



## Conestogo Public School Council Minutes: Thursday, September 19, 2013

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## WELCOME & GENERAL BUSINESS

### Attendance

(✓ present, ✗ absent/regrets. Parent Members must attend 7/10 – 70% of meetings to maintain voting privileges.)

Role	2013-14	Sep 19	Oct 10	Nov 14	Dec 12	Jan 9	Feb 6	Mar 5	Apr 10	May 8	Jun 12
Co-Chair	Barb Dowling	✓									
Co-Chair	Heather Cote	✓									
Secretary	Deb Jones	✓									
Treasurer	Jane Martin	✗									
Principal	Brian Beney	✓									
Teacher		Mme. Larke									
Parent Members (11)	Chris Sabeau	✓									
	Jaime Bickerton	✓									
	Karen Hofbauer	✓									
	Marsha Ferguson	✓									
	Natalie Edery	✓									
	Susan Wagler	✓									
	Tim Alles	✓									
Parent Volunteers	Aimee Leveck	✗									
	Carolyn Rouse	✓									
	Fiona von Kannen	✓									
	Florence Bray	✓									
	Jen Sellars	✗									
	Juli Chinnick	✓									
	Lori McCrae	✗									
	Melanie Thompson	✗									
	Monica Beal	✗									



	Sandra Clark	*									
	Sue Hoffele	*									
	Vanessa Harrow	✓									
<b>Snacks</b>		Juli	Susan	Karen	Natalie	Marsha	Jaime	Heath.	Deb	Barb	Brian

**Agenda – Review & Approval**

**Adjustments to Agenda:**

- Communications processes

**Agenda Approval Motioned by:**

**1<sup>st</sup>:** Jaime

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Tim

**Minutes, Jun 13 – Review & Approval**

**Adjustments to Minutes:**

- none

**Minutes Approval Motioned by:**

**1<sup>st</sup>:** Marsha

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Vanessa

**ELECTIONS**

**Introduction of Candidates/Re-Confirm Parent members**

**Co-Chairs:** Barb Dowling, Heather Cote

**Treasurer:** Jane Martin

**Secretary:** Deb Jones

**11 members**, as recorded in the attendance section above.

Vote: No objections, all in favour [clapping].

**Confirmation of Council Meetings 2013-14**

- Oct 10
- Nov 14
- Dec 12
- Jan 9
- Feb 6
- Mar 5
- Apr 10
- May 8
- Jun 12



## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **Principal's Report – Brian Beney**

#### **Introduction**

We are off to a great start this year with 326 eager and enthusiastic students. We are fortunate to have such a supportive and engaged school community and I thank members of the Council and our parent community for a successful Fun Fair and Meet the Teacher night. It was great to see so many parents come through our doors.

I have a number of items of interest that I will highlight briefly for you as we begin our school year.

#### **School Budget**

There are four main sources of finances that are used to operate our schools:

1. System funds (e.g. salaries, capital projects, utilities, maintenance etc.),
2. School operating funds which are based upon student enrolment (e.g. office, classroom supplies and equipment, subject area resources, etc.),
3. School raised funds (fundraising by school and school council) used for special purchases to enhance the local school experience such major school-based projects (major technology upgrades, playground and property enhancements, supplement for major trips, special school-based projects, etc.),
4. Ongoing parent payments for field trips, planners, gym uniforms, etc.

School Operating funds this year based upon our enrolment of 326 is \$32,000.

Office Admin (telecommunications, school council, supplies and printing) - \$2,000.

Classroom funds (textbooks, classroom printing, subject specific funds, principal's allocable) - \$29,000.

Maintenance repairs - \$500.

Special Education \$500.

Administrators must operate their schools within the budget with any surplus being carried over to the following school year.

#### **Technology Upgrades**

Access to at least one computer is available for each classroom in addition to our Primary pod, computer lab and library. There is WiFi access throughout the entire building which can be accessed by our 35 iPads available on a sign out basis. I want to thank the Council for their generous contributions to help make this phase a success. Training on the effective use of these educational tools in the classroom is an emphasis this year for our staff. Our next phase will be to replace overheads with data cameras and projectors available for each classroom.

#### **Full Day Kindergarten – Before and After School Programs**

Next year will be the final phase of the Full Day Kindergarten implementation in our school system which includes Conestogo. Site plans are currently being drafted and I will be able to share more information in the next couple of months. I am exploring the possibility of having a representative from the WRDSB to come out to our school to do a presentation for our parents regarding the Early Learning Program. I will have more information and details at our next meeting.

#### **Surveying of our Property**

A surveying company was in over the summer to create updated drawings of the school property as we look ahead to possible renovations. The markings on the trees and surveying markers were a part of this process.



### **Communication with our Parent Community**

- Class newsletters
- Website
- Twitter

In addition to the classroom newsletters, which are sent home (particularly in the primary division) the school website will be one of the main areas where parents can access school-wide information. A Twitter feed is now up and running, which will be used on a regular basis as well. Appointments, phone calls directly to the teacher's voice mail, emails and notes are obviously still a valuable means of communication. I will be continuing to look at other areas in which the school can effectively communicate with our parents while looking to reduce the amount of paper and money that travels to and from school.

### **Emergency Drills**

- Fire drills – (three in the Fall and three in the Spring) we have had two drills so far.
- Lockdown drills (one in the Fall and one in the Spring) we will have our drill later next week.
- Tornado drill (one in the Spring).

### **Locking of Elementary School Doors**

In December 2012 the government announced that they would work towards ensuring that all doors of elementary schools in Ontario would be locked. Installation across our system will begin later this Fall. More details re. this project will be outlined at a Health and Safety meeting on September 20th. I will share more details with the parents as they are available.

### **Digital Citizenship**

Teachers both model and teach to our students the safe and responsible use of technology on an ongoing basis. One growing area needing attention in our society is the responsible and respectful use of social media. I have been in touch with a representative from the WRPS in our area who will be coming to visit our grades 6 – 8 students to address this topic (e.g. respectful texting, responsible use of Facebook, etc.). These visits will occur over the next month or so and more details will be communicated to the classes involved.

### **School Spirit and Class Fundraising**

Local – National – Global

Our staff met to discuss various student/class initiated opportunities to help promote school spirit and to support local, national and global needs. Our desire is that we can coordinate this effort with the existing School Council fundraising in order that our parents are not always being asked for money, but rather that there is a clear purpose for our fundraising. This will be an ongoing discussion that we will have.

### **Coming Next Month**

I will be focusing my report next month on our Board and School Improvement Plan for Student Achievement as I discuss our school achievement data (including EQAO results), our Student Survey results from the Spring (which has yet to be released from our assessment department) and our learning focus for the 2013-2014 school year. I will also be bringing updates on our FDK plans (including potential renovations) and our locking of all doors process.

We are off to a great start at Conestogo and I am looking forward to partnering together with you in helping teach and train your children.



### Are there any questions?

Parent: Are there now iPads in every class?

Principal: We currently have 35, stored and locked in a case at night. Signed out at 10 at a time. Computers – a min of one in each classroom, including portables.

Parent: What happens when one [iPad] drops and breaks?

Principal response: We just purchased cases for them. We will have the couple that need repairs repaired. Cases protect the corners and glass.

Parent: Confusion about before and after care, is it guaranteed with the full day Kindergarten?

Principal: I prefer to defer that question to Scott Podrebarac. [Scott is a System Administrator responsible for the Early Learning Program within our Board.] We are very fortunate in this board that the rollout of this is going smoothly. Some other boards are not rolling out so quickly.

Marsha: Early Years Advisory Group (EYAG) - new advisory group – may provide useful information. Marsha is a member.

Heather: Last year we mandated to go paperless. Can we go a step further with it?

Principal: a number of schools who have gone that route make paper copies available for parents who need a hard copy. The office copies and sends it home.

Paperless Step 1: [Action Item: Start communicate the link to the website with every communication.](#)

Council Email Communications to Parents: We need to control our parent email list from a central account. A Gmail account?

Principal: I will look into the best approach. [Action Item: Brian to investigate any Board recommendations for email accounts and parent email list control.](#)

### Teacher's Report – Karen Larke

Primary core French – I get to teach up to grade 4-5, which is older than I have taught in a few years.

We are excited as a staff, kids are excited to be back for a new year, everyone is excited to have their kids back in the school. We have 3 new staff members who are funny, energetic, young. New members on staff. Everyone is feeling very positive an energetic.

Thank you for the meet the teacher, fun fair organisation. It is such a good format for people to come in and feel comfortable. It is the perfect time of year to put a name to a face without necessarily talking about progress. I love it.

Prizes were excellent, obviously there is a lot of work rallying people to donate. That was a fun night.

Magazines: staff is really on board with your going ape theme. We are having a lot of fun personalizing the monkeys. [shows various very creatively attired monkeys!]

As staff, we appreciate your efforts with fundraising. The iPads are wonderful, they get used all the time. They are a great tool.

I really love what I do. I love the program that I teach and working with the younger kids.

Parent question: could you ask Jaime what sports teams we are going to have and why no soccer team?

Mme. Larke: There was only one other school to play with, Wellesley, so it fell by the wayside.

Parent: For some boys and girls who didn't get to play last year, if this is their only thing, it's hard.

Mme. Larke: Yes. There are other activities being offered, like the running club.

Parent: question re other activities and choir.

Mme. Larke: Typically it is the older kids who participate in the sports events. As far as choir goes, it is usually put together for particular events. It might be a class she is working with or kids who join her at a nutrition break, but it is not something that goes on all year. We will be singing at a Rangers game this year.

Parent: I don't seem to be getting information home. My daughter doesn't pass it onto me. I want to be able to veto her choice to decline participation.



Mme. Larke: In the interest of not bombarding the entire school, not passing papers to all kids. This would be a great opportunity to make use of the website.

Extra curricular activities come up a lot: a good topic for the website. What are the offerings at Conestogo and at what age? [Action Item: Consider adding a section to the website advertising extra-curricular activity options.](#)

We are a small staff so it can be challenging to offer too much. Putting it on a website would be wonderful.

Parent: Event in the spring?

Mme. Larke: TBD usually a 3-year rotation: air band, production, art's fest.

Chair Barb: I know that parents will help and we have a line in the budget for funding whatever that thing is because we can help with parents and money.

## STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

### Treasurer's Report, Budget Review – Jane Martin

**Discussion:**

- Deferred to next meeting.
- We will review the new budget based on our chosen areas of focus for the year.

**Decisions:**

**Action Items:**

### Review & Prioritize Committees & Events for Year – Status Reports

Visioning: 3 core things that we want to focus on this year:

Let's define our focus and goals for this school year. Suggestions and discussion include:

- Communications
- Processes: create a process for taking over responsibilities.
- Safe Schools

[Action item: Continue discussion and vote on decisions next council meeting.](#)

The following chart has been updated to reflect decisions with regard to committees and events for 2013-14:

Highlights/Discussion		Decisions	Action Items
<b>Communications Chair</b>	Ongoing	School/Student/Family	Juli Chinnick, Jaime Bickerton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scope and vision for communications.</li> </ul> Hard copy newsletter needs to flag the items that are sent electronically with a method for requesting and providing hard copies.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Newly created committee.</li> </ul>	
<b>WRAPSC</b>	Ongoing	School/Student/Family	Rotating Volunteers
Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School Councils: Purpose - to assist all School Councils of the Waterloo Region District School Board, herein after referred to as WRDSB, to further their support of student achievement. This is accomplished by providing a single voice for School Councils on matters of significant importance impacting all schools. In addition, the		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Councils may be represented by their Chair or Co-Chair, or appoint any parent/guardian member of their School Council.</li> <li>▪ All WRAPSC meetings take place at 7 p.m. at Forest Heights</li> </ul>	Tentative meeting dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">October 1: Barb</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">November 5: Fiona</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">January 7: Flo</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">February 4:</a></li> </ul>



<p>Assembly establishes a forum for the exchange of ideas, concerns and best practices for School Councils, and provides the Director of Education, staff and trustees with an effective means to share information and consult with School Councils on current issues and future plans.</p>		<p>Collegiate Library.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule: the first Tuesday of October, November, January, February, April and May</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>April 1:</li> <li>May 6:</li> </ul>
<b>Constitution &amp; Bylaws</b>		Ongoing	School/Student/Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Owned by the Chair</li> </ul>			No changes required.
<b>Safety Committee</b>	Ongoing	School/Student/Family	Natalie Edery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses physical safety issues like crossing guards, bussing, etc.</li> <li>Could encompass much more.</li> <li>Could amalgamate with the safe schools committee.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep on the agenda list.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natalie: Draft a Safety Corner section for the next Conestogo Round-Up.</li> </ul>
<b>Mabel's Labels</b>	Ongoing	Fundraising	Chris Sabean
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing.</li> <li>Little effort required.</li> <li>Communications plan to ensure we are not bombarding people.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue.</li> </ul>	
<b>PitaPit</b>	Ongoing	School/Student/Family	Susan Wagler, second volunteer required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tasks: Hand out forms to classes, get forms to PitaPit, distribute Pitats, troubleshoot issues.</li> <li>Mondays: 45 minutes lunch hour.</li> <li></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require more volunteers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Second Volunteer required to help at the school. Mondays – 45 minutes.</li> <li>Next PitaPit email: Send request to parents to write the PitaPit days into their child's planner.</li> </ul>
<b>School Family Directory</b>	Oct. 25	School/Student/Family	Juli Chinnick
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In progress with Juli.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send electronically only. Parents may request a hard copy.</li> </ul>	
<b>Magazines</b>	October	Fundraising	Chris Sabean, volunteer for next year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program is booked and process initiated in the spring.</li> <li>Receive packages at the beginning of the school year.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit a helper for next year.</li> <li>Will request volunteers to help with the ice cream party, etc.</li> </ul>	



<b>ProGrant – Voice Kits</b>		Community	Marsha Ferguson
[discussion deferred to upcoming meeting]			
<b>Book Fair</b>		Library Fundraiser	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remove from Council list because it is a school event, not a council event.</li> <li>▪ Discussions with Mrs. Goodwin.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remove from council list.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Appreciation</b>	Nov 22, Mar 28	School/Student/Family	Jen Sellars, second volunteer?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fri Nov 22 – lunch</li> <li>▪ Fri Mar 28 - treats</li> </ul>			
<b>New Parent Social</b>		School/Student/Family	Heather Cote, Florence Bray
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only two families came through for a tour.</li> <li>▪ History goes back to welcoming new families to the community, introduce them to council, get them involved.</li> <li>▪ Procured a list of new families, they each got an invitation.</li> <li>▪ Personal invitations.</li> <li>▪ Communications strategy, not an event.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Change from event to communications strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Ice Rink</b>	Winter – deferred to next year	Community	Marsha Ferguson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There will be a new ice rink at the Conestogo Park.</li> <li>▪ Marsha Ferguson will provide updates on the Conestogo Park.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remove as council related event.</li> </ul>
<b>Valentine’s Dance</b>	Feb 14-2013 ?	Community	Vanessa Harrow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [discussion deferred to upcoming meeting]</li> </ul>			
<b>Gardens</b>	Spring	Community	Juli Chinnick
[discussion deferred to upcoming meeting]			
<b>FunFair</b>	COMPLETE Sept 12	School/Student/Family	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ \$4400 almost the same as last year.</li> <li>▪ Fewer expenses.</li> <li>▪ Very minor issues.</li> <li>▪ Thank you cards will go out.</li> <li>▪ Good number of teachers volunteers.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council-related boxes of goods for fun fair. Where will they be stored going forward?</li> </ul> <p>Next year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overhaul required on organization and processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Principal: review storage space options.</a></li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Follow-up survey?</li> <li>▪ Suggestion to raise ticket prices slightly next year.</li> <li>▪ Game trailer—the novelty has worn off. If it had rained, it would have been more popular.</li> <li>▪ Face painting – need to do less intricate faces, more expensive.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider raising ticket prices.</li> <li>▪ Remove the game trailer from the attraction list.</li> <li>▪ Make face painting more expensive; request simpler/faster painting.</li> </ul>		
<b>Council Parent Survey</b>	COMPLETE	School/Student/Family	Marsha Ferguson, Jaime Bickerton	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One-off. Does not need to be completed yearly.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Remove from agenda list.</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Community Social Event</b>	? April	School/Student/Family	Marsha Ferguson	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Last year: games night.</li> <li>▪ Choose new event. TBA</li> <li>▪ Skating night.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Choose new event.</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Used Book Sale</b>	Thursday, April 18	Fundraiser	Marsha Ferguson, Jaime Bickerton	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More success when it ran with the art's fest.</li> <li>▪ A lot of work with little gain.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Remove from agenda for this year.</a></li> </ul>	
<b>TBA Social/Fundraiser</b>	Spring	Social/Fundraiser	TBD	
[discussion deferred to upcoming meeting]				
<b>Dance-a-thon - DrumFit</b>	Thursday, March 7, 2013	Fundraiser	Natalie Edery	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue with DrumFit.</li> <li>▪ Need a second volunteer. Someone who is available during the day.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Second volunteer required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Communicate call for volunteers available day of DrumFit.</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Greenhouse</b>	TBD	Fundraiser/Community	TBD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [discussion deferred to upcoming meeting]</li> </ul>				



## NEW/OPEN DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Teacher's Survey Findings – Barb Dowling

- 14 of approximately 22 teachers responded.

Teacher comments:

- What is your understanding of the role of school council at CPS?
  - 92.9% selected School community building
  - 85.7% selected Fundraising
  - 57% selected Connection between parents and the principal
  - 50% selected Communications
- How effective are we? 85.7% said we were effective in completing what they perceived our role to be.
- Many decisions made without staff input.
- Communication concerns.
- Suggest we assist with spirit days and events that take place during school time.
- Suggest allocating each teacher with a designated sum of money to spend as they see fit for their classrooms.
- Ambassador to the staff from council, not just someone attending meetings.

Conclusions:

- [Teacher engagement: one of our themes for this year?](#)

Action items:

- [Barb to summarize and distribute report.](#)

### Goals for next meeting

- Choose themes and focus
  1. Communication
  2. Teacher engagement
  3. Processes
- Use the chosen areas of focus to drive budget.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Motioned by:** 1<sup>st</sup>: Jaime 2<sup>nd</sup>: Marsha