Castlefrank Elementary School

School Council Meeting

October 29, 2013

**Attendance**: Renee Poettcker, Carol Mothersill, Stephanie Nasmith, Carmen Brubacher, Terri Ross, Teri MacDonald, Matt Pieters, Kim D’Angelo, Sara Fitzgerald, Ron Henry, Sheila Ball, Rebecca Leclair, Natasha Smith, Susan Wehrman.

**Call Meeting to Order**: 7:03pm  
  
**Approval of Minutes**: (with minor changes from Carol) Approved by Teri/Sarah  
  
**Approval of Agenda**: (add safety to other business) Approved by Rene/Rebecca

**Chair report** (Carol Mothersill)  
There was a booth set up in the lobby at Meet the Teacher night to recruit people to sign up for the blog and encourage people to come out to both council events and meetings. We are currently up to about 99 followers on the blog. Suggestion from Stephanie: there are a lot of parents (at both schools) who don't realize there are TWO sites, the school website and the council blog. Ron points out that there was at one point a twitter feed for the school, but that is no longer the case and starting next week the school will have a blog of its own. This should be live Monday. ***Be sure to follow both the CES school blog AND the school council blog!***   
  
The *school council training day* put on by the board was amazing. Carol attended and she was thrilled to hear that we are doing similar things as other school, great things. She also picked up some new ideas!  
They hosted information sessions included information regarding full day kindergarten and being involved in students learning and experience, financial aspects and engagement strategies with parents, and connecting council with the student improvement plan.  
  
Carol and Carmen also attended a *meeting with the trustee* and the chairs of all the schools in Kanata South. The meeting was held at the WOCRC and those in attendance learned about resources they have available and programs they offer. The trustee spoke a little about how the board works and how they will tackle projects, as well as priorities for the school board (using check lists to prioritize infrastructure).  
  
Our first event of the year was amazing! The gym was packed for the *Halloween dance*. Special thanks to Carmen and her team who pulled it together, and Ron and the three other teachers who attended. The event made a profit of over $400!  
  
  
**Calendar of events** (Carmen Brubacher)  
  
November  
6th - wrap up of the Entertainment Book campaign  
11th - Remembrance Day assembly

12th – 15th – Book Fair. KES will come over to take part on the 14th. It will be open in the evening on the 14th and during interview times on the 15th for parents to shop. Each student will be sent home an information package, and as in the past there will be teacher wish lists posted for families to purchase gifts and/or make donations to classes. Volunteer info can be found on the blog!  
22nd - Fall Movie Night. Students will be voting on a movie as in the past. (The VIP ticket fundraiser may be done for this event)  
  
  
  
**Principal report** (Ron Henry)  
Ron starts off by saying it is becoming apparent to him that he needs to be less intimidating.... People are e-mailing other board members with issues that should be brought up to him. *He encourages anyone and everyone to approach him*, his door is always open! Ron has always tried to make himself as approachable and easily accessible as possible at all times. He is considering doing an "afternoon coffee" for people to meet with him as supposed to council meetings. Spread the word, he is not hard to get along with. Note: Questions can always be emailed to him if you would like something discussed at council, whether or not you can attend a meeting yourself.  
  
There have been some concerns brought forward in regards to a French immersion class that had an English *occasional teacher* in the classroom. Ron explained that unfortunately if all French teachers in the board are unavailable, an English teacher is called in. The process is as follows...Ron first looks for the teachers he believes to be best suited, then the call goes out to ALL French (or the otherwise best suited) teachers. Sometimes (thankfully rarely), there is simply no occasional teacher available at all, and French teachers are always in very high demand.  
  
Another area of concern for people is *bus transportation*. He is pleased to say that every child who's parent requested and empty seat, was granted one.  
  
Parents have brought forth the concern about *French resources* (or lack there of). In June the board gave Ron $26000 to spend in this area, as well, a lot of resources came to us from Katimavik ES. They decided as a group to wait until September to see exactly what was transferred over, and have since put in a huge order to support the French programs. The remainder will be spent on French books for the library. In the mean time the teachers have been sharing resources and the program has been running very efficiently.  
  
There have been concerns expressed about *supervision*. It is important for parents to know that there are five lunchtime monitors, who are all parents in our school, providing two adults to supervise each hallway. (This is an increase from one in each hallway last year.) These monitors are covering 2-3 classes each to keep an eye on safety and behaviour and address the student’s needs.

In the school yard, we have six adults outside at all times (an increase from the two we had last year). In the mornings, there are three teachers out front and two out back, with a third in the kindergarten yard. At the end of day, three teachers can be found out front, and one in the back. These teachers are in place between 3 and 3:15. This has (almost) all been in place since September and will continue through the year. All of our teachers are doing about 60min a week of supervision. If there is concern that any of the above is not happening as it should, please let Ron know.

There will be a *new school website* which should be up by Monday. You are encouraged to sign up, after doing so you will be notified anytime there is an update. Stay up to date on information and events within the school.  
  
*SIPSA* - school improvement plane for student achievement.  Each and every school is required to put this together each year. Typically a school group looks at the historical assessment data and comes up with strategies to improve issues within the school. As we don't have any historical data with all the changes, this year we are more so looking at building (from the ground up) an all around excellent school.

They have decided to focus on the concept of "self regulation". This is currently one of the categories on report cards. The plan is that between now and December we get familiar with ideas as to how we can make this work. Our hope and expectation is that if we as a community embrace self regulation we are preparing our kids to be one excellent learners. By December we will have decided where to go from there, including which programs to use that encourage self regulating. In January every student will be taught in a manner that affects this using techniques such as deep breathing practice, and being mindful. There is a ton of research that shows these methods very beneficial for children both in the classroom and outside of school. Our school is looking at a broader plan than most schools, with a big focus being on math. The SIPSA article will be posted on the website when it goes live.

CES has been identified as a *SIM school...school in the middle*. Although this means that our past test results were not fabulous, we will get funding for resources meant to improve EQAO (even though our past test scores mean nothing as we will only have 18 students writing EQAO this year, and none of the students who wrote in the past, or teachers who were a part of this, remain at our school). These resources will be focused towards our autism spectrum and ADHD students.  
  
*Renovation update*: Reminder, at this point, nothing is guaranteed. It now looks like construction will start in May, and although there is of course always the possibility, at this point it looks as though there will not be any portables in the fall. The hope is that the current band room and computer room will become classrooms. The issue of security and portables is brought up; IF portables are ever used, the school doors will remain locked and key cards will be used for students who need to enter. \*Carol reminds us that Ron is listening to our concerns and always taking them into account. She encourages everyone to bring questions and comments to council and Ron rather than going to another level\*  
  
A reminder that the *kiss and ride* remains and option for this year, and is as best set up as possible for the time being. Parent volunteers help to make this run effectively and are always encouraged.  
  
*Reading buddies* are currently are being set up with Katimavik and their students will be coming over here to read for our students.   
  
We have a number of students in the school who are both young and needy as far as social interactions. Ron is considering having a group of parent volunteers who would come to the school and spend some time with these students regularly, not for instructional time but rather as a social connection. One or two hrs a week would be ideal.  
  
*Progress reports* will go home next Friday, and parent teacher interviews are the following week. Students in grades 1-3 get report cards, but all parents welcome for interviews.  
  
The *tablet project* in the kindergarten classes has not yet begun, but will be put into place soon. The teachers are now able to load aps onto *iPads* at their discretion, and all iPads are now fully functioning. Ron asks council for $200 to support the teachers with ap purchases. Every teacher could have $10 to start. \*Council approves this request while going over budget details later in the meeting\*   
  
Rebecca Taggert is running a Movember challenge this year, male family members of students are encouraged to sign up and join our male faculty (Phil and Ron).

**Teacher report** (Natasha Smith)  
This month the grade 3s went to *track and field*. Natasha took 9 grade 3s who wanted to take part and they had an incredible time.

Council asks her what she sees the staff needing this year as far a *wish list items* go. Things such as Dollarama gift cards, Micheals gift cards and funds for presentations are discussed.  
  
  
**OCASC** (Sara Fitzgerald)  
The update on their chair who got a position with the school board is that OCASC members voted and it was decided that a co-chair would be brought in to join her in case there is a conflict of interest and she needs to step aside.  
  
Their guest speaker this time was an improv teacher who works with teachers, students and work places. She discussed how facing your fears can be a tool to learn life skills and enrich personal power, and stressed that it is all about "making your partner look good".  
  
  
**Treasures report** (Carol Mothersill)  
As Josh is still away, Carol put together a draft budget looking at last year’s numbers and keeping in mind we were a different school structure but had approximately the same enrolment.

To summarize this year’s larger anticipated expenses: Staff appreciation $500, Spirit $300, Festival $1000, Teacher allowance $1050, Staff wish list $2000, Parent/Community building $300...

We forecast revenues from things such as: Halloween dance $500, Bake sales $1000, Movie nights $1000, Coffee fundraiser $2000  
  
Notes about the draft budget: Remove insurance as it is being covered by the board this year, add $200 for iTunes cards as requested by Ron.  
Motion to approve, Teri/Kim. All in favour.  
  
*\*Action item - For the next meeting, Natasha and Ron to come back with suggestions as to how they would like to allocate the $2000 wish list funds.*  
  
  
  
**Fundraising**

Final counts for *Entertainment books* are in and we sold 175 books, providing our library $2100! All students will be receiving a "gift" and Ron will go around to classrooms to award them (wearing his hat).  
  
  
**Spirit Committee** (Carmen Brubacher)  
Currently a *Halloween* door decorating contest is in full swing and judging to be done on Friday.  
  
We will be collecting for the *Snowsuit fund*. Information can be found on the blog and notes will be sent home shortly. We are excited as this is an event that enhances the environment inside the school and outside.  
  
  
**Communication corner** (Sara Fitzgerald)

No updates, just a note that if anything needs to go out this month, please direct it to Sarah.  
  
**Other**

This year’s fall *Book Fair* will have an Egyptian theme. As always, volunteers are needed, please sign up on signup genius. Ron says big thank you to Megan Venner for running both this sale and the sale which will take place in the spring at KES.

Since Castlefrank is turning 25 this year, Phil has suggested an *evening concert* to celebrate this and Christmas including alumni and various art forms. This would be up and above anything our teachers would do and is currently in the works.  
  
There has been a concern voiced about parents *picking up morning kindergarten* students at the rear door and this opening up the opportunity for other adults to walk onto the property and go unnoticed. It is noted that the other side of this is that having additional parents on the property brings added security because there are more eyes and the parents picking up know and recognize both who should and shouldn't be there.  
The way we do kindergarten pickup is not new or exceptional. This is the way it is done at most schools.  
Ron reminds us that everyone who has a concern is encouraged to come forward to him, at this point it doesn't appear to him, or council, that this is a safety issue.  
  
*Extracurricular activities* are in the works and further information will be brought to next meeting after more has been determined.  
  
**Adjournment**: 9:50pm