

Holy Spirit Catholic School

Parent council Meeting

Tuesday April 12, 2011, 7:00pm

In attendance: Mr. Marceau, Mr. Corrigan, Mrs. Peterson, Maureen Kerwin, Jeanne St. John, Tera Gariepy, Alayna MacGillivray, Jennifer Lloyd, Lesa Sanderson, Megan Gorman, Shelley Salazar, Mike and Phoebe Kozakewich, Melanie Sczesny, Garmand Gosselin, Holly Herbert, Nadine Wright, Erin Gallagher, Natercia Duchesne, Cheryl Hogan, Angela Cucinotta, Liza Mydan, Tracy Germain, Shari Brash, Denise Keil, Sharlene Wolbeck Minke, Asaph Fernandes, Marc Tremblay, Raya Korber, Stefan Vindis, Rob and Lora-Lea Pitzel, Holly Janes-Smith

**1.0 Opening Prayer** -read by Mr. Marceau

**2.0 Approval of agenda** – Motion made by Maureen Kerwin 2<sup>nd</sup> by Alayna MacGillivray

**3.0 Approval of minutes** – motion made by Tera Gariepy 2<sup>nd</sup> by Maureen Kerwin

**4.0 Parking/Drop off Zone**

Mr. Marceau and the Principal from Lakeland Ridge had a meeting with an engineer from the County regarding parking issues, congestion, safety etc. This is more of a Lakeland Ridge problem but Holy Spirit traffic gets caught up in the congestion. Waiting for snow to be gone to properly assess. Some ideas being looked into:

- Doubling the width of the parking lot exit (at the Lakeland Ridge end)
- Making Crimson Drive (along the N. side of the school) a one way street during peak times.
- Installing a crosswalk across Cranberry Way at the South corner of the school. (crosswalks apparently can not be installed in the middle of a street)

These studies by the engineers are ongoing, the expense will be the county's responsibility and therefore will need to be addressed at future council meetings, perhaps this will take place over the summer.

Someone asked if there are existing crosswalks at the traffic circle

Jennifer Lloyd: Yes but it is still dangerous as the cars go through quickly.

Parent: Does Holy Spirit have a school patrol?

Mr. Marceau: No

Parent: Parents park at the beginning of the drop off zone (by portable entrance) and end up parking on the sidewalk, very dangerous.

Mr. Marceau: The school tries to make parents aware of the rules of the drop off zone, many choose not to listen. Lakeland Ridge puts warning notices on windshields. Signage in the parking lot is poor; many parents were ticketed on the day of the Kindergarten Christmas concert. Perhaps bylaw should be called in. A report from the engineers will be filed, sent to Holy Spirit and shared with parents.

Stefan: If all staff were parking in one main lot it would be easier to identify what was staff parking, now there are so many stalls all over it is hard to know where people can and can't park.

## **5.0 Bullying**

Maureen Kerwin: This will be an open type of discussion, please be respectful, if there are too many issues perhaps a separate meeting can be held to address them.

Mr. Marceau: The school is governed by the School Act. A bullying policy does not exist. There is no such thing as a "zero tolerance" policy. There are many different opinions on what "bullying" is. Different situations are dealt with. Some things that happen (ex. A fight, name calling, spitting etc.) are not necessarily "bullying". Mrs. Bell defines bullying as a 3 strike policy. (something happening 3x would be considered bullying). Incidents are often dealt with at the classroom level.

Mr. Corrigan: There is more value in being proactive and working to prevent these issues from arising in the first place.

Tracy Germain: What are the discipline policies?

Mr. Marceau: There is a behaviour/student conduct code in the agenda. It has space for a student, parent and teacher signature. When a student violates the rules it is dealt with on an individual basis; according to the school act. The teacher has the right to remove the student from a class (suspension); the Principal can remove the student from school for up to 4 days. If a severe offence has occurred the school board must be contacted to have the child expelled. This is very rare. We prefer to work as a team with the Principal, Assistant Principal, facilitator, Counsellor, teacher and possibly inter agency services (such as an occupational therapist, child family services etc.). Sometimes this approach does not work and we start over. A certain group of kids may be problematic all year. We will work with them.

Parents: At the expense of others.

Tracy Germain: When are the parents notified of their child's behaviour?

Mr. Marceau: It varies, once parents are involved we usually have success. Not all homes are supportive though. Parental support is key. The school's job is much more difficult without that. The RCMP resource officer can come in and deal with bullying and particular incidents. Civil litigation is also an idea.

Lesa Sanderson: Families are leaving the school because their kids are being bullied. It seems that the "bad ones" get to stay and the "good ones" are bullied out. Changes need to be made or there will be a lineup of people leaving the school.

Megan Gorman: parents do not want their kids in class with certain other kids. When are parents notified of incidents at school? Parents are concerned and want change.

Mr. Corrigan: We need to be cautious of the term “bad kids”

Shelley Salazar: Over the years the school has brought in many anti-bullying programs; some geared towards parents. There has consistently been low parent turn out. The parent council has set up evening sessions, tried to encourage people to be involved with council etc. and it does not happen. As a group what can we do?? We can talk to the children and the teachers before issues get out of hand.

Tracy Germain: It seems like the kids have no fear of staff or being disciplined.

Stefan Vindis: Perhaps with video surveillance in the school we can catch the bullying incidents on tape and use it as evidence.

Mr. Marceau: That is really not feasible. Our goal is to educate students, shape them etc., not to get rid of them.

Mr. Corrigan: Sometimes even teachers complain about student behaviour, it's not just parents.

Maureen Kerwin: Is there a way that teachers can let parents know when their kids are involved in an incident? Possibly notes in the agenda?

Parent (name?) There is an organization called Strathcona County Youth Justice (similar to community service) Maybe students need to know that this is a consequence of their behaviour and that they will be held accountable.

Mr. Marceau: We do need to build skills in people to stand up and defend themselves. That is the only way to stop bullying. The kids need to stand up, speak up and report behaviour. When the kids are too scared to tell then it gets worse. We can help fix it if we know about it. It is frustrating when we hear that bullying has been going on for months but never reported.

Maureen Kerwin: Parents need to also be aware of what is happening in the school.

Cheryl Hogan: Had a situation back in February; tried to call Mr. Marceau and got no response, no phone call back. Tried to meet with Mrs. Miller but she was told she had not time to have a meeting with her. I tried to set these meetings up, tried to report bullying but I got no response.

Mr. Marceau: Apologizes, the school tries to be responsive.

Nadine Wright: Communication needs to be increased regarding incidents that happen at school.

Jeanne St. Jean: If many parents have concerns then why have they not spoken up?

Holly Janes-Smith: How long do you spend trying to educate and nurture a child? Where is the line drawn? We don't think there is enough being done, there is too much time spent on the bully.

Stefan Vindis: It seems that there is nothing the school can do with a bully.

Mr. Marceau: We can do things, we cannot just approach a student and say "bye!" This is a public school. If you live in the boundary and are Catholic you are legally entitled to go to school here.

Mr. Corrigan: Expulsion is a very legal and very rare process.

Megan Gorman: we are not saying to expel the students but what discipline is happening on a lower level, on a daily basis?

Parent (name?) Is there ever a time when a group of parents are called together to discuss an ongoing issue?

Mr. Marceau: we have. It can be successful. It seems that having 2-3 parents is an easier number to work with.

Melanie Sczesny's husband (name missed): ABJ school seems to have a very good discipline policy, a zero tolerance policy. Are students here suspended at all?

Mr. Marceau: Yes.

Shelley Salazar: I see and hear that you are all frustrated. It seems that the attention is on the bully and that teaching time is possibly lost. It is also frustrating because parents do not attend any meetings, presentations etc. set up by the school/school council. There has been very poor turnout for events like this.

Mr. Corrigan: Regarding a zero tolerance policy; a warning is not zero tolerance. An out of school suspension is sometimes a wake up call to the student and parents.

Melanie Sczesny: When an incident happens I would like to see administrators come into the classroom and address the issue. The bully, victim and scared bystanders will know that this behaviour will not be tolerated.

Holly Janes-Smith: I think parents are all feeling that this is an issue and administration is saying no it's not.

Mr. Marceau: we do deal with things on a daily basis. If you have issues please come and see me. Mrs. Therrien was just in a class (gr5) talking to the kids about how they felt about the school. They said they were happy and enjoying school. Three years ago parents and students were intimidated by the junior high students. Now we focus on grade nines and let the characteristics trickle down. They are servant leaders, buddies to lower grades (gr 1) etc. They are fantastic students and we have great kids at this school. We are doing everything we can. I hear a call for increased communication. We can do that. We are not a closed door school. We want what you want; a great school and a safe school.

Nora (last name?): Parents must arm their kids with the tools to come to school, teach them to tell the teacher, tell their parents, parents must talk with teachers and the administration when issues arise.

Phoebe Kozakewich: What is the school doing proactively to handle bullying? We need to look at the younger grades. What is being done with the grade 9 students is great but what are we doing for the younger children?

Mr. Marceau: Parent council has been actively supporting anti-bullying programs in the school for years. Programs are in place at the school. We can prepare a list of programs to let people know what is going on.

Mr. Corrigan: Just today we had grade 5 & 6 students applying to be "positive playground leaders" The applicants are interviewed and then sent to St. Luke's for training.

Mr. Marceau: As mentioned before this is a team approach and each situation is treated differently.

Rob Pitzel: are students required to apologize to those hurt/bullied etc.?

Mr. Marceau: Occasionally, not often.

Mr. Corrigan: we would not want the victim embarrassed.

Mrs. Peterson: There are two sides to every story and not everything needs to be addressed.

Holly Janes-Smith: We should start with the younger grades. They should be learning what a bully is, how to stay safe etc.

Mr. Marceau: A good place to communicate with the administration is at the monthly parent council meetings.

Holly Janes-Smith: With the "stanger incident" that happened and the voicemail sent out, was the adequate information? Some students were informed in class, some were not. Lakeland Ridge students were given a letter to bring home to parents.

Mr. Marceau: Gave more details about the incident, working with the RCMP, it was determined this was a real incident, supervision was increased, staff made aware first thing the following morning.

Note: Parents would have like a follow up letter sent (with more information) along with the voicemail that went out.

Lesla Sanderson: Can we create a set of policies that are visible to everyone, online perhaps.

Maureen Kerwin: Is there a group of parents that would be willing to put together a proposal to direct the school and let them know what we would like to see?

Volunteers: Megan Gorman, Holly Janes-Smith, Phoebe Kozakewich, Tracy Germain, Lesla Sanderson

**6.0 Staff Report-** given by Mrs. Carrie Peterson

Lollipop/Bake sale raised \$900 for the World's Longest Hockey game

Grade 1B has a bake sale tomorrow

Grades 3/4, 4, and the grade 6 band attended a festival yesterday in Sherwood Park and Camrose. Both groups were quite successful. Handbells perform tomorrow at the festival.

Junior High orientation was held last week, ECS orientation is tomorrow night

Band concert April 16, jr high band trip to Seattle is Apr 18-21

Badminton tournament April 26

Class pictures April 27

Holy Thursday celebration is at 10:45 with Father Dan while our Easter celebration will be on Weds. April 27 at 2:15.

Friday April 29 is P.D. Day

Book fair held during Parent Teacher interviews was a success.

Jon Bauer concert is April 28

Jumpe Rope for Heart is wrapping up – a great deal of money was raised and the children enjoyed participating.

Grades 1-3 are attending the symphony on May 2 at 10:45 am

The system track meet is May 17. This conflicts with the grade 3 PAT's. They will be bussed over as soon as the PAT is complete.

Linking Generations and gr. 3/4P continues, going to the Strathcona care center continues.

Grades 1-3 and 3/4P will be making Ukrainian Easter eggs next week.

**7.0 Recognition of children completing the Sacraments**

Maureen Kerwin: This is all done at the Church; something should be done to recognize these children at the school.

Mr. Marceau: If teachers let me know they can be recognized at the assembly, perhaps certificates handed out at this time.

## **8.0 Hot Lunch Website**

Maureen Kerwin: It is \$400 to renew for another year. Do we want to continue using this website?

Parents were very much in support of the website and this method of ordering. All liked the ease and convenience of it.

Will order for next year.

## **9.0 Upcoming AGM and elections**

Maureen Kerwin: We are losing 3 parent council members, need to elect people for all positions

Shelley Salazar: Silver Bells and Hot Lunch need new coordinators as well

Maureen Kerwin: Silver Bells and Hot Lunch need more than one person, these are big jobs. If we do not have people to commit to these positions we will be losing major fundraisers. Hot lunch is not a hard job with a group of people running it.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm. Next meeting is May 27, 2011 at 7:00pm.