

**Minutes of CSS Parent Council
June 7, 2006**

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:04 by Jackie Benoit in the school library.

Present:

Jackie Benoit (President)
Laurie Hirsch (Co-secretary)
Karen Miller (Member at large)
Latrice Lehman (Board Member)
Ron Sweet (Principal)
Debra Pylypiw (Board Member)

Ann Rowbotham
Darrell Lonsberry (AP)
Karen Barlow (Member at large)
Anne Marie Fryer (Member at Large)
Sherry Badior (Treasurer)
Ann Ahern (Member at large)

Absent:

April Toyota (Member at large)
James Cameron (Board Rep.)
Denise Kitagawa
Carol Berlin-Miller (Co-secretary)
Claire Herringer

Tammy Willerth (Member at large)
Margaret Mills (Vice President)
Jackie Stewart
Cathy Kurio (Teacher Rep.)
Theresa Lor

1. Approval of Agenda

The motion to approve the Agenda of June 7, 2006 was brought by Laurie H. and seconded by Jackie B.

2. Approval of Minutes of May 3, 2006

The motion to approve the minutes of May 3, 2006 was brought by Ann A. and seconded by Deb P.

3. Guest Speaker Donna Desbiens - High School Study

Donna Desbiens is affiliated with the University of Calgary and is doing a study on High Schools in Calgary. The discussion was about expanding CSS into the high school level. She wants to find out the parents' interest in this project and how feasible it actually is. 2007 or even 2008 would be the earliest to look at starting a preliminary plan. Parents and teachers are driving this project and the Board is initiating this discussion. The school would be very small. There would be limited options offered.

Donna interviewed 40 grade 8 students at CSS. She really found them to be respectful. Donna handed out a short survey asking the parents present three questions along these lines:

1. If CSS expanded into high school, would we send our children?
2. If CSS expanded into high school, would our children want to go?
3. What is our ideal vision for a CSS high school?

Ron S. and Darrell L. wondered about their inclusion in the discussion. Everyone agreed that they could remain even though they are not parents of students currently attending CSS.

Deb P. felt the questions were not worded well. If you have more than one child, its hard to answer for both children. Donna D. said for the survey, we should assume that the CSS philosophies would continue in high school. Latrice was asking about the type of program - matriculation or options.

Donna stopped the discussion to turn on the tape recorder for an “off the record” discussion.

After the recorded discussion, Ron S. added that we need a certain number of students to be viable. Perhaps the current CSS could be a 4-8 middle school and then we could have a 9-12 high school. Another suggestion was an “on-line” school. Deb P.’s son found it hard to go from CSS to a CBE high school. Karen M. suggested its not just the teachers. A lot of kids in high school do not want to be there. The CBE has a very large range of students. Ron S. said that CSS has a better “delivery” of info. It is much more interactive. One parent said that her daughter has had a great experience at Diefenbaker. Darrell L. said that a CSS high school will depend again on the teachers (CSS is very selective). Donna commented on how much the students like the teachers at CSS.

4. Reports

(a) Chair - Jackie Benoit

Claire Herringer advised Jackie B. that 162 articles of clothing were sold.

The teachers’ appreciation lunch is ready for Friday (Christina). It will be set up in the library.

Booster Juice on May 12 - unfortunately it arrived late. Some of the teachers did not like the kids having the drinks in the classrooms. 254 drinks were ordered. In the future, the choices of flavours should be limited.

Popcorn Day - Jackie will call Liz to inquire if popcorn day has been planned.

The 1st day of school coffee time is being organized by Annette. There will be coffee,

juice and snacks. Next school year's first day of classes is August 16, 2006.

The last day of school this year is June 29. The 30th of June is an organizational day. A notice needs to go out confirming the final week of school.

The New Parent Orientation cannot happen until after the 16th of August. Ron S. thought it may be redundant, but council thought it is still necessary.

The first camp of the new school year is the last week in August. The grade 4s may go that week as well.

(b) Principal's Report

Ron S. apologized for being late. He was attending a retirement celebration for a good friend.

The thank you cards on the tables were prepared by Natalie's grade 6 students (6.2). Ron said "thanks" to everyone on council - CSS could not operate without them. He appreciates the feedback. He would like more people on council.

Latrice L. asked about having an "open" council meeting to discuss a high school expansion. Ron thought it might be better to open a 2nd campus before opening a high school. There are a lot of pluses in having a 2nd campus.

Budget Highlights

As you know, in January we received a grant from the provincial government to provide all of the coming year's grade six students with a laptop which they will use over their next four years at CSS. In anticipation of this being a very successful pilot project, we have included money in next year's budget to continue this effort with 2007/2008 grade six students.

Over the past three years, Our communication specialist Vern Begg as been working for CSS for just a few hours per month. The Spectrum is only one of many projects he is involved with. The new budget allows us to have him in the school half time. Vern will now be able to sit on the school's Communication and Outreach Committee, will take over maintaining the school's website, will be in the school to photograph and report upon many more school activities, both within the Spectrum and through outside publications, and will serve teachers and students as a resident media expert.

The Science Lab is scheduled for roughly \$33,000 in upgrades and \$10,000 of new equipment.

In order to lower the per-student fee of next year's improved Bamfield Marine Biology Excursion for grade nine students the budget provides a \$200.00 per student subsidy. Deb P. suggested parents have a payment plan for Bamfield to make it easier to make the

payment.

There are provisions in next year's budget for a new photo copier for the office. The existing photo copier will be moved to the library and be used by classes on the second floor.

We have placed money in the music budget for the purchase of a three octave set of handbells.

Staffing

Staffing for the 2006/2007 school year is now complete with the addition of Kevin Sonico as grade 8 Math/Science specialist, Nola Shewfelt as the school's Administrative Secretary, Susan Miller as Office Assistant and Donna Alden as Teacher Librarian.

Outreach

As you know, our grade eight seconded Sherene Schmidtler is returning to Foothills School Division at the end of June. She has been a tremendous addition to the Calgary Science School during her time here, always enthusiastically contributing to our school community, and is very appreciative of the professional development opportunities and experiences she has been given.

Sherene was very happy to learn that she has been placed in the soon-to-open Heritage Heights School just outside southern city limits. We hope that the relationship she has with CSS will continue long into the future and, to this end, we have envisioned a close relationship developing with her new school and its staff. A point of contact planned for the near future is Heritage Height's involvement in May 2007 Fort Steele programming. Our school will foster their participation through staff training, sharing of equipment and provision of program and site organization. We hope to foster a close relationship in several other areas and can see ourselves being helpful with both program and staff development as their new school moves forward.

We have strengthened our relationship with the Calgary Regional Consortium through allowing them to rent our facility for many of their sessions this year. We have fast become their "facility-of-choice" for workshops and will continue to foster this relationship in the 2006/2007 school year.

Technology

We have recently been moving forward by leaps and bounds in the area of technology. OSI is now providing us with two specialists to finish fine-tuning the school's network. As well, Apple Canada has been contributing expertise on an on-going basis. Over the course of the last month, we have switched our internet service provider to Bell and are now utilizing the SuperNet. Also, we have installed a new e-mail server and are moving

all e-mail services in-house.

Apple has just released their new Intel-based student line. The computers we purchase for the grade six one-to-one initiative will be 13" MacBooks with 2 gigahertz processors and one gig of ram. Depending on the success of the 2006/2007 project, we have created the opportunity within next year's budget to make a similar purchase for 2007/2008.

PCs will be installed in the business offices. Karen wondered if others could purchase computers at the CSS discounted price. Scott Petronic can forward information to interested families .

Outdoor Education

This year's combination of the Fort Steele History Lab and Fort Steele Apprenticeship Program was the best yet. Program improvements included the addition of Fort Steele Follies presented to the grade five classes by the grade eights, and the addition of a Confectioner Apprenticeship. Last year we ran the Apprenticeship pilot with 12 students per group. In spite of grade eight student numbers doubling on all trips, this year's Apprenticeship Program was the best yet!

The grade seven Southern Alberta Cultural Tour is presently taking place and final preparations are underway for the grade four Three Day Experience at Camp Sweet. Due to a booking error at Camp Goldeye, the grade six Nordegg trip has been moved to the last week of August (the second half of their two-year 6/7 program). Some children that are leaving CSS really wanted to go on this particular field trip. Unfortunately, Ron felt that since they were no longer registered with CSS, this would not be possible.

French

On June 6th we completed a review of the 2005/2006 grade four pilot program with Alberta Distance Learning. We have given the green light to continue the program with the incoming grade fours and to initiate the new grade five program in August. In the new school year we have reduced the number of French periods per six-day cycle from six to four. As well, we are considering placing an article in the Spectrum that will explain to parents of students presently in grade five and older how to register for the grade four or five program on line. Laurie H. asked about a more challenging program for children coming from French immersion schools and Karen M. suggested having a French club at lunch.

Registration for 2006/2007

We are nearly fully registered waiting on the final parental decision regarding two grade fours, and still looking for two interested grade nine students.

The Parent Handbook really needs to be completed and should be handed out at the

beginning of the year. Vern will be provided with the updated version and then he can work on having it ready in August.

(c) Board Report - Deb Pylypiw

Deb P. said the major discussion at the last board meeting was about the initial steps for a high school. The last meeting is on June 20 at 5:00 p.m.

5. Committees

(a) Transportation - Deb Pylypiw

Karen and Deb just got routes back from Southland. They have tweaked the routes. They are quite pleased with routes. One south route is very long. It starts in Douglasdale. It has 18 stops. Route 1 is long also. Route 6 is shorter. Route 9 is short. There are 10 buses in all. All routes will go home for parents to look at. There is a new prospect for the transportation committee person. Deb and Karen will help with the transition.

6. Discussion

Natalie Powell is planning a celebration for all the people leaving CSS. It will be on Monday, June 26. Does council want to contribute a gift? The gift would be to Jim and Louise only. CSS will look after teachers. Karen wanted to know if we should contribute to Kosovo or get a gift certificate? It was decided to give them a \$100 gift certificate and donate \$100 to the Kosovo charity. Motion to contribute to a \$200 to gift for Jim and Louise was brought by Deb P. and seconded by Karen M.

Latrice L. has final approval from Ron for the directory. We are asking for parent email addresses but they will not be in the directory. Darrell felt that if emails are published, there could be problems with spam and viruses. Ron thought students may abuse the emails of parents. Kids should use phones to contact their friends.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was brought by Latrice L. and seconded by Ann A. Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.