

January 7, 2025 WRAPSC Minutes

Review of the Agenda: Chair Sara Heroux

- Schools should have received PRO grant info by today

Nutrition 4 Learning: Erin Moraghan & Kerry

- 27 years of providing nutrition programs
- In 180 schools across WRDSB
- Almost in all schools K-12
- All alternative programs have Nutrition for Learning
- Universal access
- 3 food groups
- Student informed
- Diverse & inclusive
- Schools raise at least 20% of their program costs
- Students don't have to ask for access to Nutrition for Learning; it is available in common spaces
- Primarily run by student volunteers & a paid employee
- Many schools reporting as many as 50% of students are utilizing the program
- Board has asked for schools to fundraise for this; need is way beyond capacity; so schools have had to be put on a budget
- Used to cost \$700K; in recent past, the program cost \$1.8 million, but it was more likely to be \$4-5 million, but now the need is off of the charts
- How Funds are Raised for Nutrition for Learning:
 - School fundraising: 6.8%
 - Individuals: 6.8%
 - Corporate: 23.7%
 - Government: 24.1%
 - Foundations: 13.6%
 - BCC (Breakfast Clubs of Canada): 1.3%
 - Donate eggs, yogurt, applesauce
 - PCCC (President's Choice Children's Charity) 23.7%
 - Province hasn't significantly increased funding since 2014
 - Funding announcement from feds Nov. 20, 2024: \$2 billion in student nutrition
 - Majority of funding for WRDSB schools comes from our region though
- Disconnect for students during the pandemic; Nutrition for Learning forms a connection
- In some schools, students are sharing a cracker from Nutrition for Learning due to a lack of funds
- How it works today:
 - School staff coordinators
 - Budget
 - Weekly orders
 - Student volunteers: usually receiving the orders & work with staff to hand out the orders

- o Admin leadership
- Here to Help:
 - o Had a loss of external adult volunteers due to the pandemic so students have been volunteering more since the pandemic
 - o Fundraising at school
 - o Data tracking support
 - o Elevating food literacy through Stem Den (students cook with chefs @ Langdon Hall), Farm to Classroom events, & more
 - o Government advocacy
 - o Collaborations & innovation
 - o Nutrition for Learning gives ideas to school council for fundraising ideas; school councils should contact them!
- How School Councils Help:
 - o Programs benchmarking & leadership
 - o Program advocacy
 - o Fundraising
 - o Program operational volunteerism
- If 50% of parents in our region donated \$5 monthly, then would raise \$12,000, which could almost fully fund the program
- Average program cost is \$15K
- PC grants give \$4-15K
- Parents should give to the general fund of their schools so that schools can flexibly use those funds
- Sept.-Oct. grants come in from PCCC (President's Choice Children's Charity); gave \$800K-\$850K last year, but this year pulled back funding because PCCC overspent last year, so now needs to offset this year
- Messaging comes from school about how they promote Nutrition for Learning
- Nutrition for Learning gives messaging info to the schools and school councils can reach out too
- Lots of grants out there are designed to get funding back in the store (ie Walmart's grant to schools that uses gift cards)
- Nutrition for Learning (NFL) needs to be in alignment with schools' food standards
- NFL isn't an exclusive partner
- Pre-pandemic NFL parents cooked eggs for kids in schools; after the pandemic, the need was so huge that this wasn't possible anymore
- Farm Boy grant: \$1000
- Member Question: Do our grants have to go through NFL? Answer: Using grants will get your NFL amount to your school clawed back. Other members agreed that this has happened to them.
- NFL: the point isn't to set children who need food apart from others that don't; NFL doesn't want this to be the messaging that parents give to their children
- Member Question: Can schools keep back some of the less nutritional items from the kids (ie Cheerios) when some parents send their kids with a variety of healthy foods and they want them to be eaten? This member shared that their teachers keep back the Cheerios until the healthier apples, etc. are consumed.

- NFL: the main thing that NFL doesn't want parents to say is to tell children to not eat NFL food because it is for children of need
- Schools have changed NFL so it is a free for all anymore; that is beginning to change

PRO Grant: Heidi Holmes, Angie Hallman, & Ashley Harrison

- Heidi Holmes:
 - o Principal should have gotten PRO grant info Jan. 7; PRO grant applications due Fri. Jan. 24
 - o WRAPSC reps will receive PRO grant info Jan. 9
 - o Sara (WRAPSC chair) will send out list of previously successful PRO grants
 - o No cap on PRO grant amount now; dream big and request from PRO grant committee what you want
 - o Member Question: After the pandemic, our school requested a PRO grant for an end of year celebration for our whole school, and our application was denied. Why was it denied when it was about families connecting together as a school?
 - o Used their PRO grant to have a community event that focused on the Muslim students and their families; anyone was welcome to attend
 - o KW Federation of Muslim Women translated flyers, etc.
 - o Helped families at the event get on to School Day
 - o Made QR codes to get School Day account or website & taught how to link phones
 - o Asked local businesses to donate for a social bbq
 - o Partnered with the local community center
 - o Response from their PRO grant activity: families felt the event wasn't helpful; they said they knew enough about how to engage with the school (ie School Day); however, they connected together as a school community and that was appreciated
 - o Flyer; food distribution
 - o Member Question: Is the 10% for food for the PRO grant a flexible amount? Answer by Michelle Newlands: No, it is a ministry mandated amount. Further Question: Could someone advocate for a change in that percentage because food is the center of what connects people together (as they have heard from many groups). Michelle: Yes.
- Angie Hallman
 - o For PRO grant, 5 public schools joined together
 - o AI speaker came in to speak
 - o Gender diversity speaker
 - o Did a survey before to ask what topic families wanted
 - o This year, their speaker is going to be about how to talk to kids about suicide & prevention
 - o Angie highly recommends having a speaker about gender diversity because the conversations with families were very productive. It allowed families to ask gender questions of an expert and also the expert was able to debunk various ideas.
 - o Misconceptions of AI
 - o High school denied holding their event at their school and actually stopped it again when they turned to rent it and pay out of pocket. Local elementary school ended up helping.

- Michelle: Reach out to the superintendent of your schools if you can't get your principal on board to host the event; can even ask Michelle Newlands
<https://www.wrdsb.ca/about-the-wrdsb/senior-team-roles-responsibilities/sawb/schools-by-area/>
- Michelle: They now notify both the school principals & chairs of school councils of approval of the PRO grant because of a WRAPSC member's request last year.
- Ashley Harrison:
 - Stanley Park Public in Kitchener
 - Supplier White Hatter
 - PRO grant at their school: Helping parents to support youth affected by aggression online
 - Concerning signs
 - Support process & recovery periods
 - Working with police, schools, & how to overcome barriers
 - In extreme situations, what legal options do parents have available
 - Cost for online event: \$682
 - 75 people attended online (some might have watched it the day after because the counter just shows the number of people that watched)
 - A Few Members Commented: For our PRO grants, they held Fun Fests at their schools. Had magicians etc. The PRO grants can be about community engagement.
 - Michelle: If you want to increase your food budget from the PRO grant, increase the amount that you spend overall. Remember that food is 10% of your overall spending, so if you spend more overall, you can get a larger food budget.
 - PRO grant idea: applying for funds for translations
 - PRO grant idea: get a free speaker like a police officer and use the PRO grant to cover the cost of signage, advertisements, and flyers. Also, post on socials.

PIC: Sara Heroux

- Trying to identify schools which don't have active school councils
- 55% of schools applied for PRO grant
- Planning on monthly communication for school councils ie. newsletter
- Pilot parent engagement night

Large Group Discussion: All WRAPSC members and chair Sara Heroux

- What is WRAPSC's role?
 - To be able to share problems that school councils are having and for the board to be aware of these issues
 - Best practices so school councils don't have to figure out everything on their own
 - Google Drive so members can make slides
 - Collaboration of peers & more discussion time

- o Advocacy
- o Templates to save time for school councils ie fundraisers available in our region
- o Helping school councils form properly
- o More government lobbying
- o Subcommittee for advocacy
 - Could be given time on the agenda
 - Solutions
 - Possibly bringing things to a vote to the whole WRAPSC group
 - Letter
 - Written by Angie Hallman
 - Online WRAPSC members are in support of WRAPSC being an advocacy group
 - Subcommittees for advocacy like letters
 - Sept. subcommittee can be formed
 - Members in agreement
 - John (executive WRAPSC team member) happy to organize this
 - Member comment: Reminder that any parents can send individual letters to MPPs about concerns; it is effective
 - Vote to form a subcommittee in Sept: Members were in favour.
- o Non-partisan instead of non-political
- o WRAPSC needs other layers like board reps (ie. Michelle)
- o School councils form properly
- Vote to form a subcommittee in Sept: Members were in favour.

How Did Your School Councils Do this Year: Sara Heroux and open discussion with WRAPSC reps.

- Group consensus was not to break up into small groups but to do one large group
- Member Thought: co-chairs make the load so much smoother. Success.
- Member Thought: Had 3 different fundraisers this year: winter carnival (local vendors came in and watched kids perform, sold popcorn, and vendors donated some of the profits). Success.
- Member Thought: High School council. Membership has grown a lot. Tell parents on School Day what they get out of school council meetings (ie. list that they will get to meet with the principal, head of guidance; get updates on what is happening at our school; understand how to navigate the high school system and how it works; get your questions answered; meet other parents/caregivers from your school; share your ideas on how to increase parent involvement, etc.). Also, tell them that they don't need to help in any way. Chair hands out school council flyers on Meet the Teacher night and Grade 8 night. Success.
- Member Question: Can't afford both playground funding and NFL. Response: Have a toonie drive for NFL.
- NFL reduced their contribution to the schools that took the PCCC grant
- Walmart gift cards for schools
- One school asked local churches to donate to their school's NFL. The churches saved some funds from the offerings.

Future WRAPSC Meeting Dates:

- Feb. 4
- Apr. 1
- May 6

Adjourned 9:06pm

Minutes recorded by WRAPSC secretary Amy Pharoah