

STUART BAKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNCIL

Wednesday September 17, 2014, 5:30-7:00

Attended by: Peggy Barrette, Sam Itani, Bill Moshenko, Stacy McLean, Amanda Manning, Vicki Hoare, Heather Deveaux, Jen Wood, Jim Hopkins, Karen Pettinella, Tasha Degeer, Jennifer Horner, Jo MacArthur

Regrets: Angie McGreevy, Christy Vanderstarre

1. Welcome

- A welcome to new and returning members of School Council, as well as to our staff liaison Jim Hopkins and our new principal Peggy Barrette.
- We do our best to stay on schedule at these meetings, which may mean abrupt transitions on occasion, or deferred discussion items. If a meeting needs to run late, Sam will ask the permission of those in attendance before allowing it to happen.
- While we try to permit walk-on items, time permitting, it is preferable that members and attendees submit agenda items in advance of meetings.

2. Introductions

- Council members in attendance each took a moment to introduce themselves, and speak briefly about why they are on council, and why it's important to them. All grades at the school were represented by parents in attendance, which is wonderful.
- Peggy spoke briefly about education and parent/community engagement. It is her belief that engagement begins around the school council table.

3. School council roles/responsibilities

- a. Most of those around the table this evening have a fair grasp of what a school council is and what its role is in the education system. **ACTION: Sam to get a link to the Ministry/Board website where the details can be found, for the benefit of those not present.** Note: There is no bank account for council, all money is filtered through the school's budgets and is distributed from there.
- b. Roles on Council:
 - i. Chair: Sam
 - Role: Prepares agendas for council meetings, liaise with principal, facilitates discussions and keeps things moving, participate in training

- programs, act as council spokesperson for public or media contacts, attend district school council meetings, communication with parents.
- Sam is willing to continue in this position at this time, but if anyone wants to give it a try, please contact Sam to discuss.
 - ii. Co-Chair/Vice-Chair: Heather, Bill, Jo and Vicki are willing to act as backup to Sam as required.
 - Role: to stand in for the chair when they are not in attendance. This is also a good position for transitioning into the Chair role.
 - iii. Community Liaison:
 - Role: a council member who contributes to the discussions, and works to establish links between council and community.
 - Karen was asked to fill that role, but needs to look further at how this role fits with her work with the Healthy Schools program at the Health Unit. Discussion/decision deferred; **ACTION: Sam and Peggy to provide information to Karen.**
 - iv. Secretary: Heather (backup: Jo)
 - Takes minutes at meetings and notes action items.
 - v. Treasurer: This role has not been filled by a council member, but more by office staff. **ACTION: Peggy to verify that this is still workable.**

4. Principal's corner

- a. Peggy has been impressed by the efficient functioning of the school so far, and how welcoming the staff have been.
- b. A new approach to math: Math has been a problem of practice at the province and board level, and we know that we need to assess where kids are at, before determining what kids need to help them learn. The English stream grades 2 and 3 classes have been combining the kids into groups based on their learning needs, regardless of whose classroom they are actually in. They are experimenting with this new approach to see if it helps kids do better in math and feel better about their own learning progress.
- c. Side note: our EQAO scores were excellent from last year's batch of tests.
ACTION: Peggy will bring some more information on this to the October meeting.

5. School council funds, status of current projects, fundraising and the year ahead

- a. Approximately \$3,800 in our 'account' at present, a chunk of which is committed toward the Outdoor Classroom space. So far we have purchased umbrellas, and have yet to spend the money for benches, storage and plantings.

- b. **Sam to follow up with Gary Burtch re. the benches.**
- c. Jim suggested that we involve the grade 3s in planting trees and shrubs (the “Graduate Forest”?)
- d. **ACTION: Jo has a contact with the supplier of the Stewardship Council’s tree program, and will write a letter requesting sponsorship for native trees and shrubs.**
- e. The kindergarten classes are applying for funding to convert a portion of the forested area into an “Enchanted Forest” learning space. If they don’t receive the full amount of the funding they may come to school council to help pick up the difference.
- f. We have yet to determine a focus for any of this year’s fundraising efforts.
- g. **ACTION: All council members and staff members to bring ideas to the table as to what we may raise funds for this year.**
- h. **ACTION: Peggy and Jim to check in with school staff on the same question and get some suggestions and ‘wish list’ ideas from faculty and staff.**

6. Parent resource library update

- a. Jenn Horner spent considerable time ordering/cataloguing books for the parent resource library, to use up some surplus funds and fill out that library (thanks, Jenn!)
- b. We are looking for suggestions on books for parents talking about diversity, acceptance of others.
- c. Suggestion: to provide information at the parent resource library in a variety of formats – videos, both brief and long, mp3 or audio (cd?) for people to listen to in their car or on an mp3 player? Downloadable? E-books?
- d. Jenn H. has offered to catalogue the existing collection by subject so we can see where the gaps exist. **ACTION: Peggy to check in with Lisa Malott to see if new books have been added to list; once list is updated, Jen to categorize/review for gaps and possible reorganization for ease of navigating.**
- e. Some members of council are interested in investigating social media options. **ACTION: Sam, Peggy and Jo will look into this a little further and will come back to council.**

7. PRO grant

- a. We have again been granted \$1,000 for the PRO grant, under the broad heading of “Parent Engagement Tools & Resources”

- b. Vicki has offered to take the lead on the pro grant implementation this year, and will need some support of other committee members to collect ideas on what that could look like, and then to make it happen.
- c. It was noted that some of the workshops have had relatively low attendance for the amount of time, money and work put into hosting them.

8. Newsletter

- a. Jenn H will write the School Council piece in the school's monthly newsletter, so if anyone has ideas of what to include/not to include, forward those to her.

ACTION: Jenn to draft next month's and future submissions and run past Peggy and Sam.

9. School dance – carryover from 13-14

- a. This is an idea that has been floated in the past, and there were always questions about logistics and timing.
- b. Peggy has had some experience of providing school dances for kids at her schools in the past, and has run them during the school day, often bringing kids in by age groups (juniors/seniors) rather than trying to cram all ages in at once.
- c. If we put such a thing on after school hours, (for a Hallowe'en costume party, for example) would we have sufficient volunteers to supervise the event? Would parents bring their kids in?
- d. We could have a daytime 'themed' dance, eg 'sock hop'.
- e. There is agreement that we would like to try having a dance for the kids, but possibly having it take place during the school day makes more sense. We will talk about this some more to work out timing, logistics, theme and volunteers.

10. Sharing lunch ideas

- a. Since we are still up in the air about a school or council facebook page, maybe we should consider supporting an existing page, this one themed Fun and Healthy School Lunches (operated by Stacy)
- b. Stacy would like to have some extra administrative support on the page.
- c. The site is based around food, fun and healthy ideas for packing lunches, coupons, Mabel's Labels, printable notes, and so on.
- d. With the Balanced Day food schedule, there are challenges around making sure kids actually have a balanced meal at both morning and afternoon breaks.
- e. It was suggested that we add something in the school council section of the school newsletter about this page.
- f. **ACTION: Jenn to add a write-up about the page in the newsletter**

- g. Other engagement ideas for the newsletter – perhaps less about how to get involved in school council, and more things like birthday party ideas, coupons, inspirational quotes, etc.

11. Final open house details

We still have some volunteer positions that could use some help but we are in good shape. If anyone wants to help out, let Sam know.

12. Walk ons (if time allows)

- a. Angie couldn't make it tonight but would like to have a conversation about nutrition in the schools at a future meeting.

2014-15 school year meeting schedule (highlight = joint meeting with JDH) is below. All meetings are on Mondays except our September and June meetings. There is no meeting in December.

Oct 27/14 @ SBES

Nov 17/14

Jan 12/15 @ JDH

Feb 9/15

March 9/15 @ SBES

April 13/15

May 11/15

June 17/15