

Connaught School Council Meeting – March 19, 2019 Minutes

1. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes, Approval of Agenda

- Draft agenda – **Approved**
- Minutes from February 19th meeting – **Approved**

2. Principal's Report

- **Changes to Walking School Bus Program**
 - Due to popularity of the Walking School Bus (WSB) program, additional walking leaders are required throughout the district. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) put out a call for parent volunteers and junior leaders to supplement their staff of WSB Leaders.
 - Discussion: Members expressed concern over the call out. Connaught's WSB program, which is currently led by two WSB leaders, is working well and it is felt that if the program becomes more reliant on parent volunteers and junior leaders, that the safety and reliability aspects - which make it so successful - will be compromised. It was further noted that Connaught's community transportation model promotes the use of alternative methods of transportation and that priority should be given to making initiatives, such as WSB, as efficient as possible to encourage and promote participation.
 - Caretta to provide council feedback to David, Connaught's Chief Custodian.
- **Autism Awareness**
 - Autism Awareness Day will take place on April 2nd. Students will be encouraged to wear blue.
 - An [Information Night for Parents](#) will be held on April 23rd at Sir Robert Borden High School from 6:00 to 9:00 pm as part of the OCDSB Speaker Series. The discussion called "Addressing Mental Health in Autism" will be led by Jonathan A. Weiss, Ph.D., C.Psych.
- **Miscellaneous**
 - **Planning** for next school year is underway. There may be a small decrease on the English side due to the closure of the Forward Family Shelter.
 - **Fisher Park Open House** – March 28th, 6:30 pm.
 - **Education Week** will take place from May 6th to May 10th.

- **Connaught Open House**, an opportunity for parents to drop in and spend time with their children at school, will take place on May 8th from 8:30-10:30.
 - **EQAO testing** will start the week of May 21st for grades 3 and 6 students.
- **School Yard**
 - School yard conditions were briefly discussed and staff noted that it was especially muddy this year given the snow and ice accumulation.
 - It was asked if the Spring gravel cleaning, currently done through a contract with the City, could be done earlier and if the cleaning area could be expanded for this year. Caretta to inquire with the Board.
- **Growth and Development Curriculum**
 - A question was asked about Connaught's approach to the province's sexual education curriculum. It was explained that staff use the 2010 Health and Physical Education Curriculum which includes the sex ed component.
 - It was further explained that notices are sent home with children before curriculum items are covered in class but that teachers sometimes discuss issues with students on an ad hoc basis as they come up. The curriculum provides direction to teachers on "what to teach" but does not prescribe "what not to teach". In addition, a school nurse is available to provide support to staff and students as needed.
- **Discovery Math**
 - A question was asked if the school was using the Discovery or Traditional approach to math education. It was explained that the discovery approach is balanced with the foundational approach. Students in any given class are taught what they need during that particular year; the focus now on fundamentals will allow the pendulum to start shifting back to somewhere in the middle.

3. Teacher's Report

Classroom activities:

Kinders:

- **Water (Current Inquiry Topic)** This month students are exploring the basic concepts of water, where it comes from and why it is important in our lives. On March 20th, a parent volunteer will present her experiences working with WaterAid and travelling to Madagascar and Tanzania to visit villages that were

newly connected to water sources. On March 22nd the students will celebrate "World Water Day" with a variety of water-themed stations that they can explore and investigate.

Primary and Junior:

- **Indigenous Teachings**
 - Primary students enjoyed a presentation by Tungasuvvingat Inuit where they were introduced to tactile cultural objects, songs and games. One of the highlights of the presentation was a life size inflatable igloo.
 - Kareena Butler, Connaught's Indigenous Education Itinerant Instruction Coach visited one of the grade 5 classes, for the second time, on March 7 for a circle and game "Protect the Treasure".
 - Indigenous Ally Alliance made "thunder"/clap sticks and are now making dream catchers. Crafts are being made from mostly natural materials.

- **Sock puppets** (Gr 1 &2) – classes made sock puppets representing the animals found on Canadian coins. The puppets will be used to deepen the students' understanding of the values of our coins and for dramatic play to communicate feelings, ideas and stories about what they have learned.

- **Ottawa Art Gallery Fieldtrip** (Gr 5) – A half day field trip to the Art Gallery took place on March 21st. Students travelled to the museum on OC Transpo with the school's Presto Pass. Once there, they enjoyed a guided tour and workshop.

- **Workshops** - Genius Hour Projects (Gr 3); Health Unit to discuss the effects of tobacco and alcohol use (Gr 4, 5); Solutionary workshop at the Parkdale Food Centre to discuss the Stone Soup story (Gr 4, 5); Luv2Groove Dance workshop will take place from April 8-11 (all students).

Extra-curricular activities:

- **Green-a-licious** – Is a multi-class initiative which started from the harvesting of greens from school plant towers. Students from one of the participating classes have been selling Kale Chips on Fridays. Money will be used, along with plant sale proceeds, to support greening initiatives at the school.

- **Annual Plant Sale** – Planned for April 18th.

- **Heart of the City Piano Program** – Students are preparing for their wrap-up recital on April 2nd at the University of Ottawa. The program has grown significantly this year and 14 students are planning to perform.
- **Right to Play** – Junior students led an activity (“The Zipper”) in their classrooms including debriefing conversations about trust.
- **Sports Teams** – Both boys and girls volleyball teams brought home tournament golds at the end of February. Basketball intramurals are now starting.

4. Treasurer’s report

- **Highlights from the past month:**
 - **Revenues:**
 - Second round of pizza sales wrapping up with \$2200 in net proceeds estimated. Last round commencing shortly.
 - Pancake fundraiser successful with \$1000 in proceeds for School Yard Renewal
 - **Spending:**
 - Three requests received so far from teachers (\$300)
 - **Spending Requests:**
 - Trays for Stone Soup (\$112) - **Approved**
 - Contribution to water fountain bottle refilling station (\$1500) – **Approved**

5. Community updates

- **Forward Family Shelter Move – Post Move Update**
 - Both families are doing well in their new homes and the children are settling in well to their new schools.
 - One of the families started having dental work completed for the first time. Possibly a sign of increased comfort/confidence thanks to having permanent housing.
 - The other family has experienced problems with the donated washer and dryer. However, the appliances are under warranty and the family is working together (children translating for the parent) to navigate the repair process.
- **Connaught Families Helping Families**
 - Discussion took place on how to continue Council’s involvement in helping families in need. A suggestion was made to organize collection events

aligned with existing and/or related initiatives (e.g. Spirit of Giving, Spring Cleaning).

- As a starting point, and given that there is currently a need for couches, dressers and lamps, it was suggested that a call out be put on the community Facebook page for these items with the request that donors provide pictures of the items.
- Sophia to reach out to Karina to coordinate the call out. If items are received, Minou will coordinate the matching process.

- **Connaught Volunteers**

- The school is fortunate to have the help of many volunteers throughout the year. This year, in addition to parent volunteers and the school's Kiwanians, there are also 13 community volunteers – helping out mostly in the classrooms.

6. Committee Updates and Events

- Stone Soup (Danica) – March 27th

- Preparations are well underway with 19 restaurants confirmed for soup donations and 13 businesses committing to prize donations.
- A final push for sign up is needed; postings will be made on Facebook and Twitter and an email to parents will be sent from Caretta. Leadership Club students will also start promoting within the school.

- Lawn Bowling (Cynthia and Darlene) – June 14th

- Date was recently confirmed for an adult-only evening at the Elmdale Lawn Bowling Club located at 1 MacFarlane Ave.
- The committee is looking at teams of 4 or 5 players; participants can either enter as a team or as singles to be placed into teams by the committee.
- The event will likely run from 7:30 to 11 pm. Teams will play 4-5 bowling rounds with each round lasting about 25 minutes .
- The idea is to offer player and spectator tickets for approximately \$30 and \$15 respectively (costs will be determined once rental fees are confirmed). Spectator tickets will include entry to the event and participation in silent auction.
- Work has already started to secure items for silent auction.

- End of Year BBQ (Kristen)

- Will be held in late June, date to be confirmed.

- **Schoolyard Renewal Committee**

o **Site Planning and Implementation -**

- Big Yard Development Plan – Summer 2019
 - Proposals from three firms were received and the successful firm was Lashley & Associates – the same firm that worked on the Hopewell and Lady Evelyn school yards. The firm also has extensive experience in the community and worked on earlier school yard design projects at Connaught.
 - An initial meeting was held with the architectural consultants, the board’s landscape architect and school council members. Although there is a tight timeline, with possible delays due to weather, it is expected that most of the work can be completed during the Summer of 2019.
 - An initial plan will be presented to the board/council in late March.
- Communication Strategy
 - Outreach afternoon/evening – planned for May 14th in the School Library. It will take place following the staff meeting and will continue into the evening so that parents and guardians can attend. Pizza and/or child care may be provided.
 - The presentation used for staff and parent consultation will be updated; Q&As to be drafted.

o Fundraising

- ***Hintonburger Fundraiser*** – February 24th. Went well, despite the weather, raising approximately \$450.
- ***Pancake Breakfast*** - March 5th (Shrove Tuesday).
 - o Went well and raised approximately \$1000. Pre-cooked pancakes and sausages, warmed and available for the first shift, worked well again this year as did pre-cut fruit. New this year was the use of coupons for pancakes and supplies which resulted in significant savings.
 - o Take-aways for next year are to double check the coffee order and to set up a stand-alone coffee station (so as to separate coffee cups from kids’ cups).
- ***Planned Upcoming Events:***
 - o Stone Soup Event Raffle – March 27th
 - o Easter Chocolate Sale - TBD
 - o Star Wars Movie Night – May 3rd
 - o Lawn Bowling – June 14 (Adult event).

- Pay it Forward – June (Sponsorship-based fundraiser)

7. Club Updates

- Leadership Club (Richardson)
 - Students had a video call with the WE program manager to learn more about the community of Kipsongol.
 - Club members will be providing support during the Stone Soup evening and will be organizing an information table to provide information on their projects.
 - Club members are planning for Wonderful Week of WE to take place in early May.
- Scratch Club (Desmarais)
 - Finished at the end of February. Over 50 students from grades 4 to 6 participated this year.
- Enviro Club (Desmarais and Larocque)
 - On March 29th, students will promote Earth Hour at the school from 2-3 pm with handmade posters and announcements.
- Walking Club
 - Club started this month with 61 students from grades 2-4 participating. The walk takes place each Wednesday during first recess period and will run for 8 weeks.
- Knitting Club
 - Led by parent volunteer “Knitting Nancy” is taking place on Fridays. Club is open to students from grades 2 to 6.

8. Key Dates

- Next Meeting : April 16, 2019