

Connaught School Council Meeting – February 19, 2019 Minutes

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

- Draft agenda – **Approved**
- Minutes from January 22nd meeting – **Approved**

2. Principal's Report

- **Kindergarten Information Evening**
 - Originally scheduled for Wednesday January 30th and rescheduled to week of February 11th due to snow.
 - Lower turn out than expected, possibly due to the rescheduled date.
 - Interested families who missed the Information Evening will have an opportunity to attend the May Open House, or may contact Caretta.
- **PD Day – February 15th**
 - A busy day... which included discussion on coding skills and instruction on health and safety.
 - With respect to coding skills, staff acknowledged that they could be considered as important as language skills and that learning should be accessible to all students. The main challenge for incorporating it into the curriculum is the time required to teach and to allow students to practice with applications such as Scratch (a graphical programming language). While Connaught offers the Scratch Club, it only takes place once a week, during recess break, and is limited to juniors.
 - Council members asked if some options could be explored for providing coding instruction and practice time during the school day. It was also asked if a computer could be made available to students during break times. Although supervision may be challenging, staff thought it might be possible if an off-line version of Scratch could be installed. Suggestions were also made to explore the use of non-screen related activities to develop computational thinking skills (e.g. Robot Turtle board game). Council will apply for a PRO grant to offer a coding workshop next year.
- **Mid-Year Budget Update**
 - Updated spread sheet shared with council members; the school is in a good place this year due, in part, to help from council on activities (e.g. School buses and costs for field trips) and from the school's milk and popcorn fundraisers.

- **Water Fountain/Bottle Refilling Station – Third Floor**
 - The new fountain will cost \$2500. A cost-sharing approach was suggested whereby council would contribute half of the amount.
 - **Ask:** \$1500 towards the purchase of the new fountain – Approved (pending confirmation from Laura).
 - If approved, Caretta to complete a work order (Form 800) for the board.

3. Teacher's Report

Classroom activities:

Kinders:

- **Post Office and Ancient Egypt (Current Inquiry Topics)** Students walked to the post office and mailed letters to their families; discussions on Ancient Egypt are wrapping up and the inquiry into dinosaurs is starting.
- **Black History Month** – Classes will welcome Reverend Anthony Bailey from the Parkdale United Church on February 22nd to speak about Black History.

Primary and Junior:

- **Scientists in Schools** (Grades 3-6) – Planned visits for February were rescheduled to March 6th due to weather.
- **Indigenous Instruction** (Gr 5) – Kareena Butler, Connaught's Indigenous Education Itinerant Instruction Coach visited the class on February 7 for a circle and Community Ties game.
- **Ottawa Art Gallery In-Class Workshop** (Gr 5) – Workshop took place at the school on February 22nd where students learned about works of art from the Firestone Art Collection - which includes paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures by influential Canadian artists from 1890–1985.
- **Marketing Workshop** (Grades 4 & 5) – Marketing workshop took place with class's garden tower business partner, Wentsi, from Culture Kombucha.

Extra-curricular activities:

- **Visit with Local Children's Author** (Kinders) – Classes had a great visit with popular children's author, Timm Homes. He read his stories to the students and talked about the creative writing process.
- **Have a Heart Day** (Grades 3 & 6 and the Indigenous Ally Alliance) – Students prepared a letter voicing their support for First Nations children to have a fair chance to be able to grow up with their families and communities, get a good education and to be healthy and proud of who they are. The planned trip to Parliament Hill on February 14th was cancelled due to weather. Instead, Connaught students went to City Hall to read their letter.
- **Snowshoeing, skiing and skating** (Grades 4-6) – Some classes will be visiting the *Bill Mason Outdoor Education Centre* on February 21 to participate in a full day cross country ski and snowshoeing programs. Classes are also participating in regular part-day skating sessions at Tom Brown Arena.
- **Winter Activity Day** (all grades) – Planned for February 13th and rescheduled to February 19th due to weather.
- **Volleyball Tournaments** – The boys tournament will be taking place on February 21st; Girls tournament will be taking place February 28th.

4. Treasurer's report

- No major updates to report

5. Community updates

- **Forward Family Shelter Move – Wrap up**
 - The move of the two families to their new homes went well. More than enough household items were collected and leftover items were provided to two other Connaught families who had expressed a need.
- **On-going "Families Helping Families"**
 - Through the Forward Family Shelter move, it was realized that there's also need within the community for lightly used furniture and household supplies as well as transportation of any donated items. Items, including dressers and lamps and couches are of particular need.
 - A discussion took place on how council could help. Suggestions included a SWAP day and the creation of a sign-up sheet that could be managed by

Minou. It was also suggested that “Families Helping Families” become a standing item on future school council meeting agendas.

6. Committee Updates and Events

- Stone Soup – March 27th

- Plans are underway with bowls being painted, and soup and prize donations being secured from local businesses. Pre-order forms to go out on February 28 and will be due for March 8th. A call out for volunteers will be made in early March.
- During the meeting, a request was made to use recyclable disposable bowls and non-disposable utensils (similar to last year). It was also proposed that additional trays be purchased by council.
- **Ask:** Approximately \$50 for purchase of 30 or so trays – Approved (pending confirmation from Laura)

- **Schoolyard Renewal Committee**

- Site Planning and Implementation

- **Big Yard Development Plans** – The board received tenders for Landscape consulting services during the week of February 11th. After the proposals have been reviewed, council will be consulted on concept options.

- Fundraising

- **Hintonburger Fundraiser** – February 24th. Full day family event offering breakfast (by donation to Schoolyard Renewal) as well as regular menu items for lunch and dinner and ice cream, donated by The Merry Dairy.
- **Pancake Breakfast** - March 5th (Shrove Tuesday). Plans underway. Order forms and call out for volunteers to be sent out week of Feb 25th.
- **Planned Upcoming Events:**
 - Stone Soup Event Raffle – March 27th
 - Easter Chocolate Sale - April
 - Star Wars Movie Night – May 3rd
 - Lawn Bowling – May (Adult event).
 - Pay it Forward – June (Sponsorship-based fundraiser)

7. Clubs

- Leadership Club (M. Richardson)
 - Ongoing assembly presentations, which included promotion of Stone Soup fundraising for Kipsongol community in Kenya.
 - The group is preparing for a Web meeting with the WE program manager on February 27th to discuss fundraising initiatives and the needs of the community of Kipsongol.

- Chess Club (R. Thompson and J. Cromey)
 - Continuing to go well. There are 4 to 5 parent volunteers and over 20 students participating.

- Walking Club
 - Will start in March

- Knitting Club
 - Staff to follow up on status

8. Key Dates

- Next Meeting : March 19, 2019