

St. John Catholic School Advisory Council Meeting Draft Minutes

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

Opening prayer

Dr. Margie Buttignol

Review of May 17 Minutes

Ian Campbell

- Attendees will be edited, add parish reports, add notes (Johanna Carlo, Karen Gregory) approved.

Principal's Report

Paul Coady

- The First Communion was a tremendous success, the day worked out well, and the weather co-operated until the very end.
- The school closing mass will take place on the 25th of June.
- The student bullying surveys have been done by primary and senior students and the results were briefly outlined at the meeting; the Safe Schools Committee is meeting this Thursday to go over results; the goal is to have the code of conduct clearly established in the agenda book and for September.
- Is there bullying at our school? Yes. Are we working on programs to combat it? Yes. Much work is being done by the Safe Schools Committee; incidences should be reduced, but guarantees are not possible.
- Q: Discipline: how much discipline is going on and what is Mr. Coady's stance on it? The Safe Schools Committee will be outlining this. Every incident that we know of is taken seriously and steps are taken. The school always calls the parents, sometimes there is a suspension depending on the age of the children and the circumstances. The Government is amending the Safe Schools Act, bill 212; bullying suspension must be considered as a consequence for bullying. Currently there MUST be a suspension.
- Q: In the code of conduct will it say 'if there is bullying, the consequences are 'X'? Yes.
- Q: Are things improving? How? Yes, we know this by number of kids who are reporting bullying and the number of kids who are intervening.
- Q: Are kids intervening an important way to combat bullying? Yes, absolutely.
- The Staffing Model was distributed; this is based on projected numbers; keep in mind numbers and staffing can change. So far the number of students registered is 539, 11 students away from a full time Vice Principal and a full time Librarian.
- Our school is getting a new roof this summer. The Board has cancelled painting the 2nd and 3rd floors because of budget.
- Fundraising – To clarify a few things: not everything is going to be cancelled, i.e. pizza days, dance-a-thon, etc. We do so much in school in terms of raising funds for charity and for school; at times it is overwhelming. Mr. Coady doesn't want to do muffin days next year, they are so disruptive; no disrespect to those who have organized muffin days. We need to come up with a plan: we offer parents the opportunity to make a one-time donation once a year; it does happen and does work in other schools; families who do so get a tax receipt, there is no minimum, and no questions are asked. Toque day, brick by brick, laps for lungs, after a while it is overwhelming. There is concern about burnout.
- Q: Which are the big money makers for the school? The dance-a-thon and the fun fair. What others are there? Pizza day, is that profitable? It raises \$5000 per year. Mr. Coady thinks once a month is too often. Perhaps it could be once every two months, or every term. Most parents don't realize how disruptive these days are.
- The volunteers who organize Muffin and Pizza days are very much appreciated – for the record.
- Next year there will be no muffin days; Mr. Coady is proposing that we limit pizza days; make them more special days.
- Is there an alternative to pizza? It's not so much that there is a problem with pizza; the greater concern is with the disruption in school these days cause.

Committee Reports

- **Finance Committee Update**
Ian Campbell

5 minutes

- Spending is mostly on target for this year.
Request for funds from Ms. Valentini: There is a new science resource for kindergarten, the cost is \$598; it would be great to have it for September; the resource would be shared among all the Kindergarten classes; this would be a one-time cost. Motion to approve money for the Kindergarten Science resource, as much as \$650 (Ms. Valentini, Stephanie Horning) passed.

Other Business

- **Library Fundraiser**
Simon Milberry
- With regards to fundraising in general: the Board is a charitable organization so tax receipts can be provided. If we decide to go ahead with the Family Donation form, which would be entirely optional, we would invite families to donate; they would get a tax receipt for a minimum \$25 donation.
- Mr. Coady has clarified: there will be a fun fair and a dance-a-thon.
- When making a donation through the Board parents can designate money to books for example. The money can be directed to a cause, not to a specific person or group. Q: Are there limits on what can be spent? Charity donations do not fall under this umbrella. Family donation would be for the school; Laps for Lungs, Brick by Brick, these things would be separate. Q: A suggestion for next year: could we be more conscious of how much we raise for outside charities; can it be tracked through the year. This idea will be presented at the AGM not voted on tonight.
- Library Fundraiser
- There are already some possible corporate sponsors lined up.
- If we raised \$10,000 or \$12,000 it would be really great; \$20,000 to \$25,000 would make an amazing library.
- There would be three sides to the library fundraiser: 1) Money for books. 2) A Book Drive. 3) An Advocacy Arm. Leslie Simmons has volunteered to head up the advocacy side of things; this would involve things like letter writing campaigns, contacting local MPPs, etc. to appeal for more funding for school libraries. The book drive would be a community effort community. A volunteer is needed to head this up and work with Ms. Reguly to find out what we're looking for and what type of books the school can accept. Ms. Manion volunteered to do this. What Simon will be working on most is the fundraiser. A date in January 2008 is being considered, perhaps at Balmy with silent and live auctions, live auction. Ms. Manion has offered to help with recognising these efforts with a 'Giving Tree'.
- When all is said and done the plan is to have a 'Grand Opening' of the new Library; to present the new library to the community, to acknowledge corporate donors, volunteers, etc.
- Ms. Reguly needs to be commended for working very hard on the library.
- Stephanie has looked into it and we can make charitable donations, the question is do we want to do it?
- What about the idea of helping out a sister school in our area; give a small portion of the funds we raise to a less fortunate school's library? This idea was not supported by staff or most parents present.
- **Allergy Friendly Foods at School**
Amanda Taplin Milberry
- Q: For CSAC sponsored events can we buy nut-free products (e.g. SK Graduation, Graduation, First Communion, etc.). The school usually buys Costco cakes, all of which have the label that reads 'may contain traces of peanuts and other nuts'. Can we make it a policy that the school only buy cakes from nut-free bakeries?
- Staff response: there needs to be more discussion and more staff input on this issue. Buying nut free cakes might give a false sense of security. We need to take small steps; this is not a simple request. The concern is more than 4 events, it is a huge issue. Buying nut free cakes would be opening a can of worms.
- The question was clarified: Whenever reasonable and possible could nut free cakes be bought? Bake sales are completely separate issues. When we have control, when we are actually buying the product, could we buy nut free products?
- A heated discussion followed. While one teacher thought that cakes containing traces of nuts/peanuts should never have been bought in the first place the vast majority of staff present did not support the idea of buying nut free cakes for school events.
- Trace amounts of nuts can cause a severe reaction. What about the liability issues?

- This issue will be discussed at the September CSAC AGM and will be looked at by the Safe Schools Committee.
- **Argo's Huddle Up Against Bullying Program**
MJ Trainor
- Huddle Up Against Bullying: do we want to have them come in? Our school is at the top of the agenda, and we can have first choice of dates for next year. We need to let them know.
- **Other**
- Curriculum Night will be September 20; the Fun Fair is scheduled for September 22.
- CSAC AGM September 27. Motion to accept this date (Stephanie Horning, Tom Horn) passed.

Closing prayer

Dr. Margie Buttignol