



Maple Ridge Elementary School

Aiming for excellence! Visez l'excellence!

MAPLE RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

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**Prepared by: Cynthia M. Allen, PhD
Maple Ridge ES Council Chair**

School Council Annual Report 2013-2014

Introduction:

As Chair of the Maple Ridge Elementary School Council, I would like to extend greetings to fellow council members, parents, students, staff, school administrators and Board members.

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2013-14 School Council Annual Report summarizing Council activities, events and decisions. This is a required report.

There are three reports required to officially conclude the 2013-14 academic year.

- School Council Annual Report – Due October 30/2014
- Year-end reporting of School Generated Funds – Due September 16/2014
- 2013-2014 Parents Reaching Out Grand Funding and Report Back – Due August 31/2014

In the course of school council activities throughout the year, we endeavour to fulfill the overall objectives of school councils as mandated by the Ministry and the Board such as improving student achievement and enhancing the accountability of the education system by providing advice to the Principal, Board and Ministry.

School Council Members:

At the beginning of the first meeting (September 25th, 2012), an election was held in accordance with the Maple Ridge School Council constitution. The outcome of this election was as follows:

Parents:

- Chair: Cynthia Allen
- Secretary: Tamara Johnson
- Treasurer: Wil Dykstra, CGA
- Fundraising Coordinator: Jean Marc Denis
- Communications Coordinator: Rosita McLaughlin
- Community Representative: Barbara MacIntyre
- Past Chair: Kim Glass
- Member At Large: Micheline Lalonde
- Member At Large: Jennifer DaSilva
- Member At Large: Sylvia Glenn
- Member At Large: Luc Bourque

School Administration/Teaching/Non-Teaching Staff:

- Principal: Nicole Guertin-Colverson
- Vice-Principal: Todd Saunders
- Teaching Representative: Mara Belitzky/ Caroline Séguin
- Non-Teaching Representative: Julie Heyligen

School Council Meeting Dates:

Maple Ridge ES Council convened the following dates during the 2013-2014 academic year:

- September 17th, 2013
- October 8th, 2013
- November 12th, 2013
- December 10th, 2013
- January 14th, 2014
- February 11th, 2014
- March 18th, 2014
- April 8th, 2014 – pre-empted for Dr. Marian Small presentation
- May 13th, 2014
- June 17th, 2014

The meeting dates were generally held on the second Tuesday of every month. The Council has been meeting on a Tuesday for several years however in the future, Council may want to change the day of the week to better accommodate the Maple Ridge community.

Fundraising Initiatives & Grants

Fundraising is one of the core functions of this Maple Ridge ES Council. Council tried a few different fundraising initiatives as compared to recent years with the main source of revenue coming from the Pizza Lunch program. Thank you to all the volunteers that assisted in the success of these fundraisers by collecting forms and money, selling food, delivering items to the classrooms and organizing tasks.

Council fundraising activities included:

- Weekly pizza lunches (every Thursday)
- Movie Night (October 10th/2013)
- Mrs. Tiggy Winkles evening of shopping - November 20th/2013
- “In the Spirit of Giving” Day: Tuesday, December 3rd/2013 –
(Funds for Canadian Red Cross Typhoon Haiyan Relief Fund)
- Spirit Day: Olympic themed (February 7th /2014)
- Movie Night (March 6th/2014)

- Art Vernissage (May 8th/2014 – Education week activity)
- Family Fun Day (June 5th/2014)
- On-going fundraising collaborations with: Home Hardware, Mabel's Labels, Funhaven

Fundraising activities coincided with the start of the school year. Order forms for the Term 1 pizza lunch program were included in the 'Welcome Back' package that students received on the first day. Pizza Lunches were offered weekly this year. There were 35 pizza days throughout the school year. This is an extremely important fundraiser for Council. Its success is largely dependent on our volunteers. There are not enough parent volunteers available during the week, mid-day, therefore we rely heavily on student volunteers from the older grades. Thank you to all that volunteered.

Student participation was high for the two "Spirit Days" and the two "Maple Ridge Movie Nights" were well attended. Maple Ridge ES collected \$650 at the December Spirit Day. Money collected was donated to the Canadian Red Cross Typhoon Haiyan Relief Fund. These funds were matched by the Canadian government.

Maple Ridge held its first *Art Vernissage* evening during Education Week in May. It was very well attended by students, parents and staff. The students worked hard on several art projects of different genres which were displayed throughout the school. The evening was a huge success.

School Council concluded their activities this year with their annual Family Fun evening at the beginning of June. It once again had great attendance and excellent weather. Fun was had by all – students, parents, school staff and Council members. Planning for this special evening starts in January. This year, Council made the decision to solicit volunteers for this event in February. If not enough volunteers came forward, Council was prepared to cancel the event. Council very much appreciates the time invested by the organizing committee which consisted this year of Anna Dykstra, Sarah Baptiste, Cynthia Allen and Cindy Judd. This event is a highlight for the students and enjoyed by the community. It would not be possible without parents, students and school staff that volunteered their time at the various stations - ticket booth, games, food tables or by supplying cakes for the Cake Walk. Thank you ever so much. Council also would like to thank the students that volunteered. Their help is invaluable.

Grants

Maple Ridge Council was fortunate to obtain funding from various granting sources including one from Minto Inc. and an IBM Community grant. The city of Ottawa awarded Maple Ridge a Community Environmental Projects Grant (CEPGP) for the creation of a "Butterfly Garden" on the school property. In addition to the CEPGP program, Council applied for the city of Ottawa Schoolyard Tree Planting Grant and was awarded 18 trees to be planted in May of 2015.

MRES Council applied for and was awarded a PRO grant through the Ministry of Education. As a Council, we understand the importance of science in childhood learning therefore the PRO grant money is to fund parent/child workshops conducted by organizations like

Scientists in Schools (for example) that focus on math and/or science. This will be an opportunity for parents and their children to work together in a team setting, to learn various skills that can be adapted to learning at home and to provide parents with tools to help support student learning both at home and at school.

On behalf of the Maple Ridge school community, Council would like to thank these organizations for their generosity. These resources will enhance our children's education and better support student achievement and overall well-being.

School Council purchases & school support this year

In recent years, Council has supported the purchase and upgrade of technology in the classrooms. This has been very successful. This year, Council decided to set a goal to save money for a school grounds greening project and school yard transformation. It is our plan to create an outdoor educational area. This project is quite extensive and will require a few years. Therefore in consultation with the school administration and staff, Council decided to fund fewer projects this year and amass funds for the greening project.

As a Council we voted to still support these very important purchases & activities:

- **JK/SK:** Three wagons, wood and plastic tubes, physical education, outlet box for listening centre
- **Primary:** Leveled readers
- **Junior:** Protractor sets, French/English dictionaries, French home readers
- **Intermediate:** Science equipment
- **Learning Support:** Fidget toys
- **Portables:** Noise Cancelling headphones - 20 pairs
- **Special Education:** Stools on wheels
- **Phys. Ed.** – Table tennis sets
- **Library** – Books for the Forest of Reading Club
- Digital cameras to be used with the Epson BrightLinks interactive projectors
- Mathletes - a day focussing on Numeracy
- Dr. Marian Small presentation– an evening for parents
- Creation of an Outdoor Butterfly Garden

School Council Activities - Aside from fundraising, Council activities included:

1. Aviva Community Fund - Maple Ridge participated for the first time in the annual Aviva Community Fund competition in the hopes of winning funds to support the School Grounds Greening & Transformation project. This competition is web-based requiring the accumulation of on-line votes in order to advance to the next round of the competition. The Maple Ridge project didn't place in the top 10 within our category to continue in the competition, we placed 14th. This was an opportunity for Council to explore different approaches to communicating with parents. Maple Ridge Council created an MRSC School Grounds Greening & Transformation Facebook page. We sent home sticker reminders, morning announcements, manned an information table at the school, sent announcements via the community centre, OCASC and through email communication. The Aviva competition served as a communication tool itself and generated enthusiasm within the school community for our school yard project.
2. Parent Resource Library - Maple Ridge Council had received a \$1000 PRO Grant during the 2012/13 academic year. A portion of those funds was used to start a Parent Resource Library. After carefully selecting the books on a variety of topics, the books were purchased throughout the summer and the books were made available to parents this year.
3. Cst. Jason Mallet, the School Resource Officer spoke to council about the locked door policy. John Shea, the Zone 8 School Trustee attended two MRES Council meetings.
4. Dr. Marian Small – On April 8th/2014 Council hosted a parent presentation by Dr. Marian Small. Council continues to emphasize the role that parents and guardians play in their children's education. An understanding of mathematical principles is important for future successes, therefore a portion of the 2013/14 PRO Grant funds was allocated for this evening. Dr. Small is an advocate of improved mathematics education, and spoke to parents regarding the changes in how math is being taught and how it benefits today's students. Dr. Small delivered an interesting presentation and was available to answer any questions that parents had.

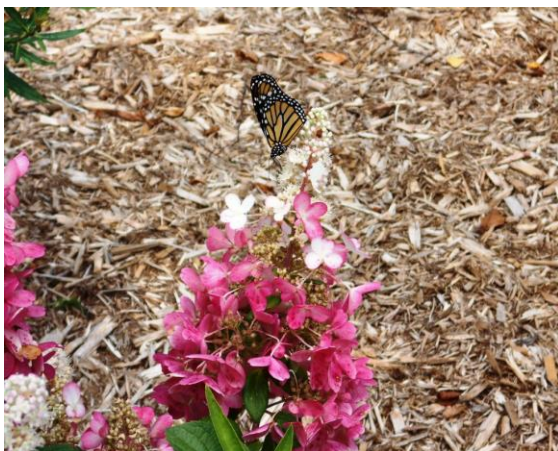
Emphasizing the importance of numeracy, Council took a portion of the 2013/14 PRO Grant funds to purchase supplies and assemble more than 100 Take-Home Math Kits based on faculty suggested activities. The math kit activities are applicable to kindergarten, primary, junior and intermediate aged students. Each kit focusses on a mathematical concept that incorporates various strategies, concepts, skills and thinking processes. These activities encourage students to discuss their learning and to look for connections to mathematics in everyday life occurrences. Both students and parents/guardians are urged to borrow the kits from the school library.

5. Maple Ridge Elementary School was proud to have been selected to host a visiting group of students from China this past spring. The students came from Xingwan School in Suzhou, China, near Shanghai. They joined in our classes to experience Canada and practise their English. Maple Ridge Elementary was fortunate to be selected to host 8 students along with their teacher. Council arranged a parent

information evening about hosting students. The Canada Homestay Network contact and the OCDSB contact for Ottawa International Projects and Exchanges were there to describe the programs and host family expectations. Council hopes to have greater involvement in future endeavours as these types of projects will enrich the entire school community.

6. A Parent Survey was conducted again this year to collect information on fundraising, topics of interest for information nights and questions on how best to engage parents. The information collected from this survey was useful for Council planning.
7. School Council participated in the Kindergarten Information Night in May to inform parents about School Council and encourage participation in the coming year. A ten minute presentation was made to the parents and a table was set up to welcome parents and promote the importance of School Council. Council would like to thank the school administration for allowing us to participate in their Information Night. School Council members were available at the September Meet the Teacher information evening and at the November Parent Teacher interview evening.
8. A School Grounds Greening sub-committee worked on the creation of a Butterfly Garden with funds acquired from the city of Ottawa through the CEPGP. This is an on-going project that will span a few years however Council was very pleased that students in our extended day program were able to participate in the maintenance and watering of the garden throughout the summer. A volunteer raised monarch butterflies which were released in the garden. The EDP children were there for the release and asked many questions. It was a great learning experience.

This will be an important school council sub-committee over the next few years as we start to transform our school grounds to include play areas and create an outdoor learning area.



9. Student Alumni List – On occasion, the Council requires the help of both adult and student volunteers from within the community. Therefore we created a Maple Ridge Student Alumni List of potential volunteers to help with future school projects. With permission from their parents, we asked students to provide us with their contact information should they wish to be on the alumni list. Volunteering at Maple Ridge would benefit both the school and the graduate as this is a great way for students to acquire the mandatory volunteer hours required to graduate high school.
10. Once again this year, the MRES Council was a member of OCASC (Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils). Attending the monthly OCASC meetings allows Maple Ridge to stay connected with schools within the OCDSB as well as exchange ideas with fellow parents. An OCASC update is made available to Maple Ridge parents on a monthly basis. Executives from the Maple Ridge School Council attended the School Council Training Day on October 5th 2013 at Gloucester High School. The day was sponsored by OCASC and the OCDSB. There were presentations about school council responsibilities, managing school council funds, communication strategies, getting involved in your School Improvement Plan, conflict resolution, exit outcomes just to name a few.

Challenges:

Challenges faced by Council this year included parent participation. Council continues to struggle with parent involvement however we are not facing this situation alone. Many school Councils throughout OCASC expressed the same concerns. However, Maple Ridge is fortunate to have a group of very dedicated parents and community members. The electronic communications (email messaging and website updates) have helped to reach out to parents. We will continue to improve upon our communication strategies.

Parent surveys have been invaluable in planning Council activities however perhaps parent questionnaires in the future should be very specific *i.e.* “Will you volunteer to head up a weekly board game club during the recess breaks?” “Will you volunteer to head up a silent auction?” “Will you organize a fundraising initiative?” etc.....

In previous years, Council had provided Child Minding services during Council meetings so that parents could more easily attend. With the establishment of the Student Alumni List, this initiative will be re-visited for next year.

Recognition:

Thank you to school administrators and staff members who attended our Council meetings. The information and guidance you provide to Council is invaluable. Thank you Nicole Guertin-Colverson, Todd Saunders, Mara Belitzky, Caroline Séguin and Julie Heyligen!

Thank you so much to Tamara Johnson for taking on the role of Council Secretary. Accurate recording of the minutes is crucial. Not all parents are able to attend Council meetings on a regular basis. Having access to the minutes on the school website is so helpful to keep parents up to date with school council activities. .

Thank you, Wil Dykstra for your dedication and your attention to detail. The position of Council Treasurer is so very important. Thank you for volunteering your time to Council for another year. Your professionalism is greatly appreciated.

Maple Ridge is blessed to have such a dedicated and committed Community Representative such as Barbara MacIntyre: Thank you for giving your time to benefit our children's educational experience.

The role of Communication Coordinator was taken on by Rosita McLaughlin. Thank you for preparing the written communications and working with the school administration to deliver the information to parents. Thanks also for preparing and administering the parent survey. Your help with the Aviva Community Fund competition was greatly appreciated. I also want to thank you for submitting the 2014-2015 PRO Grant application. This grant is an important source of funding for parent engagement initiatives. Also, thank you very much for applying for the IBM community grant. Maple Ridge students will benefit from your efforts.

The position of Fundraising Coordinator was filled by Jean Marc Denis. Although Jean Marc had to leave the position mid-year, we thank him so much for his efforts. This is a difficult role to occupy and Council and the Maple Ridge community appreciates all that Jean Marc did for our students.

Council would like to thank Kim Glass, our past Chair for her invaluable advice on Council activities. I greatly appreciated being able to turn to Kim for help when needed.

Thank you to Anna Dykstra for 'decorating' the front display. This showcase is an invaluable communication tool for Council. Through the display, parents can visualize Council activities. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. Thank you for your fundraising efforts including but not limited to Family Fun Day and Pizza Days.

Council would like to extend a thank you to Sylvia Glenn for volunteering to do the 2013-2014 Financial Review, an important requirement set out by the Board, as well as your support on other Council activities throughout the year, especially pizza lunches.

Thank you to Luc Bourque for applying for and receiving the Minto Inc. grant monies. Your role on Council is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to Lori Henderson, Catherine Eames and Anna Dykstra for their interest and enthusiasm in the School Grounds Greening project!

This year Council consisted of several parents having students ranging in ages from JK to grade 8. Thank you to Jennifer DaSilva, Joy Baron, Amri Murray, Melissa Ouellette, Micheline Lalond, Allison MacNeil-Bordeleau, Melissa Humphries, Anik Levesque and Jennifer Williams. Your dedication to Council this year through regular participation in Council meetings as well as assisting at numerous Council activities and providing insight to our numerous discussions was invaluable. A special thanks goes out to Anik for organizing the successful *Art Vernissage* evening.

The Maple Ridge Council would like to acknowledge the Office Administrators for all their help throughout the school year. Tanya Dumas and Tammy Caldwell are in constant contact with parents, students, staff and Council. As a Council we could not function without their input. Thank you so very much.

Appreciation is also extended to the custodial staff at Maple Ridge, in particular Dan Lepage, in assisting Council with our numerous activities throughout the year.

Council extends a heart-felt thank you to our Vice Principal, Mr. Todd Saunders. Mr. Saunders has been vital to communicating to parents on behalf of Council. Thank you so much for your dedication to enriching the educational experience of every student at Maple Ridge Elementary School. Best of luck as you begin your next adventure at a new school.

As Council Chair, I have found this year to be very rewarding. I would like to thank the entire Maple Ridge community for an exceptional year. I feel our students are very lucky to attend such a wonderful school as Maple Ridge ES.

Cynthia M. Allen, Ph.D.
Chair 2013-14