

Gordon Elementary PAC meeting

Sept 28th 2009 6:45pm-8:45pm

Gordon Elementary Library

Attending: Gerardo Iglesias (acting secretary), Anne Penman, Karen Wood, Niki Blakely, Caroline Krowe, Murray Manson, Jennifer Correa, Donald Gordon, Meghan Surface, Roberta Stuart, Heather Young, Rosita Di Fruscia, Miriam Grob, Charlotte French, Ingrid Sulston, Kelly Haughn, Colleen Kern, Elke Porter, Anna Johnson, Linda Drozdowski, Diana Schmidt, Colleen Xiang, Kristine Chapman, Xol Fox, Bill Uhrich, Margaret Davidson, Noreen Morris.

Call for secretary

Gerardo Iglesias volunteered to be the secretary for this meeting. For following meetings, parents that signed up for secretary on the volunteer sheets will be scheduled.

Approve May PAC meeting minutes

Elke Porter moved, seconded by Roberta Stuart.

Welcome new parents

Individual introductions by each parent present.

About our meetings

Ingrid explains in detail about PAC and about the meetings:

PAC's function is to help parents navigate school issues, to facilitate communication between the parents and staff or with outside organizations, to organize social and fundraising events for the school, and is an advocate for a quality school. We complement the activities of the teachers and staff, to make Gordon the best school we can.

When we meet: monthly meetings, alternating between the last Monday and Tuesday of the month. Dates are on the picture calendar and the website. Minutes posted on the website and on the calendar in the hallway.

What we meet about:

- Announcements and discussion of current activities in the school. PAC meetings are where you often first hear about programs and events, where you can voice your opinion, and vote. Many issues, i.e. the seismic upgrade, are topics of interest, and these are discussed in these meetings.
- We will have some guest speakers. Last year some of them came as guests with interesting topics, and the idea is to do so also this year. Let Ingrid know of speakers you would like to invite this year. It would be ideal to have someone to help with the coordination of these talks.
- Approval of spending. The process was explained.

Invitation to visit the website: all of the important documents, including the minutes, are regularly uploaded to the site, easily accessible to all parents.

What we do through the year

Ingrid goes through some of the events at Gordon through the year that PAC is involved in.

- Volunteer sheet shown. This was sent home, and due Friday. It is posted on the website on the events page.
- Ingrid shows table of PAC events through the year (also on handout). Also on the website on the events page/hallway calendar.
- Ingrid shows table of parent contacts shown (also on handout). Also posted on website. Read through the table to see what posts are open:
- Posts open: lost and found coordinator, recycling coordinator, DPAC and BCCPAC reps, Kits High school liaison, new Active Living Committee, new Parents for Science group, greening, school planning council

(November election), class reps, French Immersion steering committee. Parents volunteers for “lost and found” and “recycling coordinator” and greening committee were quickly found. Parents also expressed interest in the Active Living. Committee and Parents for Science. On Noreen’s suggestion, “Parents for Science” was changed to “Parents for Math and Science”. Offers to join this group. Class reps work was described, and several others.

Other events for the year were proposed:

“Sprouting Chefs” is a non-profit group that does gardening and cooking.

Mr. Mansfield, teaching one day a week, is interested in gardening, and working with the butterfly garden and starting an environment club.

Some parents propose a “Lice day” the same day for everyone in the school. Good slogan: “if it touches hair, don’t share”.

Dancing party was proposed, maybe around Valentine’s Day. Not good this year as the Olympics are in Feb.

Maybe at another time of year.

Bringing in a professional dancer was proposed. One known was too expensive.

Halloween party was also proposed. Noted that this is already done at Bayview and many students, especially those in JKC, go there.

Financial matters

- We received our gaming grant money. \$3850 that we can spend on extracurricular activities. This money comes from the province, and is reduced by half from last year.
- Direct donation drive this year will be coordinated by Megan Abele. We replaced two other fundraisers with this direct donation last year, and parents overall preferred it. Every family will get notices home the end of this week.
- Grocery card bulk buy was explained by Diana Schmidt. Getting Gift Cards from Safeway and other retailers is a good way to support the school. Order forms at the website and at the office. The association gains from the discount the vendors offer to the gift card sellers. Parents will spend that money in groceries anyway, so it is clearly beneficial. Diana Schmidt made a motion and Roberta seconded it, for approval to place an order to Safeway for \$950 in additional cards, using PAC funds, in order to get 4% return (the total we need is \$2,000, and we are short about \$900). The money will come back to PAC as the cards are sold. Motion was unanimously approved. Second motion is to buy \$4,000 worth of cards in October to get to 6%, and the third motion is also to buy \$4,000 in November for the same purpose. Last year experience shows that we will have no problem selling the cards, and get the full possible benefit. Voting on these motions will take place next month.
- Gift for teachers – we traditionally donate \$100 to each teacher, twice times over the year. They use it for special projects in class. Apparently, the money will be donated to the school, which in turn will allocate such moneys to the individual teachers. New motion: \$100 dollars for each class, \$100 dollars for music, and \$100 for resource, totalling \$1900. Nicky made the motion, Ana seconded it. It will be voted on next month.

It was asked what the difference between the class gifts and the direct drive. Noreen and Margaret explained that the direct drive is used for large items for the school, such as projectors, and for activities such as the performances that the school and PAC pay for together. The class funds are smaller amounts, \$100 per class, that the teachers use for their own smaller projects, but still makes a difference as many of them use their own money to buy classroom materials.

Other activities with students happening in the school

Explained by Margaret:

More Sports programs, basketball, leadership program. Me to We performance (some kids will go, with 34 tickets, to the seminar that will include the Dalai Lama).

She explained the school ambassadors, PA announcers, lunch and library monitors, student counsellors.

The nurse explained in a cool way how to wash your hands, and scanned kids hands also
2 teachers from Switzerland are doing their practicum here, and also are perfecting their English.

Other business

Margaret asked for feedback from parents on how the barbecue went:

Some parents did not make it to hear what teachers had to say, when they spoke to the parents as one group. Might send a letter to parents saying when this will happen, for those classes that do that.

Complaint was made about skateboarding early in the morning and then after school. Problems have happened. Idea is not to ban them, maybe move them to the basketball court? And what will happen then to basketball players? No helmets being used by some is clearly unsafe.

Explanation was also made for TAs: Students may have another teacher that they are asked to go to when they need to be in a different environment for a while. They use an open desk in another classroom, where they know the teacher.

Margaret explained about the new computer system being implemented. Described the problems with inconsistencies of data, making Marilyn's life quite tough.

Drink break.

Gordon seismic upgrade – progress report

Seismic project explanation followed. Invitation to read about the project on the web page – Z Smith's report. NCLD open house coming up. Sustainability, teaching styles, heritage, space-sharing, design and a list of values and concepts was an output of a 6-10 parent working group for the NCLD, that discussed innovative ideas about the school, what it is, what it could become. Teachers are also providing feedback regarding these issues. The open house objective will be to discuss the space issue, percentage wise, as well as the purpose of the buildings. Outside size will probably stay the same, with reduction of the internal spaces to allow for rigidity structures being built in. An information night for parents by the PAC seismic group will also be scheduled.

Meeting adjourn