



OCASC Assembly Meeting Minutes

Sharing Information • Facilitating Communication • Representing Our Membership

Date: September 19, 2013
Location: Fisher Park School, 250 Holland Avenue, Library
Time: 7:00pm – 9pm

Members Schools (34/70 member schools):

Adrienne Clarkson ES (ACES) - Carrie Eaton (Past-Chair), Marti Falcone (Liaison Officer, PIC)
Barrhaven PS-Ellen Dickson
Berrigan ES-Susan Klimchuk (Chair)
Bridlewood Community ES-Stacy Krahn
Broadview PS-Bobby Chawla (Liaison Officer)
Canterbury HS-Alison Shaker
Cedarview MS-Ellen Dickson
Dunlop PS-Craig Tiberi
Elmdale PS-Megan Richardson, Patti Black
Fallingbrook Community ES-Bev Naylor
Glebe CI-Lillian Thomsen, Carol Malatesta
Glen Cairn PS-Paul Warner
Hawthorne PS-Louise Crawford
Huntley Centennial PS-Mark Tymowski
Jack Donohue PS-Gina Patzer
Kars on the Rideau-Adam Checketts
Katimavik ES-Teri MacDonald
Knoxdale PS-Geoff Pearce
Lady Evelyn Alt PS-Kim Petersen
Lakeview PS-Tracy Neufeld (Liaison Officer, PIC, ACE)
Manordale PS-Cathy Babyak (Membership)
Maple Ridge ES-Cynthia Allen
Mary Honeywell ES-Elizabeth Conabree
Meadowlands PS-Patricia Lieu
Mutchmor PS-Milana Karaganis
Nepean HS-Mark Rollins
North Gower-Marlborough PS-Aaron Daley
Pleasant Park PS-Cecilia Lee
Rideau HS-Chris Ellis (Treasurer)
Roch Carrier ES-Shannon Walker
Sir Robert Borden HS-Paula Shaver
South Carleton HS-Sue Carswell
South March PS-Chris Bridgen (Communications)
Woodroffe PS-Tara Finlay

Non-Member Schools (2)

Agincourt Road PS- Trish Rossiter
John Young ES - Susanne Bowen

Guests (8)



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Paula Marble (OCDSB policy analyst), Dr. Jennifer Adams (Director of Education), Jennifer McKenzie- OCDSB Chair, Donna Blackburn, Trustee (Zone 3), Secondary School Committee - Nadine Clarke, African Bronze Honey - Paul Whitney and Zvondai Muchenje Tony Copple - Building Strong Families

Meeting called to order: 7:04pm

OCASC Chair Susan Klimchuk welcomed new and returning members and reviewed the traditional format of OCASC meetings: Chalk-It-Up (member-driven information exchange), Guest Speaker(s), Chair and Executive Reports, New Business and Adjournment.

The Assembly observed a moment of silence to pay respects to community members affected by the tragic Bus/VIA train collision in Barrhaven September 18.

1. Approval of Agenda

Chris Ellis requested the addition of an item: OCASC Annual Financial Report (Item 6.5). The agenda was approved as amended.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of May 16, 2013 were approved with the following amendments:

- Add Glen Cairn PS – Paul Warner and Dunlop PS – Craig Tiberi to list of attendees.
- Under 'Finance Meeting Update' on last page, modify sentence to read: "all but one did not want the Board to take over council finances".

3. Chalk it Up

- Representatives from *African Bronze Honey Project for Schools* shared fund raising project details.
- A representative from *Building Strong Families* shared details on parenting courses offered in Kanata/Stittsville.

Chris Ellis noted that traditionally there is a preference for members of the Assembly to speak during the Chalk-It-Up portion of the meeting and that fund raising and promotional items are reserved for guest presentations, where desired by the Assembly. The Assembly could be polled to determine interest in hearing from fund raising initiatives as there are a multitude available.

- Lakeview PS – What are some current effective practices/methods/mediums for communicating with parent community, especially given new technologies?
 - a) Pleasant Park PS: this has been a big topic. Have held a lot of discussions and utilized a paper-based family (122/160 families responded) survey to determine best



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communication channels. Current strategy is 2x/month regular email communication from principal's own email. Found that emails from parent council were getting lost in the shuffle. Everyone reads email from principal. Only 10 families don't have email. Note: Idea for survey came from Maple Ridge's website.

- b) Barrhaven PS: Council uses its own website as main communication resource for minutes, announcements, lunch program sign-up, event details etc. Also use a Facebook group for quick blasts of information e.g. today is hot dog day. Great because parents can ask questions/provide comments quickly. Finally, principal sends e-blast by email every Friday to all parents. The day before, Council submits items to the principal for inclusion. Often there are embedded links that drive parents to the website.
- c) Maple Ridge ES: Undertook a survey using survey monkey to determine parents' preferences. Determined best method was info being sent out to parents directly from principal.
- d) Roch Carrier ES: Now that they are using the automated lunch ordering program hotlunches.net for food, has a great, up-to-date tool to push out announcements to parents – using this as communications tool.
- e) Adrienne Clarkson ES: Also using hotlunches.net as information distribution system with parents – a good feature.
- Cedarview MS – iPods/Smartphones etc. in the classroom – what are school policies and practices? Forbidden in Cedarview policy but still being used.
 - a) Hawthorne PS: Daughter's classroom welcomes all the devices. Board is building a policy "use your own tech". Can use in classroom for school purposes, e.g. to do research. They still message on recess.

- b) South March PS: Is there a board-wide policy?

Response by Paula Marble, OCDSB Policy Analyst (Allison Buchanan is off for the year): A new acceptable use of technology policy and related procedure is available. The intent of the policy is to provide support for technology electronic means – educational purpose to enhance the learning in the classroom. There is flexibility and there will be variability from school to school.

Cedarview MS: Requested that P. Marble circulate the relevant links to the policies and procedures. Agreed.

- c) Huntley MS: Devices are allowed throughout the school. Technology "trolley" was cumbersome, not being used effectively. Student-owned iPads are being used in the classroom. Teachers are using devices as teaching aids. Technology use is so much a part of our lifestyle and teachers are "on top of" usage.



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- d) Broadview PS: Children bring smartphones to school; internet access from phone is better than school Wi-Fi.
- Pleasant Park PS: Requesting information/school experiences with the following fundraising programs: Accept My Gift, QSP Magazines
 - a) Adrienne Clarkson ES: currently use QSP, not labour intensive, all paperwork is done on-line; not a big revenue generator (approx. \$1500 per year in school of 800 kids)
 - b) South March PS: “Accept My Gift” program just entered Canada, not sure that any schools have experience in using it.

4. From Your Trustees

Two School Trustees were scheduled to attend the meeting and were unable to make it. Trustee Blackburn was present but had nothing pressing to share with the group.

5. Conversation with Jennifer Mackenzie, Chair of the Board, and Jennifer Adams, Director of Education, regarding councils’ role in the District’s Strategic Plan

Jennifer Mackenzie and Jennifer Adams were introduced and welcomed to the meeting. Each shared an opening comment with the Assembly and then opened up the session to question and answers from the floor.

Opening comments – Jennifer Mackenzie:

- Is a former OCASC Executive (Membership Secretary)
- Board of Trustees meets 3x/month to decide on policy issues and accommodation issues etc.
- Board has responsibility for overall student achievement and wellness.
- Re-looking at governance and structure to ensure maximum support of objectives, including how to shape board meetings
- In last years of current Strategic Plan; advancing 10 strategic objectives
- Very interested in interrelationship between student well-being and student achievement; a lot of up and coming research around this; Jennifer Adams is participating in research – heading to Rio de Janeiro in December.

Opening comments - Jennifer Adams:

- Acknowledged commitment of volunteers in the room
- Entering in 3rd year as Director of Education, arrived here 8 years ago
- Relationships between politicians and senior administration are crucial to success; when they are working well together, it leads to a highly effective Board. Has been a real coming together between the two.
- Strategic plan: two of the objectives are very closely linked to the work of school councils.
- First item is related to SIPSAs – school improvement plans. One of objectives that the trustees charged us with is a more meaningful role for school councils, parents, community



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members and students in development and implementation of SIPSAs. A small group getting together to work out what will that involvement look like; want to have guidelines and templates that allow for more meaningful involvement.

- Want principals and teams to look at greatest area of curricular need; what is the area that are kids are stuck on? What can school councils bring to that?
- Second item is objective #10; board decided to focus on improving governance; positive changes have already been made at Board level; also thinking of governance at school level. How do we maximize the relationship of the admin team with staff? How do we maximize the relationship of school with school council?

Question and Answer / Discussion:

- Glebe: Recent media coverage of technology and impacts on the classroom of the future (especially in universities) – i.e. future may be sitting at home connecting virtually with lecture; only going on campus for tutorials - “reverse education”; “collaborative education”

JA – OCDSB has invested a lot in instructional strategies, investing in central instructional coaches, teachers come in and spend time in central office and facilitate professional conversations; we want good instruction to be happening. Question is how can we enhance instructional practices in the classroom; be more lively, more meaningful for students? Good instruction means a ‘scaffolding approach’; there should be time for transmissive type learning then very quickly get into smaller group learning, then have tools to go and pursue further and need for independent work. Trying to make sure all of those pieces in the puzzle are in the classroom. Trying to give students the skills so that they can make their own decisions around education

JM – Shift is evident. See use of technology as a help as opposed to a replacement. Exit Outcomes work and secondary school review provided excellent student feedback such as “don’t give us the same stuff every year in the classroom; let us go out and find stuff for ourselves”

JA -- Exit Outcomes provided fascinating feedback; had 450 responses; secondary school presidents came together for a full day to give feedback. Asked the kids: What kind of instructional strategies and assessment strategies will need to be used in the classroom to achieve these exit outcomes? Collaborative learning was at the top of the list.

- North Gower PS: Very pleased that you feel parent councils can contribute to SIPSAs, a few years ago joined council and pushed to be part of the process.

JA - SIPs should be on-going discussion between admin and council; lots of different ways to do it.

- Rideau PS: Question around parent involvement, community involvement in schools in light of last year’s labour disruption, there was variability in approach, not always easy. Question if this issue is still on the radar?

JA - Our students really appreciate the extra things that happen in schools such as extra-curricular. Expanded volunteer policy last year in school. Parents and community members can be leading extra-curricular activities; doesn’t have to be a staff person. Parents need to be reassured that safety procedures are in place; screening, policies and procedures/ Hoping that staff will continue to do volunteering and also community members; where it’s a combination of



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the two, even more successful. Volunteer policy is on website; explains levels of risk and screening process. A lot of positive experiences were had last year, especially in the high schools. Many more parents and community members were in secondary schools – good for kids.

- John Young PS: What is your vision of how school councils can be involved in SIPSAs? Will you be using OCASC as a vehicle for involvement? Anything more specific to share?

JA – See three components to involvement: 1) Development of SIPSA and involvement of parents; 2) Implementation of SIPSA; are parents aware of what we are working on in our school, classrooms? 2) On-going communications piece. We are pretty sure most of staff could tell us their school improvement goal now. Want kids to know the goal. Want parents to know the goal. This will tell us we are having real improvements

- Knoxdale PS: How do you measure achievement in a school?

JA – Discussion on this will be happening at Board on October 15. Will bring forward annual achievement report; look at annual test scores, pass rates, look at % of students functioning at 70% and above; grade 9. Want classroom teachers to be looking at achievement together; looking at where kids are getting stuck.

- South March PS: Have you analyzed data related to students leaving to separate board as result of union disruption

JA -- There are lots of reasons why enrollment numbers change. Always monitoring trends and data.

- Hawthorne PS: Understand that with EQAO results, schools become eligible for different funding, is there something to help keep the vision broad enough so that can have excellence across the board (vs. worked on math, math is great but reading is now an issue)

JA -- All schools receive funds to work on SIPSA; schools where children are not reaching levels, will provide more instructional support. An overall goal is to support 5 groups that face additional challenges: English language learners, boys, aboriginal children, children with disabilities – 5 groups, watching carefully. Asking principals to identify groups in the school that may require additional supports to reach their potential.

- Woodroffe PS: Understand SIPSA goals. Parents at our school are very interested in looking at first page of report card; learning skills and work habits; how does that contribute to the BIP-WELL?—At Severn School; principal put on same workshop for parents that he had put on for teachers on the topic – very interesting.

JA – Currently working on a Board improvement plan focussed on well-being; looks at socio-emotional; physical well-being; cognitive well-being (not student achievement, readiness to learn). You'll soon see a more systematic approach to well-being.

- John Young PS: Is there a system that tracks high school success in relation to the feeder schools that children come from?

JA – No.



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- Lakeview PS: What are most important activities that OCASC can do this year to contribute to OCDSB success?

JA - SIPSA; increasing community involvement in schools. Every one of our leaders needs to know what 10 items on strategic plan are. Reports come out on progress on each one of the objectives; have asked communications staff to develop 2-pager on highlights (have one coming on grad rate), which will send out to principals for distribution to school councils.

6.5 Financial Report

Chris Ellis presented the OCASC Financial Report. He opened the floors to questions:

- North Gower: Insurance was budgeted at \$175 but actual was \$0; did we not take out a policy? Answer: No.

Nepean: What are plans for 16K available from previous years? Answer: these funds are from a previous PRO grant and accumulations year over year. Usage needs to be discussed by the Assembly, and fall in line with PRO grant requirements. Ideas could be tabled under new business on agenda. Encourage motions to be made one month and come back and vote the next month.

Motion: To approve the OCASC Annual Financial Report as presented.

Moved by South March. Seconded by North Gower. All in favour. None opposed.

The Chair thanked Chris Ellis for his contribution as Treasurer over the years.

6.6 Executive Reports:

Marti Falcone provided a brief report on the PIC meeting. There is an upcoming School Council Training Day, open to all, on Saturday October 5th at Gloucester. It was received well last year. This year, breakout sessions will be run by one board staff member and one parent rep. Workshops will be beneficial to all parents – not just council members. Marti asked reps to please share the information with your councils. The information is on the OCDSB website under a section called 'parents' under school councils and information and updates. Email michele.giroux@ocdsb.ca or paula.marble@ocdsb.ca to be added to school council email distribution list.

Comments/suggestions:

- For future years, suggest a different weekend to offer those with a recurring annual conflict the chance to attend.
- Move event to later in the year. Elections just held; no time; no real time to get info out and people to attend.
- Videotape and post presentations on-line so all can benefit.

6.7 Chair's Report

Susan explained that she has recently accepted a part-time role working 27 hours per week in the extended day program of a school within the Board. Under provincial legislation, no employee can be chair of a school council. OCASC, however, is an independent organization and there are no stipulations in the constitution to preclude an employee being Chair. One individual on the Executive has shared reservations about the Chair being an OCDSB staffer.

Members of the Assembly discussed options for deciding on the situation including whether a vote is in order and when and whether a vice or co-chair would be beneficial to mitigate the situation. A number of reps expressed they do not have a concern with the situation.



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One question explored was if as an employee of the board Susan as Chair may be constrained as to what she can say to the media; making delegation to the board etc. It was clarified that the Chair's role is not necessarily as spokesperson.

Given that this may be precedent-setting for OCASC, suggested that members consider further and talk to councils before coming to a decision. It was agreed that the topic will be re-visited before the "Chalk It Up" item on next month's agenda.

Adjournment: The Meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.