

OTTAWA-CARLETON ASSEMBLY OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

Meeting of Thursday, April 28, 2011
Fisher Park PS Library

ATTENDANCE:

Member schools

Adrienne Clarkson ES – Sanjiva
Sondagar, Carrie Eaton
Barrhaven PS – Ellen Dickson
Bayview PS – Riley Brockington
Canterbury HS and SSC* – Nadine
Clarke
Cedarview MS – Ellen Dickson
Churchill Alt S – Stephen Kurelek
D. Aubrey Moodie IS – Sheila Mason
Elgin Street PS – John Higgins
Fallingbrook Comm. ES – Peter
Kokkovas
First Avenue PS – Kristen Underwood
Forest Valley ES – Derek Black

Total Membership: 66

Glebe CI – Lillian Thomsen
Glen Cairn PS – Mike Hickey
Glen Ogilvie PS – Christina McNivens
Hilson Avenue PS – Bobby Chawla,
Mona Paré
Kars PS – Elaine Murkin
Lady Evelyn Alt PS – Gabe Thirlwall
Manordale PS – Cathy Babyak
North Gower/Marl. PS – Sandra Acacia
Rideau HS – Chris Ellis
Rideau Valley MS – Sandra Acacia
Robert Bateman PS – Leona King
Rockcliffe Park PS – Joel Berger
Sawmill Creek ES – Gennifer Stainforth
South March PS – Chris Bridgen

Guests and other persons in attendance:

Juliet Hamilton (OCASC Recording Secretary), Paula Hall (OCDSB), Yasir Naqvi (MPP, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education), Geoff Turner (Assistant to Mr. Naqvi)

(* SSC = OCASC Secondary Schools Committee)

CALL TO ORDER: 7:13 p.m., Carrie Eaton in the chair.

AGENDA: Approved with amendments:

Approval of Agenda
Approval of Minutes of March 24, 2011
Chalk-It-Up
From Your Executive
OCASC AGM Nominating Committee
PIC Update
Updates and Committee Reports
Guest: Yasir Naqvi, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education

MINUTES of March 24, 2011: Approved with no amendments.

CHALK-IT-UP

Canadian Future Achievers

Glebe CI – Lillian Thomsen (<http://canadian-future-achievers.ncf.ca/>)

- Local chapter was started by a former trustee in the 1990's. Looking to become more active and get more participants from the Ottawa area.

- Foundation is a registered charity and sponsors Aboriginal First Nation, Inuit and Caribbean youth. Students aged 9-16 can apply. Object is to help these students stay in school.
- Students need to maintain a B average and provide a letter from their principal. Achievements, activities and how student is a role model are all considered.
- A scholarship fundraising event, CFA Springfest 2011, is being held on May 20 from 6:00 – 8:45 pm at the Parkdale United Church. For information call 613-749-9616 or 613-562-9677 or email future.achievers@sympatico.ca.

Full Day Kindergarten and Before/After School Care

Forest Valley ES – Derek Black (drblack130@gmail.com)

- School is scheduled to have full day kindergarten implemented in 2012. School presently has a third-party daycare provider who has indicated they will close when full day kindergarten starts. Concern about loss of before/after school care. Have three questions: a) For schools with 2010 implementation, what changes occurred? b) For those with implementation in 2011, have you been given information? c) For those with 2012 implementation, are you in same position as Forest Valley ES?
 - Adrienne Clarkson ES – Scheduled for 2012 implementation, and have same situation as you. Trustee has been contacted by child care provider. Understand that 20 kids need to sign up in order for Board to run a before/after school program.
 - South March PS – Issue came up at last meeting. School getting full day Kindergarten in 2012, and Children’s Village will lose its lease at that time to free up space. Board has someone on staff to deal with this issue. No policy now but goal is to have one in place for next year. Need to lobby trustees to ensure service will be available.
 - Glebe CI – Issue was the main item at Business Services Committee at the last meeting and for the next meeting. A motion by Trustee Fisher requested a report from staff. Third-party childcare providers and parents of kids in that childcare feel strongly about the issue. Some factors that need to be considered are: age of kids, school holidays, activities offered, size of program. Toronto School Board hasn’t banned third-party providers. Trustees are being lobbied, and the discussion will continue. Next committee meeting is May 11.
 - Adrienne Clarkson ES – Biggest concern with the way the Board would run childcare is the quality of care – people engaged are not ECEs (Early Childhood Educators).
 - Hilson Avenue PS – Understand ages for daycare are Grades K-5. Just because Kindergarten changes, why does that affect daycare?
 - Glebe CI – It can be uneconomical once you don’t have half-day Kindergarten kids needing care.
 - South March PS – Some schools need the space.

Implementation of Full Day Kindergarten

Bayview PS – Riley Brockington (Riley.Brockington@statcan.gc.ca)

- Did a public delegation at Business Services raising the point that there has been no consultation on Years 4 and 5 of the implementation of full day Kindergarten. Concern is that the implementation of those two years will be the most disruptive and costly, and the schools affected need to be thinking about this now.
- Year 1 implementation occurred where schools had space, and was very easy. Years 2 and 3 are occurring where space can be found with minimal renovations. The schools tagged for Years 4 and 5 have no room and many portables now – how will they cope with full day K?
- If there is room at a nearby school, why spend huge amounts of money renovating when you can move some students instead? Lots of community discussion required.
- Report on Years 4 and 5 implementation to be tabled at May 4 Strategic Planning and Priorities Committee
http://www.ocdsb.ca/calendar/AGENDA%20DOCS/2011%20DOCS/May%202011/SPPC%204%20May%202011/9_11_084_FDK%20Year4and5%20Sites.pdf. It includes a list of all the schools affected. When is Board going to engage these communities about issues to be faced?
- Parents need to consider the question: If you're at a school that is presently at or over capacity, how do you envision adding 6 – 10 more classrooms?
- There will be legitimate situations where schools have to be expanded, and money to do so, but money will be limited.
- Comments:
 - Elgin Street PS – Definitely will be affected, and nearby First Avenue PS is also full. Presently going through an accommodation review. Have a comment on reallocation of students: The Board is providing lots of information, but not promoting ways to reach consensus. Many people want the status quo, but that's impossible. Board needs a mediation process to help.
 - Rockcliffe Park PS – Presently at 180% capacity. Many students are moving to the Separate Board.
 - Glebe CI – Surprised at lack of basic research with this issue.
 - Assumption will be that if Board is providing daycare, any child can go.
 - How to deal with subsidized daycare spaces as not been discussed.
 - Barrhaven PS – Getting even more portables. New school may be built in Chapman Mills. Talking about moving Grade 5s into nearby middle school and parents are unhappy about that. Think we need to address this issue at a higher level than the Board – need to talk to the province and the Ministry of Education.

Parent Information Session – Paths to Teen Well-being and Success

Canterbury HS – Nadine Clarke (clarkene@rogers.com) (www.canterburycouncil.org)

- Council using PRO grant money to host a parent information night.
- Tuesday May 10, 7:00 pm, in the library at Canterbury HS, 900 Canterbury Avenue.
- Guest speakers are Andie Fournier and Jessica Sauve-Griffin, Child and Youth Workers.
- All parents are welcome. Information is also on school's website.

How do councils collect money?

Robert Bateman PS – Leona King (leoqb77@yahoo.ca)

- Had a visit from their superintendent, who voiced concern about how council was handling money. Most fundraisers involve teachers collecting money from their students, taking it to the office and putting it in the safe. Concerned about legal responsibility if money lost. Wondering what other councils do.
 - Carrie – How many schools do the same thing? Show of hands indicated that most did.
 - Adrienne Clarkson ES – Recent issue was that two fundraisers were held at once and the safe couldn't be used, so money was being put in mailboxes. Looking at buying a locking mailbox for council use.
 - Elgin Street PS – Got same visit and lecture about insurance and responsibility. Teachers' union doesn't want teachers collecting money, although teachers aren't complaining.
 - Adrienne Clarkson ES – Two other considerations are whether council should have access to school safe, and that collecting money from fundraisers not part of teacher's job.
 - Robert Bateman PS – Most money raised goes to help the school, and teachers realize that.
 - Lady Evelyn Alt PS – Could call teachers' union to see if there is a policy.

FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE

OCASC Nominating Committee – Carrie Eaton

- Next month's meeting will be both a regular meeting and the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Will be voting on most positions, but not committee reps because they follow the Board calendar and get chosen in November.
- Passed out information sheets on positions open for election: Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Membership Secretary, Communications Officer, and Liaison Officers/Members at Large.
- Liaison Officers used to be assigned to zones, but now are basically member-at-large positions. They are part of the executive, but can choose their own level of involvement. There is no limit to the number of LOs – this year started with 12 but it has decreased since.
- The executive meets every 1-2 months. The location of meetings will depend on who is Chair. If she (Carrie) is elected, option is to do a potluck at 5:30 before the regular meeting, or to move the meeting around the city at various schools.
- Deadline for nomination is May 6 (should be 21 days before AGM but have chosen a later date because of lateness of this meeting), but nominations from the floor will be accepted at the AGM.
- Several people indicated a willingness to stand for positions:
 - Carrie Eaton (Adrienne Clarkson ES) – Chair
 - Chris Ellis (Rideau HS) – Recording Secretary
 - John Higgins (Elgin Street PS) – Treasurer

- Joel Berger (Rockcliffe Park PS) – Liaison Officer (if exec meetings not too hard to get to via transit)
 - Gabe Thirlwall (Lady Evelyn Alt PS) – Liaison Officer
- Have set up a gmail account for nominations – please email ocasc.agm@gmail.com if you are interested in a position or would like to nominate someone.

PIC Update – Carrie Eaton

PIC meeting, April 11

- The last few OCASC meetings were devoted to looking at options combining PIC and OCASC under the new provincial regulations. The last PIC meeting weighed various pros and cons.
- Option being looked at now centers on the fact that PIC needs to have an assembly meeting and most OCASC people want to remain a separate entity. Option would have PIC contracting out their assembly meetings to OCASC, and each OCASC meeting would include a 10-15 minute update from PIC. There would be no OCASC fees, and PIC would provide money for meetings and any other required extras. Seems to be a win-win situation.
- Chris Ellis, Lillian Thomsen and Nadine Clarke also attended the meeting:
 - Chris – Board staff brought forward a proposal of what PIC would do. Bylaws need to be developed. Regarding membership, their suggestion is that each superintendency have one parent selected. OCASC would have some positions. He would like SEAC to have a position as well.
 - Lillian – Need written agreement on details of contracting meetings. Need to have discussion within OCASC about representation on PIC. PIC needs to discuss its composition. Currently OCASC Chair and Vice-Chair sit on PIC, but OCASC is not directing them on what to say. Need guidelines for responsibilities.
 - Nadine – Recognize that PIC is to the Director what a school council is to a principal – its main function is to give advice. Overall goal is to reduce barriers to parent engagement.

PIC Conference in Toronto, April 8-9

- Very positive statistics:
 - Graduation rate in 2009/10 was 81%, up from 68% in 2003. Every 1% increase equals 1500 students.
 - 2009 McKinsey Report ranked Ontario in the top 5 education systems around the world, and second best for reading.
- Canada Learning Bond – For families with household income under \$41,000 and receiving the National Child Benefit Supplement, the government will start an RESP for children born after December 31, 2003. No matching household funds are required. Initial deposit is \$500, with an extra \$100/year up to age 15. Money can be used toward full- or part-time studies in an apprenticeship program, CEGEP, trade school, college or university.
- Mary Jean Gallagher was the keynote speaker. Her topic was the student-led program called SpeakUp, a Ministry-supported initiative to help students have greater input into the education system. Students can get involved in three main ways: the Minister’s Student Advisory Council, student forums, and SpeakUp projects. For

more information check out the Ministry of Education's SpeakUp website (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/students/speakup/index.html>) or the SpeakUp Facebook page.

- E-Learning – Not just for high school students. Upon entering school every student receives a username and password, which gives them access to resources for all grades. Helpful for students looking for extra challenges, those needing to review material, or those who have missed some school. Should be able to get ID and password information from teacher or principal. Otherwise can email elo@ontario.ca.
- Kids Help Phone – More than just a suicide hotline. Receive 4300 calls a week. Top three issues are mental health concerns, peer concerns and family concerns. More than half the calls deal with relationship issues, and 1 in 7 deals with violence. Broken down into age groups, the top issues are: for ages 4-8 – bullying, for ages 9-12 – peer issues, for ages 13-20 – mental health. Their website (www.kidshelpphone.ca) has separate areas specific to kids, teens, and organizations, with a wealth of information and interactive tools.
- Early Learning/Full Day Kindergarten
 - Many parents are concerned that a full day is too long for young children, and are asking for the option of only sending their children for half the day. Statistics have shown that this is only an issue for September, and that students get used to it by October. Of the people who did chose the half day option, most changed to full day by December.
 - Capital funding will exist for phases 3-5 of full day Kindergarten implementation. Many questions about hours, siblings. Boards are not required to offer before/after school care. Allowing third-party childcare providers is up to each Board, and most are allowing it.
- Few other points of interest picked up:
 - Some councils are putting out parent handbooks using PRO grant money, targeting either Kindergarten families or all families new to a school.
 - Some councils have changed their meetings to information sessions, and are getting more people.
- Hilson Avenue PS – Walk-a-thon on May 1 to support the Kids Help Phone.
- South March PS – Son's teacher uses the e-learning resources a lot, and it's great. Councils should encourage principal to encourage teachers to use it more.

Lead the Way Campaign – Nadine Clarke

- Event was held on April 19. 400-500 people were invited. Lots of positive comments. Focus was on creativity. Excerpts will be published soon, and information on availability will follow.

Calendar Committee – Nadine Clarke

- Ministry of Education has approved the Board's calendar for 2011-2012 (http://www.ocdsb.ca/calendar/Documents/SYC_2011-2012.pdf). Crucial dates are:
 - First day of school: Sept. 6, 2011
 - Last day of school: June 28, 2012 (elementary) / June 26, 2012 (secondary)
 - Christmas Break: Dec. 26, 2011 – Jan. 6, 2012

- March Break: March 12 – 16, 2012
- Have already had a meeting to discuss the 2012 – 2013 calendar.

Diversity and Inclusivity Task Force met last week at Longfields-Davidson Heights. Topic was how teachers are breaking myths.

Guest: Yasir Naqvi, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education, MPP for Ottawa Centre

Accompanied by assistant Geoff Turner

- Passed out a handout with information on funding increases, staff increases, full day Kindergarten, improved test scores, capital investment in OCDSB, reduced primary class sizes, and other investments.
- Ministry of Education is second largest ministry in the province.
- Opened the floor to questions. Promised that if he didn't know the answer he would look into it and get back to Anne with the information.
- D. Aubrey Moodie IS – What are the goals of the Ministry? A: 1) Increase student achievement (EQAO) and graduation rates; 2) Narrow gap between various communities; 3) Strengthen confidence in public education – seeing numbers that show this is happening.
- Kars PS – What are the Ministry's plans for compliance monitoring and enforcement of the new food and beverage policy? A: Will have to look into that and get an answer.
- Bayview PS – Enrolment has been decreasing but expenditures are going up. Biggest cost is salaries. New Kindergarten initiative will just increase that. Money from Ministry always targeted, so Boards don't have flexibility to address needs. If elected, what improvements will we see? A: Are having meetings to review funding formula, considering slowing down initiatives and giving Boards more flexibility. System was broken 8 years ago; have rebuilt it and can now change methods a bit.
- Canterbury HS – Funding formula for transportation a huge issue. Over the last 12 years calculate the OCDSB has received \$140 million less than their co-terminus board. Even now their students get bussed while ours have to pay. A: Issue is complicated. He (Yasir) is working closely with trustees in Ottawa on certain funding issues, and transportation is one. Funding formula concerns are voiced across the province. Q: Are you working with trustees in all the Ottawa Boards, or just the Public Board? A: Public.
- Barrhaven PS – Four years ago we asked about moving to a one-school-system. Were told it wasn't a good time for it. What about now? Separate Board has always had full day Kindergarten – we're getting it now. When is a good time and when will the inequities disappear? A: Don't think any political party will raise this issue. It's very divisive. Could be 10 years away, and may take a referendum. We are working on the inequities, and they are decreasing. Keep in mind that some are a result of geography.
- Bayview PS – See consolidating portfolios with the Separate Board as a way to decrease inequities. Take baby steps together, win the little battles, and eventually it'll just happen. Would love to see schools from each Board sharing a building.
- Paula Hall – Was in Newfoundland when they moved to a one-school-system. Were in extreme debt and argument was that province couldn't afford both. Plus province

is very rural, with a low population. Given present provincial deficit situation, argument could be made on that basis now.

- Glen Ogilvie PS – There are hard caps on primary grades, but no caps on full day Kindergarten classes. Why not? A: Understood there was a cap. (Carrie: It's a soft cap.) Will check on that. Ideal is 26. Q: Know of a school with 32 5-year-olds with 1 teacher and 1 Early Childhood Educator, and they are dealing with autism and developmental challenges. Full day Kindergarten will work well only if supported properly, but it is not being supported well now. Need a hard cap. A soft cap is useless and just creates frustration. A: This is the first year of full day Kindergarten. We are learning and fixing issues as they arise. One benefit of multi-year roll-out is that it allows us to improve as we go.
- Sawmill Creek ES – Each funding formula includes the funding from the previous year, so the inequity will never disappear. Is government going to address that, and if so, when can we expect to see changes? A: Recommendation is to create an advisory committee. Timing unknown.
- Sawmill Creek ES – 89% of Special Education funding is based on average daily enrolment instead of average incident of need. Why? A: Have to check into that. A lot of work is going on around Special Education. Ministry has an advisory council which is coming up with recommendations e.g. why reassess when a child moves schools. Will try to get a more thorough answer.
- Hilson Avenue PS – When the Ministry talks of consulting stakeholders, do they consider students stakeholders? A: Yes – hear from students through student trustees, who have a provincial organization. Q: Is that the only student group with input? A: Yes.
- Fallingbrook Comm. ES – ESL (English as a Second Language) is another area where there is a huge discrepancy between the Public and Separate Boards in Ottawa. Separate Board has 7% of their students requiring ESL help while the Public Board has 22%, yet they get the same amount of money. There are other areas in which certain Boards have greater needs than others, and Boards need discretionary funding which they are free to use in those areas. A: This year OCDSB had \$3 million surplus, which they can use for discretionary spending.
- Rockcliffe Park PS – It's admirable that funding is increasing, but councils are still raising money for textbooks. Board's surplus is probably labelled for something specific. A: Aware of issue and addressing it. Agree that it's unacceptable that parents need to fundraise for basic needs. Ministry recently came up with guidelines for fees. Also consulting on guidelines for fundraising. Then will consult on corporate fundraising/donations.

NEXT MEETING:

- Thursday, May 19, 2011 at 7:00 pm in the Fisher Park PS library.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

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