited. Don’t have to account for every penny – estimate somewhat.
 - Good idea to have several events included in your proposal, so money saved on one event can be spent on another.
 - Can’t be things primarily for students. Try not to duplicate things already being offered. Massage proposal to fit under Ministry initiatives if necessary.
 - If you call the Ministry, they won’t tell you that your proposal will be funded, but they may tell you if it won’t.
 - Alta Vista very multicultural and with wide socioeconomic backgrounds, so first proposal tried to reach out to all parents. Had 3 components: an Eid dinner, a drum workshop, and a presentation by Maggie Mamen.
 - First year Eid dinner was held 40 families attended. Event came in under budget because the pot-luck format brought in more food than expected. The second year (another PRO grant) saw 180 families attend.
 - The drum workshop was chosen to complement string program that school has. It was filmed, and generated a lot of interest.

- Highly recommends Maggie Mamen as a speaker. Her website is very good. Marketed strongly in the community and offered babysitting. Saw lots of new parents come out, and many of these have since become more engaged in the school community.
- Agincourt did a great Math initiative with PRO money. It's on the web.
- Discussion/questions:
 - Jack Donohue: Did a survey asking what parents wanted – top two were Negotiating With Your Child, and Bullying. Besides getting speakers, also bought books for parents and the library. Local merchants donated food and drinks.
 - Woodroffe PS – want to run a curriculum night and produce a handout.
 - Glen Ogilvie – got approval for part of their proposal, but can't find out for sure which part.
 - Nepean – thinking about getting some materials from Guidance translated. Would buying/renting signs advertising school events qualify? Probably not, because Ministry likes to get firm numbers of parents drawn to event.
 - Does OCASC have info on-line on what grants have gotten approved?
- OCASC is going to put in an application for a regional PRO grant.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03, discussion continued for a few more minutes.

Next meeting will be Thursday, October 15th, 7:00 pm.