

OTTAWA-CARLETON ASSEMBLY OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

Meeting of Thursday, April 15, 2010
Ottawa Technical Learning Centre Library

ATTENDANCE:

Total Membership: 93

Member schools

Adrienne Clarkson ES – Carrie Eaton
Berrigan ES – Susan Klimchuk
Broadview PS – Carrie Myres
Canterbury HS – Bob Weist, Nadine
Clarke (SSC)
Castlefrank ES – Brona Little
Castor Valley ES – Heather Wilson
Colonel By SS – Heather Pierscianowski
Devonshire Comm. PS – Odette
Rurigambe
Elmdale PS – Stephanie Bolt
Fallingbrook Comm. ES – Peter
Kokkovas
Glebe CI – Deborah Lemkow
Hilson Avenue PS – Tarin Richards
Katimavik ES – Nihan Kavaslar
Knoxdale PS – Paula Shaver
Lisgar CI – Kate Preston-Thomas, Liz
Melanson, Steven Wang
Longfields-Davidson Hgts SS – Dwight
Thompson

Manordale PS – Cathy Babyak
Mutchmor PS – Gwenda Lindhurst-Ko
North Gower/Marl. PS – Sandra Acacia
Ottawa Technical LC – Joyce Oickle
Pleasant Park PS – Crystal Dunnett
Queen Mary PS – Diane Faye
Regina Street PS – Sarah Neville
Rideau Valley MS – Sandra Acacia
Riverview Alt S – Gabe Thirlwall
Rockcliffe Park PS – Joel Berger
Sawmill Creek ES – Gennifer Stainforth
Sir Robert Borden HS – Bessie
Giovanopoulos
South March PS – Chris Bridgen
Stephen Leacock PS – Enang Akan
Trillium ES – Erik Esselaar
W.O. Mitchell ES – Brenda Verch

Non-member schools

Hopewell Avenue PS – Geoff Hall

Guests and other persons in attendance:

Juliet Hamilton (OCASC Recording Secretary), Cheryle Watson (OCDSB), Sandra Richardson (OCDSB)

CALL TO ORDER: 7:11 p.m., Carrie Eaton (Vice-Chair) in the chair.

AGENDA: Approved with no changes:

Approval of Agenda
Approval of Minutes of Mar. 25, 2010
Chair's Report
Chalk-It-Up
Presentation and Discussion: Balanced School Day
Sandra Richardson, OCDSB Principal
From your Executive
OCASC Executive Nominating Committee
OCASC Website Workshop
Updates

MINUTES of March 25, 2010: Accepted with two amendments:

- In the Chalk-It-Up item on Children's Village the second sentence should read, "A few weeks ago got a letter that *when* full-day kindergarten *starts* ..."
- Under the Approval of Constitution item the second sentence should read, "Lisgar rep *raised a point of order regarding* validity ..." Rep also wanted response included, but no agreement as to what that was.

CHAIR'S REPORT – Anne Teutsch

- Parent Involvement Committees (PICs)
 - Provincial consultation re role and mandate of PICs is complete.
 - Current OCDSB PIC includes reps from SEAC, CCEE, CAYRAC, OCISO, OCASC, and trustees, as well as an elementary and a high school principal, an instructional coach and the Director of Education.
 - PICs complement district organizations such as OCASC. Have recommended that regulations will accommodate such groups.
- Secondary School Gifted Program Review
 - Continues to be discussed by trustees. Trustee Shea will be presenting a motion at next Education Committee meeting regarding a change in location for one of the programs.
 - OCASC does not take a stand on issues that involve specific school closures or specific locations of specialized programs. But motion does not seem to follow from the consultation done or the staff report. OCASC rep will reiterate concerns for effective consultation.
- Community Council for Ethnocultural Equity (CCEE)
 - At March OCASC meeting CCEE rep invited interested people to attend their meeting on mandate and vision. Anne did so and appreciated the rich and energetic discussion. Topic is extended into their May 27 meeting, and they are keen to have new people involved.
- May Annual General Meeting
 - May OCASC meeting will include the AGM, at which a new executive will be elected. Anyone interested in getting more involved in OCASC is very welcome. Liaison Officer role can be looked on as "member at large." As volunteers, available time is limited, and the more active participants there are the more can be accomplished as a group.

CHALK-IT-UP

Secondary Gifted Review – Report and Recommendations

Lisgar CI – Kate Preston-Thomas (contact council co-chair: Rachel@flora.org)

- Staff recommendation is to begin phasing out secondary gifted centres entirely (page 10, section 27 of Report 10-001 to Education Committee, March 23, 2010). This was not part of the mandate of the review, and was not discussed during consultation.
- Lisgar would like to work with other schools (elementary or secondary) who are concerned about the impact this would have on congregated gifted programming at the secondary level. Any councils or parents with concerns or questions please contact Lisgar's co-chair at above address.

TESC.ca: Communications plan, governance, solutions

Trillium ES – Erik Esselaar (comms@TESC.ca)

- Wanted to set up council website that would meet all communication needs, including email, using free technology that was easy to use. Have succeeded with help from OCASC webmaster, and are willing to share methods with other councils. Only cost is \$12/year for domain name. Also created a governance document related to planning and using all communications resources, including online resources such as websites and email.

myColdCup

Mutchmor PS – Gwenda Lindhurst-Ko (info@mycoldcup.com)

- After working with school milk program, saw limitations: affordability, limited choice, carton waste. Looked for other options for how to keep milk cold. Finally designed product herself.
- Cup is leakproof, easy to clean and keeps milk at fridge temperature.
- Cost is \$18 (includes taxes and shipping); schools can add a bit and sell them for fundraisers. Website (www.mycoldcup.com) has product and ordering information.
- Questions:
 - Can a school logo be printed on it? A: Yes, for a cost.
 - Any discounts for large orders? A: No.
 - Is there a minimum number required to place an order? A: No.
 - Where are they manufactured? A: China.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Balanced School Day

Sandra Richardson, OCDSB Principal, Barrhaven PS

- Was the principal at Viscount Alexander PS when it became one of two schools to try the Balanced School Day as a pilot project.
- In the OCDSB, 88 of 117 elementary schools are now on balanced days, and none have switched back to the traditional day.
- Balanced School Day is an organizational change. The start and end times of the school day remain the same, but the blocks of instruction and recreation/nutrition time are different.
- Every school day, traditional or balanced, consists of 300 minutes of instructional time and 90 minutes of recreation/nutrition time.
- In a traditional day there are four blocks of instructional time and three blocks of recreational/eating time (two short recesses and one longer lunch recess).
- In a balanced school day there are three blocks of instructional time and two blocks of recreational/eating time (divided into play time and formalized eating time, one designated as lunch). The lengths of each of these blocks are flexible and left up to each school to determine.
- Several different ways of dividing up the day were shown:
 - The length of the first instructional block varied depending on how early school started, whether most students were arriving after a long bus ride, and whether students would need a snack quickly or not.

- A basic format would be: 80 minutes instruction, 45 minutes break, 120 minutes instruction, 45 minutes break, 100 minutes instruction.
- One scenario, with a 9:10 start time, had a longer first break (50 minutes, divided into first a 30 minute recess and then a 20 minute lunch) and a shorter second break (40 minutes: 25 minute recess plus 15 minute snack).
- Breaks can be divided so students eat first then play, or play first then eat. Second way has benefit that students don't dawdle coming back in from recess because they want to eat.
- Long instructional blocks do not mean that students are sitting doing one activity the entire time. They will do the same activities that students in a traditional school day do, but teachers have more flexibility in how to arrange those activities. For example, one 120 minute literacy block could start with the teacher reading to the class, then some shared reading, some follow-up work at students' desks, then some group work such as making up a skit, and wrap up with a related song. Another instructional block could consist of art or physical education followed by French, and then time in the computer lab. The longer block just means that teachers have more time to concentrate on a topic using many different activities without interruption.
- Benefits of the Balanced School Day (mostly anecdotal)
 - Increased on-task learning time (reduced time spent on dressing and undressing, and designated eating time within each break eliminates instructional time being used to let students eat before/after recess).
 - Fewer transitions during the day.
 - Decreased discipline problems in yard (problems tend to happen at end of long period outside, and balanced day does not have one very long recess).
 - Improved nutrition, with two sit-down nutrition breaks. These two breaks also give more social time.
 - Additional options for extracurricular activities, since there are two large blocks of time available. Can specify that gym is available for primary student activities during one break and for junior student activities during the other break.
 - Fewer problems during inclement weather (hot/cold) – 25 minutes outside not as much of an issue as 40 minutes.
 - If all teachers doing supervision at one break are Primary teachers, then Junior teachers can hold a meeting, and vice versa.
- Concerns with the Balanced School Day (no model is perfect, question is whether balanced day has more positives than negatives)
 - Half-day kindergarten doesn't mesh well. Have to make an effort to ensure that kindergarten teachers get at least some overlap with rest of teachers in school.
 - Extracurricular activities – clubs and band/sport practices like the longer time provided by the one lunch period in a traditional schedule. Can be somewhat alleviated by allowing students to bring their snack/lunch (i.e. can eat while rotated off court during volleyball practice/game).
 - Planning for hunger throughout the day, and packing snacks and lunch accordingly. Public Health has produced two flyers with suggestions, available on the OCASC website (ocasc.ca). Communication with parents

is important. Helps to pack a snack that takes the length of the nutrition break to eat.

- Conservative estimate is that the Balanced School Day gains 30 minutes a day in instructional time (time otherwise spent dressing/undressing and eating snacks in class in traditional school day). Adds up to more than 20 extra days of instructional time over the school year, which lets teachers add in extra activities during the year.
- What is the process if a school is interested in moving to a Balanced School Day?
 - Discussions with staff – administrators won't impose a change if teachers are not ready.
 - Review research and information – most of this is anecdotal. Board did before/after surveys of the two schools in the pilot program. Subsequent report is available on the OCASC website (ocasc.ca).
 - Discussions with school council.
 - Decision must be made in time for staffing commitments. Can affect part-time teachers if they are split between two schools.
- Important to have on-going feedback from staff and community, especially throughout the first year, and tweak things as required.
- Discussion
- Many school reps reported that their schools used the Balanced Day and were happy.
- Supervision time can be an issue (teachers are contractually limited in how much time they can spend per week doing supervision duty) and actually prevented one school from moving to Balanced Day.
- Hopewell Avenue PS – Use Balanced Day. Many intermediate students are not happy with it. Did any of the surveys question students or their parents? Hopewell part of a behavioural study being conducted by Carleton University, might get feedback from that. A: Yes, board's surveys did. Sometimes need to make decision based on improving education. Ask students how to change things to make it work better for them.
- Berrigan ES – Going to Balanced Day next year. How is Balanced School Day received in neighbourhoods with lots of walkers that go home for lunch? A: Need to designate which block is lunch. Students are only allowed to go home once during the day. Time can be a problem when break is reduced from 60 minutes (traditional) to 45 minutes (balanced). If good activities are planned at school during the lunch break, then students will want to stay. If it means a lot of students will be coming back to school late, may need to rethink.
- Trillium ES – Council wanted it but teachers didn't. How can issue be re-tackled? A: Needs to be the right time. At Barrhaven started talking a year ago. Brainstormed pros and cons of each. Very eye opening to look at cons of traditional day.
- Glebe CI – Found a report on-line that was both qualitative and quantitative: <http://www.nipissingu.ca/oar/PDFS/V831E.pdf>.

FROM YOUR EXEC

OCASC Executive Nominating Committee – Carrie Eaton

- Annual General Meeting taking place next month. Dwight Thompson, Brona Little and Madelaine Stewart-Dmaj volunteered to join Carrie on the nominating committee. Asked for vote to approve nominating committee – unanimous.

- Positions to be considered at AGM are: Chair, Vice-Chair, Recording Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Officer, Liaison Officers. Duties can be found in OCASC constitution.
- Modification to Liaison Officer role: LOs historically acted as point of contact for a certain number of school councils and collectively represented a cross-section of council interests across the board. Want to open this up and look at them more as Members at Large. Can attend and participate in Executive and Assembly meetings. Also have option of choosing area of specialization with agreement of Executive.
 - Looking for people who want to:
 - become a little more involved in OCASC;
 - are interested in how other councils work;
 - want to expand their knowledge regarding school councils and share it with other schools.
 - Your present level of knowledge is not important. Goal of LOs is to find answers through the executive and let school councils know they have a support system.
- Executive meetings occur once every two months (possibly once a month depending on issues), on an evening or weekend afternoon (decided by consensus each time).

Announcements

- OCASC Website Workshop for School Councils, by Tanya Weiner (OCASC Webmaster), will be held on April 22 at 7:00 pm at Merivale HS.
- The group working on the grant OCASC received needs help from someone with desktop publishing skills.
- Berrigan ES 2nd annual garage sale will be held May 8 from 7:00 am to 1:00 pm. Tables are sold out.
- Elmdale PS will hold a used clothing/toys/equipment sale on May 8 from 9:00 am to noon. Also hosting parenting workshops the next few Wednesday nights (see ocasc.ca for details).
- Trillium ES is holding a Pirates and Pyjamas literacy night (find treasure in a good book) on May 5 from 6:00-8:30 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

- Thursday, May 20th, 7:00 pm, Fisher Park library.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

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