

G.W.Smith Elementary School

School Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 25, 2016

Attendees:

Kelley Lund, Audra Garnett, Loraé Couchman, Krista Neidart, Alysia Dyjur, Candice Bowie, Candice Penz, Rachel Geistlinger, Shelley Odishaw, Diana Kuszniir, Wendy Faths, Erika Joy

Welcome Remarks from Co-Presidents Candice Penz and Shelley Odishaw. Thank you's were extended to everyone in attendance. The intention is for the pair to run in tandem and alternate as leads at each meeting if possible.

Principal's Report by Kelley Lund

The meeting was held in the Library in part to display the new G.W.Smith Website as well as whiteboard tables. Mrs. Lund highlighted some of the areas, specifically the School Council where the agenda and minutes will be posted, as well as One Book, Many Schools and the Snicker of Magic. The Snicker of Magic has audio chapters with some known guest speakers, such as former Principal Goring.

The Wind up for the Snicker of Magic will be November 21 at Eastview Middle School. There will be cake and activities and the author reading the last chapter via Skype for those in attendance. General comments on the book has been positive however some concerns were raised regarding references to smoking. Mrs. Lund acknowledged the concerns however stated it is difficult to pick a book that can encompass the interests of Grade One to Grade Eight.

The Pancake Breakfast as well as Terry Fox were well attended. There was excellent participation at the Parent-Teacher conferences.

The Math-a-thon has raised \$1500 thus far with more money expected to come in. In hindsight the timing of the Math-a-thon was poor. Families had just completed the Food to Farm fundraiser and started The Snicker of Magic reading.

A primary focus this year is on Literacy. Each grade has a dedicated literacy time with extra people providing support for a half hour for three to four times a week. Each grade is separated into small groups made up of four to eight kids. The aim is to provide more individualized support for all students. The student/teacher mix will change every six to eight weeks. The Literacy Group began in September for Grade 5 and in October for K-4.

District Physical Education Specialist Del Lomsnes was at the school on Monday to model physical education moves for students and teachers. The kids enjoyed the activities. Del is a leader in his field, is part of the Health Action Initiative and delivers workshops.

October 26 is Take Me Outside Day. Every class will be going outside at some point in the day.

Hats on for Mental Health will be held every Friday. Students are encouraged to bring in a loonie/toonie for Mental Health and they may wear their hat in the classroom.

Handball has started during the lunch hour for Grade 4/5's. There has been much interest in the activity thus far.

Orange Shirt Day was held with the emphasis on **Every Child Matters**. Few resources were provided to the School regarding how to deliver the message of Orange Shirt Day to the students. Information was tailored to each grade, and driven by student questions as well in Grade 4/5. More resources are forthcoming and will be available for next year. Orange Shirt Day is in part tied to the new curriculum. Several parents have suggested having information sent home as well as many were unaware of the meaning of Orange Shirt Day or how to broach the subject with a young child.

The curriculum is currently being revamped. It is long process. There is a survey available on-line that can be complicated as well as a workshop available on October 27.

1. Approval of September Minutes - move-Krista, Second - Rachel- CARRIED
2. Approval of Agenda - Diana requested that Field Trips be added to new business - move - Krista, Second - Rachel - CARRIED

3. Business arising from the minutes

a) Agenda versus Folders

Mrs. Lund indicated that the Folders are regarded as a Pilot Project and comments will be requested in a formal manner at some point during the year. As background, she explained that the Agenda was introduced primarily as a form of communication prior to email, ClassDojo, Remind and Google. However, now each teacher is utilizing other ways to communicate with parents. When Mrs. Lund discussed Folders with the teachers as an option they all supported the organizational aspect of them as it was clear that one side was for papers to return to the school and one to keep.

Issues with the Agenda that had arisen in the past are that often Grade 1/2's are not developmentally ready to write. More time was needed for some students which extended into the later Grades as well when it singled out students that may be struggling. Mrs. Lund said they needed to evaluate what the purpose of the Agenda

was, and whether it was a good use of instructional time to pursue using it. It was felt the purpose was primarily communication which can and has been pursued through other avenues such as ClassDojo and Remind. The instructional time that was spent on completing the Agenda can now be better applied by the teacher. The comments have been mostly positive from the teachers. There have been some comments on the folders being frayed or cracked this early in the school year. Formal feedback will be requested and a decision will be made on whether to pursue it. The initial decision was not based on budgetary concerns but rather questioning if the agenda was a good use of instructional time and was it accomplishing its purpose.

b) Equity Committee

Mrs. Garnett is on the Equity Committee with the Red Deer Public School Board. She noted that Equity does not equate to equality. Meaning that each school may not receive the same type or amount of resources. The goal is to ensure a fair inclusive education for each student across the district, regardless of personal situation or learning needs. Each School was reviewed based on Super Indicators to gauge where the resources would be more urgently needed to help students be more successful.

Anyone interested in attending the Equity Committee meetings can speak to the School Secretary Ms. Falls.

c) School Events/Fundraisers

i) School to Farm Fundraiser

The school cleared \$2282 from the event and was able to provide food to the Food Bank. Response has been positive and we will likely do the event next year as well.

ii) Math-A-Thon

Initial letter notes the money raised will be used for field trips, physical education supplies, art supplies and presenters. Next year the A-Thon will likely be held later in the year.

iii) Choose committees

Fundraisers

Hot Lunch - Lorae and Shelley to lead

Farm to School - Shelley to lead

A-Thon - Kelley to lead

Boston Pizza - Kim and Shelley to lead

Mables Labels - Shelley to lead

There has been no money raised from this so far. Parents can click on their school on the website. Awareness needs to be raised possibly in the School newsletter or via email

Teacher Torture - Table to 2017

School Event

Christmas Social/Raffle - Candice, Alysia and Rachel to lead

Skate Night - Wendy to lead. Discussion of pursuing a new sign that could be used for Skate Night at Bower Ponds as well as other events. Kelley will contact Hunting Hills High School as it may be possible to get new signage for school events. The School Council would be willing to pay for a new sign.

Spring Hop - seeking new volunteers for this opportunity

Teacher Appreciation - Lorae to lead

Social Committee - Shelley, Lorae, Candice B and Candice P to lead. Candice B will keep the group updated on other schools in the hopes of coordinating events. Possibly a movie night in January.

Other

_____ cheque writing

SUTP books

Garage Sale

- Agreed that no other fundraising options will be pursued right now

d) Large Project Ideas

A general discussion ensued. Comments were made about improving areas that were underutilized for outdoor classes. Candice B. was able to tour Annie L. Gaetz's outdoor classroom which she stated was well done. The outdoor classroom was part of a renovation at Annie L. Gaetz. Kelley mentioned that Mattie McCoullough has specialized equipment for those students with different physical needs. Some discussion regarding a climbing wall in gym however the area is too small. Potentially a racket sport area or a hockey rink however due to the proximity to Mountview skating rink and lack of lights the city would likely not be interested.

Kelley indicated that teachers have many commitments. Often it takes leadership from a teacher interested in outdoor pursuits or composting as an example in order to generate interest and draw others in. If there is not a teacher able to spearhead an outdoor classroom and engage the other teachers with ideas on how to use it, it will be underutilized. For example, the compost program is not currently able to continue as a teacher is not available to commit to it.

It was agreed that Kelley would ask the staff if they had had any big project ideas.

4. Committee Reports

a) Treasurer

Rachel provided the Treasurer's Report. \$2282.00 was raised through the Farm to School Program. The Hot Lunch Program that aims to run every Thursday is consistently netting over \$100 per week. \$300.00 was provided to each teacher to assist them in the classroom. Currently, the School Council Balance is \$13 344.05.

b) Hot Lunch

Lorae provided an update on Hot Lunch. New restaurants have been added since last year and some are more reasonably priced. If anyone has suggestions they can contact her and she will check if it is available. The goal is to offer the program consistently every Thursday.

c) Yimby

Kelly indicated that a box remains near the front office and one in the computer room. She encourages people to continue to donate books as the children love it. Some books have been traded with Mattie McCullough in the past.

d) Labels for Education

Shelley and Lorae indicated that the program will be shut down. Currently the website is not working so there is some difficulty in checking points and available items to purchase. Approximately 30,000 points are available and must be used by the end of the year. Lorae will print the available items and Kelley will request teacher comments at the November 9 meeting.

e) City Wide Report

Candice B. attended the City Wide meeting on behalf G.W.Smith School Council. A tour of the completed renovations at Annie L. Gaetz was provided. She indicated that they have incorporated an outdoor classroom, as well are involving in an Elder. An interest in participating with other schools in terms of social nights, workshops or seminars was discussed and supported.

5. New Business

a) 2018/2019 Proposed Calendar

The proposed calendar had been emailed to everyone previously. There will be an extended break during the Winter Games that are to be held in Red Deer in February. This will allow students to support and attend the events as well some facilities will be needed for the Winter Games. The Easter Break will be reduced to four days as a result. After a brief discussion, there was consensus in favor of the proposed calendar.

b) Alberta Curriculum Development

Candice P and Shelley attend the Event held by Minister of Education David Eggen. Parents, teachers, administrative staff were in attendance. The focus was on the updating of the current curriculum. Several areas of the curriculum have been not been updated in eight to thirty years. The Minister is planning to use response from the online survey as part of the process. Everyone is encouraged to complete the survey if possible. There will likely be a move toward more digital/coding involved in the curriculum. As well as a push for Financial classes to be involved in High School. There were concerns at the meeting that Alberta would adopt the British Columbia Arts curriculum but that is not the case. The plan is to have each area of the curriculum monitored every forty eight months on a rotating basis. A heated topic at the event was Sexual Education as well.

c) Volunteer Sign Up

Candice P. suggested having a blanket email requesting help that would allow those parents unable to commit to School Council yet interested in volunteering. It was agreed that an email blast will be sent out to gather interested names.

d) CARC Math Seminars

Sandi Berg does a fantastic job at walking parents through how they can assist their children with Math. The Social Committee may pursue having Sandi present her workshop at the school or in conjunction with another elementary.

e) Medical Supply Request

There were concerns regarding the amount of icepacks available in the school. It may be that issue is not lack of ice packs but that they are not returned in a timely fashion.

f) School Photo Company

There were some concerns expressed with the quality of the photos taken this year as well as the packages. The company was accommodating in its schedule that day and it was quite well run. Likely, we will attempt to have the School Pictures in September next year as well.

g) Benevolent Fund

It was proposed that School Council introduce a Benevolent Fund. If a teacher identifies a child that may be in need, for example requires a winter jacket or sports equipment, the teacher can discreetly approach the child/or parent. The child may also be identified by the Community Liaison Officer as well. The goal would be to keep the program discreet and confidential. There was some discussion in possibly donating the money to another school if it was not utilized during the school year at G.W.Smith.

A motion was put forth by Lorae proposing a \$500 benevolence fund to aid children in need. Krista seconded the motion - CARRIED.

h) Field Trips

The question was put forth on how the school decides which field trips to take each year. Other schools have completed trips to the Calgary Zoo, Tyrell Museum or a camp out in Rocky. Is it a lack of money that limits the field trips at G.W.Smith? Mrs. Lund stated that each field trip must be directly tied to the curriculum and the teachers must submit a form to support it. In regard to Rocky, our grade 5's engage with Kerry Wood Nature Centre as a lead up to attending the actual Centre which has been very well received. There is money received for field trips and attempts are made to keep it even across the grades. Busing can be expensive and the teacher has to think if three hours on a bus is contributing to the value of the experience. Often field trips close to home can offer more value such as the Landmark Walk the Grade One's completed last year. There has been no field trip request denied because of monetary concerns at this point. In essence, field trips depend on the teacher and the ability to make it relevant within the current curriculum.

i) Further Comments

Wendy was interested in the Excellence in Teaching Awards and the process. Mrs. Lund stated that a parent can nominate and that is very rewarding when it comes from a parent.

6. Adjournment

Shelley adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

Next Meeting: 7.00 Tuesday, November 29 2016