



Ecole Parc School Council & Ecole Parc Fundraising Society 2022-2023 Annual Report for EIPS

Trustee: Ralph Sorochan

Principal: Daniel Verhoeff

Vice Principal: Shelley Boswell - Jade Jordan

SCHOOL COUNCIL BOARD:

Chair – Jennifer Dechaine

Vice Chair – Amanda Shand

Secretary – Amy Archibald

COSC Reps: Jennifer Dechaine

Volunteer Coordinator: JJ Dechaine

FUNDRAISING SOCIETY BOARD:

Chair – Jennifer Dechaine

Vice Chair – Amanda Shand

Secretary - Amy Archibald

Treasurer – Jasmyne Garbe

Casino Reps – Jennifer Dechaine and
Melanie Redfearn

Hot Lunch Coordinator – Leanna Bechtel

Green Space Coordinator – Jennifer
Dechaine

MEETING DATES:

September 14, 2022 (AGM)

September 21, 2022

October 26, 2022

November 30, 2022

January 11, 2023

March 8, 2023

April 12, 2023

May 10, 2023

June 14, 2023

OVERVIEW

We focused on supporting school staff by continuing our staff appreciation program, and at the request of our Principal, executed a significant project that created a quiet room for staff to utilize as they needed. We call it the Zen Den and it has been a huge success and highly used by staff. Our second focus was to improve volunteer engagement. JJ Dechaine led the development of a volunteer program that helped with recruiting parents back into the school and providing tasks that are manageable for our volunteer base. Our fundraising efforts were focused on supporting school needs identified by our Principal, but also giving back to the community with the DRIFCan donation campaign, and the Farm to School fundraiser.

SCHOOL COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- Co-hosted Meet the Teacher night with a BBQ and school dance to start off the year.
- Developed a volunteer initiative to better understand the status of volunteering in the school, improve recruitment, placement, communication, and help staff feel supported.

- Participated in Annual Assurance Review.
- Supported literacy and numeracy needs identified in various grades by purchasing needed materials for classrooms.
- Applied for the School Council Engagement Grant which covered two elements. The printing of school contact postcards for all families and hosting a custom presentation from Volunteer Alberta at our June meeting.
- Funded and established a space in the school for a teachers reset room (The Zen Den).
- Participated in School Fee consultation.
- Continued to work with the City of Fort Saskatchewan and support the composting program for the whole school.
- Participated in the EIPS Annual Feedback Survey in March.
- Participated in and promoted the EIPS French Immersion Review.
- Attended the ASCA Conference in April.
- Updated the Communications Protocol document to help ensure clear and effective communication by the School Council.
- Initiated a playground expansion project which included recruiting new volunteers to form a project committee.

FUNDRAISING SOCIETY HIGHLIGHTS

- Updated and refiled our Society Bylaws with AGLC and Corporate Registries with the Alberta Government.
- Updated Paypal and WIX accounts to simplify online accounting.
- Maintained Hot Lunch as our main and consistent fundraiser for the year.
- Along with hot lunch we hosted the following events – Spirit Wear, Farm to School, Panago Pizza coupons, Write-On school supplies. Tru Earth and Cobs are ongoing fundraisers.
- Received a grant from the Rotary Club of Fort Saskatchewan for \$600 to support the Zen Den development.
- Supported a Diabetes fundraiser that was led by two grade 6 students and their parents. They held a bake sale and an online fundraiser for DRIFCan.
- Maintained a webpage linked to the school website for all School Council and Fundraising Society information.
- Coordinated many Teacher Appreciation activities through the year.
- Received a grant from Tree Canada of \$3500 to do succession planting of trees in the front yard of the school.
- Received a private donation to support the emergency lunch food supply in the office, as well as other smaller donations from local grocery stores.
- Received a large donation of mulch for the green space from GCS General Contracting, coordinated by the Garbe-Smith family.

FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED

- Agendas
- Classroom stipend
- Literacy resources with teacher support kits
- Classroom library books
- Emergency lunch supplies

- Teacher Appreciation
- Green Space Maintenance
- Gardening Club
- Zen Den development and supply
- Compost program
- WIX webpage
- Classroom furniture for 2023/24 school year.
- Young Authors Conference
- RAZ Kids subscription
- Volunteer Appreciation Event

KEY SCHOOL COUNCIL AND FUNDRAISING SOCIETY INITIATIVES:

GREEN SPACE & INDIGENOUS OUTDOOR CLASSROOM PROGRAM

This year we focused on maintaining the space we have developed. Our school FNMI lead, VP Shelley Boswell, worked on educating staff about how to use the outdoor space to its full potential, and teaching students how to respect nature and our outdoor space through the seven sacred teachings. We successfully applied for a grant from Tree Canada to do succession planting of trees at the front of the school. We have approval to plant five Lodgepole Pines in the front yard. This is a timely planting as we lost a few old Spruce trees to disease this winter.

The grade 4 Garden Club was able to run again this Spring with the enthusiastic leadership from M. Verhoeff. The students plant and maintain 5 raised beds at the front of the school. We also have two raised beds in the courtyard with a few perennials planted in them. The courtyard beds have been turned into medicine gardens and on June 6th an Indigenous leader from EIPS led a session about the history, meaning, and respectful process of planting a medicine garden. Funding for the native garden plants was provided through the Division to run the FNMI program.

In May 2023 we received a donation of six cubic yards of mulch from GCS General Contracting. This donation was coordinated by one of our families. We were able to refresh the mulch in the gathering circle, saskatoons, every tree, and the mud kitchen area.

The cost of materials, plants, and supplies this year for the mud kitchen, the garden club, and the general maintenance of the green space was approximately \$400.

The trees and shrubs that were planted on the playground in the fall of 2020 with grants from Tree Canada and Shell are doing fairly well. Volunteers water every summer and fall and will continue to again this summer if rain is limited. One tree did not survive the winter and will need to be removed. Over the summer the gardens and trees will be weeded and watered by parent volunteers. This is a necessary job to ensure all our hard work through the school year is maintained.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

A goal of our school council this year was to lighten the load on our staff through more formal volunteer processes. Our council endeavored to track, coordinate and therefore better understand the number of volunteer hours and the activities they were engaged in to gain a sense of additional areas volunteers could support going forward. A key component of this was the coordination by a parent volunteer of classroom support. The scheduling of classroom support was done by a volunteer alleviating the need for staff to reach out and schedule volunteers themselves.

We are happy to report that Ecole Parc Elementaire had over 1000 hours of in-kind time donated at our school this year. Of our recorded hours, from September to the end of April, the main activities that our volunteers engaged in were:

- Clubs – 150 hours

- Library Support – 120 hours
- School Council and Fundraising Administration – 300 hours
- Classroom Support – 75 hours
- Office Support – 70 hours
- Hot Lunch Program – 150 hours
- Zen Den Special Project – 45 hours
- Other activities included – Picture Day, Emergency Snack/Lunch Supplies, Terry Fox Run, Juvenile Diabetes Fundraiser, Gym organization, field trips (hours not recorded) and high school work experience students hours

We recognize that numerous additional hours were not captured in these statistics but feel confident that this work gave us an excellent sense of how we can engage and continue the excellent work and contributions of our volunteers next school year.

In addition to gathering data this year, our School Council worked to enhance engaging, retaining and maintaining our volunteer base through enhanced communication efforts and a special presentation. We used our school newsletter and newly launched school council website to continually report, request and show gratitude for volunteers. Beyond that, Council hosted a presentation – funded by the School Council Engagement Grant – where our school community was invited to participate in a presentation by Volunteer Alberta on the topics of engaging, retaining and tracking volunteers. This presentation provided the Council with new ideas for expanding and refining our volunteer program in the future.

Finally, we held a volunteer appreciation evening and invited all of our recorded volunteers to enjoy some light refreshments with school administration and the School Council and Fundraising Executives. We are extremely fortunate to have a strong, highly skilled and varied volunteer base that is able to meet most of the needs requested by school staff.

EMERGENCY SNACK & LUNCH SUPPLY

Our school was the fortunate recipient of three specific donations this year allocated for an Emergency Snack and Lunch Supply. One donation came directly from our local Coop grocery store in the form of gift cards, another from Toonies for Tummies, and the third as an anonymous donation from a local realty group. These donations totalled nearly \$1000 which allowed our School Council volunteers to work closely with our school secretary and administration, to ensure a steady and consistent supply of snack and lunch items were on hand for any student requiring extra nutrition throughout the day. Some items purchased included fresh fruit, cheese sticks, yogurt tubes, granola bars, fruit cups, hot lunches among other grab and go type snacks which ensured the program was manageable and accessible for all involved. The Council hopes to continue this work as some of the donated money from this year remains and will be carried over into next year.

ZEN DEN SPECIAL PROJECT

One of the School Council's highlight projects of this school year was the creation of a "Zen Den" space for our hardworking school staff. With financial support from the local Rotary Club and some school funds, volunteers converted a sizable and unused closet space on the upper level of the school into a living room-like space where our teachers could go to take a quiet break, work with colleagues or relax between school events. This closet was repainted, new furniture and décor installed and additional "comforts" such as scent diffuser, coffee maker and small fridge were added.

This project was an idea brought forth by school administration to address the mental health of staff and evolved with passionate appreciation for our school staff. Throughout the year, Council has maintained a store of beverages, grab and go snacks and treats for our teachers. This space has become a beloved escape for staff members during their busy day which allows them to reset and be fully present for

students. It has been mentioned numerous times by staff how often and how much they have enjoyed having this space available and how it has helped them maintain positive mental health and be at their best for students.

ASCA CONFERENCE

We were grateful for the opportunity afforded by our Board of Trustees and School Division whereby two parents shared attendance at the ASCA Conference this year. One attended the Friday evening sessions and one the Saturday sessions. Sessions attended on Saturday included two indigenous teaching sessions, a report on EIPS' reset rooms at the junior high level, a keynote presentation on engaging parents in the school culture and a digital citizenship session. Delegates reported back to our school council and provided a number of online and print resources for parents to explore further from the conference and the discussions from this sharing have already sparked new ideas for next year. As always, the networking and information gained from the ASCA conference was highly relevant and current to our Council work and our school community as a whole.

HOT LUNCH

The hot lunch program was updated this year to be hosted all on our parent council website. Overall it worked very well. There were a few logistical things that took some getting used to by our parents. We can only have one order open at a time and parents can't go back to see what they ordered, however they do get a confirmation email when they order. One order open at a time is the best for the administration side of things and we added sending an additional email confirmation closer to the lunch date to help remind parents.

Our hot lunch program was a success again this year. For the 2022-2023 school year we ran 2 hot lunches per month, making it a total of 18 hot lunch days for Grades K-6 and supplemented 9 hot lunches for the Kindergarten A group. We used a couple new vendors and hopefully can expand that next year. We used Panago, Cobs, Freson Bros., A & W, and Boston Pizza. As with any year there were some things we learned and will change for next year. Freson Bros. was making a few mistakes so we stopped using them but plan to try again next year with a more simplified menu and hope that leads to fewer mistakes. Boston Pizza was expensive for what you actually got and there was no way to reduce pricing as they stated that they were already not making money on the hot lunch program. We didn't use them again and more than likely won't next year. From October 2022 – May 2023 the profit from the program was just under \$5000. June will take us over the \$5000 mark.

COMPOSTING

Composting ran smoothly this year with the grade 4 composting club in charge of daily compost bin emptying. The request was put into the City of Fort Saskatchewan by Amy Archibald for a second bin to be provided to the school because of the increased frequency of hot lunches and the compost material produced around those lunch days. The City agreed to provide another bin however has not yet been received as of June 2023. This will be followed up in September 2023 if it is still needed.

The cost of the compost club was very low this year. Under \$50 was spent on compost liner bags. We received some donations from parents this year of compost liner bags as well.

TEACHER APPRECIATION

Demonstrating support and appreciation for the Ecole Parc teachers and staff has historically been a high priority for the School Council, and that has continued to be a key focus this year. This includes a \$100 stipend to each teacher for use in the classroom and smaller acts through the year such as, treats for

staff meeting days. One of the most well-received acts is the teacher and staff appreciation lunch. This year's luncheon will take place later than it has in previous years to booking challenges. Ken's Catering will be providing lunch for the staff on June 27, 2023, in celebration of the last instructional day. Leftover approved funds will allow us for the first time to provide teachers with a gift in the form of a gift card. Planning is already underway for the 2023-24 school year. As there will be significant turnover within the EPE staffing team going into September an updated survey should be explored to gather more information about supporting the EPE instructional team.

FARM TO SCHOOL

The Farm to School event is a great fundraiser for our school and our local food bank. The profit margin is excellent, as well as the product, and the ability to donate a significant amount of fresh veggies to the food bank. We ran the event from September 22 to October 11th with a delivery day of October 26th. In the end we donated 751 pounds of fresh vegetables to the food bank and raised \$1287 for our school.

SPIRIT WEAR

This year we gave families the opportunity to order Spirit Wear through the month of October with delivery in December. The event is a fundraiser for us and generated \$828 for the school. Based on recommendations from last year we simplified the number of items offered and only ran the event in the Fall. We recommend this format again next year but consider starting it in September and increasing the advertising of the event.

COMMUNICATIONS

This year communication was focused on streamlining the output and availability of information to parents. We decided the epeschoolcouncil.com website will be updated regularly, as needed, with current information. The rest of the information on school council and fundraising information will be highlighted in the weekly Gazette that is emailed out to parents every Sunday by our Principal. The process was in effort to reduce the multiple communication mediums allowing parents to focus on a main source for their information.

The School Council and Fundraising Society Communications Protocol document was updated to remove Facebook and classroom reps as a formal means of communication for parents. The Facebook parents group is still used for reminders for hot lunch or events but has communication directed to the website or gazette.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (attached): The financial statement attached is not the final statement, as the reporting period will end on August 31, 2023.

_____ School Council Chair
Date

_____ Fundraising Society
Treasurer Date