

Parent Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 27, 2016

In attendance:

Milisa Burns, Jean Hammond, Lyn Kwan, Vanda Lopes, David Wood, Allison Venditti, Samarra Khaja, Leslie Tumangday, Jessica Haber, Jack Phillips, Nicole Belcourt, Jim Stathopoulos

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:

- School concert In December went well, as have the parent evenings set up by Leslie T with Toronto Public Health; "Kids have stress" (2 nights, 6 to 8 participants) and "At Home Alone" workshop (this had a big turn out, 28 participants). Parents gave good feedback to the facilitator, that they learned a lot.

- Grade 7/8 Ski trip postponed again, now scheduled for March 2nd. Need enough snow for snowshoeing and tubing as 25% of the students snowshoe and tube.

- Skating has gone very well. Whitney Public School donated skates, parents brought in skates & helmets, and we have also purchased another 15 helmets. Most classes are going. Kindergarten not yet. Need parent turn out and also depends on the teacher.

Jean explained how skating initiative happened. Samarra asked at the last parent council meeting what we needed to allow Essex classes to do skating trips (late November). Jim then partnered with Witney PS for donations of used skates and helmets. Essex parents and teachers also donated. We were short on some helmets & larger sized skates which were purchased using Parent Council funds. Now every class has the option of going skating!

- Grade 7 information night is happening on February 4 to show what middle school is all about.

intermediate staff are working on it.

Kindergarten registration is ongoing. Many Junior Kindergarten students are being redirected to Dewson for French Immersion next fall.

- Karate at lunchtime is going well.

- Real Food for Real Kids lunch program is running smoothly.

- Another new PA day has been announced for April 15. The PA day on February 12 February is designated for parent/teacher interviews.

- The west gym, next door in the Sacre Coeur School which is used by Grade 7 & 8 students, has been painted. The hallway on 2nd floor is being painted. And the hallway from the Parenting Centre through to room 101, 102 etc. will be painted.

- Family literacy day was very successful today. Children's author Andrew Larsen was in attendance and gave a very interesting talk to the parents and children.

- Lunar new year celebration takes place on February 11. Ms Kwan asking for volunteers to serve the dinner. Will send a note on the blog.

-TREASURER'S REPORT: David Wood presented.

David presented all the new expenditures for 2015-2016 which include:

- another Scientist in School (Jessica Haber is coordinating all the teachers' asks for scientist in the school so every teacher will have 2 sessions)

- Artist in School for each class. Jeff from Theatrics coming in February. We are waiting on a quote. Jeff has done work with Hawthorne.

- Teacher classroom fund has been augmented. Jim is encouraging teachers to use it.

- Glee Club

- a second head lice inspection will take place in the Spring

David put forward a motion for the new budget. Budget was approved by Parent Council.

- Samarra's FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT:

Had first meeting to plan Spring Fling in early January. Have already secured : H2O truck, fire truck, Blinky police car, bouncy castles, etc.

Bingo Night on April 22

Danceathon on March 11. Essex event only. Funds raised will be allocated for the Syrian refugee family sponsorship collection between Essex/Hawthorne.

Will need call out for volunteers for those events.

It has just been decided to put a call out for sponsorship for the bouncy castles for Spring Fling.

Don't have \$ amounts yet but 8 sponsorship opportunities will be available for families, businesses, etc from the neighbourhood. Their name will be displayed on a sign at each bouncy castle.

Lynettes's idea to show parents where the money raised by Parent Council is going on the bulletin board.

Skating would be a good one to show that parent council money is helping the skating initiative.

This would be a good thing to also put out as a blast on the blog.

This type of good news story should be publicized by the Communications Committee of the Parent Council.

PARENT LINK REPORT. (Jean Hammond for Sue Hutton)

A phone call meeting took place in December, parents' feedback was that there was too much information and they were too frequent. Decision taken to streamline it to once a week, on Friday, and only if there is anything to share.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE (Milisa Burns)

Buddy bench - Suvi is working on getting a quote on a buddy bench. Gardening committee met with Justin, who will help get seating. Traditional seating takes 18 months, but can do large log with a flat top, can be dropped in, don't need concrete to drop it in, and it is a more natural look. Also considering a classic bench, but will take a while to get it. Need to consult with teachers to see what bench is best for special needs. Need 8 or 9 log benches.

To be placed near the basketball court, near the baseball field, and also near the playscape.

Timeline will hopefully be in the spring.

Lyn Kwan asked about having a greenhouse. This might be on a green wall. Jim is looking into it.

Lunch buddies, Carma Rosonina, is working on making it more cohesive, and hoping to encourage more meaningful dialogue and collaboration at the next event. e.g some kids with special needs can't speak up as quickly but it doesn't mean that they don't have ideas to contribute.

Playground buddies are going well (Tamara Revesz), and working with Hawthorne and Sue Hutton to do an initiative with Hawthorne, possibly in February.

Essex Parents Book Club: 2nd meeting of our little book club, small but mighty, new ideas and actions might be taken in the classroom as a result of tonight. We will read the second half of How Children Succeed by Paul Tough for the next meeting (Wed. March 30 at 6pm, just prior to Parent Council Meeting). A copy is in the school library now if anyone is interested.

Does anyone have a book they would be interested in suggesting to read?

LUNAR NEW YEAR UPDATE:

Lyn Kwan

Performances in the morning for both Essex and Hawthorne by Lion dancers and some students as well. Students can purchase tickets for a Chinese lunch (nut free \$4 plus \$1 for drink), proceeds from lunch pay for lion dancers and catered food. If parents donate a dish, they get a free ticket.

Volunteers needed to help with serving.

Jean asked Lyn Kwan to draft a volunteer request to go to Jim, then Jack.

Jim: slight glitch as Hawthorne's pizza lunch is on the same day as lunar new year lunch.

Parent Council to fund usual amount for this event which is \$200.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Syrian refugee family (Jess Haber), we are on a list for a 6 or 7 person family, in next 3 months we will be matched, trying to find a way or ways to involve classrooms, an initiative for each class, i.e. 6 year old boy needs backpack and school supplies, could be donations or could be making something

Family will probably not stay in this area as rent is too expensive.

Ruth is the Essex point person. Jen in one of the kindergarten classes is helping, too.