

School Council Meeting:

Monday, February 3rd, 2020

6:30pm – J.F. Carmichael Library

Minutes

Attendance: Anna Maste, Sandra Orton, Jen van Overbeeke, Sarah Kennedy, Ula Matusik, Ashley Jardin, Emma Shehan, Charity Friesen, Marcus Hoare (VP), Leah Pullen (Principal)

Welcome and Greetings

Updates and Business:

1. Finances Summary:

Nothing has changed.

2. **Water Fountain update:** – The school has had confirmation we can add a chilled water bottle filling station on the third floor. They were given the green light in terms of electrical and water supply. The machines cost approx. \$3,000 + installation. The school is going ahead with it, and if council can contribute towards it, that would help greatly.

When will it be installed? The school was asked to get their request in to the board, in the next couple of weeks, so hopefully it will be installed this year before the hot weather.

Council voted to budget \$2,000 instead of the initial \$1,000, unanimous vote.

Gaga ball court – no news at this time.

Home reading – a question came in just before the holiday break, from Mme. Colaiezzi, about the French home reading. A question/suggestion was put forward to ask if the council would support funding the French equivalent to Razz kids. This is an online subscription geared towards French-as-a-second-language kids, which supports French reading, including pronunciation. The cost would be \$600 and would give us 96 licences, one for each kid in French Immersion in the school, (for one full year). Every 30 licences are \$200, and also gives 2 free for a package of 32 licences for \$200 each. In the past, in our school, some classrooms had Razz kids accounts, for classes that thought they would use them. If the French version supports families who feel they can't help their children with pronunciation, the school feels this is a project worth trying. Parents on the council voted to support a pilot program for one year. This request came out of the French Immersion teachers collaborating/talking about the fact that the French home reading doesn't seem to show the same results as the English home reading program. The vote on a one-year test pilot passed unanimously.

3. Event planning:

- a. Book Swap – No books, no tables yet picked up or ordered. We should change the date of the swap. It would help to know the rotating strike schedule. The school shared that so far,

Thursday & Friday every week seems to be the standard days for the Provincial strike (Thursdays) and local strike (Fridays), for the foreseeable future. The new date that was chosen is: Wednesday, April 1st. The school will book the tables first, then let us know, so we can advertise, in case there is difficulty getting the tables.

- b. Movie Night – Postponed due to strike action.

4. Committee Updates:

None at this time.

Home Reading – no updates at this time.

- 5. Teacher work action:** Question – are teachers giving work to the kids to do at home for the days they are not in school? No, that would undermine the strike.

The teachers had to compile marks as this was part of their contract, but these marks will not be shared because without the context of the accompanying written comments, the marks do not tell the full story.

IEPs (a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student) will still be provided. Question - how do we know if that is working, unless we get the marks to use as a comparison? Answer: Conversations with the teachers are still welcomed, and this would be the best way at this time to work out if the IEP is working. Also a private chat with the principal about how or if the accommodations are being applied/used effectively are welcomed.

Has the time come and gone already for report cards going home? Yes.

Can we access these marks once the job action is over? The end of year report cards will have those letter grades, but they won't have any comments.

The school feels that report cards are evaluation, not assessment. Marks are not indicative of the whole picture.

Have we heard if the talks between the union and the employer have broken off? Yes. And there are no dates scheduled yet for them to resume for either union. So for the near future the schedule will be strike action on at least Thursdays & Fridays each week, so there will be no school on those days.

Principal's message:

In spite of the unrest, things are moving along nicely. A few staff changes since December.

Mrs. Holland is off for the rest of the year, because she adopted a baby. Ms. Huntington will take over from her.

Mrs. Grant just had a baby. Ms. Gibney has been hired to replace her.

Mrs. Williams is home, awaiting the arrival of her baby, so someone is replacing her.

Mrs. Grin is also home, also awaiting the arrival of her baby, so Mrs. Cormier is replacing her.

Mrs. Duffet has been off for a while, and Mrs. Kula is acting as head secretary, with Mrs.

Noordam filling in as second secretary.

Announcement:

Construction upcoming: A large-scale construction project is planned for our school. The AC project is going ahead. The school received confirmation around the holiday break. This will change a few things for us as the school year wraps up. At the beginning of May the library will be closing. The books will be moved by the Library Services group (the school board). The library will be completely re-done to bring it up to modern standards. Council needs to make a plan to move the home reading books. The library will be closed at the beginning of April because it takes about 2 weeks to shut down the library and move the books. The plan since last year for the home reading books has been to move them to the girls' change-room.

The AC project will also require a major hydro update to the school, and at the same time the board will replace the front, gym area and four banks of windows at the back of the building. They will put in air conditioning in the original core of the building (4 classrooms per floor in the middle of the building). This means that some rooms upstairs (the hottest part of the school) will not get air conditioning. The school says that screens for the windows in those rooms are under discussion with the board because they know how hot those rooms get. The school is also trying to devise a plan whereby they use the air conditioning in the core of the school to help cool those other rooms as well by keeping classroom doors open and helping the air flow through the other rooms as well. The board will be replacing all the ceilings and lighting in the affected rooms because of this project and the upstairs hallway will be getting a new floor. This will all be happening over July and August. And if the project is not finished by September, it will continue into September next year.

Because of this project the parking will change out front of the school, meaning in the small parking lot at the front area by the gym. This area will be used as a construction staging area. This will mean a change in parking spaces at the back of the school too to accommodate this. There will be communication going home by April about this.

What is on your mind:

Question: Back in September, there was a comment from one of the parents that attended the council meeting about the ash trees in the back, far corner of the school yard, that stated that some of the trees were in danger of falling down and needed to be cut down. This did happen, quite quickly in fact, immediately upon hearing this the school contacted the board and the trees were cut down within a few weeks.

With that in mind, can we plan to plant more trees? In the past the Greening Club did work like this. However, we no longer have those people (who ran the Greening Club) involved with school council. We have \$200 in the budget for this Greening Club that we can put towards planting new trees if we would like. Who would do the planting? The school thinks we can plant trees if we like, but they will look into this to be certain, if council can provide them. If the trees are planted in the spring, we'd need to have someone come in over the summer to water them. If we discover that there is water available, is that something Ashley would like spearhead? Ashley will look into what kind of tree and source more information. We should ask the teachers and find out if there is something they would like because it is an educational area. What will grow in that area, under the other mature trees? A suggestion was made to ask Michelle Purchase (a mom at our school) as she is a landscape architect, and could be a great resource.

The butterfly garden that was planted a few years ago was done with a grant from the city, and if anyone wants to take it over, after the strike the council would love some volunteers to do that. There was a mom who was asking about the garden, so Ula has volunteered to talk to her. It would be useful to have a teacher collaborate on this project too. Emma volunteers, and is interested, if needed to help with the butterfly garden and Jen also is interested in volunteering.

One of our students had a problem using the washrooms at school, as she is shy, but this was worked out. Now, however, her excuse is that there are some bad words written in the girls bathroom. The school says that when this graffiti is reported to them, the custodial staff is notified right away, and it is removed. Mrs. Pullen says if graffiti is reported to parents, to please feel free to call her or the office right away, and they will notify the custodial staff and have it removed.

So far nothing with the strike action is preventing School Council meetings from happening. The school was told by the unions that if the school is going to be closed, council meetings at any school can go ahead regardless. At our school in particular, the principal and the vice principal will continue to attend our meetings and will be available to open the doors on council meeting nights.

Next meetings:

Monday, March 2nd

Monday, April 6th

Monday, May 4th

Monday, June 1st