

JHS Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

Wednesday, Sept 23, 2020

Meeting Notes - DRAFT

7 pm - Zoom Meeting/in-person

Present: Graham Arts, Jeff Seabrook, Al MacDonald, Kerry Wheler, Wendy Campeau, Wendy Lahey, Melissa Bard, Carla, Tania Hercun, Annie Casson, Joslyn Apps, Susan Fitzky, Katie Johnson, Bethany Geraci, Meaghan McLaren, Krista Chin, Cory Segboer, Meghan Beveridge

Action items (June 2020)

1. Graham will put a call for parent representatives for the School renaming committee – discuss at next PAC meeting.

(September 2020)

1. Graham will meet with Julie to discuss next steps for a loose parts playground.
2. Al will bring challenge of sufficient subs to Superintendent (Ed Lippert).
3. Kerry will contact Julie and Steve to coordinate moving the wall tents from the JHS site.
4. Graham will give update on process for wall tents next meeting.
5. Find out if we can get support to build a sliding hill in the playground somewhere.
6. Defer discussion of the plant sale until November.
7. Graham will reach out to Caroline Roux about organizing a literacy parent information session.
8. Graham will liaise with Dr. Anne Davies about possibility of running a Google Classroom parent information session.
9. Annie will reach out to an acquaintance about running a Google Classroom parent information session.
10. Graham will ask teachers at the November staff meeting about interest in another teacher training in art projects.
11. PAC will create the calendar for treats for teachers and Graham will confirm.
12. Wendy C. will consider dates for subway lunches and communicate with Graham. Laura should be able to reactivate account.
13. Annie will lead this year's PAC parent survey.
14. Katie Johnson will send out PAC Hot Topics for La Semaine each month.
15. Confirm PAC Meeting dates for the year with Graham and Jeff.

1. Welcome and approval of agenda and previous minutes

- Graham and Wendy L co-chaired.
- June

2. Quick Standing Updates – Graham

a. Principal's report

- **Enrollment** – 294 kids (less than 320 projection), 6 kids homeschooling, 2-4 kids pursuing distance studies (while self-isolating), JHS working on supporting distance learning.
- Attendance rates are up. Late arrivals are down so far.
- Teacher does **screening** in the classroom; if a student is late, they need to come to the office to be screened. The school can't rely on students being screened at home. The school must screen everyone (students, staff and visitors). If a student screens positive in the classroom, the parent would be called back.
- **1 staffing** reduction; have 14 classes (15 last year)
- Staffing changes: Audrey Cavanagh (new program support teacher); Gabrielle Demers (new grade 1 teacher, from Montreal), Jasmine Marianayagam (returning grade 3 teacher), Emma Ambury (CEPA teacher last year, grade 1 this year); Julie Downes (substitute teacher last year, new CEPA and English teacher this year).
- CEPA funding – 0.6 of a position (0.5 last year)
- Music allocation is the same (rather than additional).
- Using 3 hours of 1 staff person (Melanie Bourque) to support teachers supporting kids self-isolating and liaising with family.
- Needed is a 0.5 English teacher. No one applied. So, JHS has worked out a solution.
- M. Sevigny will be out until at least Oct 15, so JHS working on a solution.
- Underequipped for **playground equipment**. Working with YK1 and Department of Infrastructure to move junior kindergarten (JK) equipment from old school to be near portables. Purchasing bins of toys for each class to use in playground.
 - o Q. Last year, we talked about purchasing a loose parts playground. Has there been any progress on that?
 - o It's a question of staff having the time to be able to order it. The school move was two weeks behind schedule and staff are catching up. There is a good playground set at the old school that we want to use; but will consider alternatives going forward.
 - o Q. Could a parent help out with putting together a loose parts playground?
 - o Emma and Julie are interested in CEPA and outdoors. Right now they are sourcing a new wall tent.
 - o Al – From the trustees' point of view, Tina Drew (YK1 Board chair) supports a loose parts playground. YK1 has some funding for it. One challenge is what are the rules for outdoor equipment. Tina Drew could attend the October PAC meeting. Or the matter could be brought to the YK1 Board.
 - o Graham – JHS supports the concept but hasn't had time to get it done.
 - o Wendy – For Bushkids approvals, we've taken the approach that we're not cleaning the land (trees, sticks, stumps, etc.); but cleaning the tools, etc.
 - o Al – Reiterates that YK1 fully supports a loose parts playgrounds. Though it has yet to discuss a budget, the funds won't come out of the JHS budget.
 - o At William MacDonald School (WMS) there is no sliding hill. Could the school consider how snow is piled to create a sliding area, as an alternative?

- **ACTION:** Find out if we can get support to build a sliding hill in the playground somewhere.
- Last year's surplus has stayed with the schools, so that is a potential funding source for alternatives. JHS will share its budget with the PAC, once all essentials are covered. Today has felt like the first day that felt almost normal. Will share school budget to staff on Oct 6th staff meeting.
- **ACTION:** Graham will meet with Julie to discuss next steps.

b. PAC Financial Report

- PAC budget is currently \$11,681 minus an invoice for \$579 (last subway).
- JHS needs to be sure what it will do with its surplus before approaching PAC with requests.

b. Trustee's Report - AI

- There could be a YK1 shuffle in November. So, AI may or may not be the JHS trustee after that time.
- YK1 started "food for families" (grocery gift certificates) during lockdown. YK1 gave about \$60k, but raised more than that.
- The focus this summer has been to produce and submit plans (often 7-8 submissions per plan) to the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO). YK1 hired four new staff for YK1. Recruiting of teachers continues to be a challenge.
- **Bussing** has been challenging.
 - JHS want to make sure that bussing for those who live close to the old school get free bus passes in recognition of their choice to live close to JHS for easy access. Bus company will know who can be offered free passes. Contact Tram Do (Director, Corporate Services, YK1), otherwise. This message should be on YK1 website.
 - Due to need for additional buses and routes this year for the Yellowknife Catholic School Board (YCS) and YK1. 4 new buses were purchased (about \$44k each) and 4 new routes developed that fit for YK1 and YCS. It will take about 2 months before that is in place. In the interim, YK1 is paying cab fares for some kids.
 - Q. Will there be buses that won't be needed once we can go back to regular bus capacity? Were other options explored before purchasing new buses?
 - Assume that staff made a decision based on analysis of all options. Need kids to get to school. Haven't had time to talk about what happens when JHS students go back to their new school.
 - The City doesn't want grade 8s on city buses and the buses don't go to Sir John Franklin High School (SJF) and the City won't put a route through Taylor road.

- **Insurance** – YK1 left ASB firm, as the company wanted to raise insurance by about \$100k. YK1 has chosen to go on its own.
- **Sufficient substitute teachers** is a challenge for the whole district. The substitute teacher supply list is about half of usual (about 35 subs for 3 school districts) and there could easily be additional demand, due to the need for teachers to self-isolate if they or their families have any COVID-19 symptoms.
 - o Based on projections JHS is likely to run out of funds for subs by November 15th.
 - o Options are YK1 is trying to have teachers declared as essential services and thereby allow teachers from the south to come up. Some recent high school graduates are subbing; could be more in January once graduate. Might have some half time grade 12 students as sub options. Also some university students who are staying in town who might be interested.
 - o Parents expressed concern having very young substitute teachers managing behaviours and teaching curriculum for extended periods of time. They don't have the life experience that might be needed for the position.
 - o **ACTION:** Al will bring challenge of sufficient subs to Superintendent (Ed Lippert) tomorrow.

3. Hot Topics

a. Outdoors Committee

- Q. What is the best way to support the CEPA program? Funding? Wall tents are still over at the old school. Is there a way to help get them over? Worry that someone will steal the stoves.
- Graham met with Julie last week and have confirmed the location for the wall tent. Julie will communicate with Steve Reitsma to get a quote to move the wall tents over to WMS. Parent help might be welcome. Preapproved budget up to \$4,000.
- Steve would construct the large tent in the available treed site. Might use current frame, or not. Canvas would need to be purchased. The small tent (~10x12) might be set up on site (space a challenge), loaned (ski club?), or stored (Allain St Cyr has offered a storage shed).
- There is a potential spot behind the trees that would require some building, but its further away from fire pit. Other spaces might be needed for phys ed programs. No homes around school, so not well monitored by traffic and still risk of vandalism. WMS uses its tent for about half a day once a week for forest school teacher, so there is opportunity to coordinate/partner. JHS is allowed to use WMS' fire pit.
- **ACTION:** Kerry will contact Julie and Steve to coordinate.
- **ACTION:** Graham will give update on process for wall tents next meeting.
- Old JHS site now has large amount of garbage and the picnic bench is broken. Playground not in good shape, so likely the tents could be vandalized. Parents no longer letting kids play in that playground. YK1 maintenance has access but needs to get work orders to move stuff. It's a work site.
 - o Q. If it's a work site, the playground needs to be fenced off.

- YK1 is aware of problems.
- 2 truck loads of wood is ordered.
- Q. What is the policy to have knowledge holders? Could explore involving knowledge holders who are not elders?
 - Not in the school. Outside is possible but protecting their health is a priority. All schools in NWT won't have elders working with schools, based on discussion with leadership. Connection over videoconference is a possibility.

b. Plant Sale

- 2 PAC members are interested in doing the plant sale in May. Likely a way to do it safely.
- The plant sale involves a lot of volunteer hours but is valuable to the community and students involved to learn about growing, etc.
- Opportunity to work with WMS on a joint plant sale.
- **ACTION:** Defer discussion until November.

c. Parent Information Sessions

- Parent information sessions are likely possible this year if online.
- Literacy night? **ACTION:** Graham can reach out to Caroline Roux.
- Google Classroom (all schools use it, and for self-isolating students)? Could be offered outside of school district facilitator?

ACTION: Graham will liaise with Dr. Anne Davies (former teacher) about possibility.

ACTION: Annie will reach out to an acquaintance as a possible facilitator.

 - Suggestion that teachers standardize how they set up information on Google Classroom, should schools close again.
 - Need to consider how JK are integrated on Google Classroom, even though what they're learning is vastly different. Pre-literate kids will struggle in text driven platform (like Google Classroom).

d. Promotion of CPF

- Deferred. Can invite parents to register. Membership is free until to the end of October. Kieron Testart is president.

e. Arts at JHS

- Each class getting 2 30-minute art periods a week. Teachers find time to integrate art outcomes.
- In recent years, there has not been a lot of resident artists (intentional visual art). Videoconference might allow this.
- PAC could support another teachers training for art projects. Kerry and Susan happy to help doing some instruction.

ACTION: Graham will ask the teachers at the November staff meeting.

f. Treats for Teachers

- How can PAC support the teachers, provide treats? If served, it would be allowed (not communal/buffet style).

ACTION: PAC will create the calendar. Graham will confirm.

g. Hot lunches

- Subway lunches should be possible this year.

ACTION: Wendy C. will consider dates and communicate with Graham. Laura should be able to reactivate account.

4. Other Items

a. Future PAC Meetings and Schedule

- WMS is the 3rd Wednesday of each month. JHS could be every 2nd Wednesday of each month. Future dates: **Oct 14, November 12** [needs to be confirmed], **Dec 9, Jan 13, Feb 10, March 10, April 14, May 12, and June 9.**
- **ACTION:** Confirm PAC Meeting dates for the school year with Graham and Jeff.

b. PAC positions for 2020/21

- Chair position is open. Co-chairing also an option.
 - o Annie and Susan (starting in November) will co-chair.
- Communications (drafting small email after PAC meetings with highlights)
 - o Katie Johnson
- Note taker
 - o Meghan will continue (unless another is interested)

c. PAC survey

- Could use draft from last year. **ACTION:** Annie can lead this.