

Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils

Meeting of Thursday September 18, 2008

Member schools in attendance: 37

Total members: 81

Quorum: 27

School Council Members Present/Voting Delegate

A. Lorne Cassidy ES/ Dee Whitmore/
Kim Clausen
Adrienne Clarkson ES/Carrie Eaton
Agincourt PS/Norah Vollmes
Alta Vista PS/Lillian Thomsen
Bell HS/Juliet Hamilton/John Perkin
Berrigan ES/ Susan Klimchuk
Briargreen PS/Suzanne Vanderheuvél
Canterbury HS/Bob Weist
Castor Valley ES/Laurel Perry-Hopli,
Connaught PS/Madeline Stewart Diay
D. Aubrey Moodie IS/Sherri Smith
D. Roy Kennedy PS/Terrena Bennett
Elgin St. PS/Kaeli Van Regan
Elmdale PS/Rob Frater
Fallingbrook Com ES/Irene Lupin
Farley Mowat PS/Sivas Premjeyanth,
Glen Cairn PS/Mike Hichey
Glen Ogilvie PS/Trina Whitehurst,
Greenbank MS/Paula Shaver
Heritage PS/Denise McLean

Katimavik PS/Sheila Ball
Knoxdale PS/Paula Shaver/H. Tomalty
Lisgar Collegiate/Kate Preston-
Thomas/Stephan Wang,
Manor Park PS/Mike McMullen
Mary Honeywell ES/John Tucker
Nepean HS/Alexandra MacLean
North Gower/Marlborough Sandra Hein
Parkwood Hills/Leann Webster
Pleasant Park PS/Nancy Schenk/
Heather McAfee
Rideau Valley MS/Sue Czrswell
South Carleton/Sue Czrswell
Stephen Leacock/Nadine Clarke
Steve Maclean PS/Paula Walker
Stittsville PS/Rhonda Drakes-Blais
Trillum ES/Tammy Martin
W.O. Mitchell PS/Brenda Verch
Woodroffe ES/Heather Tyrie/Maria Di
Rosa

Non School Council Attending Meeting: Riley Brockington (vice chair- board of trustees), Michele Giroux (executive officer OCDSB), Cheryle Watson (school council liaison OCDSB), Jennifer McKenzie (trustee), John Shea (trustee), Rob Campbell (trustee)

Call to Order:

Anne Teutsch in the chair 7:10pm
Introductions of OCASC executive
Introduction of Michelle Giroux (executive officer at OCDSB) and
Cheryl Watson (Policy Analyst and school council liaison at board office)
3 Trustees also present (not introduced)

Chalk It Up:

1. Learning Support teacher - **Castor Valley ES/Laurel Perry Hopli**

Strategies to lobby the board for a return of a full-time learning support teacher. Contact: wilsonheather@rogers.com (council chair)

Lost only learning support teacher –need help

Woodroffe Ave P.S

- suggests clarify procedure at future meeting
- Discuss getting Dawn Paxton come to give more input on Spec Ed.

Woodroffe Ave. PS

- says link to spec ed info is not on OCASC website

OCASC SEAC rep

- says that she knows where that info is email seac@ocasc.ca

2. Criminal Reference Check – **Leann Webster/Parkwood Hills PS**

ffwebster@hotmail.com

Parents don't need criminal ref check to volunteer in school

Community volunteers must have criminal ref check but not parents

Just because someone is a parent does not mean they are not criminals

Private schools and other school boards require criminal reference checks but this school board does not

Looking for ideas on where to work on this

Woodroffe Ave PS

- Cost could be an issue there could be a grant to pay for this

Pleasant Park

- Her child's preschool did this.

Stittsville

- Wonders if there could be a discount for volume of police checks

Katimivik

- wonders if it would disadvantage parents who have committed crimes in the past

Connaught PS

- There could be a parent with past issues prevented from volunteering in the classroom
- requires further thought also privacy issues

Lisgar HS

- There are levels of risk attached to criminal reference check i.e. high, med, low risk volunteers could be placed accordingly in the school

A Lorne Cassidy ES

- Moved from Calgary and in that school board no volunteers allowed until after Christmas because of the delay in getting checks done

Glen Cairn PS

- Can we discuss this at another time with more professionals who have knowledge? What could happen if info from a police check hits the internet?

Cantebury HS

- Where is policy?

Parkwood Hills

- Look under governance and policies and procedures
http://www.ocdsb.edu.on.ca/au_pp_main.asp

Cheryle Watson: Introduced herself as policy analyst at OCDSB she will liaise with school councils and the OCDSB

Two items coming from the board

- Info package from OCDSB to new school council chairs
- Ministry program to apply for grant PRO (Parents Reaching Out) email cherylewatson@ocdsb.ca for more information.

Approval of Agenda – 7:20 approved

Ratification of Minutes of May 15, 2008 7:20 – approved

Nadine's name is misspelled in minutes from May– check and change

Committee Reports

Education Committee Report

Committee met on September 17 at board office.

Of note was the report from Jennifer Adams Superintendent of Curriculum regarding the EQAO test results.

This info was found on the website: for more info see this link:

http://www.ocdsb.edu.on.ca/Documents/Board_Meetings/Meetings/2008/September_2008/Ed_Sept17_2008/Ed_Sept17_2008.asp

- Compared to the province, the OCDSB had a greater proportion of grade 6 students meeting the provincial standard on the junior division assessments of reading (70% vs. 66%), writing (70% vs. 67%), and mathematics (63% vs. 61%), with increases of 2%, 8%, and 5% in each area, respectively.
- A 2-3% increase in the areas of writing and mathematics on the primary division assessment; no change in grade 3 reading.
- Grade 9 students in the academic math program continue to outperform the province (80% compared to 75%), suggesting that students are well prepared for post-secondary studies.
- 3% fewer grade 9 students in the applied math program achieved at or above the provincial standard compared to 2007, highlighting the need for continued focus on instructional practices and targeted supports for this group of learners.
- Substantial increases in the percentages of grade 6 English Language Learners and students with special needs achieving at, or above, the provincial standard.

- Significant increase in achievement for grade 9 English Language Learners in the academic math program (13%), demonstrating the district's focus on a more inclusive approach to providing excellent instructional practices for all students.

Going Forward for Next Year

- Continuing to work towards provincial targets of 75% of all grade 6 students meeting or exceeding the provincial standard in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Improving student learning and monitoring student achievement in grades 7 to 12 through the student success initiative, and providing supports to these students to ensure their academic success.
- Conducting program reviews (e.g., French as a Second Language – grades 9-12; full day early learning).
- Developing a framework for equity and diversity.
- Focusing on instructional practices with increased numbers of instructional coaches working with classroom teachers in elementary and secondary schools.
- Implementing a revised policy and procedure on assessment, evaluation, and reporting.

Please visit www.ocdsb.ca for further details on our achievement results.

Budget Committee Report

Board passed balanced budget for more info see this link to the last meeting in May:
http://www.ocdsb.edu.on.ca/Documents/Board/Reports/Budget_committee/Budget%20May%2028%20Report%207%20Revised2%202.pdf

SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) Report

Special education delivery is very uneven across the board; the special education framework is intended to provide a guide for improving delivery of this service.

Please see this link for more details:

http://www.ocdsb.edu.on.ca/Documents/Board_Meetings/Meetings/2008/September_2008/SEAC_sept3_2008/SEAC_sept3_2008.asp

For more specific issues that come up at your school send Beth Doubt an email seac@ocasc.ca and she can point the party in need in the right direction

Trustee Getty's motion will be discussed at the October Chairs meeting.

Visioning Presentation at OCASC

“A New Vision for OCASC”

Anne made her presentation (attached at the end, and edited to reflect what she covered). There was only one question: while explaining how all the needs could be grouped into 3 primary, high level needs, she was asked (Bob – Canterbury) to elaborate on what was meant by “Facilitating Communication.” Her response was: helping “who we serve” to get information by suggesting who they talk to, pointing them in the right direction, helping them make that contact, etc.

Rest of notes pertain to discussion following the presentation.

Woodroffe ES

- thank you (for doing this)
- Want to let people know that OCASC is the only organization in Ontario that has seats on Board committees and has a voice at those committees and votes there (incorrect – corrected later). Other associations don’t have that.
- Ministry of Education has guidelines for councils, which lay out some of the things they should or shouldn’t do. The manual states that every parent at school is a member and has a voice on their council. Does that not imply “we serve parents ... vehicle of council?”

Trillium

- are you trying to come up with a mission statement?
- personally, find it a glaring omission that kids are not mentioned

Chair

- looking for a purpose statement more than a mission statement

Connaught ES

- is choice serving/representing?
- can’t they be combined in mission statement?

Katimavik ES

- issue seems to be voice vs vote
- at council any parent can speak but only members can vote
- at OCASC need a card to vote
- can serve all parents by letting them have a voice, but councils (ie the rep who has stepped forward at each council to come and be educated) have the vote
- all parents vote for their reps
- in order not to undermine council, it’s the reps who have the vote, but this doesn’t have to muzzle the parent voice

Parkwood Hills ES

- agree with Trillium and Katimavik

- maybe add at the end “ultimately representing the needs of our children”
- know parents and councils can be in there
- some committees can be political in nature, some people come for that
- hard to decide

Stittsville PS

- wouldn't we just fall under chain of command:
- parent --> council -(via rep)-> OCASC
- rep brings unified concerns
- wouldn't we then fall under representing and serving councils

Lisgar HS

- sometimes parents come to us directly, either because they haven't had any luck at council, or there's no united voice at council

Chair

- plus their school may not have a council

Stephen Leacock PS

- would like to hear from people who haven't spent hours on this already.

Pleasant Park PS

- wonderful job, sounds like you're almost there
- do serve and represent

Alta Vista

- would like to hear from people for whom this is their first OCASC meeting
- why are you here and what do you hope to get out of it?

Elgin St PS

- to help the kids in the school by learning about greater issues that council may not be looking at
- hearing the ways different schools deal with things, such as behaviour management

Chair

- fits in with “Sharing Information”

A Lorne Cassidy ES

- for support, to see what other councils do
- is what we do normal?
- educate ourselves on issues

Fallingbrook

- OCASC has finger on hot button issue

- we're not a political council – this is a source of information

Pleasant Park

- unified voice
- affecting change in process
- right now especially concerned about the shuffle in the fall, juggling numbers
- learn about the role of trustees, government
- how can we work with the system and get our needs met if we feel our children are not being well served

Trillium

- more selfish reasons – how to support daughter
- got on council, then interested in how to support council and school
- how do you support your child in their school
- complicated structure, need help to understand it and make a difference

Castor Valley

- amount of parent involvement at school was too low
- to get correct information to take back and give to council and parents via newsletters
- weren't getting proper info
- have directed parents to website to get info and get involved
- information sharing, increase involvement

Lisgar

- to help Kate, who's overloaded
- learn how OCASC works and what it does for schools and how he can help
- help Lisgar and communicate to Lisgar parents
- give/get feedback

Mary Honeywell

- comes from business world
- OCASC is facilitator – provides environment where council reps can present concerns or help direct concerns to proper person or help me do that

D Aubrey Moodie IS

- it's implied that we're doing all that for the good of all children
- some topics more relevant at school or council level
- broader issues, such as supervisory minutes, discussed here
- united voice
- did you try to prioritize the 3 main needs/functions
- her choice would be United Voice, because this is the only place to do that

Anne

- do other people feel one is more important than others?

- quick show of hands (very crude): United Voice 5, Sharing Info 6, Fac Comm 3

? – They're interdependent – can't have a united voice if you don't share info

Stephen Leacock ES

- should they be prioritized? – if we focus on one thing is it to the detriment of others?

Glen Cairn ES

- think Facilitating Communication is most important
- so we can share information with each other and council, then go back and get United Voice

Connaught PS

- all essential
- United Voice is outcome of other 2
- wanted to come because parents are very observant – can hear what other parents are seeing and hearing

Pleasant Park

- has OCASC been offering a United Voice effectively?
- questions it
- came late last year, came specifically because of the shuffling issue
- 2 letters written, not sure what impact it had and whether it made a difference
- is writing letters our only way

Chair

- no – can do lots, but it comes down to open boundaries
- could meet with Board/trustees, make presentations

Alta Vista

- think all 3 functions are important
- some issues I feel passionate about but they don't get a united voice
- even if OCASC doesn't adopt a motion, the discussion and information she brought back to council lead them to do things themselves which had results (issue was split classes)
- a lot of it was the principal's work, but she knew council was behind her 100%

Parkwood Hills PS

- manages a crime prevention group
- all 3 are main factors that would make an optimum group/leadership committee
- to have all 3 in complete balance would be incredible
- need all 3 in complete balance
- trying to get it herself in another committee that she belongs to

Lisgar HS

- back to how to offer United Voice
- we sit on Board committees
- has been going on a long time, before amalgamation of the 2 Boards
- we are unique and there's a lot to be said for it
- the reps who sit on Board committees take it seriously

Chair

- need balance
- 3 are inter-related
- question of who do we serve
- omission of students was noted at the time
- we're all there for the kids
- which way are we (OCASC) unique
- Board, trustees are there for the kids, so we can be there for councils

Mary Honeywell ES

- if parents and kids brought all their issues to you, there'd be no way to get things done
- parents represent their kids, and take their issues to council or the principal
- some issues at councils don't come to OCASC because they don't have to

Canterbury

- who does OCASC serve is a good question
- has a problem answering it
- presented with 12 different options (6 with 'serve', same 6 with 'represent')
- all are interesting, all deserving of long discussion
- can't say, out of those – "here's the magic answer"
- need to carefully consider all the options

Chair

- not really looking for final answer, going to take all feedback to another session

Katimavik ES

- do think that OCASC serves councils. What about those without councils or who aren't members. Need to ask why and then try and make it happen.
- if you can do those 3 things very well, reps bring it to council which then brings it to parents
- help facilitate forming councils
- how else can we help parents
- is there a communication/information breakdown that's resulted in certain councils not being members
- goal would be that everyone has a voice

Lisgar HS

- present them with dilemma
- question of non-represented parents
- we can't make decisions that are not good for all children
- some members feel we only represent the paid councils

Berrigan

- continuing with the ideas of the rep from Katimavik
- regarding serving councils not members of OCASC
- in Zone 3 only one school is not a member, but some zones have lots of schools who are not members
- if she's at a Zone meeting, she's not going to say "you're not a member of OCASC, so I'm not going to listen to you"
- OCASC serves non-member councils but they're not represented
- what is the advantage of paying?

Mary Honeywell ES

- like facilitate better than represent or serve
- as rep, if I come with an issue I should champion it and get info and support for it – I shouldn't expect OCASC to take it over
- therefore facilitation means an environment as opposed to a specific action

Connaught PS

- difference between vision and mandate.
- Vision could be to present a unified voice, mandate could be to get representation from every school.

Heritage

- this is my first OCASC meeting
- these are 3 pieces, but there are layers underneath
- there are certain kinds of information I want
- a heads-up – what do I need to look for 2,3 4 months from now
- whom do we serve? – who is the audience for the statement
- we should represent all councils
- great to have an influential voice
- this is where the misconception that OCASC reps had voting rights on Board committees was corrected

Pleasant Park

- weren't members for several years, but should have been -just didn't realize it
- whose job is it to initiate communication with the council – LO?

Woodroffe Ave.ES

- agree we represent all councils
- upset when trustees pooh-poohed presentation by OCASC in the spring because of the low vote

- even after leaving LO position, has received a call from a principal to help set up a council
- problem is busy parents, and many parents for whom English is not a comfortable language
- do we penalize them because they can't come to the meetings?
- like the new, simple agenda (old complicated one was commented on during a presentation to OCASC by equity officer?) – old one was too intimidating to a lot of parents

D Aubrey Moodie IS

- OCASC serves all of these, even councils not represented
- it's nice to put things in boxes, but don't want to box yourself in
- deal with issues as they arise
- cover priority issues

South Carleton PS

- if we have any more comments, who should we contact?

Chair

- send them to ocasc.chair@ocasc.ca

Bell HS

- have been here longer than anyone
- interesting to hear what people come to OCASC for
- what he heard was the same reasons that he came for
- all the things you've asked for, OCASC has done, to varying degrees of success, over the years

Discussion ended at 9:15

Notes for Visioning Session with OCASC Assembly September 18, 2008

(Started with Anne's copy, but deleted what she didn't cover and reordered to reflect how material was introduced)

Introduction

- OCASC Assembly approved a budget of \$4,000 in the spring to conduct a visioning exercise
- OCASC exec has met three times with our facilitator each time for a four hour session
- it is time to fill the Assembly in on where we are at so far and to seek input on a few particular questions
- we hope to come back to the assembly soon with a new statement of purpose.

Background – why we started the process

- we wanted to assess where we were and where we wanted to go as an organization
- we wanted to ensure that our resources and time were being used in an effective manner

Background – the process

- Juliet and Nadine put a lot of time and energy into researching a visioning process
- they interviewed a number of potential facilitators
- OCASC exec approached the Assembly for approval to spend up to \$4,000 on a visioning process
- the expense was approved, with the understanding that the exec would head up the visioning process and the entire Assembly would be included in the process prior to its closure
- Ken Victor, of The Edgework Leadership Group, was hired as our facilitator
- the exec met with Ken three times in June and July, once for three hours, twice for four hours

A brief synopsis of the visioning meetings

- we discussed open versus closed boundaries for an organization – what does one let into the organization and what does one keep out – very closed? – or all things to all people? – need to set boundaries of some sort
- do we want to do it all or do we want to do less better (added during presentation)
- a clearly defined purpose helps to know what boundaries to set – need clarity of purpose
- OCASC tends to have had very open boundaries and tried to be all things to all people, which is difficult and requires more resources than otherwise
- Juliet and Nadine did some research and sought input from a number of previous OCASC members who had been heavily involved in past years, looking to put together a historical timeline for OCASC - this was discussed to and helped put our current concerns and questions into context - in fact, the

issues and concerns we face tend to repeat themselves over the years

- the Venn diagram for the school system – circles representing the different groups within the system – students, parents, school, school board, school council, OCASC – each has its purpose in the system – what is OCASC’s UNIQUE purpose?

- what are the needs that would not currently be met if OCASC ceased to exist today? – we identified many needs – probably about 40 – and then from those 11 that were reasonably uniquely met by OCASC

- needs that are uniquely met by OCASC:

- helping parents obtain timely access to board staff and trustees
 - providing a forum for trustees to share information
 - offering advice to School Councils as needed and consistently
 - providing parent opinions to Board staff
 - providing knowledgeable information about board and education issues for media
 - helping school councils obtain timely access to board staff and trustees
 - providing a united voice for school councils
 - providing a forum for trustees to explain policies and procedures
 - provide united lobbying for OCASC membership
 - offer shared values to school councils, parents, media
 - offer representative views on board committees

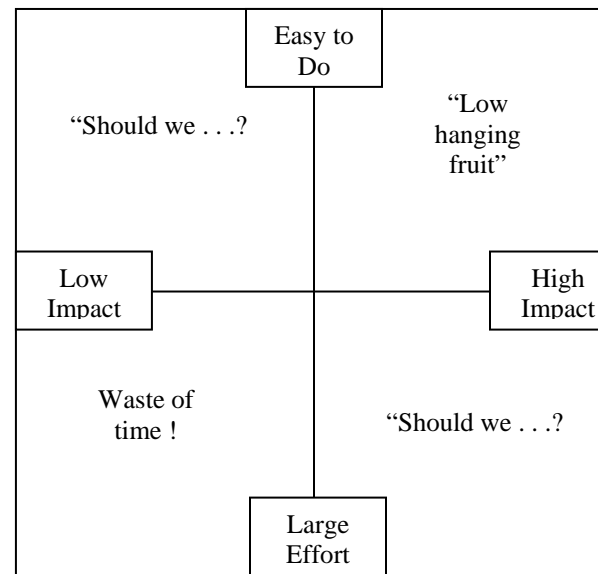
- created a grid of low to high impact against high to low effort – the items in the easy-to-do-high-impact quadrant are the most “bang for your buck”, or “low hanging fruit”

- low hanging fruit included:

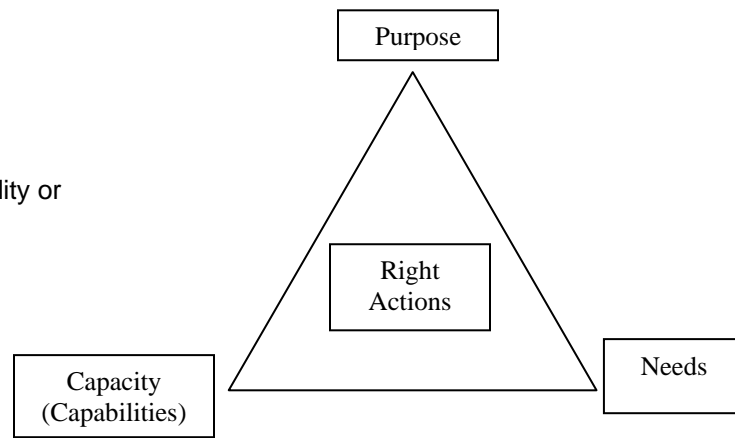
- helping school councils obtain timely access to board staff and trustees
- providing a forum for trustees to explain policies and procedures
- providing committee reps for Board staff
- providing parent opinions to Board staff
- providing background information to media
- doing interview for media
- offering a spokesperson for media contact
- providing knowledgeable information about board and education issues for media

- assessed the capabilities we currently have in our organization

- 15 exec members at 10 hours per week each = 150 hours per week - 4 full time jobs or 16 quarter time jobs - a lot more time and effort required to coordinate 16 people working ¼ time than 4 people working full time



- triangle with points being - Purpose, Needs, Capability or Capacity - Right Actions goes in centre of triangle
 - whom do we serve?
 - we serve:
 - Parents
 - School Councils
 - we provide services to:
 - Board of Trustees
 - School Board Staff
 - Media
 - four statements to try to define who we serve:
 - we serve parents through the vehicle of school councils
 - we serve school councils
 - we serve school councils in their capacity to serve parents
 - we serve school councils, maximizing their role to serve parents
 - the issue of who do we serve - parents or school councils - repeatedly became a sticking point during our discussions
 - here are the questions on which we would like to focus the discussion today, in order to get the input we require to proceed to the next step:
 - does OCASC serve school councils or parents?
 - do we need to differentiate between serving councils and serving parents?
 - do we serve school councils that are not paid up members of OCASC?
 - do we serve schools, or parents at schools, that do not have school councils?
 - if we serve all parents does that mean individual parents have equal say to school councils which represent many parents?
 - does serving parents undermine the value of school councils?
 (These questions were put on the board.)
 - there may also be an issue in the use of the term “serving” versus the use of the term “representing”. The previous questions could be rephrased using representing in place of serving. (Were also hung on the board.)
 - reduced all the needs by grouping them into three primary, high level needs:
 - sharing information
 - facilitating communication
 - offering a united voice
 (Also hung on board)
- Next Steps (mentioned at some point during the evening)
- after tonight’s discussion the exec will have another session with our facilitator on Sept 30.
 - we want to take the input we get tonight to that meeting to help come up with a united statement of purpose for OCASC



- we want to use this statement of purpose to guide us toward moving forward with purpose and using our limited resources efficiently and effectively