

**École Intermédiaire Lawrence Grassi Middle School  
School Council Minutes  
Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at 7 pm  
Meeting/Staff Room LGMS**

**Attending:** Bryan Wityshyn, Leanne McKeown, Sonja Howatt, Alison Andrews, Lori Wynn, Liz Baker, Alanna Mcleod, Alison Carter (minutes)

**1. Call to Order & Welcome Any New LGMS Council Members and Guests:**

Leanne calls meeting to order

**2. Adoption (Amendment) of Agenda:**

Approved, no further items to be added or deleted.

**3. Confirmation/Approval of Past Minutes:**

Approved by email.

**NB Learning Component:** Bill Belsey on bullying was held at CCHS on Nov 14 instead of with today's meeting.

**4. Reports**

**4.1. Principal's Report: Brian Wityshyn**

- Bill Belsey gave a presentation on bullying at CCHS on Nov 14th. Good audience turnout. Brian is hoping to bring Bill to LGMS for a workshop. In the program for anti-bullying, 'Beyond the Hurt', gr 8 students are trained as facilitators to talk to students in other grades. In a preliminary meeting a teacher-selected team of gr 8 students were training alongside adults. *Carol Falloon* was very impressed by the students' maturity in the training. Further training will take place in January.
- Student answers are in from the 'Tell Them From Me' (TTFM) survey; these will be collated, and the report is expected in January 2013. TTFM questions are a mix of specific, and open ended questions like (What can we do to improve the school?) Previous TTFM's have given feedback on gaps in the art programs offered. The TTFM survey gives students a voice.
- A presentation was given to some school staff on settlement services for New Canadians. *Jeannie Godfrey* is one contact for Town of Banff settlement services. As schools are often the first point of contact for new immigrant families it makes sense for schools to know how to put them in touch with services in the Bow Valley that will help with transitioning to their new community. *Sonja*: we also have the 'Now' program: a program that trains immigrants to be mentors for other new families. The Philipino population is increasing in Banff, and Canmore schools are now seeing new Philipino families moving to Canmore, and registering their children in schools.
- Parks Canada presented their Avalanche Awareness training to LGMS. This year's gr 7 & 8's have all completed this training.
- Poinsettia campaign sold over 1,100 poinsettia's, similar to numbers sold last year, raising \$8,300 towards the school music band program. The money will be used for such things as repairs to equipment; subsidies to the Camp Caroline band camp and special tutor classes; rental of the more comfortable Brewster buses to attend band camp; subsidies to other music events; entrance fees to musical events such as the Vic Lewis Band festival; and also buys score sheets.

- Quebec exchange trip – fundraising underway.  
A council member expressed disappointment that the English students with core French are not going on a Quebec trip because student numbers were not sufficient for the Quebec Trip to run. Students from core French were not invited to be in on the Exchange, and it would have been nice to have been invited.  
Parents of students in French Immersion were only presented with the Exchange option, and some parents and children in French immersion may have preferred the Trip option.  
A discussion followed on how to make organization smoother for next year. In order to avoid disappointments and anxieties for parents and students it was suggested that there is a need for more complete and earlier communication between English Core French/French Immersion trip organizers. *Sonja* noted that there are further exciting opportunities in the pipeline at CCHS. So whilst it may not be a comfort now to students missing a Quebec experience, there are travel possibilities for students when they reach CCHS.  
More information on twinning arrangements for the Quebec exchange is expected before school breaks for Christmas.  
Note on facilities review. If gr 8's go up to CCHS then some see a need to ensure that certain traditions, like gr 8 grad ceremony, are not lost.
- *Sonja*: 8 days of Christmas Activity is running again this year: every day a new activity is held, e.g. winning ribbons boys from girls, then girls from boys; selling candy canes – funds raised will go to LGMS student Sancia Trouillot to help with her cancer treatment; students going downtown with self-made cookies to hand out downtown as appreciation to the community; boys are organizing dodge ball games, etc.  
*Sonja's* leadership class has done some work at the day care next door to LGMS. They go in groups of 10: first for an orientation, and then to play with the little kids. It's very beneficial for the preschool and LGMS students; even the boys are finding out how cute the preschoolers, are and relating stories back.
- **Action: Brian and council to revisit Hearts and Hands fundraising after Christmas break.**
- The traditional LGMS Christmas Concert was performed on Tuesday 11 December by band students. Students have made great improvements in their playing abilities, and gave a wonderful concert.
- Report cards will be going out in the last week before school breaks for Christmas.
- Telus update: Telus came and made their own measurements with *Ken Riordan* from CRPS facilities; Telus only made measurements and *Andre Gigon*, the neighborhood's contact on the cell phone tower issue, was not invited to be present. Brian was aware that Telus measured outside the school, but was not aware they had measured inside the school.  
Telus has not announced a new location for the present cell phone tower, and they have not announced a date for a public information session; mediators for this session are not known.

#### Further Questions for Brian:

*Alison A.* asks about Bill Belsey and the talk of training for teachers on anti-bullying issues. Brian and Carol hope to take this 20 hour online training.

**Action: Brian to check out Online Anti-Bullying Training for suitability to extend to other staff.**

*Alison A:* Is there anything closer than Camp Caroline for band camp in order to avoid the 3 hr bus ride?

*Brian:* Facilitators and clinicians are so great there and it would likely be costly to bring mentors to, e.g. Camp Chief Hector, but we could ask what's possible.

**Action: Brian will inquire about other locations closer to Canmore for band camp?**

*Alison A:* Last meeting talked about buying more table tennis bats and balls. *Brian/Sonja:* Kids now have to bring their own ping pong balls as they are going through the school equipment so fast. Kids also bringing in their own bats, and making them in shop. The schools will always have some balls and bats, but kids prefer to bring their own 'cooler' bats, and they take care of their own equipment better.

So there are no plans to use DPA money for ping pong balls/bats; a fourth ping pong table has been bought. Gym equipment needed – more ski boots, etc. (see point 4.2).

- Noted that the Student Gathering Area is being treated with respect. The students appreciate how nicely their gathering area is decorated for Christmas.

#### **4.2. Treasurer's Report: *Alison A.***

- Financial statement sent out. There have been a couple more pizza days since the last council meeting, and one more to go this year.  
\$300 for DPA for gym equipment; maybe look to go towards ski equipment like ski boots. *Andrea* will let *Brian* know what's needed. Council has the money as \$1,400 was available for School Wishes; \$575 now taken out for the fourth ping pong table, and leaves \$800 in the budget line for School Wishes.  
**Action: *Brian* will follow up with *Andrea* on what DPA equipment is needed.**
- Note on grant applications: waiting to hear back from: i) Banff Community Foundation for drama application; ii) Rotary grant for audio-visual equipment. Question was asked whether we should buy this now. Cost is estimated at \$3,500 plus the costs for installation and delivery.  
**Action: *Brian* will put Audio-Visual equipment on hold with retailer.**  
**Action: *Leanne* will follow up on if the Rotary grant will be approved or not.**
- *Alison* asked for guidance on Not Sufficient Fund (NSF) cheques for pizza: Discussion followed on how best to handle these. Concluded that if this happens, a letter be sent to the parent and the parent given 4 – 6 wks to clear up the matter, and council will still provide the pizza to the student concerned, but after this time and if payment has not been made then pizza delivery will be stopped. Council recommends that there be a procedure for the cases when there is an NSF issue. However, this information **does not need** to be automatically included on the pizza order form sent out to parents as these cases are very rare.  
**Action: *Alison A.* to draft a letter that could be used in cases where there are NSF issues, and to keep this with the pizza folder for future reference.**

#### **5. Reporting Procedures: Descriptors VS. Marks regarding student assessment – *Alanna***

A lively discussion followed on the merits of Descriptors versus Marks when assessing students.

Some parents would like to see percentage marks along with descriptors on report cards. Some parents feel that descriptors are not giving enough guidance and motivation to their children. When students receive a 'Meeting' descriptor then they don't know how close they are to obtaining an 'Excellent'. Students are more engaged if their parents know something about the curriculum, and can assist them at home where necessary. Parents would welcome being shown how Moodle works, and how they can use this tool to help in their children's study, i.e. assignments, resources, which assignments handed in, progress bar, etc. Question: Moodle is that teacher driven, or driven by school? *Brian*: Peers and colleagues are teaching each other. Majority of teachers on board in gr 7 & 8's for Moodle; *Mr Vallee* has been pioneering the use of Moodle in his classes at LGMS.

*Liz* asked if it might be a good idea to use council monies for IT workshops for teachers to help kickstart the use of Moodle in other classes. *Alison C* felt that IT instruction was not the issue, and that Moodle is sufficiently easy enough to use if only teachers had more time to think in order to set up Moodle as they wanted, i.e. cutbacks in teaching staff is the issue.

*Sonja* pointed out that descriptors are much more important and more meaningful to students than a percentage mark. It allows them to understand where they need to make improvements, and focus on these areas. Some students reach an 80% and are satisfied with that and don't do extra work to improve. Other

classes don't have all the marks up on Moodle so doesn't give a full picture anyway. Teachers are focusing on the process when they use descriptors. *Sonja* feels students get a false sense of where they are if they just rely on percentages.

In any discussion on pros/cons of performance assessments it would be good to communicate this to parents. Parents need to understand how their children are assessed. Parents would like to hear teachers' recommendations for research resources like websites, book titles and education articles. One of the Cochrane school websites was recommended for good links; see on <http://www.rockyview.ab.ca/schools> for Cochrane schools. *Alison A* would also like to see parents informed on what topics teachers are learning about on PD days, and how this will improve student learning.

**Action: Communication needed between students – parents – teachers. Perhaps do something at the beginning of the year to show parents how the assessment process and Moodle works; inform parents on topics covered on PD days.**

Question on Textbooks from Liz: How is the choice made between certain French and English textbooks? Is it possible for books to be online? Parents would like to see access to, at least, math books online in English and French. Liz would like to see consideration extended to Science as well.

At present, in most cases the English textbook is not an exact match to the same titled French textbook.

Online study books would allow the following to happen:

i) Parents can provide support to students at home; ii) Teachers simply send out an email informing parents of what lesson they are on during a particular week; iii) The school does not need to buy books – could be a possible cost savings there; iv) Kids do not need to carry heavy books home; v) Having matching English/French textbooks would help non-French speaking parents support their children in French Immersion; vi) Online books are the environmentally and cheaper option.

Some parents have access to the Alberta repository for textbooks, but this is limited and not open to all parents and students. Some French math and social books are online, but not the full range of books there could be.

**Action: Brian to look into getting matching English/French textbooks online, and if it is possible to extend access to more students and their parents.**

*Brian*: the model used by CRPS is to look for educational excellence.

General agreement that we need to see the rubrics, and how kids need to improve. *Sonja*: 'It's the journey, not just the mark'. *Leanne*: '...sometimes it's hard to know how to help them (i.e. *the students*)'.

*Sonja*: Thanks council for the candid conversation – need lively sessions, and put everything out on table.

6. School Facilities Review Update – Liz, Alison A & Alison C.

'The draft options and criteria and notes from previous discussions are on the CRPS web-site at': <http://www.crps.ab.ca/index.php/school-board-mainmenu-92/community-ed-network-mainmenu-328>

Brief discussion on the 2-day facility review process. Liz emphasizes that the school communities must not lose their traditions, e.g. end of gr 8 'graduation', school dances, etc.

*Brian*: agrees it would be a shame to lose the individual special events per school.

A Facilities Review Survey is to be sent out to all parents soon with decisions expected before spring break.

We can revisit this topic in the January agenda.

Further, it was decided to keep the 9 January meeting time in place rather than try to move it to 16 January.

The following items have been tabled for next council meeting: Wednesday 9 January 2013 at 7pm:

7. Minister's Conference Call – Betty/Leanne.
8. Council Initiatives – updates (council website, grants, spending for school wishes, poinsettias) – All.
9. Items for Brian – Hearts and Hands, Telus.
10. Items for follow up – Timeline for casino discussion; CCHS Hunt Memorial; suggestion for monthly minutes to include highlighted action items & who is responsible for follow up – All.
11. Roving Council Members Proposal – Alison A.
12. Learning Component–January (Technology use?) – All

**Adjourned 9:05pm.**

**Action Items from 12 Dec 2012 to be reviewed at next meeting 9 Jan 2013:**

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- 4.1 Action: *Brian* to check out Online Anti-Bullying Training for suitability to extend to other staff.
- 4.1 Action: *Brian* will inquire about other locations closer to Canmore for band camp?
- 4.2 Action: *Brian* will follow up with *Andrea* on what DPA equipment is needed.
- 4.2 Action: *Brian* will put Audio-Visual equipment on hold with retailer.
- 4.2 Action: *Leanne* will follow up on if the Rotary grant will be approved or not.
- 4.2 Action: *Alison A.* to draft a letter that could be used in cases where there are NSF issues, and to keep this with the pizza folder for future reference.
5. Action: Communication needed between students – parents – teachers. Perhaps do something at the beginning of the year to show parents how the assessment process and Moodle works; inform parents on topics covered on PD days.
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