



October 2013



École Whitehorse Elementary School Council

Words From the Chair

Welcome to Fall!

School Council wants to increase our ability to communicate directly with the school community to keep you up to date on our activities and the progress we are making with our priorities. To that end, we are asking parents to email us at ewesschoolcouncil@gmail.com to permit us to add you as a contact for our direct circulation email list. Please feel free to take this opportunity to also include in your email any suggestions, comments or questions you may have so that we can increase our dialogue within the school community.

School Activities

To celebrate International Teacher's Appreciation Day on October 5, 2013, School Council collected from students leaves with notes of appreciation for our ÉWES teachers and attached them to a "Tree of Appreciation" for the school community to enjoy. Staff were treated to a candied apple and personalized card of thanks to show appreciation for the expertise, care and patience that our students receive.



School Council is in the process of finalizing a fall activity for the school community. We are hoping to secure Shipyards Park on Saturday, November 16, 2013 from 11:00 to 2:00 for a hot dog, hot chocolate and marshmallow roast for us to celebrate our school community. Stay tuned for more details!

Further activities throughout the school year include the Mother's Day Breakfast on May 9th, 2014, and the end of year School BBQ on June 9th, 2014. More hands are always cheerfully welcomed at these events so please watch for direct requests for assistance to help us carry out these events and make them a success.

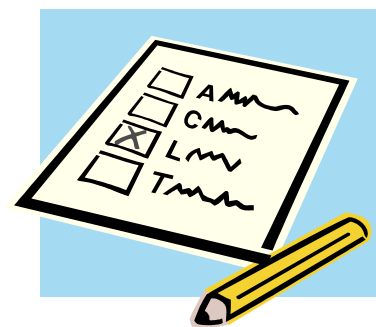
Bits and Pieces

Special Education (Student Support Services) Review

Some parents recently received an email from Jane Morris, the consultant retained by the Department of Education to conduct a review of student support services at ÉWES. A copy of the email can be found at <http://ewesyukon.weebly.com/latest-news-blog.html>. School Council urges you to both fill out the survey within that email and to take advantage of one or more of the options available to speak directly with Ms. Morris to share your experiences and thoughts. If you need the email outlining Ms. Morris's availability re-sent, please contact us and we are happy to provide you with that information. Please join us on Tuesday, October 22nd at 6:30 (**TONIGHT**) at the Education Building on Lewes Blvd for an opportunity to speak with Ms. Morris in person. Alternatively, Ms. Morris can be contacted at 667-8000 (leave a message) or Jane.Morris@yesnet.yk.ca.

School Elections

School Council elections will now run this spring due to changes in the *Education Act*. In March of 2014, School Council will begin the process of elections so please take the time to consider contributing to your school community by putting your name forward for nomination. Please contact us directly for more information regarding school elections and watch for our December newsletter for specific information in this regard.



Transportation



The Department of Education has recently renewed the Transportation Committee and an initial meeting was held in early October to discuss the current experience of transportation for students in all school communities. Of particular interest to the ÉWES school community was a challenge regarding direct after-school transportation from ÉWES to Canada Games Centre. School Council learned that there are a number of ÉWES parents seeking this transport assistance. If this applies to you, please contact us and we can share our information.

Active Living

Most parents are aware that at ÉWES, creative measures are constantly applied to handle the capacity pressures related to our children's physical education. One gym to support 430 children...simple math can see that carving out time is a challenge! We can all be very proud of our teachers and administration who have worked hard to think outside the box for what has resulted in many physical education firsts for Yukon. One of these firsts is our before class Active Living Program. Every morning our kids can be seen outside working out their wiggles so their learning day can start fresh and invigorated.

In the hopes of increasing the energy and enthusiasm during our Active Living Program, ÉWES School Council has submitted an Action Grant application to Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon (RPAY) for a sound system and speakers. The idea is that with aided support of music, the kids and teachers will feel that much more supported to exercise in a fun environment. In addition, we have requested 50 hockey helmets to further encourage the use of our ice rink! All 84 applications are currently being reviewed by RPAY and we should know within the next month whether or not we have been successful in our bid for support.

For more information please go to <http://www.rpayschools.org/action-grants.html>.

School Council Priority Focus

Playground and School Ground Naturalization

At our next council meeting in November, we will be moving forward with formalizing many aspects of this priority by way of approving a vision, goals and terms of reference for a steering committee to lead this priority. At this time, committed volunteers have put together for our consideration the following:

Our vision is to create a natural experiential school ground for our ÉWES community that reflects Yukon biodiversity and fosters appreciation, education and environmental stewardship for future generations.

Goals:

1. A safe and functional schoolyard that works in all four seasons.
2. Experiential, hands-on opportunities for students to care for the natural environment.
3. An outdoor school environment that meets curriculum objectives for K-7.
4. Encourage co-operation and foster a high quality of play.
5. A school space that engages and supports broader community engagement.

You may have already noticed the first steps of greening the ÉWES playground. In July, trees were planted along the soccer field by Third Avenue and four large garden boxes were installed on the front lawn of the school with help from Yukon Government's Y2C2 program. The trees - all local species - will eventually grow tall to provide wind and shade protection. Parents and students filled the boxes with compost and soil in September and M. Richard's Grade 2 class painted them with protective stain. Now ÉWES classes can grow food in those garden boxes next spring.



Right: Students painted the garden boxes to protect them for years to come!

Left: Tree planting by Environment Yukon's Y2C2 crew in July.

These successful projects demonstrate the commitment of our school community - administration, teachers, students, parents and local organizations - to work together to improve the outdoor environment at ÉWES. We are excited to now be embarking on a holistic plan for the playground. Adding greenery and structures that reflect our environment will offer our students a close encounter with nature as part of their daily education experience.

Your input is needed! Online surveys and in-person meetings will be planned for getting specific information on project ideas. Stay tuned - announcements will be shared via the Journal News and our School Council newsletter!

What is the process of greening our playground?

Successful projects evolve from a design process that includes students, teachers, parents and members of the broader community. People who feel involved are more inclined to care, contribute, stop vandals and create the elements of a project that make it truly special.

The following steps will form our process in the coming months:

1. Establish a committee;
2. Research and visit other schools to see their project;
3. Develop a collective vision for the site;
4. Make a site map of your school ground;
5. Develop and present the project design to school staff, parents and the community;
6. Establish a maintenance strategy;
7. Get approval from the principal and school board;
8. Create a budget and fundraise;
9. Organize your planting day;
10. Plant;
11. Keep the spark alive—visit the project often to observe, learn and maintain it; plant something new every year, even if it's only a few seeds.

All this information and more can be found in [All Hands in the Dirt: A Guide to Designing and Creating Natural School Grounds](#).

From: Evergreen Canada - www.evergreen.ca

Global EWES Behaviour

School Council is working with both Stacey Burnard of the Mind Up Program and ÉWES administration to further the school community's understanding and experience with social emotional learning for our students as part of our "**Global ÉWES Behaviour**" priority. Please watch for information within our upcoming newsletters and on our website that will further the introduction that EWES administration arranged for parents to the Mind Up Program on October 16, 2013.

Contact Information

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