

Connaught School Council Meeting – Minutes

Date and Time: September 17, 2019, 7:00 pm

Location: Connaught Public School Library

In Attendance:

Staff:	Caretta Williams DeAveiro, Principal; Minou Morley, Vice Principal
Parents:	Sophia Wong, Chair; Laura Hurst, Treasurer; Melissa Black, Secretary; Kerry Barnes, Brian Cockburn, Darcie Doan, Heather Hammond, Karen Monaghan, Catherine Pirie, Danica Rogers, Callie Sanderson, Mark Scrivens, Andrea Villeneuve
Other:	

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

- Draft agenda – **Approved**
- Minutes from June 18th meeting – **Approved**

2. Principal's Report (Caretta Williams DeAveiro)

- **Start Up:**
 - Connaught's start-up population is 376 which is slightly lower than last year (386). It is expected that the population could increase to about 400 over the course of the year.
 - Class sizes are generally small with kinder class sizes in the low to mid-twenties. The largest class is the English 5/6 combined with 32 students.
 - New staff include Meghan Smith (teacher EFI 1/2), Laura Moodie-Parks (Learning Support Teacher), Elliot Poole (Library Technician); Merve Fathel and Lydia Cochrane (Kindergarten ECEs); Magdalena Mendez and Maryam Al-Harethi (Lunch Monitor).
 - The Breakfast Monitor position is still vacant with the role being temporarily being carried out by a Caretta and Minou. Anyone interested in applying can reach out to Caretta or Minou for further information. Responsibilities include the daily preparation of breakfast for approximately 30 students, currently registered in Connaught's Breakfast Program.
 - Some of the school's sports equipment (including balls) will be repaired in

the next week or two by Mark Scrivens, parent volunteer.

- **Safety Drills:**

- The first of three annual practice fire drills took place today and it went well. Upcoming drills will include practice lockdowns.

- **Opening Assembly:**

- Reading of "The Grateful" by Angela Kohler to reinforce feelings of gratitude and appreciation.

- **Classroom Support Model**

- Focus this year is to have support provided to teachers in the classroom.

- **Miscellaneous:**

- **Work Orders:**

- Water fountain/bottle filling station (3rd floor)
 - Installed over the summer; awaiting invoice.
- Weather Station
 - Preparatory work on roof completed; awaiting delivery of weather station.
- Turf
 - Custodial staff received training and tools (i.e. leaf blower, power brush) over the summer to help maintain the newly installed turf field.

3. Highlights of 2018-2019

- **Completion of Turf Field and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony**

- The schoolyard development project, including the installation of the turf field, was completed in late August. The results are stunning!
- A Ribbon cutting ceremony took place on September 12

th during the *Meet the Staff* evening. Some of the major community sponsors and school board representatives attended; photos were taken with students, sponsors, staff and parent volunteers and posted on social media.

- A 5 x 2.5 foot banner was created thanking all of the supporters for their contributions over the years. The sign was attached to the Kinder Yard fence so that it is visible to the public.

- **Year End Financial Report (Laura Hurst)**

- A presentation of Council's year-end financial picture took place. As a summary:
 - **Fundraising total: ~ \$35 000**
 - Includes fundraising from playground renewal events, grants and sponsors (~\$24 000) and regular school fundraising (~\$11 000)
 - **Spending total: ~ \$70 000**
 - Includes playground project contribution (\$60 000) and various classroom and club-related contributions (~\$10 000)
 - **Balance at start of school year 2019-2020: ~\$ 26 000**
 - As reported in Council's *Year-End Financial Report* to the board.
 - Reflects amounts raised and spent by school council between August 6, 2018 and August 6, 2019. Does not include any amounts collected through the school's School Cash Online program.
 - **Playground Renewal Fundraising Total: ~\$155 000**
 - Reflects amounts raised for Phases 1 to 3 of Connaught's Schoolyard Renewal Campaign covering 2014-15 to 2018-19 reporting periods.
 - Fundraising through grants, council-led events and sponsor and community contributions.

4. The Year Ahead

- **Executive Election and Volunteer Roles**

- Discussions took place on a nomination received to re-appoint the current Chair, Treasurer and Secretary to their roles. With a view of on-boarding new members, it was agreed that the following executive-level roles would be filled:
 - Chair: Sophia Wong (Returning)
 - Treasurer: Laura Hurst (Returning)
 - Secretary: Melissa Black (Returning)
 - Co-Chair: Callie Sanderson (role will also be to shadow the Chair)
 - Co-Treasurer: Andrea Villeneuve (to shadow the Treasurer)
- *Note: In early September, information about school council executive and volunteer roles was distributed to the school community. Since many council members have children in higher grades, special attention was placed on attracting parents of newer Connaught students.*
- Volunteer nominations were also discussed and the following roles were filled:
 - Pizza Day Coordinator: Brian Cockburn
 - Movie Night (October 25th TBD): Karen Monaghan
 - Citrus Fundraising Coordinator: Mark Scrivens
- It was mentioned that additional volunteers will be required to support the above mentioned events and to either lead or support the following:
 - Active Transportation Committee (two events in winter and spring)
 - Scholastic Book Fair (one event in mid-November)
 - Stone Soup (one event in March)

- **Schoolyard Renewal**

- **Ideas for 2019-2020**

- Approximately \$18 000 is available for remaining school yard renewal projects. A discussion took place around items already planned and/or discussed including:
 - Installation of a chalkboard in the Nature Education Centre

(NEC)

- Installation of a bulletin board in the school yard
- Purchase of a flower for music garden plan (as per S'cool grant)
- Purchase of a replacement bike rack
- The Site Planning and Implementation Committee (Kerry Barnes and Melissa Black) to confirm status of planned items and to gather information from the school community on needs for the upcoming year.
- **Adopting a school:**
 - Given Connaught's fundraising success, and to support better equity between schools, it was suggested that we consider partnering with a school that does not have capacity to raise funds. Several schools with RAISE status exist in Connaught's superintendency and would benefit from such an arrangement. This is a practice that is already in place with other schools including Elmdale and Broadview.
 - A comment was made about what a good opportunity it would be to engage students.
 - Although there was general agreement for this approach, there was also concern about the need for school councils to raise funds for equipment and supplies that should be funded by the Ministry of Education. There was also some discomfort in being potentially asked to approve, or not approve, funding requests received from an adopted school.
 - Before making a decision, additional time will be taken to identify possible schools in our superintendency and to further develop Connaught's spending priorities for the current year.
- **Communications:**
 - **Information from Teachers:**
 - A question was asked about the approaches teachers have for communicating with families. It was pointed out that different teachers use different forms (e.g. emails, student agendas, online tools, shared forms) which can be overwhelming for parents with children in multiple classes. In addition, some parents reported

that their children had not received agendas this year.

- Staff confirmed that there are no guidelines as it is normally up to the teachers to decide how they can best communicate with parents - and this is something that can vary widely from one class to another. It was also confirmed that not all classes were given agendas because not all teachers find them useful.

- **Council-related Information:**

- A question was also asked about the approach for updating the Council section of Connaught's website. Because school websites are maintained jointly by the school and the board, there can be challenges in keeping information up-to-date. Andrea Villeneuve agreed to look into the approach for maintaining council-related information and will follow up with Caretta for contact information.

- **Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant**

- Discussion took place on the need to find volunteers to coordinate the application process and event coordination related to the annual PRO Grant. The Ontario Ministry of Education offers a \$1000 grant to School Councils for projects that "inform or engage parents in support of improved student achievement, human rights and equity, and well-being."
- In previous years, council has received funding and organized events related to math skills and truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Suggestions for this year include events related to Coding Skills and Parenting Skills.
- Volunteers would be responsible for coming up with a project concept, submitting a grant application, and working with staff and volunteers to deliver the project.

- **Tech Club**

- Discussion took place on the creation of a new Tech Club that would focus on developing IT and coding skills.
- A parent volunteer, husband of Andrea Villeneuve, was identified.

- **Families Helping Families**

- Suggestions were made to install a donation box and/or a space in the school to house donated items for families in need. It was decided that this would be difficult to maintain and that a better option may be to continue using photos of items available for donation. Families interested in the item could either contact the donator directly, or reach out to Minou.

- **Spending Requests:**

- Council received one funding request by teachers for on-line current events-related resources for French Immersion classes:
 - Les Nouvelles (\$198)
 - Le monde en marche (\$198)
- **Decision: Deferred**
 - Discussion took place around the teaching methodology to be used for this type of resource. Caretta to return to council in 1-2 weeks with decision.

6. Key Dates

- Next Meeting : October 15, 2019