

OTTAWA-CARLETON ASSEMBLY OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

Meeting of Thursday, March 24, 2011
Fisher Park PS Library

ATTENDANCE:

Total Membership: 66

Member schools

Adrienne Clarkson ES – Carrie Eaton
Agincourt Road PS – Krista Shibata
Alta Vista PS – Petra Alince
Bayview PS – Riley Brockington
Berrigan ES – Susan Klimchuk
Bridlewood Community ES – Lynn Paterson
Canterbury HS and SSC* – Nadine Clarke
Castlefrank ES – Brona Little
Castor Valley ES – Heather Wilson
Churchill Alt S – Stephen Kurelek
D. Aubrey Moodie IS – Sheila Mason
Dunlop PS – Ellen Lamarre
Elmdale PS – Megan Richardson
First Avenue PS – Kristen Underwood
Forest Valley ES – Derek Black
Glebe CI – Lillian Thomsen

Glen Cairn PS – Mike Hickey
Hilson Avenue PS – Bobby Chawla
Katimavik ES – Nihan Kavaslar
Lady Evelyn Alt PS – Gabe Thirlwall
Lisgar CI – Sylvia LaFontaine
Manordale PS – Cathy Babyak
Meadowlands PS – Isabel Ruddick
Merivale HS – Anne Teutsch
Mutchmor PS – Hetty Mannethu
Nepean HS – Shirley Netten
Pleasant Park PS – Nancy Schenk
Rideau HS – Chris Ellis
Roch Carrier ES – Shauna Spearman
Sawmill Creek ES – Gennifer Stainforth
Sir Winston Churchill PS – Karen Desjardins
South March PS – Chris Bridgen

Guests and other persons in attendance:

Juliet Hamilton (OCASC Recording Secretary), Paula Hall (OCDSB), Annie Atnikov (Lady Evelyn Alt PS), Joseph Huniu (Lady Evelyn Alt PS), Danielle Fontaine (Lady Evelyn Alt PS)

(* SSC = OCASC Secondary Schools Committee)

CALL TO ORDER: 7:07 p.m., Anne Teutsch in the chair.

AGENDA: Approved with no changes:

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes of February 17, 2011
- Chair's Report
- Chalk-It-Up
- From Your Executive
 - Budget Group
 - Committee Representatives
 - Secondary School Review Ad Hoc Committee
 - OCASC AGM Nominating Committee
 - Updates
- Discussion: OCASC and PIC together: Where do we go from here?

MINUTES of February 17, 2011: Approved with no amendments.

CHAIR'S REPORT – Anne Teutsch

- Board is looking at changing the way it does the staggered start in Kindergarten. Consultation is planned with a focus group on Wednesday April 6 from 6:00-7:30 at the Board offices on Greenbank Road. Are looking for up to 20 parents to participate. If you or anyone you know is interested in attending please let Anne know (anne@teutsch.ca).
- School Board will be holding its second annual Aboriginal Conference, “Celebrating the Spirit of Youth II: Show Me the Way,” April 18 and 19, 8:30am – 3:30pm, at the Ottawa Convention Centre. Guest speakers will be Margaret Wheatley, Cindy Blackstock and Dr. Martin Brokenleg. There are a limited number of spots for parents. Please pass information of this event on to people that may be interested. Attendance is free of charge. For information or to RSVP, contact Vivian Hebrawi at vivian.hebrawi@ocdsb.ca or 613-596-8211 ext. 8820.
- On April 19th from 4:30pm – 8:00pm, following the Show Me the Way conference, the OCDSB is hosting another of its leadership initiative events, “Lead the Way to Creativity,” also at the Ottawa Convention Centre. The purpose of the event is to: connect people from the OCDSB community with people from a variety of other organizations; create and engage in dialogue about the conditions under which healthy and creative individuals and organizations thrive; celebrate our collective accomplishments. Guest speaker will be Margaret Wheatley. More information on this event and how to register is available on the OCDSB website (<http://www.ocdsb.ca/ab-ocdsb/leadtheway/li/Pages/default.aspx>), or contact Lorri Huppert at lorraine.huppert@ocdsb.ca or 613-596-8211 ext. 8391.
- The provincial Ministry of Education is holding its annual symposium for PIC (Parent Involvement Committee) representatives on April 8 and 9. Anne and Carrie are both going.
- The Secondary School Review Ad Hoc Committee will include representatives from OCASC – we will be looking for people interested in committing to that.
- The OCASC Annual General Meeting is coming up in May – are looking for people interested in joining the executive.
- The April OCASC meeting is scheduled for the Thursday before the Easter long weekend. Is there interest in moving it one week later? (Large affirmative show of hands.) Will check and see if it can be moved, and let people know as soon as possible.

CHALK-IT-UP

Speakers

South March PS – Chris Bridgen (christopherbridgen@gmail.com)

- Planning to apply for a PRO grant for a speaker. Want to know of good speakers and their cost.
 - Glebe CI – Maggie Mamen is a wonderful speaker. But have the rules changed so that speakers are not an allowable use of PRO grant money?
 - Anne/Paula – Don’t think that’s the case, but will check [Ministry of Ontario website for PRO Grants lists ineligible projects.

Speakers is not included in the list] . Information for this year's grants not available yet.

- Castor Valley ES – Received a grant this year which budgeted \$500 for a speaker – is coming on Tuesday, so will let you know.

Shannen's Dream

Lady Evelyn Alt PS – Annie Atnikov, Joseph Huniu, Danielle Fontaine (teachers at Lady Evelyn) (annie.atnikov@rogers.com)

- Shannen Koostachin lived on the Attawapiskat First Nation Reserve, near James Bay. Years ago the Attawapiskat school developed a diesel leak and was torn down and replaced by portables, which became more and more run down, had doors and windows that wouldn't close properly, and often had no heat. Shannen and the Attawapiskat students petitioned the government to build a new school, and although a new school was promised several times, they still do not have one. As they became more vocal and garnered publicity, students and others across the country became involved, and the goal broadened to fight for equitable education rights for all First Nation children and youth.
- Schooling in most parts of the country is funded by provincial/territorial governments. But the federal government is responsible for funding education on reserves. The federal government provides much less than what the provincial government provides per student, and extras such as libraries and computers are not funded at all.
- As of 2010, 48 new schools are needed in First Nations communities nationally, and 29 are in need of expansion and major renovations. Health concerns include: overcrowding, extreme mould, high carbon dioxide levels, sewage fumes, frozen pipes, and unheated portables resulting in students suffering from cold and frost bite.
- Shannen died recently in a car accident at the age of 15. Shannen's Dream is a campaign named in her memory to make sure all First Nations children across Canada have "safe and comfy" schools and receive a good quality education that makes them proud of who they are. It has become one of the largest youth movements in the world. More information can be found at <http://www.fncfcs.com/shannensdream>.
- Students at Lady Evelyn Alt PS are very passionate and involved in this movement. April 27th is a national action day for equal education, and a march to Parliament Hill is planned to ask the Prime Minister to reconsider building a school in Attawapiskat. Hope that other schools will join in. For more information contact Annie at the above email.

Principal Profile for French Immersion Centre

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

- K-8 school with 700 students in French Immersion. Principal Profile currently states that principal should be bilingual, and if they aren't that the Vice Principal should be. What do other schools do?
 - First Avenue PS – Have had both. Have always requested a bilingual principal, even though it was suggested that the pool of potential principals is much greater without that stipulation.

- D. Aubrey Moodie IS – Same suggestion was made at Lakeview PS, and they did make the change.
- Bayview PS – Profile should reflect the general view of the parents and community, so if a bilingual principal is what people want, put it in. At Bayview have had both Francophone and Anglophone principals. Bilingual principals are better able to evaluate the competency of staff and students in a French Immersion setting.

Milk Program

Agincourt Road PS – Krista Shibata (kristashibata@hotmail.com)

- School offers a milk program now, but with a lot of help from staff. Do any schools use adult volunteers, or are all milk programs dependent on staff?
 - Alta Vista PS – Use parent volunteers. One parent runs it. Every day a parent comes in to fill the class containers, and a separate parent comes in to clean up. It's a quick and easy job. Used to use older students, but that didn't work as well.
 - Lady Evelyn Alt PS – A parent from Mutchmor PS came to OCASC once and gave a presentation of a wonderful way to run a milk program. Check the minutes for the November 2009 OCASC meeting.
 - Sir Winston Churchill PS – Program at SWCPS is run by parent volunteers, no staff.

“Best Tools for Schools”

Agincourt Road PS – Krista Shibata (kristashibata@hotmail.com)

- Wondering if any schools have used this on-line school supply provider? Right now are using another supplier, and 40% of parents use it, but the on-line aspect of Best Tools is appealing.
 - Sawmill Creek ES – Have used it, and it was great. Easy for teachers, and the parents who used it liked it. Many parents find that they can reuse supplies from previous years, so there's no need to buy all new school supplies each year.
 - First Avenue PS – Used it last year, and it was great. Be warned that there was a deadline around mid-August. Another nice aspect was that people could make donations to provide supplies to more needy families.
 - Berrigan ES – Used it a few years ago. Very low interest so didn't use it again. Quality was good.
 - Castor Valley ES – About 100 parents used it, and it worked well.
 - Pleasant Park PS – Used it two years ago. Only problem was getting teachers to reach a consensus on what supplies were needed.

Book Sale

First Avenue PS – Kristen Underwood (kristen.underwood@gmail.com)

- School is having a huge book sale April 7-10. There will be a great selection of used books, with the proceeds going to the school. Hours are: Thursday 3:30pm - 9:00pm, Friday 10:00am - 9:00pm, Saturday 10:00am - 5:00pm, Sunday 10:00am - 3:00pm.

Bows for Butterflies

Secondary Schools Committee – Nadine Clarke (clarkene@rogers.com)

- Bows for Butterflies is a benefit concert and fundraiser for youth mental health. It will take place on March 27 at Centrepointe Theatre, starting at 1:00pm. It is being hosted by Margaret Trudeau, who will speak about her personal experience and sign copies of her book. There will also be a concert by the Ottawa Youth Orchestra. More information is available at <http://www.bowsforbutterflies.ca/index.htm>.

Green Bins

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

- Wondering if any schools are using green bins. (None that were present, but has been mentioned in previous Chalk-It-Up sessions this year.)

FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE

Education Committee – Gabe Thirlwall (Alternate Rep)

- Trustee McKenzie tabled a motion to write a letter identifying the negative affects of federal funding cuts to immigration services such as OCISO. This was supported and will go to the full Board.
 - Suggest that OCASC and individual schools also send letters to support maintaining this funding. These funds provide money for the MLO (Multicultural Liaison Officer) program, and support other programs that help immigrant students integrate into their schools.
 - Gabe will send Anne copy of letter, and OCASC will draft one.
- The Advisory Committee of the Arts presented recommendations for improvements in Arts delivery.
- Following up on a trustee suggestion of starting a swimming program, staff contacted the Lifesaving Society, which is willing to offer 3-day survival swimming lessons for free. More time would be great, but booking pool time would be difficult. Program would be delivered to all Grade 3 students.
- An update on the Elementary Alternative Program was given. Last year there was a review of the program. The five remaining alternative schools are currently reviewing the seven fundamental principles with their staff, principals, students and parent communities.

Secondary School Review Ad Hoc Committee – Chris Ellis

- This review will look beyond just programming, but consider school configurations, boundaries, program pathways, and supports and services.
- Propose having a working task force consisting of high-level Board staff (director/superintendents/principals) and a ‘steering committee’ which would include the task force as well as two trustees, a secondary principal, a secondary vice principal, an elementary principal, two secondary teachers, two secondary students, two members of OCASC, and a representative from a post-secondary institution.
- Chris would like the steering committee to include reps from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), the Community Council for Ethnocultural Equity (CCEE), the Advisory Committee on the Arts (ACA), the Children and Youth at Risk Advisory Committee (CAYRAC), and the Parental Involvement Committee (PIC).

He feels their input and views would be valuable to broaden perspective of committee and maintain constant communication with these communities. If there is a consensus at OCASC, would like the executive to contact the Board.

- Anne – Did that suggestion get raised at SEAC? Chris – Was given as a notice of motion; will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Glebe CI – Suggestion is a good one. What is the timing – when do meetings start, and how long will committee be active? A: Will meet once or twice before summer, and mandate is very long term (4 years). A lot of legwork has already been done.
- First Avenue PS – Wouldn't that number be too big for a steering committee? Agree they should have a voice, but maybe not at that level. A: Have been on large steering committees – it can work, but it can be a problem.
- Sir Winston Churchill PS – Idea is good, but are reps from these committees willing to attend, and is there stability in reps for such a long time period? A: Some of those committees may not be able to find reps, but want the Board to at least consider including these groups.
- Bayview PS – Thought time line was more like two years. If it really is longer, there need to be graduated decision points so that decisions are made along the way and not all deferred until the end. It will be challenge to have consistent representation over the entire length of the committee's mandate. Might also consider having a representative from the business community on the steering committee.
- Anne – Spoke to Superintendent Adams, and her thoughts on adding more reps were:
 1. The committee would get too large, especially if there were two reps from each.
 2. The hope is that if those reps are not included, the reps on the committee would communicate with those organizations not included.
 3. The steering committee is separate from any consultations going on, and these groups would all be consulted during the process.
- Chris' comment on #3 – There is a difference in what can be brought to the table at higher levels. The consultation process may be better if the steering committee is already informed about issues these committees have.
- Since Chris' idea of extra reps was positively received, Anne will follow up with Superintendent Adams.
- SSC – The Secondary School Review will be an ongoing discussion item at the OCASC Secondary Schools Committee, which meets the second Thursday of each month at Fisher Park PS. (More information on SSC is available on the OCASC website.)

OCASC AGM Nominating Committee – Carrie Eaton

- The May 19 OCASC meeting will be both a regular meeting and the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

- A new executive is elected at the AGM, and a nominating committee needs to be struck today to work on gathering a slate of candidates. Nominating committee consists of at least one member of the present executive and two other people.
- Positions that need to be filled at the AGM are: Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Membership Secretary, Communications Officer, and Liaison Officers/Members at Large.
- Nominating Committee: Carrie Eaton (Adrienne Clarkson ES)(Chair), Bobby Chawla (Hilson Avenue PS), Chris Bridgen (South March PS)

DISCUSSION: OCASC and PIC together: Where do we go from here?

- At February meeting we started the discussion on OCASC and PIC (Parent Involvement Committee).
- The new PIC regulations need to be followed by October 2011.
- Present PIC does not meet new regulations.
- OCASC has been around much longer, and overlaps what the regulations say the PIC should do.
- Various handouts were passed out:
 - Parent Involvement Committees – Notes from the Ontario Education Act
 - OCASC and PIC – Roles and Activities
 - Notes from the February discussion at OCASC.
 - Scenarios for the OCASC/PIC Relationship
 - Model 1: OCASC and PIC have no formal relationship – individual people may be involved in both, but the two organizations have no institutional connections.
 - Model 2: OCASC treats PIC like any other OCDSB committee – we appoint one or more committee reps, but do not otherwise have any institutional links.
 - Model 3: Some or all of the OCASC executive have *ex officio* seats on the PIC. This is technically the current situation.
 - Model 4: OCASC is the “at large” forum of PIC. The OCASC executive is closely involved with PIC or is the PIC.
 - Model 5: OCASC = PIC. OCASC becomes the PIC for the OCDSB.
- Glebe CI – Doesn’t seem to be a big gap in membership between current PIC and new PIC. Do see one difference – new regulations stipulate that the majority of people at a meeting need to be parents. New regulations specify the minimum number of meetings per year and that parents are appointed for 1 to 2 years, to a maximum of 4 years.
- First Avenue PS – What is different between the present PIC and the new PIC? Anne – Stronger language and greater expectations from the PIC. OCASC has been doing a lot that PIC will have to do.
- Berrigan ES – Issue is, what privileges does OCASC have now that may be taken away. Anne – Want to leave doors open to deal with whatever ministry does in future.

- Dunlop PS – Looking for clarification – not all districts have groups like OCASC? A – Correct. Q – What precipitated ministry to create PICs? Anne – They are trying to increase parental involvement, since it has been proven to help student achievement. OCASC has a structure that the government is trying to achieve across the province, involving parents and school councils. Q – Will province require that all pre-existing groups work/join with PIC in some way? Anne – No, it's up to each Board to work it out. Aim is not standardization, just increased engagement.
- Lisgar CI – One concern Lisgar council has is losing the representation of every council at PIC, thereby losing the broad view that is present at OCASC. Anne – Heard that at the February meeting – assembly meetings at OCASC are very important to school councils. That is also recognized at the Board. So whatever happens, we know this is an important part. Will not shut down something that works. Q – So if there's an amalgamation, there would still be assembly-style meetings? Anne – Yes. As in Model 4 of the OCASC/PIC Scenarios, could have PIC meeting 4 times a year, and more frequent assembly meetings.
- Lisgar CI – What about a voice at the Board. Right now both PIC and OCASC have direct connections. Anne – Now have direct representation on Board committees. That is very special and we don't want to lose it. It is built right into Board policy. Have to figure out how to maintain that in whatever new system we develop.
- Hilson Avenue PS – See present level of parental involvement as a sort of pyramid shape, with the most people engaged at the parent/teacher level, fewer at the council level, and fewer still at the OCASC level. See PIC as aiming at the parent level, whereas OCASC aims at the council level. Anne – Even in the names, PIC implies working with parents whereas OCASC implies working with councils. Regulations do mention PIC being involved with councils as well as parents. Recent OCASC visioning process debated where we should focus, and the website and OCASC News are available to everyone, and meetings are open to everyone. PIC activities will be more focussed toward meeting their purpose, so many will be aimed at parents.
- Comment: Two meetings a month will result in fewer parents involved.
- Sir Winston Churchill PS – In Boards where there is no parent involvement, will they amalgamate Boards and form one PIC? Anne – No. Each Board must have their own PIC. Must meet minimum regulations. Boards which are very widespread geographically can meet electronically.
- First Avenue PS – One advantage of OCASC is independence from Board. Probably won't have enough interested parents to have both PIC and OCASC reps on Board committees. Need to keep our independence. Anne – Other strong point raised at February meeting was maintaining autonomy. One question – is it the autonomy itself that's critical, or just the ability to disagree. Committees such as Alternative Education Advisory Committee still voice disagreement.
- Nepean HS – Does the PIC have to be a committee of the Board, or could it be a subcommittee of OCASC? Anne/Paula – The Director of Education is on it, but it is not a Board committee. It is more autonomous than other statutory committees, and can make its own bylaws.
- Rideau HS – Committees can express disagreement with the Board, but only within their own areas of expertise. So PIC would be restricted to commenting on parent

engagement issues, not on something outside its mandate. OCASC has no such constraints.

- Pleasant Park PS – If OCASC continues to exist, has Board given any indication which group would be sending reps to committees? Anne – It's not in the ministry regulations, but it has been discussed. The Board's regulations state that OCASC reps can sit on its committees, so in the short term there would be no changes. Things could change further along. Q – So if OCASC disappears that privilege would disappear? Anne – Assume privilege would transfer to PIC.
- Pleasant Park PS – Appealing thing about OCASC is the comfort level, frankness and openness. PIC could be intimidating with the Director and trustees attending, and being held at the Board offices. Risk alienating parents. Anne – Needs to be about parent involvement. Critical to keep assembly meetings; question is where do they fit in. It sounds like the message is that we need two separate meetings, assembly meetings and exec/PIC meetings where work gets done. Q – Speaking at OCASC could reach both levels – exec members attending PIC could share the concerns and info raised at OCASC.
- Forest Valley ES – (to Anne) As a member of PIC and OCASC, is PIC now meeting new regulations? A – No. FVES – Is OCASC now meeting new PIC regulations? A – No. FVES – Think there is too much emphasis being placed on the differences in names: council vs parents. Given that neither group is fulfilling the new mandate, could we become Model 4 in the OCASC/PIC Scenarios, with the core PIC being the OCASC exec?
- Agincourt Road PS – What are the present mandates of OCASC and PIC? Anne – The Education Act states that the purpose of the PIC is to support, encourage and enhance parent engagement at the board level in order to improve student achievement and well-being. The purpose of OCASC is to share information, facilitate communication and represent its membership.
- Agincourt Road PS – How does the current situation (basically Model 3 in the OCASC/PIC Scenarios) work? Anne – Right now Carrie and Anne (as OCASC Vice-Chair and Chair) sit on the PIC. Communication between the two groups is good, the relationship is positive, and the meetings are open to everyone. But can see real value to having more than 2 OCASC reps on PIC.
- D. Aubrey Moodie IS – The business model for acquisitions and mergers would allow acquired group to exist separately for a year while working closely with members of the other group, with a cultural merge happening at the end of that year.
- Pleasant Park PS – Who would appoint the parent members of PIC? Anne – That would have to be decided when drawing up the bylaws. Could have OCASC appoint people. Q – Who would have voting power – would a small number of OCASC reps be lost amongst reps from other groups, even though they would be representing a large number of councils?
- Pleasant Park PS – Regulations say that each council could have a rep on PIC. Anne – There is a huge variation in how PICs are being set up. There is also a huge variation in how strongly Boards are committed to setting up and working with their PICs, and in how successful the PICs are.
- Glebe CI – Like how things are now. Like idea of having more OCASC members on PIC. OCASC's purpose can be changed by parents without Board okay – its fate is in

the hands of the parents who volunteer to attend. OCASC can address issues at any level – trustees, provincial government, federal government. PIC works only at the Board level.

- Glebe CI – Ideal PIC means that Board would have to take the views of the PIC into account. But the regulations say the Board *may* solicit the advice of its PIC. Maybe OCASC should write the ministry and say the regulations should say *must*.
- Lady Evelyn Alt PS – How many councils would choose to send reps to PIC instead of OCASC if both bodies existed? Might negate what we're trying to preserve.
- Rideau HS – OCASC and PIC as separate bodies would be greater than together. Board is still struggling in helping schools engage parents. It is beyond the capacity of OCASC to address these issues. PIC is more focussed on that – could identify those schools, send resources, create that engagement, and schools could end up sending a council rep to OCASC. PIC has the Director, trustees, and should have reps from community groups that reach out to those groups that are unengaged. PIC would build capacity, OCASC would use that capacity. We may eventually be squeezed out, but will disappear if folded in.
- Lisgar CI – Question is how not to get squeezed out. PIC has a more selective focus while OCASC has a much broader interest.
- Anne – The next step is to take the combined notes from this discussion and the February OCASC discussion to the next PIC meeting, which is being held on April 11 at 7:30 in room B400 at the Board offices on Greenbank Road. The meeting is open to the public. Paula Hall, who has been at all our OCASC meetings, and Michèle Giroux, who was at our February meeting, both attend PIC meetings. PIC members will be bringing suggestions and concerns from their various communities. Will report back at our April meeting.

NEXT MEETING:

- Right now scheduled for Thursday, April 21, 2011 at 7:00 pm in the Fisher Park PS library **BUT** may be moved one week later because of the Easter weekend. Members will be informed as soon as possible.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm.

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