

Parent Council Meeting

Thursday, November 2nd, 2017. 5:30pm

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Krishna Burra (Superintendent), Greg Seiveright (Principal), Tara Beers, Kylie Etmanskie (Teachers), Lisa Posthumus (Secretary), Kayo Murakami Wood, Angie Vaughan, Judy Gerber-van Vliet, Heather Sheedy, David Stagner, Peter van Vliet (Parents), Tom Wroe, Donna Ivimey (Community Members)

1. Principal's report

a) School Activities for PC to Support

- Please see attached list of planned field trips. Other trips will likely be added. Tara shared that as part of the school improvement plan there will be more field trips planned as a way to get some of the kids out of their comfort zones and help the kids to deal with some of their anxiety about new environments. Discussion occurred regarding how much we would like to provide towards field trips. Angie suggested that we save a bit for future years if we have fewer students and fewer opportunities for fundraising. It was agreed that we aim for about \$2000 towards field trips as we did last year so that we don't use up our entire surplus.
- Angie asked about the presence of student representatives to the parent council. This would be a good leadership opportunity. Tara Beers and Mr. Bruder will approach the grade 6-8 students to see if any students would like to participate.
- Discussion occurred about types of fundraisers we would like to pursue. We would like to do fundraisers that attract the whole community, such as the poinsettia fundraiser, which don't depend as much on the number of students. The cheese fundraiser has also been popular. The hot lunches have been a good fundraiser but the revenue will drop with fewer students.
- Kylie shared that she'd like to organize another Paint Night. The General Wolfe will be holding some paint nights and we could be one of their beneficiaries.
- Heather shared that she would like to do some after school art programming, which

could also be a fundraiser.

- Kylie suggested that we could collect bottles from the dump. We would need 2-3 volunteers every Wednesday for a month every year to pick up the bottles. Kayo will ask for parent volunteers.
- Tom and Donna shared that the boat club would like to do after school programming again this year and involve kids from both schools. Dragon boating would be a good team building exercise, which would be another resource available to the schools. The students would be required to pass a swim test first if this is during the school day. Greg will send Tom information on the swim test requirements. If it were an after school Community club not affiliated with MPS, and not a school activity, then the swim test wouldn't be required.
- David S. suggested a pumpkin fundraiser for next year which was received with enthusiasm by the group.

ACTION:

- Tara to approach the grade 6-8 students for becoming a representative at the Council – G8 and G6 students volunteer.
- Kylie to plan a 'Pain Night', and ask the General Wolfe about its paint nights
- Heather to develop an afterschool art program as a fundraiser
- Kayo to ask parents if anyone could help the bottle drive one month a year
- Greg to send Tom information on the swim test requirements

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b) The Prospect of Next Year

- Krishna Burra, LDSB Superintendent, attended the meeting to answer parents' questions and to make it clear that MPS will be open next year. There are no plans to look at closing MPS at this time. The closure of the school would require a formal Accommodation Review process. No such process is underway. The removal of portables is not an indication that the school is closing; the portables weren't being used and were needed by KCVI. It was acknowledged that there has been a rumour on the island (and beyond) that MPS will be closing and this rumour needs to be quelled.
- The Catholic Board (ALCDSB) was contacted last year about sharing space with MPS

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but at the time had not completed their accommodation plan. They have since stated that Wolfe Island is not their priority area in their accommodation plan. ~~they are not interested in looking at sharing space at this time.~~ A suggestion was made that we continue to pursue a new arrangement with the ALCDSB but it should be noted that they do not face the same enrolment challenges at Sacred Heart. ~~and that perhaps Sacred Heart may not have any incentive to share space, as their student population is not declining.~~

- As to next year, the number of teachers and classrooms depends on several factors (some related to catchment area changes in the downtown area) and will not be known until at least April of 2018. We may be re-paired with another school and the number of teachers and administrative support partially depends on staffing between the two paired schools. Regardless of student numbers, we would still need a French teacher and the head teacher would still need planning time. The ~~He~~ hopes would be to have a preliminary answer about staffing by late April so that parents will know what to expect going into next school year. That being said, like any year in any school, the final staffing of the school will not be determined until September 2018 when enrolment can be confirmed. No matter what, they will provide programming for all students enrolled at the school in JK-8 in 2018-19. ~~next year.~~
- Krishna informed parents that based on a Limestone Administrative Procedure, MPS would not qualify to be a French Immersion site, as they need at least 20 interested families in JK/SK, and Grade 1, or Grade 7 to put French Immersion in place. There is also space for more students at existing in the public French Immersion schools in Limestone town. Logistical challenges related to staffing and travel time to the island also pose a problem.
- He stated that if a group of families wanted to go to English public school in Kingston, then the board would do what they could to help facilitate that choice and work with those families, including possibly providing transportation. Concern was raised that if transportation ~~this~~ were an option, MPS would lose more students to schools in town.

- Regarding becoming an alternative school there are some challenges: ~~While~~ there is an issue with bussing students to the island for school and transportation from the Winter dock, elementary programs have to cover JK-8 curriculum expectations across curricular areas, and realistically any new programs would take at least 18 months to put in place. ~~The group~~ we could look at the possibility of an elementary alternative program open to all students in the board, but there are significant challenges as noted above. It was clarified that an alternative program ~~this~~ did not refer to a program for students with specific needs, ~~troubled kids, but more of a focus program such as those offered in grade 7 and 8 by LDSB.~~ The board can work with the parents if we are still interested in pursuing an alternative program, but ~~~!~~ This would take considerable work and time. Any potential program would need to be attractive for people on, or off, the island. a lot of marketing as we would need to appeal to off-island families. ~~For any potential program,~~ The Ontario curriculum needs to be covered, which makes it more challenging to implement a focus program for the younger grades. Focus programs in grades 11-12 work because students have much more flexibility in choosing elective courses. Krishna was clear that he would do what he could to help, and is open to hearing our ideas on alternative programming. He also stated that he didn't know how an alternative program would be viable ~~this would work~~, considering the logistical challenges of bringing students over to the island, as well the challenges around fitting in the curriculum with a focus program for younger grades. He stated that parents should bring any ideas to him in the early stages to see if any would be viable before spending too much time and energy on an idea that would not work from the board's perspective. Parents were appreciative of Krishna attending the meeting and answering our questions.
- It was noted by some present that we have discussed starting an alternative program at MPS in the recent past, based on environmental stewardship and sustainability, utilizing the gardening program and other island features. We could build on those ideas. A meeting regarding this is to be called soon.
- Tom raised the concern that we may have an influx of families with the new ferry and that the island needs to keep a public school to serve a potential growth in population.

He also suggested we consider sending out a press release to inform the community that MPS is not closing.

ACTION:

- Kayo to circulate the minutes to all families as soon as possible and ask their opinions for the next year
- PC to prepare any potential ideas to bring to the LDSB based on the responses from parent consultation

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2. School Garden Project Year 3

a) Seed Saving joint-teaching with SH

- Donna Ivimey gave a report on the garden project. MPS and Sacred Heart senior classes attended a Seed Saving workshop with Cathy Christie and Kathy Rothermel. They learned about the seed cycle and food production cycle. The students brought home seeds and did planning for next year's garden. It was a nice opportunity for the schools to interact and work together. The garden produce is being used well for hot lunch this year. Kale is still growing and will probably be available until January. The Sacred Heart grade 5-8 teacher is interested in the garden project and using produce for their hot lunch as well.
- The community garden group is trying to decide if a new larger garden is possible. This would need both schools involved, along with the senior housing and medical clinic boards. Workshops could be offered to students in town to expose them to the island. Janette Haase will be talking to the Sacred Heart parent council regarding the possibility of helping to fund the garden project.

b) Student Survey

Angie has a draft survey she's working on to put out to families and students to get feedback on how they feel about the garden project.

c) Financial contribution

The parent council will decide on funding the garden project after we look at the results of the survey.

ACTION:

- Angie to prepare a draft survey and share with others (any timeline?)

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3. Fundraisers

a) Poinsettia Sale

Lisa will put up flyers this week and order forms will go home on Monday. Poinsettias will be delivered on November 29 and can be picked up between 3-5:30pm at the school. She will need some help to unload the truck in the morning of the 29th.

b) Christmas Fair on Sunday November 26th from 10-3

We will have a table at the Christmas fair this year with bake sale items and MPS water bottles and hats. Angie will communicate with the parents to see who would like to bake and work at the table.

c) Christmas Parade on Saturday December 9th

We would like to put a float into the parade again this year. Tom volunteered to help with this.

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ACTION:

- XXX to call parent volunteers to help unload in the morning of Nov 29th
- Angie to communicate with parents reg. baking and manning at the table on Nov 26th
- Kayo to communicate with students/parents about the theme for this year's parade and organize decoration and preparation with Tom

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4. Meeting Schedule

Our next meeting will take place in January. Time and date to be determined.

ACTION:

- Kayo to doodle the next meeting date

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