



Maple Ridge Elementary School

Aiming for excellence! Visez l'excellence!

MAPLE RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

October 30th, 2016

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

School Council Annual Report 2015-2016

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 2015-16 School Council Annual Report summarizing Council activities, events and decisions. This is a required report.

There are three reports required to officially conclude the 2015-16 academic year.

- School Council Annual Report – Due October 30/2016
- Year-end reporting of School Generated Funds – Due September 21/2016
- 2014-2015 Parents Reaching Out Grand Funding and Report Back–Due July 15th/2016

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 22nd, 2015), 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: Shealee Free
- Treasurer: Wil Dykstra, CGA
- Fundraising Coordinator: vacant
- Communications Coordinator: Rosita McLaughlin
- Community Representative: Barbara MacIntyre
- Member At Large: Robin Januska (Pizza Lunch Coordinator)
- Member At Large: Jennifer Tracey (Pizza Lunch Coordinator)
- Member At Large: Micheline Lalonde
- Member At Large: Jennifer DaSilva
- Member At Large: Elitza Palazov
- Member At Large: Crystall Matheson
- Member At Large: Tamara Johnson

- Member At Large: Mary Dixon Bourque
- Member At Large: Tracy Murdoch
- Member At Large: Jacquie Jette
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School Administration/Teaching/Non-Teaching Staff:

- Principal: Nicole Guertin-Colverson
- Vice-Principal: Natalie Makara
- Teaching Representative: vacant
- Non-Teaching Representative: vacant

School Council Meeting Dates:

Maple Ridge ES Council convened the following dates during the 2015-2016 academic year:

- September 22nd, 2015
- October 13th, 2015
- November 10th, 2015
- December 8th, 2015
- January 12th, 2016 (cancelled due to inclement weather)
- February 9th, 2016
- March 8th, 2016
- April 12th, 2016
- May 10th, 2016
- June 21st, 2016

The meeting dates were generally held on the second Tuesday of every month. The Council has been meeting on a Tuesday for several years. This day has been working well.

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. Thank you to all the volunteers that assisted in the success of the many fundraising activities by collecting forms and money, selling food, delivering items to the classrooms and organizing tasks.

Council fundraising activities included:

- Weekly pizza lunches (every Thursday)
- The Lunch Lady (every Tuesday, Feb-June)
- Sale of Entertainment Coupon Book Memberships
- Dance-a-thon - April 29th/2016

- Art Vernissage evening - Sale of flower pots & seeds – May 5th/2016
- Family Fun Day (June 9th/2016)
- On-going fundraising collaborations with: Home Hardware, Mabel's Labels, Funhaven, Boston Pizza

Pizza supplied by River Pizza was again offered weekly. There were 35 pizza days throughout the school year. This is an extremely important fundraiser for Council. This year Council implemented an on-line ordering and payment system through HotLunches.net. There were a few minor difficulties to overcome at first but overall the electronic system was effective. This program 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 everyone that helped to make this fundraiser so successful, allowing Council to offer this service to our school community.

Many parents have asked for more lunch options therefore Council brought in "The Lunch Lady" this year. Lunches were offered from February to June, every Tuesday. The service is administered and maintained entirely through The Lunch Lady. Each Maple Ridge class had a student Lunch Lady monitor that helped distribute the lunches. Parents were very pleased therefore Council opted to have The Lunch Lady program for the 2016/17 academic year.



Our fall fundraising campaign was the sale of the Entertainment Coupon Book Memberships. Although this was a second year selling the memberships, there were a few challenges to overcome. Council was not able to rely on the teaching staff to help promote this fundraising initiative due to the ongoing contract negotiations. Logistically, it was difficult, but nonetheless, we did raise over a thousand dollars and those that purchased the books were pleased.



Maple Ridge held their first annual 'Dance-A-Thon' that lasted the entire day on Friday, April 29/2016. The event was such a success both as a fundraiser and as a student activity amassing over \$12,000!! The students were so excited. In the spirit of healthy competition, prizes were awarded to the top students in each division that brought in the most money. Five classes, one from each division, were awarded a pizza party for having collected the highest amounts in pledges. The gym was decorated with fabulous arts and crafts made by student volunteers. Members from the Ottawa Redblacks Cheer squad helped pep up the atmosphere in the morning. The Hot 89.9 Street Team was rocking it up in the afternoon. A special thank you to James Thorpe and Miche Lalonde for providing the audiovisual equipment and spinning the tunes all day!



The 'Garden Club' assembled and sold plant pots with seed packets at the 3rd Annual Art Vernissage evening, May 5th/2016. The plant pots were a perfect Mother's Day gift. Funds raised were in support of the school yard greening project. The Art Vernissage is held during Education Week where students can showcase several art projects of different genres displayed throughout the school. The evening was very well attended.



As a Father's Day activity, the Ottawa Champions baseball team generously welcomed the Maple Ridge School community to a game on 14th. The school was given 150 tickets valid for both adult and children. student interested in seeing the game, was given enough tickets for them their family members that wished to participate. The game was well attended. Everyone had a great evening.



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School Council concluded their fundraising activities with their annual Family Fun evening and Silent Auction. It once again had great attendance and excellent weather. Fun was had by all – students, parents, school staff and Council members. This event is a highlight for the students and enjoyed by the community. Planning for this special evening started early. Council very much appreciates the time invested by the organizing committee which this year consisted of Anna Dykstra, Sarah Baptiste and Cynthia Allen. Thank you to Council members and parents who solicited prizes for the silent auction and basket draw. The Maple Ridge school community greatly appreciates the generosity of the local businesses who donate to our event! This evening 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 has been fortunate throughout the years to obtain funding from various granting sources and this year was no different. We received an IBM Community grant for \$2000 which was spent on much needed technology. We also received a \$500 Parent Involvement Committee grant.

MRES Council applied for and was awarded a \$1000 PRO (Parent Reaching Out) grant through the Ministry of Education. These funds paid for two (2) parent/child evening workshops conducted by the Canadian Museum of Science & Technology outreach program – Science Mobiles. Due to the success of these science evenings that bring parents and students together in a safe learning environment, Council submitted a 2016/17 PRO Grant application to facilitate family math evenings.

Maple Ridge was awarded a \$500 Proud To Be Me grant to pay for workshops by Improve with Improv, Be Your Best facilitated by Jennifer Laale. The primary grades 1-3 participated in one of the four workshops on May 2nd & 3rd, 2016. The grant was for \$500 however the total cost was \$904. Council paid the difference from their fundraising account.

On behalf of the Maple Ridge school community, Council would like to thank these granting agencies 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 had supported the purchase and upgrade of technology in the classrooms which was very successful. Council now has our plan to create an outdoor educational area. Council and the school administration met with a design consultant for the OCDSB and Evergreen to begin the process. This project is quite extensive and will require a few years.

As a Council we voted to continue supporting these very important purchases & activities:

- **Library** – Books for the Forest of Reading Club – popular with the students. This is a great program to encourage children to read.
8 long tables with matching chairs, hexagonal tables with small chairs library
- **Parent Resource Library** – Purchased select books to add to the existing collection.
- **Activity** – Funded four (4) days of Rocks & Rings Curling program – every student was able to participate. (January 27-28-29, February 1/2016)
- **Garden** – Purchased mulch, 6 child sized picnic tables, 5 standard picnic tables
- **School yard** - 2 Buddy Benches
- **Technology** – 2 ipads, 9 chromebooks
- **OCASC** – Paid for Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils membership fees
- **Classroom:** 400 mailbags, math flashcards

School Council Activities – In addition to fundraising, Council activities included:

1. Using 2015/16 PRO grant funds, Council hosted 2 science evening workshops. The first was November 12th/2015 for the grades 7 & 8. The evening was facilitated by the Museum of Science & Technology's outreach program, Sciences Mobiles. We were fortunate to have members of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada present with their high powered telescopes. The second was facilitated by Science Mobiles on November 19/2015 for the JK-grade 6 students. The students rotated through stations including a portable planetarium that the students were very impressed with. As a Council, we understand the importance of science in childhood learning therefore this was an opportunity for parents/guardians and their children to work together in a team setting, to learn various skills adaptable to learning at home and provided parents with tools to help support student learning both at home and at school. Council continues to emphasize the role that parents and guardians play in their children's



education.

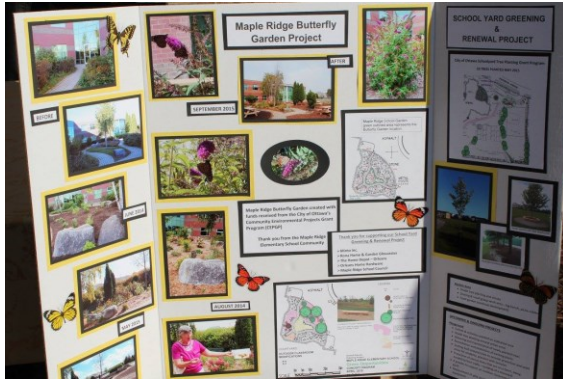
2. The Brier, being in Ottawa this year, was great news for our school. As a Council, we have voted to bring Rocks & Rings to Maple Ridge for the past few years. R&R chose our students to represent the one millionth student participant of their program as well as a student representing the start of the next million students. Chathu Mahanama and Owen Sharman were invited to the Brier on March 12th/2016 as the student representatives. The kids practiced at noon on Brier ice beside Brad Gushue's team, then both families were given seats at ice level to see both the afternoon (3vs4 page) and the semi-final evening games. There was a short demonstration and presentation that was filmed during the sixth end break of the McEwen/Koe game and was aired on TSN. Curling Canada and Rocks & Rings donated two Floor Curl kits to Maple Ridge (value of \$1100 + tx) which Owen and Chathu accepted for us. Attached are a couple of photos as well as sharing a file on One Drive of the TSN presentation. This link is for the press release. <http://www.curling.ca/blog/2016/03/12/curling-canada-rocks-rings-celebrates-one-million-kids/>



Short film clip.

<https://onedrive.live.com/redirect.aspx?cid=b3151200c5e0ef6b&resid=b3151200c5e0ef6b!191&parId=b3151200c5e0ef6b!181&authkey=!AI0iwJozbkYcBPM&ithint=video%2cMP4>.

3. The Maple Ridge School Council Constitution is reviewed and updated if needed every three years. A sub-committee was formed, including Rosita McLaughlin, Robin Januska and Tracy Murdoch, to update and suggest edits. Following Council wide discussions, the revisions were approved. Thank you for all your work on this important project.
4. The Maple Ridge butterfly garden is now certified with the North American Butterfly Association. As the garden was funded in part by a city of Ottawa grant through the Community Environmental Projects Grant Program, (CEPGP) on October 20/2015 Maple Ridge invited Stephen Blais, the City Councillor, Keith Penny, the school trustee as well as Catherine Eames, a dedicated volunteer to a dedication ceremony. The Orleans Star ran the story Thursday, October 29, vol. 30, issue 26. <http://www.orleansstar.ca/News/Local/2015-10-28/article-4325180/Maple-Ridge-certifies-butterfly-garden/1>



5. Communications - Council had an information table at the Meet the Teachers evening in September, at the November Parent-Teacher interviews, at the May Art Vernissage evening, as well as at the Family Fun Day in June. Again this year, the school administration sent electronic communications to the Maple Ridge community on Council's behalf. Parents/guardians were always aware of upcoming events, fundraisers and Council meetings. We also sent out several "Council Corner" newsletters to parents keeping them up to date on our activities as well as the on-going fundraising initiatives. This was on top of the 10 monthly Council meetings where extensive minutes were maintained and posted to the school website.
6. School Council participated in the Kindergarten Information Night in May 19/2016 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.
7. A School Grounds Greening sub-committee continued to work on the 'Butterfly' Garden and surrounding gardens. This spring we had several gardening days at the school, including the front and back gardens.
8. 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 3rd/2015 at Sir Guy Carleton Secondary School with Annie Kidder from People for Education as the Keynote Speaker. The day was sponsored by OCASC and the OCDSB. There were presentations about school yard greening, managing school council finances, communication strategies, getting involved in your School Learning Plan, learning support services for students with special needs, just to name a few.

9. On-going initiatives – Council continues to maintain a ‘Student Alumni List’ where on occasion, high school students may be asked if they would like to volunteer to help with future school projects. Volunteering at Maple Ridge is a great way for students to acquire the mandatory volunteer hours required to graduate high school. Council also added a couple more books to the ‘Parent Resource Library’. These books are available for our parents to sign out and cover a wide range of pertinent topics.
10. Maple Ridge Council donated the \$1500 profits from the annual Family Fun Day to Fort McMurray through the Canadian Red Cross. May 1/2016 a wildfire began southwest of Fort McMurray, Alberta Canada sweeping through communities and decimating everything in its path.

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. 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.

Council finds it difficult to get parents to actively participate in the school grounds greening project. Although parents have expressed their appreciation of Council’s efforts to create a more educationally stimulating outdoor environment, it has been difficult to get volunteers to help with the project. Parents have limited time to spare with so many extracurricular activities and heavy workloads.

In previous years, Council had provided child minding services during Council meetings so that parents could more easily attend. Council will re-visit this initiative.

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, Natalie Makara!

Thank you so much to Shaelee Free 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.

Thank you to Anna Dykstra for 'decorating' the front display. This showcase is an invaluable communication tool. 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 the Entertainment book campaign, the Family Fun Day and Pizza Days.

Thank you to Robin Januska and Jennifer Tracey for leading the Pizza Lunches. These dedicated pizza lunch volunteers are responsible for Council's most lucrative fundraising project. This is such an important fundraiser and service to the students. Council could not offer weekly pizza days without the commitment from parent volunteers.

Council would like to extend a thank you to Jennifer Tracey for accepting to do the 2015-2016 Financial Review this year, an important requirement set out by the Board.

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

It is apparent that this year's Council members were very dedicated. Through regular participation in Council meetings as well as assisting at numerous Council activities and providing insight to our numerous discussions, every single member was invaluable to the team.

The Maple Ridge Council would like to acknowledge the Office Administrators for all their help throughout the school year. These ladies 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, Natalie Makara. Mrs. Makara has been vital in communicating with parents on behalf of Council.

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 2015-16