

St. John Catholic School Advisory Council Meeting Draft Minutes

Monday February 12, 2007, 7:00 p.m.
Eunice Miller Library, St. John Catholic School

CSAC Members Present:

Community Members Present:

Opening prayer

Dr. Margie Buttignol

Welcome and Adoption of Agenda

Tom Horn

Review of January 11 minutes

Tom Horn

- Motion to adopt January 11 minutes (Doug Black, Anne Marie Campbell)

Finance Committee Update

Doug Black

- An updated budget was available. We are still on target.
- The first aid training for the monitors won't be as much as was thought so all the money that has been set aside for this won't be needed; it is suggested that the remainder of this money be used for first aid supplies and related items.
- Newsletter printing costs – this cost hasn't been officially approved. We want to give people chance to sponsor but we don't want to chase people for money. The cost is approximately \$125/month. Motion to approve printing costs (Tom Horn, Leona O'Connor Clarke) passed.
- Funds for Pub Night – last year we spent about 700 this year we only have about 550 allocated, will that be enough? \$700 would be a better start. Motion to increase funds for Pub Night from \$550 to \$700, passed.

Principal's Report

Paul Coady

- In January author Michael Wade visited the school; it was very much enjoyed. Mr. Coady is currently working with another author for a visit later in the spring.
- The Grade 6s recently went away; everyone had a great time, it was a wonderful winter experience. Kudos to Mr. Albert, Mr. Scian, Ms. Evans and Dr. Buttignol for participating in trip. Mr. Coady also thanks the parents. It was a good time all around.
- Thanks to Ms. Martin, the school had a visit from K2 paddlers who won a silver medal in Athens. They spoke about the need to be perseverant, healthy eating, respect for others and teamwork.
- In February there was a photo of students in the Toronto Star for Toque Tuesday. Our students raised \$2600. Thanks to Ms. Reford for heading up the program.
- Last Thursday was JK registration; it was a very busy day. About 60 forms went home, not all will come here but the turnout was quite good.
- The Talent Show took place last week. Mr. Scian, Ms. Evans and Ms. Casey helped to organize the event; it was a lot of work and lots of fun. It was quite exciting, it raised morale. A song was written to the tune of 'Keep on Rockin' in the Free World'; it was 'Keep on Rockin' at St. John School'. It was a great moment in the school. Could the lyrics be in the next newsletter?
- The boy's basketball team won their division.
- A volunteer, Mr. Quance, is going to be running beginners' basketball with smaller balls and lower nets. He is a legendary basketball coach in Toronto and is willing to come in during the lunch hour.
- Tomorrow there will be a fundraising assembly for Laps for Lungs. We'll be doing this even this year in stead of jump rope for heart.
- There will be an Ash Wednesday Liturgy at 1pm on the 21st; everyone is welcome.

Other Business

- *'Oh My, We Have Homework!'*
Tips, tactics, resources and responsibilities for parents with children in Grades 1-3
- This is an initiative of the Academic Affairs Committee; they plan to add an academic component to each CSAC meeting.
- Mr. Scian and Ms. Gregory volunteered to be here.
- What is the philosophy behind homework for primaries and juniors at school? What is the value of homework? How much is enough/too much?
- The curriculum has changed so much, it has become so compressed. So much is happening now that didn't happen 6 or 7 years ago. With elimination of OAC year in high school, things are compressed; grade 9 students could not handle the expectations of the new curriculum; this resulted in items being moved down to the Elementary Curriculum that were never there before.
- Homework is not a punishment – this is not the role or purpose of homework; it is not busy work. With differentiated learning, child A and child B may be doing different things; it is not an assembly line. In the old days everyone did the same homework.
- The purpose of homework is practice; to reinforce the concepts from the classroom. It also helps to organize work and life.
- Outside of normal homework projects comes along; please don't do the project for your child. Have the child bounce ideas off you, but don't do it for them. We all have very busy lives, outside activities, and there will be times that the children are not going to be able to get everything finished, but they should take ownership, it is the child's work that needs to get done. Follow up with your kids. Use agenda. The homework pattern should be relatively consistent, if not talk to your child and talk to your child's teacher.
- Ms. Gregory: the guideline is 10 min per grade. The use of agendas helps to develop organizational skills. Kids are responsible for bringing home the proper books, supplies, etc. If the homework is taking lots of time let the teachers know. If it takes a long time because the child isn't maintaining their focus, that is different; try to provide a quiet workspace. When the children are finished their homework, primary parents are encouraged to check the work with the kids to make sure it's done. Aside from homework a reminder for parents to encourage your kids to read daily; every night, independent or aloud.
- Have a system in place. Encourage common, open place where homework is being done, parents should be close by, accessible. Not a big advocate of children doing homework in their room, certainly not until later; grade 8 or older. Children should have a common, consistent, open place to do homework.
- Mr. Scian: Children usually have the opportunity to start their homework in class; they go over it in class. There usually isn't a risk of the children not totally understanding the assignment. It is progressive; they get to work on it first in school. Although there is homework each night, it is not always the same amount of work. If your children are finished their homework, they should be encouraged to read. They should read every night. Reading orally to parents is important for expression, fluency, etc. Parents should write a note to the teacher if children are working longer than the recommended time. Lots of parents assume the homework is done, but please check. Often parents don't know when homework is not done. The guideline is 10 min per grade, but that doesn't count unit tests or projects. Studying is different for every kid. Kids will have notice for tests.
- Nelson math has good on line math resources, the website is great practice.
- Another thing good for parents is that every chapter has a FAQ, main themes of units and answers, this can be helpful. Every chapter has that from grade 3 and up.

Bullying

- A parent spoke about bullying: we are new to school; our child has been consistently, repeatedly bullied, in school and in daycare, by girls, and by groups. Mr. Coady is dealing well with the situation however the parent would like to see the school be more proactive with regards to bullying.
- Bullying is present in every school, it is widespread. One in three students report having been bullied and 10% are bullies.
- Bullying has a huge affect on people and can be a life changing thing. It can lead to anxiety, lower academic achievement and much more. It often goes unnoticed, nobody sees anything, it happens on

a covert basis, and often parents not aware until it's a huge problem. It also has a dramatic affect on bullies, and it can affect them for life.

- Bullying is not the child's fault. Children need and deserve adult intervention and help; both the bullied and the bullies.
- What we would like to see is something going out to parents, to help make them more aware. Bullying happens here and everywhere, on regular basis.
- Ms. Gregory commented that she tries to be proactive in the classroom. Her class has watched public service campaigns, the commercials on TV. They have had many class discussions on the topic.
- Some suggestions from attendees at the meeting: a 'bully box' at office, for people to report bullying anonymously; the book 'Stop Picking on Me' which is available from Scholastic; a list of helpful book in the newsletter; it sounds like there are things happening at the school to combat bullying but these things are not being communicated to parents. Let's get the parents more involved.
- Mr. Coady's comments: he doesn't disagree with most of what has been said. In our school bullying is not systemic or endemic. There will always be bullying. Mr. Coady helped draft the document Safe Schools.
- The school has a Safe Schools Action Team – some of the team's plans are to: revamp the code of conduct; send a survey home for parents; and have the students complete a survey.
- If we sweep bullying under carpet children will not come forward. In our school many children are more than willing to come forward.
- Mr. Coady agrees that there needs to be more communication to the parents; the signs of bullying, what parents can do, etc. In no way does Mr. Coady minimize this trauma; however, he does defend the school. There is much going on that is good and healthy. The teachers and staff have been great
- Q: Can daycare connection be involved? Yes, the day care administration will be involved.

Other

- Mr. Coady is requesting funds. The principal's discretionary fund is in the hole \$500 in hole. Families in need have come to Mr. Coady with requests for help. These families are in need; all kids should be given the opportunity to participate in trips and events.
- Mr. Coady is requesting \$2000 for bussing for the Muskoka. This is extraordinary request for only grade 6 children however, Coady does not have funds to cover it. Last year the discretionary fund wasn't used, this year \$3000 has been spent already. Will csac consider helping cover the costs? Q: How does the school know there is a family in need? Sometimes they find out in confidence from parents, needs are also communicated through teachers; the teachers can often recognize when families are in need. Sometimes the school asks for a nominal fee mostly for preservation of self esteem. It has worked well so far.
- Motion for Mr. Coady's funds request (Doug Black, Anne Marie Campbell), passed.

First Aid

- A date was set for First Aid Training, Monday March 26th from 6:30 to 9:30. The fee will be \$30.

Closing prayer

Dr. Margie Buttignol