

Minutes

Connaught School Council - Meeting #1

Tuesday, October 6, 2020 - 7:00 pm

Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/cmr-rrqp-ouj>

1. Welcome to the meeting (Sophia Wong (Outgoing Chair) - 5 min)
 - Draft agenda approved
 - Questions can be asked via the chat function
 - Approx 32 people in attendance

2. Elections for 2020-2021 executive positions (Sophia Wong (Outgoing Chair) - 10 min)
 - Nominations were received for all executive positions
 - Process for electing the executive committee was explained and all nominees presented themselves to those in attendance.
 - Motion moved to acclaim those nominated to their respective positions. Motion was passed unanimously.
 - Co-chairs: Cynthia Shelswell and Gisele Salazar
 - Treasurer: Andrea Villeneuve
 - Secretary: Allison MacLachlan

3. Treasurer's report on School Council finances (Laura Hurst (Outgoing Treasurer) - 10 min)
 - Last year was an unusual year: strike and lockdown resulted in less money fundraised.
 - \$9K was raised last year, which was well short of the target.
 - Pizza day is typically the most successful fundraiser (\$8-11K a year). Other events often include: movie night, citrus fundraiser, wreaths, etc.
 - Spending: More was spent last year as a result of funds built up from the school yard renewal. Spending on: Chromebooks, tech tubs, microphone, sports, field

trips, wobble stools, kinder group, gr 6 class, etc

- Historical perspective: The biggest fundraising initiatives since 2014 have been school yard renewal, kinder play structure, enhancement of outdoor learning centre + garden, turf field (which included support from school board, city, etc.).
- There is currently \$16,000 in the bank.
- Tentative budget: Right now things are very much up in the air, lots of traditional fundraising is not possible because of Covid. We are waiting on guidance from the school board and whether the OCV council will be owed some portion of funds raised from previous years; this will be discussed at an upcoming Parent Involvement Council, as per OCASC.
- Some ideas in the pipeline to revisit when the time is right: indoor mural, yard enhancement: music garden, mulch, outdoor chalkboard; school events, kids on the block, IT needs, classroom support (\$100 per class), sports, sister school, library commons, big yard play structure renewal/replacement (which is a longer term project and requires advance planning).

4. Propose new date(s) for School Council meetings (Chair)

- Overwhelming thanks from those in attendance to the outgoing council.
- Proposed dates for future School Council meetings: First Tuesday in each month. Nov 3, Dec 1, Jan 5.
- Suggest that we review dates in December for the new year.
- The Chair asked Michelle Richardson (teacher representative) and Kim Simpson (Principal) if they had any objections to the first Tuesday of the month. Both agreed as it coincides with staff meetings and fresh news to share.

5. Principal's report on back-to-school (Principal - 30 mins)

- At present there are 306 students at the school. The numbers are fluctuating on a daily basis. Last year there were approximately 380 students at the school.
- There are 62 students that have moved to OCV as part of the downtown campus.
- The specialized class (semi-integrated developmental delay class; max class size of 10 students) has moved to a hybrid model: 5 students in class, while 4 are participating online with the same teacher teaching both. This hybrid model is designed to maintain the relationship between the students and the specially trained educators.
- There are currently 7 Connaught students on a waitlist to move to remote learning. The virtual classes are currently full. The OCDSB is working on addressing waitlisted students.
- This year there are 17 homerooms vs. 18 last year. 3 kindergarten classrooms as opposed to 4 last year.

- Lots of special care was taken with regards to placement of students (households, buses and EDPs grouped together where possible).
- There is a range of class sizes this year with 13 at the lowest end and 30 at the highest (grade 6 EFI).
- Provincial class size requirements didn't change this year; primary classes are capped at 20 students; virtual classes are at maximums with many junior and intermediate classes @ 35 students each.

Covid Protocols

- There was a big decluttering effort, making room in classrooms for physical distancing and clearing paths for hand washing.
- Handwashing and sanitizing protocols have been put in place.
- Wearing of masks is going well for the students. Even the majority of primary students are doing their best to wear masks throughout the day.
- Desk shields are in place in the primary classrooms, as well as resource rooms, guided and specialised classes, as well as barriers in place for lunch for our large grade 6 class as further protection.
- All staff are wearing PPE, including face shields and masks. This is obviously challenging but everyone is doing a great job.
- There is an Isolation room in place which is being used on a daily basis when students are ill.
- While some students have been sent home with symptoms, we have yet to see a positive case in the school.
- There has been a public health nurse assigned to the school to deal with Covid. She is very available to answer questions and offer guidance; she did a school visit in September.
- Daily reporting to the Board and Ministry is in place.
- Connaught has implemented triple recesses in order to allow for physical distancing on the yard; the yard is divided into zones for each class cohort.
- The school has been divided into zones in order to reduce cohort interactions and to assist with contact tracing.
- There are additional cleaning procedures in place during and after school hours. This has necessitated extra help during the day and extra duties at night.
- Fire drills will be different this year. The alarm will sound in the morning but classes will practice leaving the building at different times. The schedule of 3 in Fall and 3 in the Spring will be maintained. The students will not be practicing lockdown drills this year. More information will follow via School Messenger.
- The school just wrapped up a week of successful virtual meet the teacher and

open house meetings, as well as the first virtual assembly.

- Because of differing schedules in the various classrooms, announcements are also virtual this year.
- Initially, there was a lot of new learning regarding Covid at school but we are shifting our focus to the learning and wellbeing of students, while still being mindful of COVID protocols
- There have been some modifications to curriculum: no singing indoors and phys ed is all taking place outside, etc.
- This year, progress reports will go out on Nov 20.
- The breakfast program looks very different this year. No hot breakfasts. Instead, there are bins of food in the classrooms for those that need it. The teacher facilitates this daily.
- Arrival and dismissal continue to take longer than normal due to new protocols.
- Arrival working well. It's important to remember not to stop on the west side of Rosemount or to park a block away to ensure everyone's safety..
- Dismissal is where we see the largest bottleneck; There are 9 staff on duty to aid with dismissal. Thanks to all families for their patience and modelling for students.
- The Terry Fox run was very heartwarming. It's the 7th year that Connaught has participated and we raised \$645 this year and \$4000 total across the 5 years of participation.

6. Principal and Teacher Q&A (All - 15 mins)

- **Q: Is the grade 6 EFI in a regular classroom?**
- A: Yes, but it is the biggest class we have. We looked at the library and gyms but they both had their downfalls (carpet and noise). The choice of classroom was discussed with public health.
- **Q: Is scented sanitizer allowed?**
- A: You can bring your own sanitizer, but it is recommended that students use the sanitizer supplied by the school. Teachers have been reminded to be scent smart.
- **Q: How often does the public health nurse come to the school and how many schools does she serve?**
- A: She has been once, but is very available by phone and email. Unsure about how many schools she serves.
- **Q: Have there been any pressures thus far with staff absence?**
- A: System is in real need of occasional teachers. Fortunately Connaught is well

positioned for occasional teachers.

- **Q: Do the students have access to balls?**
- A: No. sports equipment is allowed at this time. This is an ever evolving situation and may change.
- **Q: How do bathroom breaks work?**
- A: There is scheduled time for each class but students can also go when they need to. If they go off-schedule they need to sign in and out of the classroom for contact tracing
- **Q: Is arrival 8:30 sharp?**
- A: Supervision is on duty as of 8:15. Staff is trying to take care of kids on the bus first. Arrival as close to 8:30 as possible is appreciated.
- **Q: Does the grade 6 EFI have any additional staff?**
- A: Our support teachers work very closely with all of the classes and try to meet the individual needs of the students. There are no special additional teacher assignments for the grade 6 EFI.
- **Q: How is the school garden doing and do the classes have access to it?**
- A: Thank you from Michelle to all the families who tended the garden over the summer. Every class has the garden for 40 mins a week. Classes are definitely using the space. Right now the students are harvesting garlic and herbs and carrots.
- **Q: How have things changed for the kindergarten classrooms?**
- A: Curriculum has not changed, the teachers have implemented learning pods to reduce contact. The students are still doing the same activities. The little ones are not good at physical distancing, so big dividers are being used for eating times and for individual activities such as playdough and writing. And there is lots of outdoor time.
- **Q: Is the library closed?**
- A: Yes for the time being. We are using the materials though. The teachers request books and they are pulled by our library technicians and used in the classrooms then returned to bins to be bagged for a holding period and then reshelved.
- **Q: How is the lost and found working?**
- A: If labelled items are found, they are returned to the child in their classroom. Non-labelled items are kept in the office for a short time and then donated.
- **Q: How are birthdays celebrated?**
- A: Kinders are not to send anything in. The educators make a crown for the birthday child. All birthdays are recognized via the virtual announcements.

- **Q: Will there be a popcorn fundraiser?**
- A: Not at this time.
- **Q: Will there be clubs or sports teams?**
- A: All of that is on hold for now. Virtual clubs are encouraged, but are difficult to implement with this age group. Kids need to get outside and move and we can't mix cohorts. The need for clubs/teams for High Schools is being raised at the next Parent Involvement Council. OCASC hopes that the guidelines developed for High Schools can be translated for Elementary.
- **Q: Are field trips not possible?**
- A: No, there will be no field trips at this time.
- **Q: Can the coding club move online?**
- A: It could be done for some elements, but not sure how it would work.
- **Q: Do kids have to go out in the rain if they forget their rain gear?**
- A: Parents can and have been dropping off rain gear etc. It's very important that children have what they need for the day. They do have some things set aside in the office should there be an emergency.
- **Q: Do kids need to bring in laptops?**
- A: They are welcome to bring their own Chromebooks. They can be the only user and it must be fully charged and ready to go. There are no expectations that they bring them to school.

7. Discussion on priorities for the year, given COVID restrictions (Outgoing Treasurer/All-20 min)

- While it's still unclear what we can do in terms of fundraising it would be good to understand some of the school's priorities.
- There is also a lack of direction from the Board on how funds will be distributed to OCV councils, etc.
- The biggest need in the school right now is technology, to replace the chromebooks, etc. that were sent home last year and were not returned.
- Typically the goal is to have 1 device per 4 students, but we are nowhere near that right now and it's a huge challenge, especially given the devices can't be shared.
- We did start the year in a good place as there was money for teachers to buy books, etc for their classrooms.
- At this point in the year fundraising doesn't need to be a priority.
- Principal Kim will revisit the wish list with teachers and see what still makes sense and what needs to be reevaluated.

- Typically the council gives each teacher \$100. This will be looked at again this year, but with a Covid lens to make sure what's bought is appropriate. Kim will come back to the council on this.
- Some ideas include class sets of balls, rhythm sticks, skipping ropes (for each student) etc. But again this needs to be evaluated with the teachers and Principal.

Fundraising ideas

- Melissa Black (former Connaught School Council Secretary) and Laura Hurst have volunteered to coordinate the wreath fundraiser. Andrea Villeneuve to support on Hot Lunches.
- Outreach to local businesses (butcher, restaurants, etc.)
- Outreach to Hintonburg economic development council as well as the Wellington West BIA
- Citrus fundraiser will not be running this year.
- Leadership Club: Parkdale food campaign will find a way to continue this relationship. Francis O has volunteered to help manage this.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Next meeting date is scheduled for Tuesday November 3, 2020 at 7pm.