

Le Phare Elementary School

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

20 OCTOBER 2020 / VIRTUAL

ATTENDEES

Crissy Hallock
Caroline Madore
Sherwyn Solomon
Steve Chapman
Margaret Crosier
Lana Parris
Ashley Maltais
Tanya Thomas
Veronica Retamales Buford
Marianna Connors
Sandra Schwartz
Sherwyn Solomon
Caitlin McIlveen

AGENDA

School Trustee Report - Sandra Schwartz

Sandra Schwartz congratulated Le Phare Staff for all of their efforts getting school up and running despite Covid - 19 which is constantly evolving in terms of requirements needing to be put in place to ensure safe schools. She acknowledged that all 170 schools in the board worked around the clock to make all the necessary adjustments (no one size fits all). For instance, each school checked their ventilation systems, and made the other necessary adaptations despite a last minute communication of information.

There are still more absences with staff due to Covid, and still a major lack of supply teachers province wide. Some schools may have to close for a few days in the future if necessary due to staffing shortages.

Conversations are being held with the province regarding equity and distributing money based on the level of need, not necessarily equally across the province.

A question was posed to Sandra regarding what to do about kids who are not performing at grade level, in that they may have fallen behind during the school closures in the spring. Also, a question was posed regarding if the board would roll out curriculum in the future that will help compensate for lost

educational time during the pandemic. Sandra acknowledged these concerns and agreed that it will be something the board will need to address, and that all schools and students are in the same situation. In particular, students who are at higher risk need to be well supported (e.g.: Students at the secondary school level who are at risk of leaving the system.) Currently the top priority is safety in schools given the pandemic.

Sherwyn highlighted that there is a scope and sequence initiative put out by Program & Learning, for all curricular areas in the elementary panel to support teachers that are new to teaching a particular grade and/or subject. In addition, Caitlin has been working to get Occasional Teachers into the school to release teachers to complete PM/GB+ benchmarks so that teachers and parents can have a good understanding of current reading levels of students. The Learning Support Team (LST), Jane Todd and Sarah Ashton are moving quickly to get assessments and interventions in place.

Principal's Report - Sherwyn Solomon

Sherwyn advised that Ottawa Public Health was making changes to the symptoms screening procedure that parents use before sending their children to school each morning. He added that there has been at the peak, 100 student absences in one day, as well as 7-10 staff members absent (either due to illness or just waiting for themselves or family members to get testing / results done). These statistics came down significantly recently (e.g.: 12 students absent the other day). Staff members are working hard to cover each other off as needed, and Caitlin is working hard to ensure staffing continues.

We will likely see an increase in Covid -19 cases and/or students out of school as they will be required to get Covid tests again and/or may get other illnesses during the fall/winter season. This will therefore create some staffing shortages to come in the weeks and months ahead.

There are 17 000 kids doing online / virtual school. A lot of support staff are needed in conjunction with the main teachers. As such, this has been a huge undertaking that is very resource heavy. Of the Le Phare student population, 7 students moved from virtual school and returned to Le Phare. Children were not put in capped classes so as to maintain the school board cap requirements. There were 16 students who left Le Phare to attend virtual schools. A reorganization at this point is not off the table, but it is recognized that this would be extremely disruptive to students and teachers. The cut off date for any reorg is typically September 30th in any given school year.

For Halloween, costumes will be permitted but with restrictions. There will be no parties and no candy distribution. More information will follow.

For Remembrance Day, there will be no distribution of poppies. Le Phare will be observing Remembrance Day, and students will be able to make their own poppies.

Other upcoming dates include Indigenous Veterans Day on November 8th, which recognizes the contributions of all Canadians, including Algonquin, Black, Chinese-Canadian soldiers, and women who serve(d) in the military.

Report cards will be available virtually in November.

There were several comments seeking extra communication about where their children are at in terms of progress (ie: PM Reading Benchmarks), so that if schools need to close, they can assist their children at home. A comment was made that Google Classroom is working really well for follow up with students' work, homework, and learning expectations each week. .

Margaret (Peggy) Crosier - Update on Math program:

Peggy is making learning part of everyday life, namely to include numeracy and literacy in everyday situations instead of giving traditional homework. A lot of work is being done in class, and teachers are trying to make it clear via Google Classroom or other means, which work is already being done in school versus work that kids can do if they are absent from school.

Math now has a social- emotional learning strand as a lens to look at the other math strands. A key goal is building confidence in doing math, where mistakes are celebrated, given that we learn from our mistakes.

Financial Update and Spending Priorities:

Council discussed upcoming spending goals. In particular, Council is looking at finding similar items as last year to fund, and accelerating spending on the Teacher's Wish List. **Council put forward a money motion and committed to set aside 10 percent of all revenue towards a new play structure / upgrades to be constructed in the future. In addition, charitable funds will be allocated to support Le Phare families / the community.**

Budget

Lana presented the current budget to Council and gave a summary of last year's spending. There was no fundraising from March until the present due to Covid. The bank balance is currently \$15 822. The balance will be approximately \$18 000 by end of year after further deposits are transacted.

School Yard

Some parents commented that they would like to see the lines painted and the older children's play yard updated next. Sherwyn added that 4 basketball nets are up but that students could use and really love more. Approximately \$6000 will be put toward a new play yard (from previous funds).

Food Security

Regarding food security, last year Council spent \$260 on fresh food (Sept-March). Naomi Weber is running the Breakfast Club, with each child who participates receiving their own bag of food. Currently, breakfast club is well funded and running smoothly. The school has approximately \$2000 in Breakfast club funds (\$1200 from the District budget and \$800 from donations).

With regards to School Generated Funds, money could be allocated here to buy non-perishable items to give to students who need food if they come without a lunch. (Which is different from Breakfast Club). Alternatively, money could be borrowed from Breakfast Club and replenished as needed.

Council passed a motion to donate \$500 towards Breakfast Club / extra snacks and will check into the program to see how the spending is going. There are enough volunteers (and restrictions due to Covid so extra volunteers cannot be allowed in), so the school is using the staff they have to keep it running, but it just started today, so time will tell if they need assistance.

Council discussed assembling holiday food hampers for families in need at Christmas time.

Teachers' Wish List

The amount of \$5,000 was already allocated to purchase Teachers' Wish List items from last year, and approximately \$3,271 was already spent (e.g. some items cannot be purchased right now during the pandemic, such as the maker's space, thus not all of the money has been spent yet).

A virtual English reading program (Razkids licence) was purchased for all Le Phare students using last years' Council funds. The school is in the process of purchasing an equivalent French reading program.

Other priority items on this year's Teachers' Wish List as presented by Peggy, included cameras and voice amplifiers (could be purchased via Grand and Toy). As there will be \$500 dollars remaining from the \$5000 of last year, Council will allocate more money to Teachers' Wish List items.

Council passed a motion to give \$3000 to Teachers' Wish list for staff to spend on priority items, likely audio and visual teaching equipment to support teachers (particularly given the unique needs of distanced teaching during the pandemic)

Outdoor Education

Council discussed prioritizing some spending on outdoor learning, such as purchasing snowshoes.

Music

One suggestion was for allocating money to a music program. Sherwyn informed that teachers received a music licence to use.

Thank you gifts

Council passed a \$75 motion to give Tim Horton's gift cards and Le Phare mugs to 3 crossing guards (as some recently extended their hours). This is further to the September's Council meeting during which parents presented Council with the concern that the crossing guard shifts were not long enough to benefit Le Phare students and therefore ensure safe street crossing at 2 major crossing points. The issue has since been resolved and the Tim Horton's gift cards will be offered to the guards as a gesture of our appreciation.

ACTION ITEMS

Research Snowshoes to determine costs and discuss purchasing for this winter.

NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA

Fundraising Ideas