

Parents' Advisory Group Inc.
École Robert H. Smith School
Minutes of the Meeting – April 4, 2012

Present (based on sign-in sheet): Michael Gies, Candace Partyka, Trish Wainikka, Stuart Roche, Art Jordan, Sara Man, Frances Greco, Pam Shay, Tom Rossi, Brad Regehr, Ross Stokke, Tia A Everitt, Dave Leochko, Joseph Partyka, Susan Broadhurst, Paula Jasper-Hall, Daryla Christie, Shannon Bowden, Kali Li, Cathy Macey, Andrea Robertson, Tanya Ducharme, Beth Klassen, Anna Randall Gryc, Mark Wasyliv

Regrets: Christine McGregor, Kathleen Reid, Simone Smith, Denise Gout-Smith, Michelle Gabor, Dan Orlikow

1. **Meeting called to order. We have quorum.**
2. **Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
 - ***Motion to approve the Minutes of the January 25, 2012 PAG Meeting – Moved by Joseph Partyka, Seconded by Paula Jasper Hall, Carried.***
3. **Review of Agenda**
 - Additions – Director Vacancies (to New Business); Funds Surplus and Math Night (to unfinished Business)
4. **Executive Reports**
 - \$355.35 profit from the Family Dance.
5. **New Business – Director Vacancies: Picnic, Fun Lunch, Dance, Volunteer Coordinator**
 - If anyone is interested in taking on one of these positions for the 2012/13 school year, please talk to Candace Partyka.
 - Consider advertising by synervoice, newsletter, and at the events. Also consider contacting individuals who have volunteered on those committees in the past and are already familiar with the position.
6. **Unfinished Business - Math Presentation**
 - This is definitely a topic of interest and concern to everyone. There was a suggestion to have a PAG Math information night for the parents, with a presentation on “How to Help Your Child Succeed in Math” by Anna Stokke. As soon as the date is set, a synervoice message will go out.
 - Will this be in consultation with the teachers and could the message be in conflict with the message that the teachers are getting from the division or curriculum requirements?
 - The current math is different from the math that the parents know. Some parents are concerned about their child's performance and are seeking tutoring for their children.
 - The presentation will focus on how to help your child do well in math – what children need to learn and how parents can reinforce what they have learned in school - rather than a campaign against the curriculum. There is currently some concern about the curriculum, but this is independent of the school and teachers and will not be part of the presentation.
 - The school will also be presenting a math night in the fall with the divisional person who is assigned to assist the schools with their math. This will be directly in line with the curriculum and divisional guidelines.
 - It was noted that the mandate of parent councils is to engage in discussions on curriculum, therefore a discussion of the math curriculum is completely within our mandate and we should not shy away from it.
 - It was reiterated that this is definitely a concern for many parents, so the discussion will continue at PAG meetings.
 - The teachers were asked how they feel about this discussion. The response was that a healthy debate about curriculum is great and they are glad to see parents interested. Kids can sometimes be concerned because parents do math differently and sometimes tell the kids to do it differently. It is good to build a strong parent / teacher connection when working with the child. The teachers don't feel attacked by these discussions – as teachers they try different strategies for different children.
 - There was a question about how the transition is made from the new math being taught in elementary schools to the traditional math that is taught in later years – is there something built in to the curriculum to assist with this transition? Maybe we need to bring in provincial or divisional representatives to assist in answering some of our questions.
 - It was explained that algorithms are the traditional methods of math; the new math is trying to explain these algorithms (build understanding). Sometimes the algorithms are more efficient, but the underlying understanding is not taking place. The pendulum has swung from the efficient to understanding, and unfortunately neither are perfect.
 - The Chair asked those at the meeting if they are in favour of the PAG hosting a presentation by Anna Stokke – all were in favour, no one opposed the presentation. It was noted that the presentation does not represent the view of the PAG or the school, but the PAG is inviting an expert to present on the topic.

Unfinished Business – Excess Funds Raised

- To date, the PAG has approved \$6,000 for the school to mount smart board projectors and \$5,000 to go to the playground enhancement project. There is approximately \$6,000 remaining that needs to be allocated.
- The school has provided a wish list of items that are not covered by the Division that we can consider. This will be discussed further at the next meeting and a list will be provided so that the parents can ask questions and vote.
- The parents would like to know what portion of the students will benefit from the item and want to ensure that as a PAG we are accountable for how the funds raised are used.

7. Teachers' Report

- The Grade 6 Farewell is approaching.
- There will be a camp meeting for Grades 5 and 6 students next week. Parent volunteers will be contacted as needed.
- Smart Board projectors have been placed in 4 classrooms (P1, P5, P6, 203) – it has opened up the space and they are working well. Thank you to the PAG.
- Mr. Mark was the artist in the school this spring. The kids now understand that the whole world is a drum!

8. Administration Update

- Concours d'Art Oratoire was excellent – astonished by the quality of the presentations. Two students went to the next level and won gold. They will now move on to the provincials. Question: is it possible to have the best girls and best boy from each class, rather than just the top 2 students in each class move forward?
- The Science Fair is for children in grades 4 and up; the work is done at home. Some parents mentioned that it would be nice to have a science fair at the school. In the past the school has held an Educational Fair.
- In 2012/13 the division will set all 10 non-instructional days for the school.
- Our school has not yet received staffing allotment from the superintendent. There will be a presentation at the next PAG Meeting in May.
- Numbers are healthy for next year. We may not be able to take all students that apply if they are out of catchment. Letters will go out in June to the families that are accepted. Preference is given to families that already have a child in the school, but that child may not get the program they want (French/English).
- Report cards have gone out. The amount of effort from the staff into these report cards is incredible. The staff really care about the kids!

9. Questions / Comments Concerning Written Progress Reports / Standing Committees

- The QSP made a profit of \$2,863.07 to date.

10. Next meeting – PAG Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the School Library.

11. Motion to adjourn the meeting – Moved by Brad Regehr, Seconded by Sara Man, Carried.