



Conestogo Public School – Council Minutes: Wednesday, April 17, 2019

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UPCOMING COUNCIL EVENTS

2018-19 Event Dates:

- Next Council Meeting: Thursday, May 16
- Family Skate: Saturday, March 23
- PRO Grant event: Family Math Night, Thursday, April 11
- Kidney Clothing Drive: Thursday, April 11, and Friday, April 12
- Teacher Appreciation (Desserts): May 29
- Upcoming Council Meetings (the third Thursday of each month with some dates adjusted for events and holidays):
 - May 16, 2019
 - June 13, 2019



ACTION ITEM SUMMARY

Initiative/Project	Action Item	Member Responsible
Fundraising	Replace "Jump to Math" link from the school website with information about the craft show.	Deb
	Resend invitation for Fundscrip/Flipgive	Gena
Safe, Caring, Inclusive, and Healthy Schools Committee	Remind the school community about the Principle "birdhouse mailbox".	Cathy
Pro Grant	Check application date	Deb
	Report: Organize invoices and submit the post-event report to the Ministry	Deb
	Provide the receipt for pizza.	Cathy
Playground	Communicate to the school community some of the progress on the playground planning.	Cathy
Put on the Agenda for May	Connecting with new parents and welcoming current parents to participate in or attend Council.	Gena
	Speaker from Teachers College	Gena



WELCOME & GENERAL BUSINESS

Attendance

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

Role	2015-16	Sep 13	Oct 18	Nov 8	Dec 13	Jan 17	Feb 21	March 21	Apr 18	May 16	June 13
Co-Chair	Jenny Benham	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Co-Chair	Rebecca Hallman	P	N	N	P	P	P	P	P		
Treasurer	Karen Hofbauer	P	N	P	N	P	P	P	P		
Communications	Deb Jones	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P		
Secretary	Gena Braun	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Principal	Cathy Baer	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Teacher Reps	Carolee Fox	P	Karen Larke	Angela Bauman	Dougall Newport	Rachel Quickfall	Sherry Morland	Carolee Fox	Jamie Robertson	Shannon Brown	Lori
Community	Stephanie Forte	P	P	N	P	P	N	N	P		
	Chris Sabean	N	N	P	N	N	N	N	N		
WRAPSC	Jessica Gordon	P	P	N	N	P	P	P	P		
	Colleen Heinrichs	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	N		
	Gloria Ramage	P	N	N	N	P	N	N	N		
Parent Members & Volunteers	Marsha Ferguson	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
	Agnes Lehtonen	P	N	P	N	N	P	P	P		
	Katherine Sunday	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
	Shawna Gingrich	P	P	P	P	P	N	N	N		
	Karen Forsyth	N	P	P	P	P	N	P	N		
	Erin Schmidt	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P		
	Mel Thompson	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
	Laura Bredahl	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
	Jenn Metzloff	P	N	N	P	P	P	P	P		



Agenda – Review & Approval

Adjustments to Agenda:

- Remove Teachers College
- Change Date to Wednesday, April 17
- Teachers report: Mr. Robertson instead of Carolee Fox
- Intro to Karen Meissner

Agenda Approval with changes Motioned by:

1st: Erin

2nd: Deb

Minutes, February – Review & Approval

Adjustments to Minutes:

- None

Minutes Approval with changes Motioned by:

1st: Rebecca

2nd: Jessica



PRESENTATIONS

Intro to Karen (Board Trustee)

- Trustee for Woolwich and Wellesley
- We only have one trustee for this township
- Started last December and very excited to take on this role
- Makes a point of being available to anyone in the community to answer questions and support the school system as much as possible.
- Previous member of the council at her children's school (Riverside).

Teacher's Report – Jamie Robertson

- He has been teaching physical education here for 23 years and this includes many extracurricular activities and sports events outside of regular school hours.
 - New: Learn to golf program this year (\$30 to participate).
- Track and Field Season costs:
 - Purchased ribbons for track and field – over \$280 but the budget from the school is only \$80.
 - Parent council does have \$500 for physical education stuff and it is requested that this cost be covered by this budget, either this year or planning for next.
- In the future, Council suggested that spending for this line item be planned clearly.

Principal's Report – Cathy Baer

- Umbrella Project –April is "Intrinsic Motivation" and May is "Integrity"
 - The Umbrella Project Planner Message:

As parents and educators, we play a very important role in helping our children develop the skills they need to navigate life's uncertainties.

The Umbrella Project is dedicated to helping you and your children learn these skills of emotional wellbeing in a fun, easy to implement way and helping you thrive in all of life's weather.

Our school will focus on one skill each month, as outlined below. Parent resources can be found at <https://umbrellaproject.co/>. Parents can also sign up for the Umbrella Project Newsletter, <http://eepurl.com/c62pPn>. The Umbrella Project is also found on Instagram and Facebook: @umbrellapjct.

2018-2019: Gratitude, Grit, Self-Compassion, Resilience, Mindfulness, Autonomy, Intrinsic Motivation, Integrity and Mastery/Hope

2019-2020: Empathy, Growth Mindset, Cognitive Flexibility, Authenticity, Purpose, Kindness, Self-Efficacy, Optimism and Lifestyle

- Follow up to our conversation about student attendance - request for parent and teacher volunteers to engage in a conversation with the goal of sending a letter to the school community with a common message.



- Our statistics are different than those reported in the news, but it is still important to minimize missed school (as emphasized by Carolee Fox at the Council meeting in March).
- School absenteeism has been increasing overtime.
- Note that the count of absent days does not include vacation when the appropriate form is completed.
- Cathy would like to continue this conversation with a few parents and teachers that are interested in meeting to find “common ground” and build an appropriate message to share with the school community (with input from Parent Council and the staff).
 - Jessica Gordon indicated a desire to participate in this discussion.
 - Feedback from Council: This conversation was posted in the March minutes and Council has received some feedback as follows:
 - Current climate of education in the province is a concern and this should be considered in the timing of this discussion.
 - Some parents questioned the validity of teachers telling them when it is or is not appropriate for students to miss school.
 - One-on-one conversations between parents, teacher, and the principle may be more appropriate than a broad letter, especially when there are extenuating circumstances such as the emotional health of a given child (i.e. if there are concerns around bullying or other emotional health issues at school). Personal circumstances may play in as well, but the family may not want to share this information with the school.
 - Is this a board directed initiative? Cathy indicated that it is not.
 - Are all the teachers supportive of this letter? The letter would be vetted through council and parents before being sent (see the point above regarding a meeting to find common ground).
 - Maybe an approach this is more of a “check in” rather than a directive would be a better way to present this message. The basic message of encouraging attendance is strongly supported by Council, but the approach may need to be more gentle.
 - Students are absent for other important programs as well (music programs, leadership, sports), and learn in other ways.
- Class Placement Considerations for the 2019-2020 school year:
 - Please submit requests in writing by April 30, 2019 to Cathy Baer. (Focus on children being affected).
 - Requests are to inform us of situations between students so that we can create the best classroom communities possible.
 - Requests for split or straight classes or for specific teachers will not be considered.
 - Registration, 2018-2019: 282 students, currently 249 registered for 2019-2020.
- Brock McGillis costs:
 - \$600 for a one-hour presentation including Q and A.
 - \$900 for a one-hour presentation plus Q and A plus an hour breakout with our GSA.
 - \$1200 for a full day.
 - A full day would permit possible involvement of parents or an evening event.
- Our GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) started last week. This was initiated based on student requests and currently includes just grade 7-8 (but open to growing).
 - Activities may include conversations around support or guest speakers. Acts as a support group within a school community.
 - This is run by three teachers: Mrs. Newport, Ms. McMillian, Ms. Fischer.
- 8B raised \$354 for the Me to We Water Foundation.
- 8A has a Family Movie Night coming up on Friday May 3 (charity yet to be determined).
- Guest Speaker Requests (PRO Grant for next year?)
 - Dr. Jen Forristal (approx. \$1000),



- Gender Identity (Deepa from the Board and Wash from “Ok to me be”)
- Comment from Council: “[The Kindness Diaries](#)” may be an event/speaker we could share with several other schools.
- Earth Day Assembly, Thursday, April 18: 1:30 – 2:00 PM.
- May 27: Kindergarten Welcome Night
- Upcoming Field Trips and Special Events: Please check the Calendar on our website, <https://con.wrdsb.ca/calendar-events/>.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

Treasurer’s Report – Karen

- Skating event: No need to purchase hot chocolate next year and then this event will likely balance (costs and revenue).
- General conclusion: Currently on track
- **ACTION ITEM, Deb/Cathy: Replace “Jump to Math” link from the school website with information about the craft show.**

WRAPC Report – Jessica

- Will be sending out a french immersion survey to determine how well the current approach is working or what could be improved, and will also be running parent focus groups (you must fill out the survey to participate in the focus groups).
- X-warrior Future Fair: (see e-mail)
- Junior Achievement: This program may be underutilized and are open to more requests from teachers.
- Behavioral concerns discussed (also mentioned in the March minutes). Some suggestions were provided to the Board regarding improved communication with parents (there is a policy but how it is implemented varies from school to school) and a communication with the class as a whole (without identifying specific students) so that parents are aware of disruptions in the classroom, specifically classroom evacuations. The focus was on children that are affected by the disruptive student, rather than on the students with behavioral issues.
- Superintendent on special education and student well-being will be continuing the conversation.
- May 7: WRAPC meeting will include the Trustees and parents are encouraged to attend.
- May 13: Parent Engagement session regarding Anxiety in Your Teen at EDSS, also recommended for parents of pre-teens (grade 6-8) as well.

Safe, Caring, Inclusive, and Healthy Schools Committee - Cathy

- No specific report and will schedule a meeting in the near future (students often initiate the conversation if they have issues they are concerned about).
- **ACTION ITEM, Cathy: Remind the school community about the Principle “birdhouse**



mailbox”.

COMMITTEES & EVENTS – STATUS REPORTS

Fundraising Update – Fundraising Committee

- Fundscrip/Flipgive (information provided by Gena):
 - Flipgive: We have 4 supporters and have raised a total of \$32 so far (two months).
 - Fundscrip: We have two supporters and have raised a total of \$9 so far
 - Feedback: Why aren't you signing up, or are you already using these methods to support other groups?
 - Agnes – send paper information.
 - **ACTION ITEM, Gena: Resend invitation.**
- Kidney Foundation Clothing Drive raised just over \$300.
 - For next year: Be more specific in items that are accepted.
 - ACTION ITEM, Cathy: Follow up with nursery to arrange a visit and determine approximate costs.
 - Motion, Erin: Use some of the Club budget funding toward the Green Team tree.
 - Second: Agnes.
- Family Skate:
 - Time of year was good.
 - Plan for it again next year as it was very well received and continue to include other schools.
 - Lessons learned or suggestions: No premade hot chocolate, and have extra helmets available.
- QSP: Do we want the prizes?
 - Motion by Rebecca to forego the QSP prizes this year.
 - Second: Gena

Pro Grant Jump2Math Review – Laura/Deb

- Note for next year: Applications not yet being accepted.
 - **ACTION ITEM, Deb: Check application date.**
 - We may want to include this in the budget in case the PRO Grant is no longer available.
- Event was well-attended. 34 families signed waivers + 21 Grade 8 volunteers helped facilitate.
- Kids appeared to have fun and the grade eight volunteers did a great job facilitating and helping younger children.
- The goodie bags from the Fun Fair definitely contributed to the fun - thank you Fun Fair committee!
- **ACTION ITEM, Deb: Report Back: Deb will organize invoices and submit the post-event report to the Ministry.**
- A copy of the final report must be sent to the school board.
- **ACTION ITEM, Cathy: Please provide the receipt for pizza.**
 - PRO Grant includes budget to pay for \$40 of the pizza. The rest must come out of council or school funds.
- Consideration: We could run this type of event as council in the future (would need to make our own vinyl mats or something similar), i.e. “hop to math” or “jump to words” or event just an active games night.
 - Older children may have been dissuaded by the title of the event (i.e. “math”).



Playground Update – Cathy

- Playground Enhancements – outdoor drinking fountain, additional tarmac, outdoor sitting area, Junior climber, Kindie play area, Gaga Ball Pit (old mitts/gloves).
 - We were not successful in obtaining a Rotary Grant for this year.
 - We were successful in obtaining a \$550 WEFI Grant to go towards our outdoor sitting area (\$1500+ for each table with addition of shipping and installation).
 - Karen H and Cathy looked at a site plan (recently updated to show some septic system details, but the location of the tanks was not indicated).
 - Question: Can we put a plaque or sign/stencil on the table with our school logo or similar?
- Mrs. Fox’s room is under construction to put in an outdoor water fountain (has to be removed during winter) but can be used all summer by the community.
- Cathy is currently going through approved vendor options.
- Principle’s advisory committee (one student from each home room) indicated they would like “American Ninja Warrior” style obstacle course.
 - Next step: Identify a few options and present these to the students for a vote, but find something that compliments what we already have.
 - Then work with the vendors to see what options would be similar.
- Gagaball painting: We have not yet determined the best stain.
- Learning Commons:
 - Used for many different programs and clubs.
 - Jiffy poll in the middle of the room to be removed and data connections to be terminated.
 - New storage cabinets to be installed.
- Additional tarmac needs to be done by the Board.
- **ACTION ITEM, Cathy: Communicate to the school community some of the progress on the playground planning.**



OPEN DISCUSSION ITEMS

Speaker from Teachers College – Jenny

- Postpone until May

Discussion with Karen:

- Parent engagement suggestion: Letting parents know this is also just a forum for discussion and membership is not required (they are welcome to attend once without pressure to come on a regular basis).
 - Council added: We have several volunteers that don't attend meetings but still participate to support events or run events.
 - Remind parents that the purpose of Council is not solely fundraising.
 - Volunteers can be involved without attending Council meetings.
 - Parent engagement can mean different things for different parents and may include home support, volunteering in the classroom, or supporting activities outside the school.
- Student Trustees:
 - Elected within secondary schools and must apply to the Board (Grade 11s can apply). They come to meetings to represent the student voice and they organize a student senate that runs once per month. They engage the students in topical conversations and bring the student voice back to the board.
 - All high school students can participate in the senate meetings.
- Provincial Government Announcements:
 - Some of the information provided by the Provincial government is not announced to the school boards in advance – schools find out at the same time as the public.
- Karen is very open to being contacted through e-mail or phone.
- Questions from Council:
 - Budgeting for the playground over time: What is the Board's policy with regard to carrying over funds (amount and length of time): If you have a substantial project planned, it can be held for several years.
 - Is there higher level discussion around sharing of resources with schools in lower socio-economic areas? How can we better serve all of the schools in the board to minimize this inequality? This has not yet been discussed at the board level.
 - Suggestions on communicating to parents/students regarding what is and is not paid for by the Board? Karen is happy to follow up on this issue.
 - Is school funding different depending on the socio-economic status of the school community? Karen will follow up.
 - Grants for the Ministry are allocated to specific things and can only be spent on those specific areas (despite needs).
 - S'Cool Life Fund for example asks for school ranking as part of grant application – is this common for educational grants?
 - Breakfast program was considered a few years ago, but there is no place to put a fridge (as a very small school). On a wider level, some of the guidelines from the Board are overly strict and limit parent/staff ability to help the community.
 - Heat and humidity: Recently discussed at the Board (Heat and Humidity Report was presented in late November).
 - Additional report received this week and it was determined that is not feasible to solve this problem for all schools by January 2020.
 - Current plan is that air conditioning will be added with renovations to schools, with a few schools getting priority air conditioning (i.e. might include schools that are increasing in



- population).
- The Board has to get approval from the Ministry for these types of projects and it is not always granted.
- Discussed school area boundary lines.
- **ACTION ITEM, Gena: Put on the agenda for May: Connecting with new parents and welcoming current parents to participate in or attend Council.**

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by:

1st: Agnes

2nd: Jenn