

Connaught School Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Virtual via Google Meet at 7:00PM

Executive in attendance: Gisèle Salazar (outgoing co-chair), Cynthia Shelswell (outgoing co-chair), Andrea Villeneuve (treasurer), Sabrina Sengupta (fundraising coordinator).

Principal: Kim Simpson; Vice-Principal: Minou Morley; Teacher's Representative: Michelle Richardson

<i>Agenda Item</i>	<i>Speaker</i>
<p>The inaugural school council meeting for 2021-22 school year was convened at 7pm by Cynthia. After a land acknowledgement, the June 2021 meeting minutes and the September Agenda were approved.</p> <p>Cynthia provided a recap of the 2020-2021 school council year. This included a summary of some of the fundraising initiatives we ran (eg. wreath fundraiser; plantables; maple syrup fundraiser and Bridgehead coffee) and what funds were applied to (eg. iPads; virtual teacher experiences; gratitude gifts to staff; support of Grade 6 graduating class. Recognition of the limits of the 2020 year impacting more routine fundraisers like pizza day.</p>	Outgoing Co-Chair
<p>Elections</p> <p>The following candidates for the following executive roles were approved for the 2021-22 school year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Treasurer – Andrea Villeneuve● Secretary – Gisele Salazar● Fundraising Coordinator – Sabrina Sengupta● OCASC Rep - Cynthia Shelswell <p>There being no candidates for Chair/Co-Chair, the position(s) was not filled at this meeting.</p>	Outgoing Co-Chair
<p>Principal's Report</p> <p>Vice-Principal Minou started the report with a few words of thanks to School Council for previously raising funds for the astroturf for the big kids' yard. Specific mention was made of the Truth and Reconciliation Day on September 30th to engage students.</p> <p>Principal Kim welcomed new families and school council families and introduced Michelle Richardson as the teacher representative again for this school year. Highlights from the principal report are as follows:</p>	Principal & Vice Principal

- School enrollment. Enrollment is up from 310 to 350. 10 Connaught students are attending OCV. There are 17 home rooms which is the same as last year. Grades 1-6 average 18-24 students but the numbers continue to be dynamic throughout the year. There are 3 kindergarten classes (approximately 28 students per class) and one special needs class which has a maximum of 10 students. 4 English classes and the rest are early French immersion. The school has had some difficulty in securing sufficient desks but it has been resolved now.
- Communications.
 - 'Virtual meet the teachers' is scheduled for the next week, mid-week.
 - First virtual assembly was hosted last week for the entire school.
 - Virtual announcements are being organized by MInou.
 - Assessing skill building
- Programs and Other Topics of Interest
 - Snack program again this year - \$11k in budget for this year. Classroom bin model costs more so the Board has recognized this with more funding however a campaign from school council for more gift cards towards funding this program would still be welcome
 - Play structures will open again from tomorrow but limited access to one cohort at a time rather than a general reopening. Accordingly, the structures use will be rotated between cohorts.
 - 2nd recess music to be revisited.
- COVID
 - A few COVID-related (forward-looking) questions were raised at the meeting:
 - ❖ Q - *any forward planning in regards to vaccinations for K-6 (e.g., clinics at school), assuming those are approved for elementary level in the coming months*
 - ❖ A - Connaught has not heard anything in this regard. Likely will be an OCDSB news circular.
 - ❖ Q - *any planning in regards to a symptomatic/rapid testing at the school?*
 - ❖ A - PCR test kits, not rapid test kits, are picked up by OPH as needed for symptomatic testing of students and staff at school. The PCR test kits have the same turn around time as at a testing center but the convenience of being available on the school site.
 - ❖ Q - *are any additional masks required for the student body? That is, could the parent council help to provide extras or order extras (for anyone who might lose a mask, break a mask, etc)?*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A - Kids are wearing masks in and out of buildings at school. Masks are being promoted as much as possible. The school has a large number of standard spare masks as needed for kids if they forget at home. ● Transportation – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School Bus cancellations. The OSTA superintendent was consulted regarding the cancellation of bus routes to Connaught. However, this not being an issue specific to Connaught (there is a Province wide shortage of buses/drivers) a representative from OSTA was not invited to attend School Council. In any event, the cancelled route has now been reinstated. ○ Walking School Bus Marshalls. There is also a shortage of walking school bus marshalls as well. OC Transpo voucher program is being offered to affected parents but not really a proper solution. Families can reach out to OSTA to find out. The idea of a second walking school bus for the neighbour previously served by the school buses was discussed as something that perhaps parents could organize independently but would not be sanctioned by OSTA given the route is shorter than a school bus route. ○ Crossing Guards. A need for more crossing guards remains. The idea of students as crossing guards was floated but it was agreed that it might not be an option as the Ottawa Safety Council vets the cross-guards and the role is a paid one. A potential topic for mention on our social media sites for parents can reach out to OSTA directly. 	
<p>Teachers’ Report</p> <p>Michelle provides monthly update from teachers in the school on some of the highlights of what the kids are doing at different levels starting with Kinder update. Here are some of the past month’s highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Terry Fox Run. Fundraising event for cancer research – it was agreed that this would be mentioned on Facebook to draw fundraising and to remind parents that their kids should be dressed to run that day. ● Parkdale Food Centre – the food bank is looking for good food box again in October. Although the food bank will remain on Rosemount they are expanding to Hamilton (Beyond the Pale location). ● Connaught School Garden – nature education center is getting lots of use by the kids. Plantables gave a boost to growing season. Very useful for the grade 3 where they learn about plants and science. Intending to donate plants to Parkdale Food Centre. ● Thank you for the gratitude gift of ice cream to all staff at the end of last year. 	<p>Teacher Representative</p>
<p><u>Treasurer’s Report</u></p>	<p>Treasurer</p>

<p>Andrea indicated the checks and balances for the monthly reports for new attendees of school council. Mention was made of passive online fundraisers like Mabel's labels and Chapters Indigo which have been generating income without any action on our side.</p> <p>For the start of the 2021-22 year, school council has \$12,000 in the bank with no committed spend yet although Andrea reminded the meeting that some of the \$12k needs to be allocated to school yard renewal.</p> <p>By way of background, Andrea mentioned that we started the 2020-2021 school year with roughly \$16,000. However fundraising this past year was half of standard. Although we raised \$4,800, we spent \$9k last year. In a normal year bi-weekly pizza day sales would have generated around \$8k. Because of COVID restrictions we were without this profitable fundraiser making the new Plantables fundraiser our most successful one this year.</p> <p>Most of the spend was on graduating class and technology (5 iPads) and dance parties (Love to Groove). Last year was not a normal spending year although we typically spend \$9-10k each year. OCDSB will provide a report on all school board spending on an annual basis.</p>	
<p>Discussion/AOB</p> <p>It was agreed that the agenda item of discussing priorities for the 2021-22 year should wait until after selection and appointment of a Chair/Co-Chair to steer the discussion.</p> <p>Input from the staff/school on priorities was raised at the meeting but no immediate requests were put forward. However, the following were mentioned as possible items to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● support of the diversity and inclusive book purchases to supplement the 15 titles the school has so far. This is a continuation of a request from last year. ● More document cameras. ● The big gym may need a facelift in the near future – a mural might be needed. 	
<p>Reminder of upcoming dates and closing</p> <p>It was agreed that meetings should continue at the earlier time of 7pm rather than 7:30pm for the 2021-22 school year. Anyone wishing to attend school council regularly can be added on request to pre-populated calendar invites.</p> <p>Next School Council meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2021 at 7pm via Google Meet.</p>	<p>Outgoing Co-Chair</p>