

Minutes

Castor Valley Elementary School Council Meeting

February 16, 2017 from 6:30pm – 8:30pm

1. Welcome, Attendance

Cynara Corbin opened the meeting at 6:38pm

Voting Members (quorum reached):

Carrie Amell, Crystal Doyle, Cynara Corbin (co-chair), Deanna Morris, Elli Kapsalis, Emma Krzyzanowski, Esther McConaghy, Jenni Bell (co-secretary), Lesley Parker (vice-chair), Lisa Multari, Maryam Sugrue-Foubert, Sarah Slater, Tina Clarmo (co-treasurer)

Non-Voting Members and guests:

Chris Toinoven (Principal), Angie Bickmore (Teacher), Debbie Dignard, Karen Percy, Maria Armas

2. Approval of February Agenda

Motion moved by Deanna to approve February Agenda, 2nd by Carrie, all in favour - carried.

3. Approval of February Minutes

Motion moved by Esther to approve January meeting minutes, 2nd by Lisa, all in favour - carried.

4. Presentation on Safe Schools Policy by Chris Toinoven

Emergency Procedures:

1. Fire Drills – Schools are mandated to have 6 fire drills over the school year, 3 in the Fall months and 3 in the Spring. CVES typically is evacuated in and around the 2 min mark. Attendance is complete in approx. 5 mins. Meeting point is in the back field. Attendance is taken as the students line up. Staff line up in front of their students. Each teacher has a green card and red card, the green card goes up when attendance is complete, red card goes up if a child is missing. We have had a red card go up during a practice in the past (student in office etc.). Goes quite smoothly. Discrepancy between 2 mins and 5 mins accounts for the time taken for the Kinders to get to the meeting space and line up etc. At the first fire drill of the year we often start out at 4mins to evacuate 10 to attendance completion, but those times improve significantly over the next 2 drills. Cards are kept in the classrooms with teachers. Each classroom has class lists applicable to different classes that use that room (gym has 16 for example) – the teacher grabs the appropriate folder holding the current class list and the cards. The 1st drill doesn't happen until the 2-3 week of school to give the Kinders a bit of time to be trained to know what to do. We have done drills in all sorts of situations.

2. Safety Plan for Emergency Situations (i.e. lock downs)

There are 3 phases of our safety plan. 1. Lockdown, 2. Secure School, 3. Shelter in place

1. Lock Down

Definition: persons are secured out of sight in a safe location, Routines do not continue. This is explained to kids in age appropriate ways.

Situation: An active threat to the safety of persons in the school.

Procedure: Do not answer your door of phone. No one leaves the classroom. Everyone hides. Windows and doors are covered. (no cell phones).

Release: Doors unlocked by police.

Very important that parents don't come to the school or text students during an active threat.

The way we practice this at CVES – Principal goes on PA and states we are having a practice lockdown. Office staff then scatter and start releasing classes one at a time. The next phase after the release is going into the secure school mode. We have not had police in yet, as it raises a lot of fear and questions with the younger kids unfortunately.

Question from Council – Why do we practice fire drills 6 times a year, and lock downs only twice? Is that indicative of how much more likely it is to have a fire over a lock down?

Answer - Chris doesn't know, this is a Ministry of Education policy.

Question from Council – How do kids in portables go to the bathroom during a lockdown?

Answer – They don't, they have to wait until they've been released.

Question from Council – Is it communicated to kids what to do if they are in the hallway or bathroom when this happens?

Answer – They are instructed to stay where they are. If in the bathroom to lift their legs up, hide in stalls and be quiet. Most kids understand what is required in the situation. Kids seem to have the hang of it, if they are out in the open they scatter and hide. If kids are outside (gym) and there is an active threat – they go to the corn field, or if they can get to a portable to hide.

Procedures are explained to kids well in advance; in age appropriate ways so that they understand before we do the first drill.

After everything has calmed down, office staff scatters and goes to doors to listen, then release them.

You cannot be released from a lockdown with a PA announcement. The thought behind this is that if it was a real lockdown, the principal could be forced to make an announcement by the attacker.

Question from Council – In future, could young kids be sent home with a note or an email from teachers to parents to let them know that this practice procedure has been discussed or done today?

Answer – Yes, we can look at implementing that.

If we are going into a real lockdown Chris would just say ““Lockdown” this is a Lockdown”

2. Secure school

Definition: Persons are secured in a safe location but daily routine continue within classes and office. No one should be in the halls.

Situation: An emergency where students in the hall would hinder the work of local authorities (i.e. medical, intruder, bomb threat, scheduled search)

Procedures: Take attendance. Do not leave your classroom.

Release: PA Announcement.

Example: Bomb threats – school is not evacuated right away. The Principal's job is to go and find the bomb.

3. Shelter in Place:

Definition: The outer doors of the school are secured and daily routines continue within.

Situation: A situation outside the school building (weather, wildlife) may threaten student and staff safety.

Procedure: Go about your daily routines but no one leaves the building.

Release: PA Announcement.

In future kids from portables would be brought in the school during this procedure.

Depending on the threat (coyote in yard versus something happening downtown) a judgement call would be made to bring kids in or leave them out)

Other Safety Procedures followed at CVES:

- Sign in / Sign Out
- All visitors check in at office
- Staff Supervision schedules
- Safe Arrival checks
- School Health and Safety Inspections (monthly)
- Visual check of site (daily – custodian/principal/staff)

Question from Council – It is no longer necessary for parents to sign out kids at the end of the day – is this not an opportune time for someone to do something?

Answer - No more risk than a kid standing at the bus stop.

Note; during custodial battles the school is supplied with details and pictures to help minimize the risks.

Follow Up regarding questions/concerns raised in previous council meetings:

1. Regarding asking our Safety Resource Officer (SRO) to come in and assess our school;

SRO's do not perform this function for schools; they are not trained in any type of assessment.

2. Regarding implementing a Buzzer System at CVES;

Chris spoke to the office staff and SRO about their views on buzzer systems. Office staff felt that they were not trained in assessing threats as to whether to buzz someone in or not.

SRO said *"anyone determined enough would still get in. And, it's my experience that in a lot of schools, there's really no screening that takes place: someone buzzes and the office staff presses the button without looking to see if they know who it is."*

SRO did tell us that we are one of the only schools that do NOT have one.

Other considerations:

- Explaining this to students, and students being left out
- It's a lot of money for a somewhat false security. If there was any perceived threats in the school the principal would put the school in lockdown.

Current door procedures: All doors are open in the morning. Once the Kinders come in from playing outside, all the side doors are locked; kinder/primary wing is secure and locked up.

5.. Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs report:

Tree Planting grant: (Update from Karen Percy) Karen came across a tree planting grant program offered through the City of Ottawa. Karen can provide more information to council/principal. It's part of the celebration of Canada's 150th. One grant is specifically for schools. Application is due June 1st, you hear back in September. Cynara will review the application forms and submit. Kinder yard badly needs more trees for shade. We need coniferous trees near the road (durability) but deciduous trees could go elsewhere.

Screenagers: By our schools measurement this was a resounding success. About 18 parents attended the 4:30 session and close to 30 parents attended the 6:30 session. Fantastic conversations took place between kids and parents after screening. Chris felt in his experience this has been the best parent workshop he's been associated with. The discussion period after the screening was great. Some grade 9 students came to give their perspective during the discussions, as well as some of CVES grade 4 and 5 students. Lesley and Cynara provided childcare; there were 12 kids at the 4:30 session and 8 at the 6:30 session. Finding childcare help was a challenge, we reached out to OTHS, a couple of kids were confirmed but they cancelled on the day of. We will not be offering childcare for MindMasters for this reason.

MindMasters: Lesley has a call out to St. Marks and OTHS for childcare for this event. Tina asks if council members can have some of their own older children come? Yes but must be supported by parents. Cynara asks can we make an offer to pay sitters if needed with council money if we can't get volunteers? Since we aren't in an area where high school students can easily get here on their own, that means parents have to volunteer their time too. But would we pay a parent the same? Where do we draw the line?

Per our Treasurer Tina Clarmo, this can be done but a record would need to be kept of the transaction. It can turn into a slippery slope if we are "paying volunteers". We could offer a "thank you gift card" as an incentive instead of paying.

We could talk to our grade 7 and 8s and to the Ambassadors – Angie Bickmore will speak with them and gauge interest, then let Cynara know. We have not yet offered childcare for this event, depends on whether we can get volunteers. We can buy them a pizza dinner. We would need volunteers from 6:15 to 8:45pm. The presentation is very similar to last year's and done by the same lady.

6. Principal, Teaching & Support Staff Reports

Teachers Report (Angie Bickmore)

- Ms. Reed says they just finished their "Someone Special To Me" presentations, which is a grade 2 initiative
- Carnival finished last week, a group of French teachers got together and planned this event to teach kids about these French Canadian traditions, break up the winter, planned a week of activities. First time we've done this event here at CVES. Kids were very into it. Unfortunately there were lots of weather interferences but things still went well. Intermediates even wore snow pants to do the activities! Bonhomme was here all week (grade 8 student in a rented costume). We had some bugs with the Bingo game over the PA.
- Ambassadors were super busy before the holidays, eased up a bit in January. They have been working on the milk bag mats. Big learning curve for this activity but its running well now. We just did a big delivery to a homeless shelter downtown of baked goods for Valentine's Day. Goal

was to make 60 dozen, they got 90 dozen. Shelter said they had never received such a sweet donation. A guest speaker is coming next week to discuss homelessness in Ottawa

- Both boys and girls intermediate teams came home with the medals. Juniors have tournament coming up on the 24th.
- Ski days are up and running. More kids than we've ever had before, an extra bus load. Beautiful weather for the first date. The 2nd one was cancelled/rescheduled due to the driving conditions.
- Screenagers with juniors and intermediates – went really well, had some very good honest discussions back in the classroom. A very good springboard for further discussions about how we're using our technology.

Principal's Report (by Chris Toinoven)

- Carnival – big cheer off in the gym, red on one side and blue on the other. Kids were separated by the curtain, was so much fun!
- Staffing – into next month is when the staffing process starts for next year. Kinder registration has begun, there is not the usual big rush they've seen in the past (no longer relevant with the current 50/50 French/English days) Projection from board is 74 Kinders. We are currently at 51 registrations so far. Another class of grade 7s will be coming over from Osgoode Public which will fill out our intermediate numbers. Next year Kinders will continue to share in SK/JK classes.
- \$860 was raised at Family Movie night to be donated to Hawthorne Public school. We are looking at continuing to do more charitable things. There will be two Grade 1 trips in the Spring, two classes to one area and 3 classes to the other. We need to appeal to Grade 1 parents asking if they would like to sponsor another student from another school (perhaps Sawmill Creek with its influx of Syrian refugees). This is something that is in the works.

Support Staff Report – No updates at this time, everything running well.

7. Treasurer's report (Tina Clarmo):

- There hasn't been a whole lot of activity in January. Toy sale proceeds went into the account in January.

Ad Hoc – we had budgeted about \$10K for this, we have currently spent around \$4400, and have another \$600 budgeted. We have about \$4500 that hasn't been budgeted to anything specific yet.

- Ad Hoc request received from Kim for art supplies for \$64. We could use some of the funds in our Arts in the Schools fund for which we raised money from Talentfest last year (\$208 raised).

- Ad Hoc request from Alison for the grad committee – we had budgeted \$400 for grad. They are requesting an additional \$350 dollars (see addendum for their budget). There are 57 grad students this year – which is about the same as last year. (Discussion ensues over this request)

- We could make a formula for how much money council donates on a “per child” basis for future. It would be fair every year, not an arbitrary amount. \$10/child as a starting point.

- We have in the past not done fundraisers as this is a non-sanctioned event. Fundraising events like bottle drives have caused some conflict in the past due to not all kids participating.
- Grad committee could do a bake sale at Talentfest? Is that allowed? Chris would not support any in-school fundraiser for this.
- Is this a precedent we want to set? And is it a cause we want to support? It is not an educational event, it is a party. We could offer to pay for the fixed items like awards and dj/music and decorations?

Motion moved by Sarah that we keep the budgeted line item to give them \$400 but we would be open to subsidizing additional \$ for any students who need extra help. 2nd by Maryam.

Motion carried.

Cynara will go back to Allison and advise. Parents can contact Chris for subsidizing questions.

- Ad hoc request - \$293 for lunch for parent speakers for Career day

Motion moved by Tina to approve \$293 for luncheon, 2nd by Esther. All in favour, Carried

- Ad hoc request - \$200 for Talentfest decorations

Motion moved by Jenni to approve \$200 for decorations, 2nd by Elli. All in favour. Carried.

-We don't want to carry money over from year to year, we want to spend the money that we raised. We already have a healthy amount in the library improvements fund. We are in a situation where we will need to consider where to spend some money.

-We ask Angie to pass the message on to the teachers. What types of things can teachers ask for? Picnic tables for the Kinder yard was brought up in the Fall but no official request came in.

-Chris will sit down and put together a plan for what the school needs moving forward. Look at a bigger plan on how to spend the money.

-Technology reserve fund – this will not be spent

-Almost no requests came in from Juniors. If grade 4/5's can't reschedule their field trip then maybe we could offer them something else.

-Angie says individual requests from teachers sometimes create a bit of conflict, group requests per grade/level might be better.

8. Fundraising Programs / Events Report

Talentfest: We are not going to ask for any money and offer a free event this year. No donations being sought by council.

Audition forms due Feb. 28th. Jen has a team of volunteers.

Career Day: Plans are going well, we have lots of different speakers booked to come. Still have open spots, can email Jen.

Family Movie Night: A resounding success! We raised \$860 which is going to Hawthorne Public. We didn't run out of popcorn.

Fun Night: Thursday June 15th. The Fire Fighters and ice cream truck are booked. Will book a meeting for this committee to meet soon

Used Book Sale will be April 28th, Tara is willing to help do it again but needs a shadow. Storage of books ahead of the sale has been an issue in the past as people want to get rid of the books and not

hold onto them for months until our Spring sale. We could put a box in the lobby. Esther volunteers to shadow Tara. We could ask people to start donating books now. Put out the call for books early. Ask Tara if she has a flyer to send to Cynara from past years so we can start posting it. Details to be worked out regarding money and book limit

9. Library Committee

- Options for the library that have surfaced; a projector or presentation unit, perhaps a drop projector from the ceiling or a TV unit on the wall. We are looking at different options.
- Went with the School Board carpenter that is going to make an item per our request; a bench that will run along the window, with cubbies for books underneath. Against the wall a ½ circle step 6-8" with another higher step that can act as a stage. Process for the carpenter is 6-8 months turnaround time. Work order is in.
- Quiet zone in back right corner
- More cubbies being built, bean bag chairs, looking at moving Coreen's desk onto the east wall.
- Moving book shelves to create area for intermediates.
- Painting, but specific colours still being discussed. Painting will be done over March Break
- Blinds might be replaced as well.
- Painting book shelves white, freshen everything up a little bit.
- Still discussing what technology and furniture we will be bringing in here.
- A display case being built also. Display for newer books one side / storage for Chromebooks on other side.
- Furniture will be built by start of next school year

A new student that is joining us next year is part of the Make A Wish Foundation, one of his wishes is to fill the library with books. We are in discussion about this with the parents.

The function of a library has changed. Non-fiction books for research are not really needed anymore. Non-fiction books of "high interest" are still needed.

10. Inclusive Safe & Caring Schools Committee (update by Elli Kapsalis):

- Committee hasn't met recently. Official Kindness week was this week. Random act of kindness day is tomorrow, which is a PD day. Elli will update the board outside about Pink Shirt Day. Message to go out from council reminding kids to wear pink shirts on Tuesday.

11. Intermediate Working Group

- Nothing to report, January meeting didn't happen. Meeting February 21st.

12. OCASC – Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils (Alka Moorjani update via email):

- 2017-2018 calendar includes a pre-Labour day and Christmas break starting December 22nd. Pre-Labour day start wasn't specific but I assume it would be on Friday September 1st.
- The Special Educations Advisory Committee (which includes gifted programs) is looking to save \$500K but will make no changes in 2017-18. The Board will continue to look at possible changes in delivery.

- Councils can change what they use their PRO grant for from their stated plans in the application so long as they contact the ministry.

13. New Business: None to discuss at this time.

14. Important dates:

- Intermediate working group – Feb 21st
- Talentfest Audition Forms – Due Feb 28th
- MindMasters Workshop – March 2nd

15: Adjournment and Next Meeting:

- 9:14pm: Cynara Corbin made a motion to adjourn meeting, 2nd by Sarah Slater, motion carried.
- **Next CVESC Meeting – April 20th at 6:30**