

## **MINUTES FROM THE PARENT COUNCIL MEETING OF THE WOODLANDS SCHOOL**

Monday, September 21, 2009

### **Attendees:**

#### **Council Executive**

Sangeeta Chopra-Charron (acting co-chair)  
Mark Langley (acting co-chair)  
Dawn Kearns (treasurer)  
Janet Mount-McCrum (secretary)

#### **Staff**

Jeanne Gray (principal)  
Ray Kaake (vice-principal)  
Carol Suhay (vice-principal)  
Daphne Perugini (acting vice-principal)  
Jorge Mendoza (teacher representative)

#### **Parents / School community**

Rob Pierson	Stacey Hassanzadeh
Brenda Cox-Graham	Stuart Harris
Pauline Saunders	Brian Doyle
Claire Doyle	Jane McCann
Kathie Stoliker Costello	Mark Costello
Shaila Shankardass	Harvinder Matharu
Nancy McLean	Sampath Banaward
Sahar Elkhatib	Iris Bennett
Ghanshyam Rathy	Durriya Shabbir

### **Discussion Topics**

(1) Welcome to parent council and introduction from Jeanne Gray (principal)

Ms. Gray welcomed the attendees and presented a brief introduction to council, its purpose, and its recent accomplishments.

(2) Introduction to parent council from Sangeeta and Mark (council co-chairs)

Mark and Sangeeta welcomed the parents and encouraged them to continue attending meetings and get involved with council. We need parents to be involved at parent council on all levels and positions.

Dawn Kearns has accepted the position of Treasurer, and Janet Mount-McCrum has accepted a Secretary position. We need additional volunteers to provide backup for Janet in the Secretary position, and to assume the roles of co-Chairs as Mark and Sangeeta's children are graduating this year.

It was suggested that parents need a better understanding of council roles and responsibilities in order to know what they're getting involved with, and an action item was taken to create a page on the website detailing this information.

ACTION: Mark and Sangeeta to draft the page, Jeanne Gray to review

### (3) Discussion on survey of topics for seminars.

Last survey was done 2 years ago. Mark pointed out that he would like to do the survey again. The council would like to know what topics are most important to the parents, to decide which seminars we should have. A straw poll of parents in attendance was taken to provide preliminary feedback.

New ideas for increasing attendance at the seminars were solicited. We will use the automated voice system to call home and advertise the seminars. Establishment of a call list so that people hear from a real person rather than a machine was also proposed. Executives will discuss this possibility with Ms. Gray and reach a decision, as we're not sure we can muster the volunteers to conduct a manual callout.

ACTION: Mark to update the survey and send an email to the mailing list. Mark, Sangeeta, Jeanne Gray, Ray Kaake to discuss the manual callout list option.

### (4) ESL parent night - coming up

This school event overlaps with the proposed "Adjusting to the Canadian School System" seminar topic, and it was decided that council will throw its support behind the school event rather than duplicating effort.

It was suggested that the school consider running concurrent sessions with presentations in Urdu and Mandarin as the principal ESL languages at the school.

ACTION: Jeanne Gray to provide details of the ESL parent night for promotion on the council website. Mark to investigate whether our email system can handle Urdu/Mandarin characters in the outgoing announcement.

#### (5) Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Government Grant

This year we will most likely continue with the speaker series, submitting a PRO grant request to cover the cost of invited presenters.

#### (6) Letter to Ministry of Education on Funding Inequities

The per-capita student funding formula for Peel school board is lower than most school boards in the province. The Woodlands School Council sent a letter of inquiry to the Ministry in May 2009. We followed up this week and were told they did not receive this letter, so we will re-send the letter and ask for a response.

It was suggested that the letter be posted on the Council website, and parents be given the opportunity to add their names to the letter.

Ms. Gray pointed out that the school community can have quite an influence on policy makers if it focuses its effort in one direction. As an example, a Woodlands student interested in environmental issues called upon all students to contact the government and demand action on climate change. Students did, and the Woodlands was heard – the Prime Minister's Office called Ms. Gray to say that we need to do stop calling because their phone lines are jammed.

**ACTION:** Mark to mail the letter and post a copy on the council website, with the ability for parents to add comments supporting the sentiments expressed.

#### (7) Nutritional Breakfast Program

Brenda Cox-Graham, a former Woodlands teacher, would like to start a "NUTRITIONAL BREAKFAST PROGRAM" to start students off on a healthy day to improve learning. Hopefully having teachers and students working together to provide every student with a healthy breakfast. Brenda will report back.

#### (8) Cyber-safety night

Peel Regional Policy will be presenting on Cyber Safety to the Woodlands family of schools. The event will be preceded by a free pizza dinner for community building. Over 400 people are signed up from our feeder schools, plus our own schools' parents will receive an invitation in a send-home letter soon. Parents should return the response slip so the school knows how much pizza to order.

#### (9) Presentation from Ms. Perugini regarding learning skills, homework etc.

Ms. Perugini stressed how important the student agenda is - please read and use it. Keep good communication between teachers and parents. Students should have some homework every night. Review what was taught in school and read on a regular basis.

(10)        Wrap-up

Mark and Sangeeta thanked everyone for coming out and will post information on the school council website – <http://www.woodlandscouncil.com>

MINUTES TAKEN BY JANET MOUNT-MCCRUM  
TYPED AND SENT BY MORGAN MCCRUM