

STUART BAKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNCIL

Monday, November 24, 2014, 5:00-6:00 @ SBES staff room

Attended by: Sam Itani, Peggy Barrette, Vicki Hoare, Jim Hopkins, Bill Moshenko, Heather Deveaux, Jo MacArthur, Jen Wood

1. **Welcome and review agenda** – Sam
2. **Action items from previous meeting** – Vicki/Heather
 - a. Review Board nutrition policy (will do once annually; defer to January meeting or another date in the new year)
 - b. Check with JDH re: OPP Vulnerable Sector Screening (Peggy) PENDING
 - c. Foundations for Healthy Schools follow-up (All) On agenda for this evening
 - d. Yearbook: Faculty support? (Peggy) No faculty support so far. Jo M will bring a sample yearbook in to a future meeting.
 - e. Subway Day (Jen) Update:
 - i. Jen spoke with our local Subway to see what they can do. They have a \$4 kids meal, that we would sell for \$5 as a fundraiser. We would provide an order form with selections, with a deadline. Jen to collect \$ and place order, then deliver to the classes. Subsidized meals will be offered on the form. (Jen to remove this portion of the form for those families who choose to take advantage of subsidy, to protect their privacy.) Another option is to remove the juice so the cost is lower and even more affordable.
 - ii. Jen to coordinate the Sub Day, deadline for orders Tuesdays, subs come out on Thursdays. After the first one, we will know better what our numbers look like and how much volunteer help we need.
 - iii. Jan 22nd will be the first Sub Day. If it is popular we could do it more frequently.
 - iv. Hot lunch program has been discontinued.
 - f. Fun Night sponsors (Bill) - ongoing
3. **Principal's corner** – Peggy
 - a. EQAO results
 - i. Peggy made a presentation on the results from last year's EQAO testing. Literacy was slightly lower (1%), all others well above previous year. Scores are up overall, and SBE scores are higher than the overall Board and Ontario results.
 - ii. Our school has some excellent programs in place already, such as volunteer reading helpers. But we are always considering options for improvement in teaching methods and tools to help students.
 - iii. In math, the school is working on helping kids solve problems, not by rote, but by a true understanding of the problem, and what steps it may take to resolve it. This includes offering many options and tools to helping kids figure out a

problem in a way that is understandable to them, regardless of their learning style.

b. Healthy schools follow up

- i. Karen was unable to attend this evening, so some of the discussion needed to be deferred on this. But the program has value, even more so with lots of input from parents and students.
- ii. How can we engage more parents in this process, get them interested in the program? There is possibly an education piece required, to let parents know what the program is, and why they should care about it. Possibly post links to our website, and then put them out on facebook via individual school council members, as a starting point?

4. **Parent engagement** – Jo M

- a. We want to find ways to re-energize the conversation around parent engagement. We talk about it every year, but it is difficult to look at it from another point of view. Jo summarized some of the reading she has done on various Board websites and other materials pertaining to engaging parents in education.
- b. What is the purpose of parent engagement?
 - i. Communication
 - ii. Engaging in partnerships
 - iii. Schools as “community hubs”
- c. We have done some things that have been successful in engaging more parents in our school, but what else could we do, or do differently?
- d. How do we measure the level of parent engagement? It is possible that our parents are quite engaged, just not in ways that are obvious to us. Engagement isn’t just about sitting around the School Council table. It can be many things, and includes 5 key areas:
 - i. Attendance at meetings.
 - ii. Volunteering at school/events.
 - iii. Parent/teacher communications.
 - iv. Homework support at home.
 - v. Talking to child about school.
- e. What do we need to ask our parents to determine how engaged they really are? Maybe we should be celebrating the level of engagement rather than worrying about it!
- f. It was suggested that, since the kids today live in an electronic, very connected world, perhaps this is the level at which engagement should begin?
- g. Possibly part of engagement is about getting parents feeling comfortable in the environment of the school, getting to know the faculty better (faculty profiles in newsletter or on website, perhaps?), and finding ways to let parents know that they can be a part of the school’s life in a way that suits them.

- h. What about getting the word out to parents and community that the school is available for groups to use for community groups' meetings & activities. Lots of parents have outside interests, and may be looking for spaces to engage in those activities. If they make the building "theirs", they may be more comfortable and more inclined to engage in the school environment.
- i. ACTION: All – Come prepared for next meeting with the answer to this question: What are the motivating factors and barriers that you see for each of the "pillars" of engagement (see chart below). How do we get other parents to tell us what they think – (beyond those parents who sit around this table)?

Areas of parent engagement:	MOTIVATIONS	BARRIERS	Programs in Use	Programs to Consider
School Council participation				
Volunteering in the school				
Supporting homework with time and space				
Relating with child's teachers				
Talking to child about school day				
Other?				

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/gettingstarted.html>

- 5. PRO Grant – Vicki – deferred pending further discussion of the above.

Upcoming 2015 meeting dates:

Jan 12/15 @ SBES

Feb 9/15

March 9/15 @ SBES

April 13/15

May 11/15

June 17/15

Highlight = joint meeting with JDH (SBES meeting 5-6; joint meeting 6-7)

All meetings (SBES and JDH school councils) will be held at SBES to make it easy for parents with kids at both schools to attend both meetings.

January meeting topics: fundraising needs; PRO grant; resource library; food in schools; engagement exercise 1;