

**Lisgar School Council Meeting
January 7, 2009
Minutes**

Council Members Present:

Jeremy Chitpin, Beth Doubt, Rachel Eugster, Tina Hogue, Lynn Honsberger, Pam Hopper-Coculuzzi, Bob Irvine, Gertrud Jeewanjee, Liz Melanson, David Paull, Sanjay Srivastava, Bruce Warnock.
Ex-officio: Karen Gledhill, Mark Goebel.

Council Member Regrets: Edward Chen, Feng (Wendy) Ding, Jamie Gardiner, Doug Griffin, Lianhua He, Paul Kronberg, Hui Li, Karima Lotayef, Yani Luo, Dirie Mohamed, Sue Nishi, Kate Preston-Thomas, Ruweida Shire, Stephen Wang, Lawrence Wolofsky.

Parents and Guardians: Mario Coculuzzi, Joel Cohen, Mary Ormerod

Meeting Chair: Rachel Eugster

Meeting Secretary: Gertrud Jeewanjee

1. Welcoming Remarks (Rachel Eugster)

- Rachel welcomed all attendees; attendees introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

- Student council presidents sent their regrets.

It was

MOVED BY: Sanjay Srivastava

SECONDED BY: David Paull

THAT the agenda be accepted with the following two additions:

- Cross boundary transfer policy (David P.)
- Presentation event

CARRIED

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was

MOVED BY: Tina Hogue

SECONDED BY: Sanjay Srivastava

THAT the minutes be accepted as distributed.

CARRIED

4. Student Council Co-Presidents' Report (Jeremy Chitpin)

- (1) Canned food drive was a big success with close to 2000 cans collected. The OC Transpo strike negatively impacted on the drive, as students might not have been able to get the cans to school. There is a possibility that student council will run another fundraiser in April for Centretown Emergency Food Centre.
- (2) The End-of-year assembly was successful too; the turnout was good.
- (3) Summatives and exams are in process

(4) Upcoming events:

- Semi-formal dance on February 12
- Talent show; this will be the first in five years; it is hoped that many parents will participate.

Comments:

- Council should send out a call for volunteers for the talent show to the parent mailing list, if council wishes to do so.
- Student council co-presidents should distribute the school council minutes to their council members

5. Tips & Tricks for Lisgar Parents

- - Ski Club: teachers should be made aware ahead of time (by the students) when the ski club trip is taking place, so there are no exams scheduled the day after the trip.
- - Tutoring: parents should not hesitate investigating on hiring a tutor; it can be an invaluable resource.
- - University applications: don't wait for the last day to submit the applications; very often the system crashes close to the deadline.
- - Community hours: the community volunteer hours should be completed by the end of grade 10 because of the increased work load in grade 11 and 12 and because of part time jobs. Community hours are advantageous for university applications, but only 40 hours are recorded on the report card. Make sure the hours are logged in the school system.
- Social networking sites: approx. 50% of people have improper information on their profile; employers are increasingly visiting those social networks to gather information on potential future employees. Students should be aware that their postings on the web might remain on their friends' pages even though they deleted the offending material from their own profile. Kids are often not aware of the ramifications of their actions.
- Students email addresses should be business like if they are being used for job applications.

Q: Where can information about volunteer opportunities be found?

A: On the back of the volunteer form; some opportunities are available at school (e.g. Open Doors Ottawa), NCC, theatres, community organizations, non-profit organizations, Bluesfest, volunteerottawa.com. The guidance counselors are aware of some opportunities and council will start a pilot project on the LSC web site.

Action Item: Add the volunteer web page to February's agenda.

6. Staff Representative Report (Paul Kronberg)

Paul sent regrets.

7. Principal's Report (Karen Gledhill)

Happy New Year!

- (1) Many thanks to all the parents who contributed to the Holiday Donation drive. Almost \$1800 were donated to the school. Thank you to Lianhua He for organizing the contributions and providing the data in chart form.
- (2) Fall '08 OCDSB Report – 4 copies are available for perusal.
- (3) Article *Safety and the Internet* – distributed. The article is also available at www.kidsintheknow.ca.

- (4) New Computers – Our lab, Room 206, will be upgraded with new computers (31) and flat screen monitors (old Dells in there now); 23 computers to be replaced in the Library, with flat screen monitors; 5 new computers in Room 209, no new monitors.
- (5) OC Transpo Bus Strike – on average, 11-15% of students are absent each day. The strike does not have a huge impact on our attendance; however, some students are on the road a long time for their commutes; being dropped off very early and picked up very late; some students are walking up to 1 ½ hours to school. If the strike continues past this week, we'll try to identify those who may need assistance getting to school – car pooling, etc. No students have been absent every day since the beginning of the strike.
- (6) The teachers are completing the curriculum, summatives are due, review for the exams is coming up.
- (7) Canned Food Drive – I received a lovely thank you card from Alison Dingle, Chair, Centretown Emergency Food Centre, thanking us for the donations in December.
- (8) Cross-Boundary Transfers – February 17-27. Our online applications will continue this year. Students for whom Ridgemont is their gifted centre may once again attend any of the gifted centres in our board without applying for a transfer (the Ridgemont gifted centre was closed last year). No news as yet on our transfer cap.
- (9) Grade 8 Parents' Information Evenings – Monday, January 12, 7PM (Gifted Program) – Rachel will be attending; Wednesday, January 14, 7PM (Applied, Academic Programs) – David will be attending. Thanks Rachel and David!
- (10) Our play and the music nights in December were very successful. So many talented Lisgar students! Jabberwork received good reviews in Citizen
- (11) It is my pleasure to announce the incoming Principal, Mr. David McMahon. David is in his 8th year as Principal at Sir Robert Borden H.S. and he spent 4 years as Principal at Canterbury H.S. His teaching subject area was Business. David and I met during the holidays, at Lisgar, for a couple of hours. He is absolutely thrilled to be coming to Lisgar and is looking forward to working with all of you. David will visit during the exam period and meet with Rachel and David.
- (12) Lockdown Practice – we finally had a practice and based on the feedback from the police officers, we failed. We will tighten our procedures and provide a written list of what to do in each classroom and we will have another practice early in Semester 2. Our School Resource Officer is pregnant and now on desk duty; once another is assigned to Lisgar, the lockdown practice will be planned.
- (13) I forgot to mention at the meeting – we were delighted to have some of our grads visit during two lunch hours the week prior to the holiday. They met with interested grade 12's and spoke about their college/university experiences.
- (14) It has been a privilege to serve as Principal of Lisgar Collegiate Institute and I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you for your support and all of your efforts on behalf our students/your children. I have always enjoyed our meetings – they have been fruitful, positive for our students and the council and fun! It has been a pleasure working with you! I wish all of you health and happiness as well as bliss and pure enjoyment as you watch your sons/daughters pursue their dreams and passions. Thank you.

Q: How is the principal chosen?

A: Potential principals apply for mid-year or beginning of year positions. If a position becomes available, the Board checks who is interested. Principals can indicate which school they would like to be transferred to.

Q: Is there any information on the lock-down practice included in the information package? Some parents might have been concerned if students came home telling about a lockdown.

A: A synervice did go out in December. There were no practices last year because of the frequent alerts during the school year.

Comments:

- Parent information night: it was suggested to do a question period in the auditorium instead of the library as some parents push and shove to get a chance to talk to Karen. Maybe the parents' attention could be held by one staff member in the auditorium until the department heads had a chance to move to the library to answer questions three.
- Lisgar has a large attendance from students living outside the boundaries; most anxiety stems from cross boundary transfers or having children formally recognized as gifted.
- Suggest to parents that they could coordinate car pooling via the parent mailing list. Maybe create a bulletin board on the LSC website for parents to coordinate car pools.

8. New Business

The agenda has been revamped to allow for more discussion time amongst parents.

(1) Remembrance Day

- Currently the assembly is mainly influenced by Christianity (incl. a cross on stage); this might not be appropriate for a multicultural school.
- Students could possibly lead the assembly

Comments:

- The multicultural aspect is becoming the norm at national ceremonies; ambassadors of other countries have started to lay wreaths too on Remembrance Day, indicating that war is horrible for any culture. It is suggested to have a theme each year to encourage future actions towards peace. Avoidance is not enough. (David P. has been involved in organizing Remembrance Day ceremonies on Parliament Hill and overseas.)
- The US has Memorial Day in May as a holiday; schools prepare for this holiday; students visit soldiers in veteran homes.
- It is an opportunity to educate students to have more respect for other cultures and religions.
- The assemblies at Lisgar are well organized, the Vox editor's speech has a great impact; musical contributions are very positive too.
- Remembrance Day starts at home with being appreciative of what the soldiers do.
- Resources for enriching the assemblies are available: Canadian Heritage, Canadian Legion, or invite parents who have served in the armed forces.
- The event should be as inclusive as possible.
- It is difficult to make sure students attend if they are off-site (i.e. at the Cenitaph)
- The assemblies could be more student oriented rather than procedure oriented.
- One elementary school had done a project of finding who had a family member who had died during a war to make children aware on how many families were impacted by war.
- Students should be encouraged to research any family connection to war (incl. nurses, merchants, etc.) and maybe prepare a small presentation or a display.
- Students should be actively involved so they don't get bored.
- All faith-based symbols should be removed; Remembrance Day is always seen as Canada's role; war experience from other countries should be included too; it also takes forgetting about the previous enemies.
- Remembrance Day is not only an opportunity to remember the past, but also an opportunity to encourage students to reflect on how to keep the peace in the future as a way to honor and carry on what the solders protected with their lives.

- Presentations could include more recent events rather than just the world wars; giving the students more opportunity to be interested; explain the role of soldiers as peace keeping rather than killing.
 - Some schools have students present war events in the form of tableaux; let students talk about their own experiences with war - this has an incredible impact on students.
 - If it is difficult to take a large group of students to the Cenitaph, then maybe only grade 10 go there and the other students go to the assembly.
 - Remembrance Day is an opportunity for students to educate their peers.
- (2) \$500 Board Grant – postponed to February
- (3) New principal – covered by Principal’s report
- (4) LSC presentation
- February: it is suggested that we give David McMahon an opportunity to introduce himself and his plans for Lisgar
 - March and April: suggestion to invite the Trustee to present what she is doing; also invite the Lisgar Alumni to present their role.

9. Old Business

- (1) Updated principal’s report

It was

MOVED BY: David Paull

SECONDED BY: Liz Melanson/Pam Coculuzzi

THAT the updated principal’s profile be accepted as distributed.

CARRIED

- (2) Holiday donations – already covered in principal’s report.
- (3) Letter supporting Glashan – postponed to February
- (4) Cross Boundary Transfer:

David P. read out the draft of a letter intended to be sent to Cathy Curry at the Board.

Comments:

- The letter should also go to Lynn Scott.
 - Council should provide input regarding the letter; it should also be coordinated with Lynn H. as she has been the primary liaison for transfers.
 - The Board staff tends to see the Board as a system as supposed to see us as individual parents and students;
 - There is no information yet on the Board website regarding the transfer consultation.
- (5) Presentation event: Laura Lunn sends regrets. She prepared a short questionnaire to find out what parents are most interested in; the questionnaire will be distributed via the parent mailing group. Additional topics under consideration: emotional needs of gifted children, brain changes in adolescents. Lisgar will have the email addresses of the incoming grade 9, so information on the presentation can be sent to those families too. The tentative date is March.

Action Item: Karen to provide a list of books about adolescent brains.

10. Subcommittee Reports

- (1) Board Watch

- Secondary gifted review: no final recommendations until fall of 2009, so no changes to gifted centres until the fall of 2010; the result of parent survey is now posted on board web site.

(2) OCASC – report on the January 15 meeting will be brought to the February LSC meeting

(3) SEAC

- The board has changed their schedule: SEAC is now on the Wednesday of the last week of the month, the Education Committee is meeting on January 20, their meeting is now on Tuesdays.
- The last meeting took place on January 6. Sandy Owens gave a very good report on the process of obtaining special equipment.
- Michael Clark presented an update on the SpecEd costs for 2008. The deficit is down; he recommended that trustees don't cut any more SpecEd funding.
- Budget: the Ministry is contemplating a 1% cut to funding.

(4) Zone 10

- No meeting took place in December; the next meeting will take place on January 19 at Lisgar.

(5) SSC

- The next meeting is scheduled for January 8.

Q: Are there any substantial expenses expected due to curriculum changes next year?

A: There will be new science courses next year; school has to purchase books for grade 9 and 10; if there is no text book available, photocopy costs increase; some teachers might still use old textbooks for certain topics until the board removes those textbooks from the list of permissible books.

Q: Should secondary school council go forward with a letter to ask for additional funding?

A: The Board bases the school book funding on enrolment but not on the variety of sections in any particular school.

11. Information Items

Rachel made first contact with Glashan; David will coordinate getting Lisgar parents involved

12. Round Table

- One former student reported that the 90 hours invested in Writers Club was the time best spent so far.

Thoughts of Lisgar School Council on the Retirement of Karen Gledhill

Karen, on behalf of Lisgar School Council, we would like very much to formally read into the Minutes of this, your last Council Meeting as Principal of Lisgar, the thoughts and sentiments of Council on your work here at Lisgar. While these thoughts were a collaborative effort from many Council Members, they express how we all feel on this evening.

The tone of a school is set from the top down. Karen, you have set a high standard indeed. Your passion, your unflagging enthusiasm, your boundless energy, and your total engagement have inspired all who worked with you. Anyone who has worked with you even on minor projects knows how dedicated you are - working late, on week-ends, and during vacations. Your commitment to Lisgar even included coming in to work on Sundays to address the sheer volume of email that comes with the job of being principal. We know how organized and patient you are and how you were always willing to share information with us.

In working with you, we have all been very conscious of your intense concern for the well-being -- physical, emotional, and spiritual -- of Lisgar students. And we have seen you act -- fully, quickly, decisively -- to respond to these concerns. This holistic approach -- thinking of all of the needs of all of the students -- has distinguished you as an educator.

Your compassion for the students at Lisgar has been matched by your passion for your work with all of the members of the school community. In addition, we've all noticed how much you care, not just about

Lisgar and its students, but for all the schools and their students. This we accepted as the norm until one of our Council Members appeared before the Board's Education Committee. One Board Member wanted to know if Lisgar parents were aware of the impact Lisgar's success in attracting students had on other schools. The reply was, "Of course. Mrs. Gledhill tells us about it whenever we discuss student transfers." We learned afterwards that this was not the expected answer, and that your ongoing concern for the schools whose programs were being negatively affected by Lisgar's gains was considered above and beyond the call of duty. This is just one example of the dedication and the compassionate perspective that you brought to your position as principal of Lisgar.

While we have known you only for a few years -- in some cases only a few months -- we all recognize you as a special leader who balances the professional requirements in formal education with a clear vision of education as the key to develop people into well-rounded individuals who will become comfortable members of our society. Your years of experience at Lisgar and other schools no doubt enhanced your development into an exceptional leader. You have earned the respect of teachers, staff, students, and parents. You have infected people with positive energy, and invited us to be part of your vision.

While the job of any Principal is to a large degree that of chief administrator, you have transcended that to keep your focus on being an educator as well. Your commitment to, and pursuit of, attaining the best educational standards possible to meet the many needs of our children has paid, and for years to come will continue to pay, many dividends.

Thank you, Karen, for all you've done for our children, our school, and our community. Yet just a thank-you seems to us somehow to be an inadequate expression of our appreciation.

The Members of Lisgar School Council

13. Adjournment

The council meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.