

**Belfountain Public School Community Council Meeting Minutes  
September 23, 2009**

**Meeting Attendees:**

John Harrower, Kara McIntosh, Heather Kendall, Aileen McNichol, Lisa Sze, Tanya Mihkelson, Robin Taylor, Ellen Palmer, Christine Pereira, Lisa Frazer, Karen Gardiner, Annette Morton, Liberty Murray, Robin Turner, Monica Kerr-Coster, Denise Grant, Kate Subak, Cheryll Collins, Catherine Harley, Tish Hansen, Cris Nobrega, and Tonya Davey

**7:00 p.m. Welcome and Introductions – John Harrower**

- At BPS there are children with severe and potentially life threatening allergies to various foods including but not limited to: nuts, tree nuts, eggs, milk and seafood (for which they carry an epipen)
- This is a concern both in the school and on the buses
- There is a need for everyone to be vigilant in keeping our school and buses free of these foods in order to protect the safety of the children with such allergies
- BPS is going to work to increase awareness of this serious medical condition

**7:10 p.m. Allergy Presentation – Lisa Sze**

**Anaphylaxis**

- Anaphylaxis is a severe and potentially life threatening allergic reaction. It may lead to death if left untreated
- Food is the most common cause, but it can also be caused by other things such as insect stings

**Symptoms**

- Some common symptoms include, but are not limited to: hives, change in skin colour, swelling, difficulty breathing, some children report that food tastes “spicy”, or that they have a “hair in their throat”

**Treatment**

- Once a reaction is triggered and there has been contact with a known allergen, an epinephrine injection with an epipen is immediately required
- Individuals with these severe allergies usually carry 2 epipens
- Call 911
- If the reaction or continues or worsens, a second injection is required 10-15 minutes after the first (or sooner)

**Prevention**

- Avoidance, awareness and action

**Suggestions for BPS**

- The goal is to be a “Nut” / “Allergy Aware School” that’s safe for all children (not possible to state BPS is “nut free”)
- Don’t share snacks
- Wash hands frequently
- Wash eating areas regularly
- Create label awareness
  - o teach and encourage parents and staff to read labels on the food that is sent to school
- Fundraising (including lunch program) should be as allergy safe as possible (aim for “nut free” sources and avoid the danger of cross contamination
  - o Currently the subs and milk in the lunch program are not “nut free” and there is a danger of their cross contamination with nuts at the sources from where they are purchased
  - o The cookies are nut free

## Concerns

- BPS is a rural school and it will take time for any emergency assistance to arrive so there is a greater need to be vigilant
- Concern with “litterless” lunches:
  - o Without packaging, teachers and lunch room supervisors are unable to check for known allergens in the ingredients of food that is brought to school
- Suggestion:
  - o Emphasize “boomerang” lunches where any pre-existing packaging may be brought to school and taken home at the end of the day
- Concern:
  - o It is difficult to monitor the ingredients in food that is brought to school for birthday parties and special events
- Suggestions:
  - o Celebrate without food
  - o Keep “safe” foods on hand for those who have allergies, but this is still a concern as it could lead to cross contamination and some reactions may be induced without actually ingesting the allergen

## Action

- A presentation was made to the BPS teachers regarding severe allergies and the prevention of allergic reactions. The teachers were receptive to the awareness and prevention strategies discussed
- There will be ongoing efforts to make BPS more “Nut” / “Allergy Aware”
- A presentation on how to administer an epipen will be given to lunch room supervisors and anyone who volunteers at the school
- Education should also be provided regarding cross-contamination
- Information about allergies and anaphylaxis will be posted on BPS’s website
- Information about allergy awareness will be made available at the open house on September 30<sup>th</sup>

## Resources

- The Asthma & Allergy Foundation has a handbook for schools with suggestions on what can be done to make schools more allergy aware
- There is a handbook for schools on the Peel Board of Education website
- There will be a handbook available in the BPS staff room

7:25 p.m.

## Principal’s Update

### Eco Learning Grounds

- The development of the Eco Learning Grounds is moving along well
- The primary playground will be inspected Monday
- The installation of the junior playground will start tomorrow and it will be inspected in 2 to 3 days
- The seeds are now germinating in the amphitheatre
- The rain garden is dry
- The gazebo is being constructed offsite
- BPS received a \$1,500 donation from TD Friends of the Environment Fund which will be used towards plants and trees on the grounds
- Three assemblies have been held in the Stone Circle so far this year (most recently for the autumnal equinox)

### Fire Drills

- There have been two fire drills
- Both morning and afternoon kindergarten classes have been exposed
- The fire department provided information to the children
- The fire department will be doing a surprise fire drill in October

## Lock Down Drills

- There will be a lock down drill in the next couple of weeks
- Once the lockdown button is triggered, the bell rings for 30 seconds with a very distinct ring
- The drill is generally done like a game of hide and seek in an effort not to scare the children
- Information about the lock down drill will be sent home in advance of the drill
- What to tell children should they ask why they have lock down:
  - o It keeps them safe if a stranger/intruder is in the building that may hurt someone
- In the event of lockdown:
  - o Parents/caregivers should not attend the building
  - o No one is allowed in or out of the building
  - o Parents/caregivers should check the Peel Board website for a contact telephone number
  - o If there is no direct threat to BPS (i.e. in the event of nearby incidents, domestic issues, noxious odours etc.) the school will be in a “hold and secure” pattern, a precautionary measure, where no is allowed out or in but school will continue as usual indoors
    - The police will make this directive, be present and takeover
  - o If the lock down continues past regular school hours and buses are no longer available, parents/caregivers will be called to pick up their children

## Reorganization

- ***There will be no reorganization at BPS!***
- BPS has 164 students
- There may be 2 or 3 more registrants in October
- The Peel Board lost some teachers and there will be a lot of movement in our family of schools
- The largest classes at BPS will be the grade 1 and grade 4 classes with 23 children each
- The remaining classes have 19 or 20 children

## Meet the Teacher Night and Corn Roast

- September 30, 2009 from 6:00p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- There will be a video loop of BPS’s autumnal equinox celebration

## Eco Focus

- BPS is considering the sale of worm castings – will it require a health license (health inspector to be contacted)
- The children will be working/playing with worms and compost this week

### Suggestion:

- BPS could sell worm castings at the Salamander Festival to raise awareness
- In the future, BPS could sell worms

## Belfountain in the News

- “In the Hills” magazine contains an article, “Open Air, Open Minds”, featuring BPS’s eco focus programming
- There are photographs online
- Our principal, John Harrower, was interviewed regarding the changes in our playground and the creation of BPS’s new Eco Learning Grounds
- The article will be published in “The View from Belfountain”
- Copies will be available at The Shed

**\* BPS’s principal, John Harrower welcomes parents to contact him in person to discuss any concerns**

**7:45 p.m. Karen Gardiner – Chair of Community Schools Association**

- Liberty Murray is the Treasurer of the Association

- BPS's gym is available to rent out for different functions (i.e. birthday parties, ball hockey etc.)
  - BPS generally has control of its own gym – this is rare, but The Peel Board has control of the weekends
  - The gym is available from 6:00 p.m. onward Tuesday through Friday each week (Monday nights are already booked)
  - Rent is very reasonable – contact Karen for details at karen.gardiner@dpcdsb.org
  - Any funds raised go to BPS, usually by purchasing an item required by the school
  - The Association has collapsed twice before due to lack of interest
  - If the Association collapses again, BPS will lose control of the gym and the funds generated from its use
- \* someone will need to take over running the Association down the road in order for BPS to maintain control of its gym and any funds raised from its rental**
- More information about rentals is available on the BPS website and at the Peel Board of Education website (right hand side under Quick Links – “Rent School Space”)
  - Information about rentals will also be available on the Information Board at the front doors of BPS
  - Information could also be posted in “The View From Belfountain”

### **7:50 p.m. Belfountain Public School's Community Council**

- The Report of the 2008/2009 school year is available and will be posted on the Council board and on BPS's website

#### **Membership**

- Membership will remain the same for this year
  - o Heather Kendall and Kara McIntosh are co-chairs
  - o Liberty Murray is Treasurer
  - o Tonya Davey is secretary
- Next year will be a new election year

#### **Meetings for 2009/2010 School Year**

- meetings will be held on the following Wednesday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
  - o November 11, 2009 (next meeting)
  - o February 10, 2010
  - o April 14, 2010
  - o May 12, 2010
  - o June 9, 2010

#### **Funds for Teachers**

- Every year funds are allocated for the teachers for programming and materials
- Last year \$250 was allocated to each class for the teacher's wish lists and \$3,600 was allocated to a non-discretionary slush fund
- The goal of the non-discretionary fund is to expose the children to the performing arts and other interesting activities that would not otherwise be available to them in the school
- Activities in the past have included: cross country runs, Valentine's skate, dance program, volley ball program, and various interesting people have been brought into the classrooms

#### **Non-Discretionary Funds:**

- This year there will be a French trip for all juniors - French Concert with Guy Laroche
  - o Busses will be required (cost is about \$15-\$20 per child and it would be helpful to subsidize this cost)
  - o The French classes try to do this every few years so that all children will have the benefit of this experience at least once
- Another activity of equal value will be provided to the primary children who are not yet taking French (i.e. maybe Scientist in the Classroom)

- The goal is to benefit as many of the students as possible
- \* teachers with ideas may present them to John Harrower

#### Funding Sought

- \$250 for each class (including non-classes such as French, ISSP, Character Education and special needs) = Total of about \$3,000
- \$5,000 for the teachers non-discretionary fund
- **Total Funding Requested for Teachers is about \$8,000** (but \$1,000 of this is already in the non-discretionary account)
- The funds are not yet available but will be raised through QSP and other fundraising activities and will be provided once raised
- Last year BPS raised over \$19,000
- There is 10% of the balance of the account from the end of last year remaining, plus about \$1,000 remaining in the teacher's slush fund from last year that may be put toward this year's request
- The teachers have already been provided with the funding made available from the Board
- The Ministry provided the library with about \$1,000 which has been spent on books
- The French program also received \$1,000
- The Erin Fall Fair presents an opportunity to raise funds by entering the school competition
  - o For every 5 entries \$500 will be given to the school (just for entering)
  - o Bryan Bibby-Smith will organize entries into the penmanship contest

#### Six Character Traits Program – Pilot Project

- BPS has been signed up for this online anti-bullying program
- It is similar to a "choose your own adventure" game but teaches strategies to deal with various social situations
- Each class will also have charts and cards to teach these strategies
- Mugs and pencils are also available to promote the program
- The program emphasizes 6 character traits, but teachers may also teach additional character traits
- Each month will focus on a different character trait
- Liesa Brett, BPS's behavioural resource facilitator, will try to work with each class once a week

#### **VOTE: Unanimously Approved**

- \$250 to be allotted to each class (including non-classes such as French, ISSP, Character Education and special needs) = Total of \$3,000
- \$5,000 to be allotted for the teachers non-discretionary fund
- **Total Funding Approved for Teachers = \$8,000 (\* in kind gifts also welcome)**

#### Class Parents

- Parent volunteers are needed for each class (total of about 8 parents)
- These parents will act as a liaison between teachers, staff and the community
- This is an interesting role in which parents may learn about and become involved in what is going on in the classroom
- This is an evolving role and may be as involved as the class parent wants to make it. Involvement may range from researching resources and networking with the community to assisting with class tasks
- Involvement of the class parent may include:
  - o Resourcing experts for the teachers and assisting the school in developing partnerships (i.e. for the flying squirrel project, a parent volunteer contacted a flying squirrel expert and connected the teacher to the expert so that BPS now has a resident flying squirrel expert!)
  - o Welcoming new families to the school community
  - o Acting as an outreach to new parents in our school community
  - o Organizing class helpers (helpers are still useful in higher grades)
- Class parents are good resources for both teachers and BPS's Community Council
- Class parents will be designated in the directory
- A sign up sheet will be passed around

**8:15 p.m. Treasurer's Report from Liberty Murray**

**Year End for the 2008/2009 School Year**

- There was \$36,702 in the account at the end of the 2008/2009 school year
- 90% of these funds were allotted for the learning grounds
- BPS raised \$19,197 last year from
  - Lunch program (\*biggest fundraiser)
  - Sunset BBQ
  - Dance-a-thon
  - QSP magazine subscription
  - Spirit Wear

**2009/2010 School Year**

- BPS needs funds going into next year to continue the work on the Learning Grounds
- Cards By Me will be back this year
- We now have about \$26,000 in the account (about \$10,000 has already been spent towards the playground and the junior playground comes tomorrow)

**8:20 p.m. Eco Learning Grounds Update from Kate Subak**

**Phase I**

- Phase I will be completed over the next month
- In October the following will be completed
  - Gazebo
  - Instruments will be ordered
  - Trees may also be planted
- There are 2 opportunities to help coming up (weekends)
  - This weekend – to spread mulch – could use the assistance of strong kids who need community hours
  - Gazebo installation will require 5-7 people or a crane
    - The gazebo is being built off site and will be ready for installation on October 12<sup>th</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup>
- There are many people to thank for the work done on Phase I this summer, including but not limited to : Darryl McNichol, Glen Hanson and Mark Heaton

**Phase II**

- Phase II will be the string climber – funds to be raised at the Climber Social
- There is willow work required to create Tuffet Chairs
- The garden will be enhanced with trees
- Money from the Board will go to mulch and the three ball basket ball “nets” (one will be put back in its proper location and BPS has acquired an additional one)
- The 2 tether ball poles will not be replaced
- The baseball diamond will not be replaced
- The soccer pitch will be replaced possibly with a mini field with 2 moveable nets over the septic bed so that it may be temporarily relocated if the grass starts to wear
- Suggestion: Sell baseball equipment if its not being used (but children may still play baseball on grass without a diamond)

**8:25 p.m. Fundraising Events for 2009/2010 School Year**

- QSP (Sept. and Oct.)
- Lunch Program – ongoing
- Cards by Me (Jan. or Feb.)

- Dance-a-thon
- Sunset BBQ (June)
- Other possibilities: spell-a-thon, shop & support program, spirit wear, eco jot products, Audubon birds, Restaurant Night ...
- QSP
  - push now for subscriptions
- Lunch program
  - ongoing all year
- Cards by Me
  - January or February
  - Children's art goes on the front
  - Need class parents to assist the children with their art work
  - Will raise greater funds if someone can find a reduced rate for the printing
  - Should use recyclable paper & vegetable dye inks
- Loveable Labels
  - can order from the Lovable Labels website at [loveablelabels.ca](http://loveablelabels.ca)
  - be sure to include BPS's name in the Fundraiser's box
- Noinkees
  - various products may be ordered from the website [noinkees.com](http://noinkees.com)
- Dance-a-thon
  - March
  - Parent volunteers needed to help children with pledging, freezies, glow sticks etc.
  - BPS may go directly to Kisco to get freezies (with a letter from the principal)
- Sunset BBQ
  - A new chair and co-chair are needed for this event
  - Heather Kendall has a working binder with great information, contacts, resources and tips
  - It is an important night: excellent fundraiser and kids love it
- Spell-a-thon
  - Not popular with staff
  - Easy fundraiser
  - Concern: This activity may alienate children who are less academically inclined
- Spirit Wear
  - Available in the coming months
- Climber Social
  - Saturday November 14, 2009
  - \$40 per ticket – tickets will be on sale at the Salamander Festival
  - "Supporting Outdoor Learning and Play"
  - Proceeds go to Phase II of BPS's Learning Grounds
  - This is a community event and is not sponsored by BPS Community Council
  - Adults only
  - Dinner, dancing, silent auction, live auction, children's marketplace, cash bar
  - Goal:
    - To get parents and community out to see what goes on at BPS school
    - Opportunity for parents to see what the children are doing at BPS
  - Volunteers needed
  - Silent Auction forms available for anyone interested in donating items for the auction
    - Theme items needed (i.e. experiences such as ROM passes, tractor rides, fire truck ride, principal for a day, guided nature hikes; gift certificates to local restaurants and spas; gifts to give for the holidays etc.)
  - There will also be 3 items for the live auction
  - Advertising
    - Posters at the school, at the Salamander Festival, and around local towns
    - Emails will be sent to BPS parents once the school directory is complete
    - Word of mouth

- “In the Hills” magazine
- Suggestion: provide babysitting

#### Composting Toilet for Belfountain Conservation Area

- Funds are needed to build the structure to house the composting toilet
    - The children raised funds for the toilet but are short funds for the structure
    - Structure Cost: \$1,700 for lumber and \$700 for solar panels
    - All funds from last year’s Restaurant Tour went to the composting toilet
    - This year’s funds from this event could go to the structure
    - CVC will build the structure if the materials are provided
- \* BPS has the first partnership between a school and a conservation authority

#### Concern:

- Vandalism

#### Suggestion:

- Only BPS children will have a key

#### Concern:

- Maintenance of the toilet which will be used all year round

#### Suggestion:

- Parks and Recreation will maintain in season when the park is open
- BPS will maintain during the off season (winter months) (but whom?)

#### **Other Business**

- Other Co-Curriculars to be discussed at a later date
- Book Fair – Christmas time

**Meeting concluded at 8:55 p.m. and adjourned to next meeting on Wednesday November 11, 2009 from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.**