

Le Phare Elementary School SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

16 FEBRUARY 2021 / VIRTUAL

ATTENDEES

Margaret Crosier (Teacher Representative)
Sherwyn Solomon (Principal)
Tanya Thomas
Marianna Connors
Nicole Parker
Farhan Hameed
Victoria Roy
Peggy Sun

1) WELCOME

Talk and Run

- **Tax receipts:** To our knowledge, Council cannot issue tax receipts for donations because we are not a registered Charity, but a recent email to Victoria from OCDSB confirms that OCDSB is, in fact, a registered charity and so donations made directly to the School could receive a tax receipt from the School. **ACTION: Council Co-Chair will seek to confirm this understanding with the Board/Ministry in the coming weeks**

Approve Previous Minutes

- No comments (except a name correction). **ACTION:** Minutes will be circulated for approval by email (two previous meetings, Nov and Jan)

2) FINANCIAL REPORT

Budget Review

- We spent \$5,400 on snowshoes (less than motioned), and we were well able to afford these despite only having earned back \$1,250 from Auctria donations so far. **ACTION: Sherwyn will consider if a storage solution for snowshoes is needed (and if Council could consider if we would be willing to contribute to the cost)**
- Auctria income is over \$2K (fully funded books for \$500; fully funded for boomwhackers instruments; and only slightly funded for snowshoes; barely \$1K of that in one day last week - recognizing generosity) **ACTION: Email Money Motion to Come for books and instruments.**

- We expect to receive \$500 from OCDSB soon for parent involvement (but we can save it until next year if we want)

3) NEW BUSINESS

Next Purchases/Donations

- Kangaroo Math program was previously supported at Le Phare (math contest via Carleton University). Farhan will send an email with information to Admin for consideration (could be integrated into Le Phare programming in this or future years). At a minimum could be promoted with families. Costs for participation are low (\$10) and could be considered by Council for families who may benefit. **ACTION: Farhan to email Admin for info (and to Council inbox (or comms/promotion))**
- Council (Marianna) has \$150 in Decathlon gift cards that were received as a rebate for the snowshoe purchase, and were previously donated by Council to the School through a Money Motion in November. **ACTION: these will be delivered to the School this week.**
- We had planned \$450 for staff appreciation (already spent \$75 for crossing guards). A staff virtual event and/or gift would be a nice gesture. Staff and caretaker appreciation is important, especially this year. **NEXT MEETING: Council could discuss options and funding approaches.**
- We had planned \$350 for Grade 5s. Sherwyn is willing to explore similar approach to last year with Le Phare hoodies as gifts. There are about 47 Grade 5 students (fewer than last year). **NEXT MEETING: Council could discuss options and funding approaches.**
- Other Teachers' Wishlist items were considered, either to be funded by Council now, or to add to Auctria to seek donations. Consideration of options for Auctria "themes" for the next wave of fundraising. This could include
 - outdoor education (eg basketball hoops, equipment, or pavement paint),
 - educational categories from the teachers' wishlist, with items grouped by program (eg music, math, coding, etc)
 - Students' wishlist, with student-informed priority setting (led by teachers)
 - A series of small, individual items, or a collection of items
- **ACTION: Council input to be sought via email on approaches for next fundraising items via Auctria.**
- Do we want to renew our nutritional food donation to Le Phare (it was \$500 at the beginning of the year)? Sherwyn has indicated this would likely be helpful, expects previous funding has been spent and noticed a gap today during the snowstorm when the breakfast program was not running. **ACTION: Sherwyn will confirm spending of the previous \$500 donation and inform Council if**

more funding/volunteering to shop would be helpful.

- We could also consider providing direct support to families with another "hamper" of gift cards (either with our "community fund" which reflects 10% of revenues, currently sitting at \$1,100 from last year, plus this year).
- Feedback from Sherwin indicated that need is overall stable, and offered a consideration that investments/donations in closing education gaps may have the most impact. EG, technology (chromebooks) is a direct barrier for some students in education outcomes. This year has exposed particular learning access gaps that would normally be addressed through other means (such as access to libraries, public wifi, camps and extracurricular programs).
- Although funding to the school this year had been increased for these types of supports, the need is higher than the available funding/technology. Pre-covid, the school did not load technology/equipment and it was easier to share it and enable access for a broader group of students who may need it. There is always a need for family donations (eg food or necessities) but there may be desire to focus on gaps that other foundations and programs are not able to fill in order to advance education outcomes for Le Phare kids.
- **ACTION: Council input to be sought via email on desire to invest last year's 10% "community fund" (approximately \$1,200) as a donation to the school directly to families, either for:**
 - a) hampers/gift cards; or
 - b) funding "equalizers" to balance or close gaps for students facing learning barriers, at Administration's discretion.

Parent outreach, engagement, activities

- Parents feel disconnected from one another (even a lack of birthday parties is challenging). Ideas were considered for informal parent connections (such as informal WhatsApp groups by class, or a virtual informal outreach activity led by Council).
- The challenges of personal privacy and the use of mandated/permitted applications/platforms pose a challenge for the School to support informal connections (such as WhatsApp). Personal info and photo sharing could also be a consideration. **ACTION: Council input to be sought via email on the possibility of inviting parents to make informal (virtual) connections or email/online groups within their classes, and to consider ways Council could encourage or facilitate this.**

Input on Council's Messages to Families

- General information, clearly all in one place is helpful (eg the fundraising email). Encouraging a constant feedback loop with parents is helpful to informing messages. Input is always welcome.

4) ROUNDTABLE

Parent questions and input

- March/April Break: The School does not receive more information (or earlier information) than parents.
- French programming in Kinder (English full-time for Term 2): ECEs and other staff will engage children in French. Parents may reach out to teachers directly to explore other options for French integration/immersion.
- Transition from Grade 5 to 6 (and available programming): Letters of Intent are on hold, but in the coming weeks/months the School will be better positioned to support transitions for Grade 5 students to Grade 6.
- Parents love seeing photos and receiving email updates from staff, particularly feeling disconnected from the school this year.

5) PRINCIPAL/TEACHER REPORT

- Circumstances with schooling during Covid are changing rapidly.
- There is a problem with the electronic report card systems, now expected possibly this Friday.
- Pride in the team at Le Phare (agreed!)
- End of day release is challenging. For student safety, given higher car traffic (and fewer kids on busses) the parking lot has recently been closed but neighbours have raised complaints. Ottawa ByLaw and POlICY have been called. Admin is working to find solutions.
- PD Day was enriching for staff (eg equity, Indigenous education, privilege)
- Upcoming Indigenous education for Grade 4 and 5
- Pink Shirt Day (Feb) -- anti bullying
- New robots/coding education making its way through classrooms
- Reading levels and PM benchmarks are seeing huge strides, with many kids closing their gap that resulted from last year's shutdown, and even catching up to standards. Thanks to parents for their support in home learning.

Annex A:

Kindergarten Night at Le Phare (Virtual)

- Kindergarten will be 50/50 English and French (no further info as to how the time will be split between each).
- Please let the school know ahead of time if you have a child with special needs to be accomodated.
- Please let the school know if you choose to identify your child as Indigenous, and the school will inform the Indigenous education team (voluntary and confidential).
- Average class size will be 26 with a maximum of 28 students.
- If you live more than 800 metres from the school your child qualifies for busing.
- Reading to your child in their first language is a huge indicator of success

Annex B:

Email money motion, Feb 17 2021:

MOTION: Via Auctria, Council has met its fundraising goal from the Teachers' Wishlist for both library books (\$500) and boomwhackers musical instruments (\$250). I motion that we donate \$750 to the School to support these purchases for the library and music program.

Passed, 8 votes Yes. [Cheque subsequently delivered]