

Parents' Advisory Group Inc.
École Robert H. Smith School
Reports for Meeting on December 7, 2011

Chair – Michael Gies

Hello and welcome to our third meeting (already?). We have had a great year so far and I would like to thank all the parents who have not only been coming to our meetings in large numbers but to all of you have helped make our first few events so memorable for the staff at our school and especially our children. Speaking of our last meeting, I would like to again thank John Orlikow, our city councilor, for attending and fielding our questions so candidly.

Tonight we move ahead and plan for the second half of the year. The Family Dance is coming up in February and so get ready to have some fun. Mark and his team are already looking for volunteers, so please take a look and see what you can do. We will hear how our first few fundraisers performed and for the second year in a row we will present the full fundraising report from last school year detailing the monies raised and how they were distributed to the school.

I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season and thank you again for volunteering in the PAG.

Treasurer – Stuart Roche

The following is the proposed expense budget for 2011/12 PAG with a comparison to the previous two years expenses:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Environment	162.16		850.00
Staff Appreciation	528.97	473.52	500.00
Miscellaneous	515.00	572.14	500.00
Service Charges / NSF	75.39	241.30	250.00
Volunteers	459.05	214.57	300.00
Babysitting	160.00	185.00	180.00
Office Supplies		92.55	50.00
Meeting Expenses	25.52		50.00
TOTAL	1,926.09	1,779.08	2,680.00

The increase in budget for 2011/12 is based on the request of the Environment Committee to do a clean up of the school grounds. This is normally done every two to three years. This would include topsoil top up, school planter boxes and a general clean up.

Last year we incurred a large increase in bank service charges due TD Canada Trust changing it's service fees. We now get charged per deposit and for the number of cheques deposited and for the amount bill and coin deposited.

I have compared three credit union offerings and have found the following:

- Assiniboine Credit Union - No charge for deposits, 5 free monthly transactions (cheques written) plus one additional per \$200 minimum monthly balance.
- Steinbach Credit Union - No charge for deposits, 1 free transaction per \$500 minimum monthly balance
- Crosstown Civic Credit Union - No Charge for deposits or cheque writing

I only looked at credit unions as I am aware that the banks would offer the least competitive account packages. Also I am a firm believer in buying local and all three credit unions are locally run and member owned. The Assiniboine Credit Union (ACU) package is essentially free as we would maintain enough funds in the account to get free banking or if there would be charges they would be minimal. With each of the choices we would incur start up costs to purchase cheques which are not cheap. We have about a year and a half worth of cheques for our existing account so we would be incurring these costs soon regardless of changing financial institutions. Start up costs would be about \$120. There is a chance I could waive a portion of those fees.

My personal preference would be ACU however I feel it is important to disclose that I am the Branch Manager of the Kenaston Branch, 1855 Grant Ave. This however would be no different than me having my personal banking and finances at ACU which I do. We have stringent checks and balances.

I have discussed this with the PAG Executive and our recommendation is to move to ACU. The major advantage being the branch is in our neighbourhood and regardless of who will be the treasurer in the future the branch will be close by. Also the banking fees will be minimal if any.

Environment Report – Nadine Karpinski and Simone Smith

We are putting together a plan for getting grant money and donations for the playground enhancement project. Here is a summary of what we have done and where we are going:

- We are submitting the required documents to the WSD for board approval for the project. They supported our initial master plan development, however we need their formal approval before continuing.
- We wrote a brief background of the project for school families.
- We met with the grant writer from the St. Avila project to hear her recommendations and suggestions for our grant writing plans.
- Our next steps are as follows:
 - Possibly set-up a Facebook page to attract alumni as potential donors.
 - Set up a team to work on the project campaign.
 - Contact alumni to start to collect donations.
 - Identify our key “marketing” strategy for grants, government, and corporate sponsorship.
 - Complete grant applications through organizations such as:
 - Community Places
 - Water Stewardship Fund
 - Hydro’s Forest Enhancement Program
 - others

South District Advisory – Tia-Alexandra Everitt & Dan Orlikow

- The first meeting of the South District Advisory Committee was held on 9 November, 2011 at École River Heights School.
- Tia Everitt and Tom Rossi were in attendance on behalf of École Robert H. Smith School.
- Meeting was primarily focused on introduction to the Committee, determination of chairperson duties, approval of minutes from prior meeting and introduction of new business.
- Agenda included in-depth discussion re: 2012/2013 budgetary process and timeline.
- Provincial funding for WSD will be announced in late January, whereby the Finance committee of the School Board will finish drafting the budget.
- Budget will be distributed to all schools & parent councils and posted on division website.
- South District Advisory Committee will reconvene in February to dialog re: the draft of the budget & a public meeting will be held to generate feedback on 27 February. The deadline for feedback on the budget will be 2 March. The board will finalize the budget on 15 March, per legislation.
- Committee was advised to expect mill rate shifts to allow the board to generate necessary funds from municipal taxes to maintain existing programming/infrastructure, continue process of greening older buildings and to cover the increased costs associated with an uptick in district enrolment.
- Anyone who wishes to see documentation re: the preliminary budget information can request it from Tia in the New Year.
- Introduction of the Policy IGAB – Diversity and Equity Education.
- Board has proposed changing existing Policy IGAB – Multiculturalism to the new Diversity and Equity Education policy, in order to reflect current legislation that reflects Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms, Manitoba Human Rights Code, Public Schools Education Act.
- This is not a human resources/hiring initiative, but steps towards ensuring that students, staff and parent boards in WSD are cognizant of the rights that all people have regardless of gender, socio-economic status, religion, sexual orientation or culture et al.
- Tia has copies of the proposed policy, and will provide upon request in the New Year.
- Next meeting of the South District Advisory Committee will be in February, at Carpathia School, date TBA.
- Any new business or issues to be brought to the board can be discussed w/ or emailed to Tia Everitt at tiaeveritt@hotmail.com.

French Language – Andrea Robertson

At the meeting of the French Immersion Advisory Board the superintendent provided us a draft of the new Diversity and Equity Education Policy for the Winnipeg School Division. They are encouraging distribution of the policy to parents, parent councils and student councils for feedback. Copies of the current policy and the draft of the new policy will be available at the PAG meeting for anyone interested in reviewing it. Please provide feedback to Brenda Lapointe, Board Administrative Assistant either by fax: 774-6211 or email: brlapointe@wsd1.org no later than January 31, 2012.

Fun Lunch – Michelle Gaber and Trina Minor

The next fun lunch is December 9th with Panago Pizza, Booster Juice and Gunn's Bakery. Next year 3 other parent volunteers have stated that they can take over fun lunch as I (Michelle Gabor) will not be continuing with the program. They are Trinity Mak, Kerri Lambert and Monique Andrews.

Staff Appreciation Report – Laurence & Susan Broadhurst, Anji Petruzzelli

A Staff Appreciation event was held on Thursday, November 17th, with the participation of many volunteers, who helped set up, clean up, fill platters and cups; brought in baked goods, juice and fruit and those looked after nursery and kindergarten classes and recess duty.

Volunteer – Daryla Christie and Christine McGregor

The month of November went quite smoothly. Volunteers helped out successfully at both the Staff Appreciation coffee morning and the Read-a-thon. We are in the process of gathering fun lunch volunteers for December 9th. Things are progressing well.

Administrator's Report - Mr. Rossi & Mme Labossière

- Enrolment presently at 490. Last year at this time we had 466.
- New grade 4 family started yesterday and likelihood of a new grade 5 family starting January, 2012.
- Parents are already calling and visiting the school for 2012-2013 school year.
- Open House Wednesday February 1st at 9:30am & 1:15pm in MPR room
- Registration Nursery- February 8th at 8:00am
- Registration Kindergarten- February 15th at 8:00am
- Noon hour enrichment MYRCA Club is being offered again. This year we had over 65 students sign up and a number of our staff are volunteering their time over the noon hour.
- Noon hour enrichment Can Spell Competition for grades 4, 5 and 6 students. Applications have gone home and Mr. Leochko and a number of staff will be working with children over the lunch hour on Thursdays. Thursday January 19 during the morning we will find out who will represent our school at the city finals. Parents are more than welcome to attend.
- After school enrichment opportunity for Mad Science for grades 3, 4, 5 and 6. Starting January 23 for session 1 and February 1 for session 2. Mad Science will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays, 8 sessions each. PD days and school closures have been taken into consideration. Wednesday January 11 Mad Science will be visiting classrooms and handing out applications during the morning.
- Thank you to our staff and parents that are volunteering their time organizing various clubs in our school; knitting, painting, volleyball, adventure, etc.
- Enrichment Clubs and/or activities are taking place either before, during the lunch hour or after school. Thank you to staff and parents that volunteer that enable us to provide these valuable learning opportunities.
- Many classrooms helping for the holiday season with hampers, Winnipeg Harvest, Third World Countries, Agape House, gift exchange with inner city schools and more.
- Winter Concert on December 15th. 9:45am K/N performances, 1:30pm and 6:30pm for grades 1-4. First 2 rows reserved for elderly and handicapped if necessary. Silver collection at the door.
- Staff PD Day on December 16th focusing on our school priorities.

- Volunteer Holiday Thank you Celebration on Tuesday December 20th in our library. Dainties and entertainment provided.
- Parent Teacher Conferences went extremely well once again. Excellent progress and room for growth in all areas for our students. Thank you to our babysitting graduating class for assisting.
- Read a thon Fundraiser was exceptional for the kids. A good time by all and the children from what I hear enjoyed the entire day, parent and staff storytelling, Fred Penner's performance and all students received a gift for participating. Thank you to our fabulous parent volunteers that assisted that day.
- Tuesday January 17 Nelson Education setting up a display in our staff room for staff to purchase books for their classes. Just another way of supporting our teachers and their classroom needs.
- Community Breakfast Friday March 2nd. Proceeds this year donated to the Winnipeg Harvest. This year there were 2 students that researched this charity and presented. Thank you to all the students that researched charities
- Staff Parking Lot is safer this year and we thank parents for being respectful and not using it as a drop off or pick up zone.
- Report Cards were very informative and thank you to our staff for doing an outstanding job. Thank you to parents for your positive feedback.
- Book Fair was successful once again. Thank you to Mrs. McCallum and Mme Thomson for organizing our Book Fair this year. We appreciate your efforts. We have close to \$3400 credit from Scholastic for classroom teachers to use. We already purchased \$800 worth of books at the Book Fair for our school. Credits from the Book Fair will be used to replenish books in the library and classrooms.
- Leadership Teams are doing a great job answering phones, doing morning announcements, patrolling, refereeing, supervising hand washing, sorting books for our Read a thon, etc.
- Staff Appreciation second best to none! All our staff feels special and appreciated from your efforts. Thank you to Mr. & Mrs. Broadhurst, their committee and numerous volunteers that prepared, served and covered classrooms and recess for our staff.
- Math is in the air and everywhere. Our school is doing very well covering mandated curriculum expectations and professional development and additional supports when needed are being provided within our powers.
- As you are aware, the Province of Manitoba has announced a requirement that will require a class size limit of 20 students for grades K – 3 in all public schools. Our District Superintendent has conducted a preliminary assessment of the potential impact this may have on classroom space requirements for schools (including Nursery) in our Division and identified schools in their district which merit a more thorough review. Our school will be reviewed early in the New Year for current space utilization and identify potential solutions which can address the new classroom space requirements for both the short and long term.
- Field Trips, guest performers and speakers, classroom activities, updating equipment and materials, and professional development are abundant in our school. When staff asks, they usually get funds to support children's learning throughout the school year. We also encourage and provide staff with multitude professional development opportunities and support them with substitutes and registration when called upon. Thank you to our parent advisory group and parents in our school for providing us with funds through fundraising to support our students and staff.

On behalf of our staff, Mme Labossiere and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our parents, and particularly the parents that make an attempt to attend our PAG meetings for the most part. We realize that you all are extremely busy but are also revising your schedules to be active in the school. Your contribution and effort are greatly appreciated by staff and students. Happy holidays to each and every one of you and may your holiday season be safe, peaceful and filled with celebrations and joy.

"It takes a community to educate a child."