

December PAC Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement.

2. **Treasurer's Report:**

Regular Account - \$11,952.37

Gaming Account - \$4,439.56

This is a healthy balance considering we have not yet done major fundraisers.

On that note, we are looking for ideas on what we can spend money on as well as ideas for the Tree-Chipping money that will be coming in January.

Jonathan was asked for input. The school has not had any Arts programming since the Covid. Something like Art Starts (which showcases local performers so the money goes back into the community) would cost about \$800 per performance. There is also interest in having Yoga Buddies (the PAC paid for half which was \$1500 last year) come back as this was well-received last year. Last year the PAC fully funded Dance Play which cost \$3500.

Question - could some of the hardship fund that the school will be receiving go towards any of these performances/events? - No - that money has already been allocated by the school.

Decision: We will look into funding Yoga Buddies and Dance Play to spend money on this year.

3. The **Staff Dinner** was tonight and the PAC donated \$500 to pay for the food. It was the most well attended dinner in years and the donation was very much appreciated. This is something that we should look at funding in future years as it is both low lift and very appreciated.

4. **Craft Fair** - Kathryn - It was a success! We raised over \$2000 and was a great way for the community to come together. A survey was sent out and there is interest in participating if another event is to be held in the near future. A big thank you to Kathryn for organizing and to Jonathan for spending his Saturday at the school so we did not have to pay for the gym rental.

5. **Holiday Fundraiser** - Kathryn— While still well-supported, this was not as successful as previous years. We received about half the amount of orders compared to last year. Apparently it is a tough year for fundraising and lots of schools are in the same situation where the expected money raised is not there, according to one of our vendors.

6. **Ongoing security concerns**

We have been approached anonymously by a couple of staff members as there are some students who tend to bolt and there are many school ground exit and entry ways. There is also a constant stream of grownups who have no connection to the school crossing over school grounds, including across the gravel field, during school hours. Kids need a safe space to play.

The PAC will contact maintenance and grounds at VSB and ask for a solution

For comparison, Florence Nightingale has fencing all around the perimeter except for at the front where one can enter and exit. The South side gate is locked during recess and lunch by a supervision aid. Based on this, the school does have the ability to potentially do this.

The biggest concern is the North side gate as it leads directly into the alley. Among other concerns, there is no indication to drivers that a child could exit suddenly into the alley.

The East and West side gates are used by both strangers and dogs during school hours to cut through between Guelph and St George when 8th avenue and the alley should be the options. We would like to see either a temporary gate that could be locked/unlocked by supervision aids or a permanent gate on both sides.

We believe our kids deserve a safe and stranger-free area in which to play during school hours.

Jonathan raised a few points:

- this is the type of presentation that will make sense to VSB district staff
- how much of a hardship would it be if we closed the gate on St George for parents when they drop their kids off?(If it were to be permanently closed)
- there are a lot of people who use the gate every day who may be more in favour of a lockable gate. It could get locked at 9:00 and if late, one would have to walk around as it could challenge a lot of folks if it were to be closed permanently

The PAC is currently compiling anecdotes for the presentation to the VSB.

Some parents like that there are options for drop off/pick up so the front of the school doesn't get too clogged up.

One possibility could be a gate with a spring that latches which would make it difficult for bikes to get through and looks closed to those who may want to just cross through the school property.

Nightingale has a system where there is a latch and it looks locked and has the ability to be locked but does not have to be locked to be closed.

A poll was taken among parents present and here are the results:

- 1 - North side gate - 80% support permanent closure
- 2 - East side gate 90% support a gate with temporary closure (during school hours)
- 3 - West side gate - 100% support some form of signage or closure of this side

7. An idea by Megan L was brought forward to gauge interest - does the PAC support spending money on purchasing equipment to be used by students (especially the older ones who play on the grass and gravel fields as well as the blacktop play areas) during recess and lunch time?

According to Jonathan everyone above Grade 2 must play on the alternate playgrounds. He is in favour of the idea of providing balls/equipment to play with for these students. Some schools have specific bins for recess/lunch equipment which is tied to divisions, which works because it is good to have the students take ownership (and thus good care) of the equipment. Is there be someone on staff who we could liase with to come up with a rough budget and process?

An idea is to survey students in each class to see what type of equipment they would like. To clarify, the gym equipment is kept for inside the gym only to preserve the life of the equipment.

Action - we will liase with a staff member to find out how we can do this.

8. MTP JEDI Committe

Has been revitalized and is now 3 members-strong. They would love to be bigger and would like to send out an email to invite people to join and/or be included in an upcoming email. There is an ongoing conundrum as to how to engage folks who need the support of the JEDI committee.

How to get to the folks who may not be connected to the school community?

Posters - Jonathan has given permission to put up posters in the school

There may be an opportunity to join forces and/or pool funding with other JEDI committees from other elementary schools

They have requested a page on our PAC website and will liase with Mike to create this. Jonathan suggested that Monique would be good to work with. They could perhaps create a leaflet for her to pass out to any families she is already working with.

9. MTP FIDO Committee

Kirk presented to the VSB at their monthly meeting, essentially calling out the board for their inaction. He had five minutes and did a presentation with power point which covered the following:

There are three different policies which speak to the idea of community use of school grounds and the district reserves the right to cancel community use if there are violations.

Kirk believes that the use of the school as a dog park is an egregious violation and dog owners' rights should be suspended.

There has been no response through all 5 levels of the school board.

He called them out for their dereliction of duty - we want to know why there is only inaction, no response to our outreach.

Concerns include consumption of dog feces by children.

Some possible solutions are to close off the North gate, lock the south and east gates and for the school to commit to the People, Parks and Dogs strategy, which exists.

FIDO has had to put up own its' own signage on school property as the VSB signs are cartoonish and easy to not take seriously

We need an identifiable point person

There were zero questions and comments from board members after the presentation.

He has followed up twice, the last time receiving a response saying they will look into it.

He has now requested a timeline but has not yet heard back.

CBC interviewed him before the meeting and he is unsure where that has been left.

A big thank you to Kirk and the committee for donating so much time - their effort matters.

Question - can we liase with the City of Vancouver enforcement and link in with closing off gates as to only have one exit which could help them to catch owners of off-leash dogs to be able to fine them?

Idea - twitter campaign - every time someone sees a dog off leash take a photo, tweet it, tweet at city of Vancouver and media outlets and bombard people with examples

The 311 App encourages people reporting infractions to take photos as well.

10. MTP Days

Looking into making it simpler to run yet still accomplishes the same goals.

Some ideas include:

Have it on a Sunday in June to link in with Farmer's Market traffic
Keep the popular parts like the raffle and bbq.
Turn the field into a community village where businesses run the field to promote their business and provide an activity.
We could still do dunk tank or bouncy castle but not as many games.
Try to get the fire truck back
Perhaps a small craft fair

We will allocate a large chunk of time at an upcoming meeting in Jan/Feb so that everyone can have their voices heard.

11. Principal's Report

Ask the Principal Questions:

1. *I was wondering what the timeline is for fixing the broken playground equipment (the large "spider web" swing is missing as well as one of the little wheels that spins on the monkey bars).*

Jonathan does not know but will look into it and find out.

2. *Who is responsible for snow shovelling/salting of the sidewalks in front of the school? Specifically referring to Guelph's sidewalk just outside the playground, it was not cleared upon first snowfall and has become icy and treacherous, which is not only a hazard for families walking to school but also makes it impassable for those needing mobility aids. Is it the VSB who should be responsible for this?*

Yes this is a safety issue. -The engineers are there to make sure that the **main entrances** are safe and the expectation is that those who use the alternate entrances will use the main entrance when their preferred entrance is not safe. This is why only the main entrance is cleared. This is a time issue as the school only has one engineer and the salting and clearing gets added to his duties. Last year the VSB gourds crew did come around and do some clearing but they did not get to our school for this last snowfall. He is not sure why and is going to inquire as to if there is a priority list of schools. We do have a lot of kids who arrive on foot vs some schools who have a lot of students arriving by car so this may have something to do with it.

Sidewalks are the last thing to get cleared as priority is the entrances. He understands it is a hazard. This has come up with staff too. He will put out a message telling people to use the main entrance during snow and ice as they are unable to clear all entrances.

A parent volunteer brigade with shovels would be welcomed.

There was a question regarding movie crews using the gravel field as a parking lot - the concern is over safety of small kids running between cars.

He will get supervision aids to monitor. The gravel field being off limits to students also needs to be enforced and vigilance increased and perhaps more caution tape used.

The VSB and the school make the decision to allow the parking. The school does get money from this. They have bought iPads with this money in the past.

There was a question regarding updates from questions from the last meeting.

Science World Science Club - there has to date been no staff member interested in heading this up - he will put it out again to see if anyone is interested.

The fine dust issue - we would like to see this resolved before the dry weather returns. He will ask if pea gravel can be put in there as it will also assist with drainage. It also could carry more weight if a parent were to lodge a complaint with the school board. Genny will take this on.

what do do about it. Replace with gravel? He will ask if pea gravel can be put in there as it will also assist with drainage. It also could carry more weight if a parent were to lodge a complaint with the school board. Genny will take this on.