

## What: Maple Ridge Elementary School Council Annual Report for 2020

Date: October 13, 2020

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

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2019-20 School Council Annual Report summarizing Council activities, events and decisions. This is a required report.

There are two reports required to officially conclude the 2019-20 academic year.

- School Council Annual Report – Due October 30, 2020
- Year-end reporting of School Generated Funds – Submitted September 21/2020 (Appendix 1)

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 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019), 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: VACANT
- Treasurer: Jennifer Tracey
- Fundraising Coordinator: Wendy Mak
- Communications Coordinator: Rosita McLaughlin
- Community Representative: Barbara MacIntyre
- Pizza Lunch Coordinators: Jennifer Tracey, Wendy Mak
- Members at Large: Elitza Palazov, Crystall Matheson, Brenda Beaudoin, Michelle Snook, Lisa Briscoe, Tamara Johnson, Kristi LeBlanc, Heather Peppy, Amanda Hope, Rhiana Lorimer, Pamela Dossett,

#### School Administration/Teaching/Non-Teaching Staff:

- Principal: Marianne Harvey
- Vice-Principal: Marc Laliberté
- Teaching Representative: Mara Belitzky
- Non-Teaching Representative: Lizabeth Van Daalen

NOTE: Jennifer Tracey was new to the position of Council treasurer. The previous treasurer held the position for 11 years. Therefore, the signing authorities on the CIBC school council bank account were changed. Authorized signatories are Cynthia Allen, Jennifer Tracey and Crystall Matheson. These three are long time council members.

## **School Council Meeting Dates:**

Maple Ridge ES Council convened the following dates during the 2018/19 academic year:

- September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 – Purdy’s fundraiser
- January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – Family Fun Day planning
- ~~April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020~~
- May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – Informal Virtual
- June 16<sup>th</sup> 2020 - Virtual

General Council meetings were not held in December and March. These two meeting dates were devoted to the Purdys Chocolate fundraiser and Family Fun Day planning, respectively.

Council invited Keith Penny, the school trustee to attend the November 2019 meeting. Likewise, Maple Ridge Student Council representatives attended the January meeting to provide an update of their on-going activities. Clarissa Arthur, the executive director for the Education Foundation of Ottawa attended the February meeting.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the April meeting was cancelled. An informal virtual gathering was held in May. The June Council was an official meeting held virtually using Zoom. Thank you to everyone that attended meetings throughout the year.

## **Fundraising Initiatives & Grants**

Fundraising is one of the core functions of this Maple Ridge ES Council. 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 Wednesday, September-March)
- The Lunch Lady (every Tuesday & Thursday, September-March)
- Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup> – Maple Ridge 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bowl-A-Thon
- Purdys Chocolate Campaign (November-December)
- Family Movie Night (January 23/2020)
- Family Fun Day (May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020) - Cancelled
- On-going fundraising collaborations with: Home Hardware, Mabel’s Labels, Boston Pizza



Pizza supplied by River Pizza was again offered weekly. There were 27 pizza days throughout the school year (22 in Term 1, 5 in Term 2A). A Maple Ridge parent suggested that the pizza term be split in half in order to spread the payments over the term. Finances in the months of September and January can be stretched for parents, therefore for the second ordering period we split it into Term 2A and 2B. The change did not create a lot of extra work for the parent volunteer that organizes the pizza program but offered an

improvement for the parents. This is an extremely important fundraiser for Council. Again, this year Council used an on-line ordering and payment system through HotLunches.net. The electronic system was effective. This program is largely dependent on both adult and student volunteers. Thank you to everyone that helped to make this fundraiser so successful, allowing Council to offer this service to our school community.

Council brought back “The Lunch Lady” again this year. Lunch options were offered every Tuesday and Thursday. 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.



**20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bowl-A-Thon** - Maple Ridge hosted a Bowl-A-Thon on Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at the Orleans Bowling Center. We had over 50 participants. Even ‘Rocket’ our new school mascot came out to cheer.



**Purdys Chocolate Campaign** - The fall fundraising campaign was very successful again this year selling over \$6000 in chocolate with \$1800 in profits designated to financially support the school improvement plan and student achievement. Thank you to everyone that participated.



**Family Movie Night** – Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, Maple Ridge families gathered in the gym to watch a family movie, Pokémon Detective Pikachu. All proceeds went to the Ottawa Food Bank. The project was a Grade 6 initiative with the students doing most of the work. They sold tickets and refreshments. The evening was a great success as measured by the smiles on the kids’ faces and the fact that most of the concessions sold out. The Grade 6 students proudly presented the Ottawa Food Bank with a **\$1746.90** donation on February 12th!



### 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 two grants.

1. **Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)** \$500 – To be combined with fundraising dollars to host a Family Science Evening, facilitated by Scientists in Schools. It was scheduled for Thursday, April 2/2020 – Cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic shut down.
2. **Proud to Be Me** - \$762.00 – 3 *Improve with Improv* workshops facilitated by Jennifer Laale of Be Your Best, were scheduled for April 14<sup>th</sup>. All intermediate students in grades 7 & 8 from both the French immersion and English programs were going to participate in one of the Leadership workshops. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the workshops were cancelled.

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

## School Council purchases & school support this year

As a Council we voted to support 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. Council paid for a variety of other books that were purchased throughout the year.
- **School Spirit** – Purchased 1) School Mascot suit so that ‘Rocket’ can attend various school activities, 2) Instant Canopy with Maple Ridge name & logo to take to sports tournaments.
- **Maple Ridge 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations** – Family Pancake breakfast, Student & staff group photo from the roof top, ~~school legacy project (eg. inspiring murals, peace poles)~~
- **School Leaving Grade 8 Students:** Printed yearbook for each student, “Congratulations Graduate” Lawn Signs


Financially supported these purchases:


- Updates to the instrumental music department including new music books, instruments
- Math related items for the kindergarten team, eg. geostix, match-ups, number rockets, activity dice, Go Fishing, number rockets etc....
- GB+ Levelled Readers for French immersion, grades 3 & 4
- Replacement of the gym sound system including mixer, rolling compact rig, microphones etc...
- QuickBooks Software to efficiently track Council finances


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

1. Communications & School presence - Council had an information table at the Meet the Teachers evening on September 26<sup>th</sup>/2019. 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 through a Facebook page that was maintained by a Maple Ridge parent. We also had a “Welcome Back” letter at the start of the school year in addition to communications about the on-going fundraising initiatives. This was on top of the 6 monthly Council meetings where extensive minutes were captured.
2. Parent Council members worked with grade 8 students to establish a Yearbook Committee again this year. The group met regularly throughout the year until March. They ran a successful fundraising activity selling Candy Canes in December. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the OCDSB printing service that we normally hire to print the books was not available. Although slightly more expensive, Council paid a third party business to print a copy for each of the grade 8 students, at no charge to the students. Thank you to the parent volunteers that provided oversight of this important activity.

3. Extra-curricular activities:

- a. The LEGO Guy -  Orange STEM Education – Workshops were offered on a weekly basis from October through to February, at either recess or lunch break depending on grade level. Workshops were facilitated by Ian Dudley, the LEGO Guy, Ottawa's Leader in LEGO education. Students were very excited to work on engineering, mechanics and robotics through hands-on LEGO and NXT/EV3 Mindstorms® projects! The programming was available to students from grades 1-8. Registrations and payment was handled through the school administration and *School Cash Online*.

- b.  - An 8-week daytime sketching program was offered in October-November on Wednesdays during first recess. A drama program, Broadway Lights was offered for 8 weeks on Tuesdays immediately after school. A winter Cartooning after school program on Tuesdays was started in February but only ran for four weeks before the forced shutdown in March. Programming was open to students in grades 1-8. Arts Express facilitated the workshops in addition to organizing the registration with concomitant payment. Council was responsible for advertising and fielding questions.

- c.  - Council was excited to bring Mad Science to Maple Ridge. 'Crazy Chemworks' was offered Mondays after school from January through March. Registration was open to students from kindergarten through grade 8. The program was so popular that a second session was opened up. Registration had opened for a spring Junior Engineers program for students K to 6 and Robotics for grades 4-8 students. The program did not run due to the forced shutdown. Registration and payment was completed through the Mad Science interface.

4. This year MRES Council opted not to be a member of OCASC (Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils). The quality of the monthly OCASC meetings had deteriorated as compared to previous years. So much so, that attending the meetings did not provide any additional information over reading the monthly OCASC minutes and following updates on the OCASC Facebook page and website. Maple Ridge was able to stay connected with schools within the OCDSB as well as exchange ideas with fellow parents through social media. 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 that was held on November 9th, 2019 at Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School. The day was sponsored by OCASC and the OCDSB.

5. 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 as required by the Ministry of Education to graduate high school.

### **Challenges:**

There were several challenges this year, the first being sporadic school closure dates due to strike action. The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) were in negotiations with the Ministry of Education. While there was not total withdrawal of services, there were one-day walkouts starting in December through February. Elementary schools were affected by both the ETFO and OSSTF strike actions. Several of these days fell on a planned 'Pizza' lunch dates. Council worked with parents and the pizza provider to offer parents with a favorable solution. The pizza lunch was either moved to another day of the week, added to the end of the pizza ordering period or refunds were offered for missed days. Council encountered difficulties when re-scheduling a missed pizza day due to strike action that would unfortunately fall on another strike day. The planned extra curricular activities encountered similar issues. In total, school was closed to students for 9 days.

Council continues to struggle with parent involvement however we are not facing this situation alone. Many school Councils within OCASC expressed the same concerns. Maple Ridge is fortunate to have a group of very dedicated parents and community members. The electronic communications via email messaging, website updates and social media have helped to reach parents. We will continue to improve upon our communication strategies.

Although, Council is always available via social media and email, we are also cognizant of the fact that these venues can give rise to disrespectful behavior when frustration levels are high. Due to the ongoing labor negotiations, there were limited sports teams, no term 1 report cards and no winter activity days. Parents and students were understandably upset. Although beyond our control, Council encouraged parents to speak to the school administration and to the respective teachers. Throughout the year, teachers were available to communicate with parents.

March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 outbreak as a global pandemic, referred to as Covid-19. This required the shutdown of most businesses in addition to schools from elementary through to university. Globally, people were forced to isolate as much as possible to limit disease transmission. The schools remained closed through to the end of June. Many teachers provided students with virtual activities and assignments. Council members continued to check in with families and staff. Due to the shut down, the annual Family Fun Day was cancelled. In addition, the legacy project planned to mark Maple Ridge's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was postponed indefinitely.

Council finds it difficult to get parents to actively participate in the school grounds greening project. Parents have expressed their appreciation of Council's efforts to create a more educationally stimulating outdoor environment although it has been difficult to get volunteers to help with the project. We are hopeful that given the current global situation and the benefits of social distancing outdoors, that staff, parents and students will become more enthusiastic.

## **Recognition:**

A heartfelt thank you goes out to Marianne Harvey. At the end of this year, we said good-bye to Miss Marianne after benefitting from her leadership for the past three years. Through regular participation in Council meetings as well as assisting at numerous Council activities and providing insight to our numerous discussions, Miss Marianne was invaluable to the team. We wish her well as she enjoys her retirement and hopes she returns to tell us all about her adventures.

Thank you to school administrators and staff members who attended our Council meetings. The information and guidance you provide to Council is invaluable.

Appreciation is extended to the office staff at Maple Ridge. Council is indebted to Tanya Dumas, the office administrator. Many Council activities and projects could not run without her guidance and active participation. Thank you Tanya!

Thank you to Mrs. Dunn for organizing the Forest of Reading program. This initiative is always welcome at Maple Ridge.

We appreciate all that the custodial staff do to maintain a healthy school environment that is conducive to learning.

Thank you to the dedicated pizza lunch volunteers. This is such an important fundraiser and service to the students. Council could not offer weekly pizza days without the commitment from parent volunteers.

Thank you to all those that attended the monthly Council meetings in addition to participating in the discussions via email. Maple Ridge Council members worked very well together this year and our students benefited from our efforts.

The 2019-2020 school year was like none other in history. Although there have been challenges, our students have learned so much more than we could have imagined. We have seen how resilient our school community is. As Council Chair, I have found this year to be very rewarding. I have experienced first hand how we support and protect each other by actually distancing and isolating ourselves. That said, the Maple Ridge community stuck together. I would like to thank the entire Maple Ridge community for all their efforts in keeping everyone safe and healthy.

Stay safe.

*Cynthia Allen*

Cynthia M. Allen, Ph.D.  
Maple Ridge ES Council Chair 2019/2020



**Appendix 1.** School Council Year-end Financial Reporting 2019/2020

Submitted September 21/2020 - yearendfinancials@ocdsb.ca by Jennifer Tracey, Council Treasurer

School Name	Maple Ridge Elementary School
School Council Chair School Council Treasurer	Cynthia Allen Jennifer Tracey
Opening balance of all reconciled bank accounts, investments and cash on hand on August 1, 2019	\$10,075
The amount raised by school council during the year August 1, 2019 and July 31, 2020	\$20,490
The amount spent by school council during the year August 1, 2019 and July 31, 2020	\$19,587
Closing balance of all reconciled bank accounts, investments and cash on hand July 31, 2020	\$10,979
Portion of above amount raised which was collected through the school's School Cash Online program	\$0