

GREATER ESSEX COUNTY PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (GECPIC)

Tuesday, January 24, 2012 ❖ 7:00 p.m. ❖ Brock School Cafeteria

MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Sheet was distributed for sign in.

AGENDA: Motion to accept agenda made by Kelly Schwab and seconded by Wayne Samwell.

PREVIOUS MINUTES: Motion to accept previous minutes made by Wayne Samwell and seconded by Deb Gagnier.

JK Registration by Laura Bates, Principal of Roseland

- Presentation was made regarding Kindergarten Open House on Feb. 15th.
- Why are our Kindergarten open houses so successful? Support of GECPIC and the school board.
- All the schools share information with each other and take advantage of best practices.
- GECPIC is very important to our schools.
- Word of mouth advertising is very important.
- Gather feedback from staff, community and students and try to get as much feedback as possible from parents.
- Roseland is trying to get the message out and highlight their strengths. They take a community approach. Teamwork is key. They share their vision with parents.
- Showcase your classrooms and the school.
- Make it a family affair including letters to incoming students and parents, invitation to students and parents, open house passports, Windsor Public Library.
- Getting the Word Out: Newsletter articles in January and February newsletters, GECDSB personalized newsletter insert, personal invitations made by kindergarten students for siblings, friends, and neighbours, and by word of mouth.
- What we have learned? In order to engage parents we need to make a concerted effort to plan events that will reach them in order to educate parents. Parents play a vital role in education.

Naturalized Play Areas by Stephen A. White, LEED AP, Albert Khan Associates

- Albert Khan Associates is the firm that built Hiram Walker and Willistead Manor.
- The presentation was speaking about the process of planning a naturalized play area.
- Stephen White lives near Dr. David Suzuki Public School and wanted to work with the school board.
- Understand your site
 - Inventory the space that you have.
 - Consider who the space is for? Who uses the space?
 - How do children play? Kids don't play with the toy, they play with the box.
 - What is the school yard for - - play, exercise, learning, respite, release.
- Design Principles: Connection to nature, social interaction, exercise and choices.
- Typical schoolyard has delineated zones of play including the space for the play equipment.
- Dr. Suzuki School site had several issues to deal with: public access, winter winds, and sun.

- Use the schoolyard to connect curriculum to nature.
- Site concept: Create an environment to exercise the mind and body. Create a natural world for exploration and learning.
- Engaged students: What would make our schoolyard cool? What do I want to do or see in my schoolyard?
- Asked students to draw pictures of what they wanted. Received hundreds of pictures. Students were very passionate about what they wanted.
- Some common ideas emerged such as sports fields, mazes, trails, and places to chill.
- If you come up with a good plan, you don't have to implement it all at once. It could take several years to complete.
- Need to think about all different ages as well as expansion in the future.
- Natural spaces can be used as laboratories. Students can bring concepts from the outside to the classroom and teachers can help the students connect the concepts back to the curriculum.
- Think about the simple steps you can take and then consider the master plan. It takes time to implement the entire plan. Be smart with the limited resources you have to work with.
- The presentation is on Dr. Suzuki's school website.

Director's Report: Warren Kennedy

- The GECPIC Survey has been sent out and looking to get the results at the next meeting.
- The school board is working with the City of Windsor on the International Children's games to build on the fitness of our children. Passports are being designed that is child driven where children will keep track of their eating habits and fitness levels.
- \$10,000 PRO Grant: possible opportunities will be discussed with principals to GECPIC to decide how to make it available to parents.

Principal's Presentation: Melissa Nantais from Massey

- Spoke about the PRO grant funds and how they were used for a parent/student evening.
- Parental Involvement = Student Success.
- Sent letters out to feeder schools and letters home with students. Synervoice was used to send a message to the home. Parent council representatives passed out flyers on parent-teacher interview night.
- What topics do parents need to know more about to help parents and students make the high school experience a positive experience?
- Worked with parents, staff and community to prepare a menu of workshops.
- Translated some of the handouts into other languages.
- Most of the cost involved in these evenings was for photocopying.
- Presentation will be put onto the GECPIC section of the school board website.

Chair's Report: Jamie de l'Eveille

- At the last school board meeting, there was a motion regarding the use of perfumes. They want to make people aware of the issue of allergies and perfumes.
- A CD was made by different classes singing children's songs for Kindergarten registration.
- Enrollment report as of October is status quo.
- Mike Neuts will be presenting on February 23rd at Caboto Club.
- The 3 Family of Schools PARC's are in the beginning stages.
- GECPIC budget was shared.

- Teachers Have Heart is raising funds for breakfast programs and they are selling raffle tickets to support the cause and the tickets are \$5.
- Armande Matte would like to know if any schools are interested in hosting the Free Income Tax program for low income individuals which is open to the community.

Motion to adjourn made by Sue Cate and Kathy Westlake.