

## School Planning and Information Session: January 31, 2014

### **Question #1: What have we already done that has provided an excellent learning environment for children?**

- **Access to outdoor space:** use of field, outdoor pursuits, Martin Park, Capes Park, school yard design, garden, composting, curriculum based field trips, bike riding weekly trips;
- **Building meaningful community:** extra activities for families beyond school ( camping and Creekside Halloween parties), parent/grandparent involvement and support, parent evenings, we have built a strong community;
- **Classroom environment:** opportunity for children to do practical work like chores, high quality materials and supplies, the beauty and peacefulness of the space, the children experience reverence, strong sense of respect that is instilled in children for their environment and each other, multi-age play, rich curriculum, Waldorf philosophy – working with temperaments, teaching the whole child, providing daily, weekly and seasonal rhythm, an environment that allows children to be children, providing an environment that minimizes commercial distractions, parents with similar values, pride and strength in children’s experiences, an environment for internal motivation, a reward-free experience, the joy of learning and creating for it’s own sake, pride in what the children create and do, creation of self-esteem in children, simple uncluttered space;
- **Collegial relationships:** regular faculty meetings/regular study/positive energy between colleagues, room for teacher creativity;
- **Community support:** Tin Town and Creekside connections, high calibre professional volunteers;
- **Curriculum:** music program, child-led learning i.e. market fair, fibre fair, focus on physicality in class learning – lots of movement, embodiment of aesthetic education, focus on story-telling, Art Gallery project, handwork program; hands on meaningful crafts;
- **Events and Festivals:** Christmas Fair, May Fair, Lantern festival, plays;
- **Health and well-being:** Quality and uniqueness of food children prepare and eat in ECE, lack of media, lack of attention to style, lack of junk food;
- **Location:** centrally located, providing a Waldorf setting in an urban environment;
- **Membership with umbrella organizations:** WECAN members, AWSNA developing members;
- **Openness to diversity within classrooms:** special needs within class, no gender discrimination;
- **Parent-Teacher relationship:** parent support, teacher/parent communication, accessibility to teachers – after hours communication;
- **Services/help for families:** hiring full-time administrator, lending library/book club – educating parents, TAP program;
- **Teacher-Child relationship:** Teachers are able to be affectionate with children, small classes, teacher connection, flexibility to meet children where they are, provides children with a sense of belonging, committed teachers, giving time, working on spiritual selves, teacher moves with children through the grades.

**Question #2: How could we provide exceptional services for Grade 1 and Grade 2 students within the space, staffing capabilities, and financial realities for the school?**

***There are 3 possible scenarios for Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes:***

- 1). 1 teacher (Grade ½ split)
- 2). Grade 1 and Grade 2 have two separate teachers in the am and then become Class ½ in the afternoon
- 3). Two separate classes ie. Grade 1 and Grade 2;

***Separate classes:***

- We could increase enrolment by offering two different classes;
- There are benefits of a stand alone grade 1 from a teacher and family perspective;
- Grade 1 could be a stand alone with Grade 2 as a bigger class. How could it be beneficial to have them both together?;
- If you remove finances and space –what is ideal for children? The transition from KG to Grade 1 is significant. Need to strive to keep the 1 and 2 separate;
- Quality – offer this at the outset in Grade 1
- Teacher with Grade 1 – need to build with children through the years – what happens down the way;
- Solve the main lesson teacher – then the subjects can be combined.

***Combined class:***

- If we combine classes (multiple ages) there is the benefit of bigger class sizes for children and teacher;
- What would it take to bring Grade 1 and Grade 2 together – this would require a teacher with this experience to hold the class;
- Is the combined route successful? The current Grade 1 students could mentor and buddy the new Grade 1 students;
- At some point could class 2 join the older children. This would shift classes to have a different combination (ie Class 1, Class 2-3, Class 4-6);
- It is ideal to have a fuller range of temperaments and learning styles in the class;

***Questions to ponder:***

- We need to trust the power of children to grow – they may not be the same children by September;
- What are our hindrances and how do we overcome these? Financial, personnel, space

### Question #3: How can we gather enough volunteers to support the school and renovate a second space?

- **Access outside resources:** Government grants – eco renovations, Volunteer Comox Valley, appeal globally to Waldorf World – work for boarding;
- **Be clear on what skills are needed:** know who and what you need – fall back on hired labor, draw on parent body/faculty – interested people;
- **Draw on community support:** opening up the community through work, ask Transition Town to help us with the yard, appeal to work experience programs – college, Ba’hai volunteers, Service clubs – Lions Rotary Kinsmen, Habitat for Humanity, Local contractors work in exchange for tuition;
- **Involve children:** Healthy competition between classes and groups;
- **Offer incentives to volunteer:** appeal to interests and abilities (working with wood/tiling), provide workshops for specific skills, exchange work for info/workshop seminar, provide child-minding with field trips and programming, provide food and liquid, Waldorf dollars – volunteers hours for coupon that can be used to purchase services, connect with an eco-builder who uses the building as advertising – a model for eco-building, donations to school in exchange for work ie workathon, recognition project (wall/tile/bench);
- **Reasonable timeline:** begin during this school year (i.e. don’t wait until the summer), be flexible in schedules to accommodate business
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** At least someone is a foreman/forewoman - labourers as volunteers, clearly defined job descriptions, volunteers are clear on their roles;

\*In terms of renovations: Only develop what we need now – make workload manageable for everyone.

#### **Question #4: How do we want the larger Comox Valley to view the Saltwater School? What impact would that image have on enrolment?**

*How do we want to be viewed?*

- **Overall view:** we want to be seen as a centre of excellence in the type of education we bring, we want to be viewed as a great alternative where we let kids be kids, we want to be viewed as a credible school where students learn uniquely and are confident in their creative, lateral thinking, that kids will be skilled learners as opposed to rote learners and are connected to nature, the children experience full body learning;
- **Connections with other schools:** work toward viewing Waldorf education coming under the umbrella of the public school system (would we be flexible enough to work towards this perhaps at a high school level?), debunk the myth that Waldorf is a Christian based school, high school career fairs, connect with other schools and become colleagues with other independent schools for referrals.
- **Educating parents and the wider community:** we want to educate on the values of Waldorf education and the differences between a Waldorf and Montessori education, family anthroposophical education would be helpful, we are an open and transparent community and we integrate with other groups in the community ie Lush Valley, Habitat for Humanity;
- **Enrolment:** we would like to have enrolment so high that we have to cap it, draw more families from other parts of the country.
- **In terms of community:** we are a community of people – extended family,
- **In terms of marketing:** our marketing should show that all aspects of education are addressed and that we provide an alternative to technological games and instruments, we are inclusive to all family styles and culture (not a hippie school), we are not elitist;
- **What we offer in terms of services:** inform on the Tuition Adjustment Program, special needs accessible, meets the children where they are at, our school develops the whole child and that students are responsive to changing times;

*How might this affect enrolment?*

- It could increase enrolment;
- It may change the community of families that come to the school;
- Make risk management reasonable;
- Increase awareness of the management of the values at Saltwater School
- The value of the fees for the education be seen as more of a priority than other aspects in the family budget.
- It would inspire community to volunteer with us and help to further build community;
- Interaction with other schools;

Student Numbers			Class	Human Resource Requirements		
2013-14	2014-15	**Future		Main Class Teachers	Specialist Teachers	Other Staff
<b>Early Childhood Education</b>						
3	5	5 x 2	Parent and Tot	W Facilitator	n/a	Administrator Bookkeeper Teacher Relief Recess Monitoring Cleaner
15	15-18	15-18 x 2	Preschool	ECE (& W) Teacher EA (W/ECE)	Education Assistants	
11	15-18*	15-18 x 2	Kindergarten	Deg., W (ECE) Teacher	After School Staff#	
				ECE (&W) Assistant		
<b>Grade School</b>						
6-7	10	10-12	Grade 1^^	Deg. (W) Teacher^^	Music & Choir	
13	6	15	Grade 2^^	Deg. (W) Teacher^^	Remedial EA's #	
	14	15	Grade 3	Deg. (W) Teacher	Handwork	
9		up to 20	Grade 4		Outdoor Pursuits	
	10	up to 20	Grade 5	Deg. (W) Teacher	Movement#	
n/a		10 +	Grade 6		French#	
n/a	n/a	10 +	Grade 7	Deg. (W) Teacher	Woodwork	
n/a	n/a	10 +	Grade 8	Deg. (W) Teacher	Strings	

\* Move to full-day Kindergarten, 5 days a week in 2014-15 (increase Ministry funding by 50%)

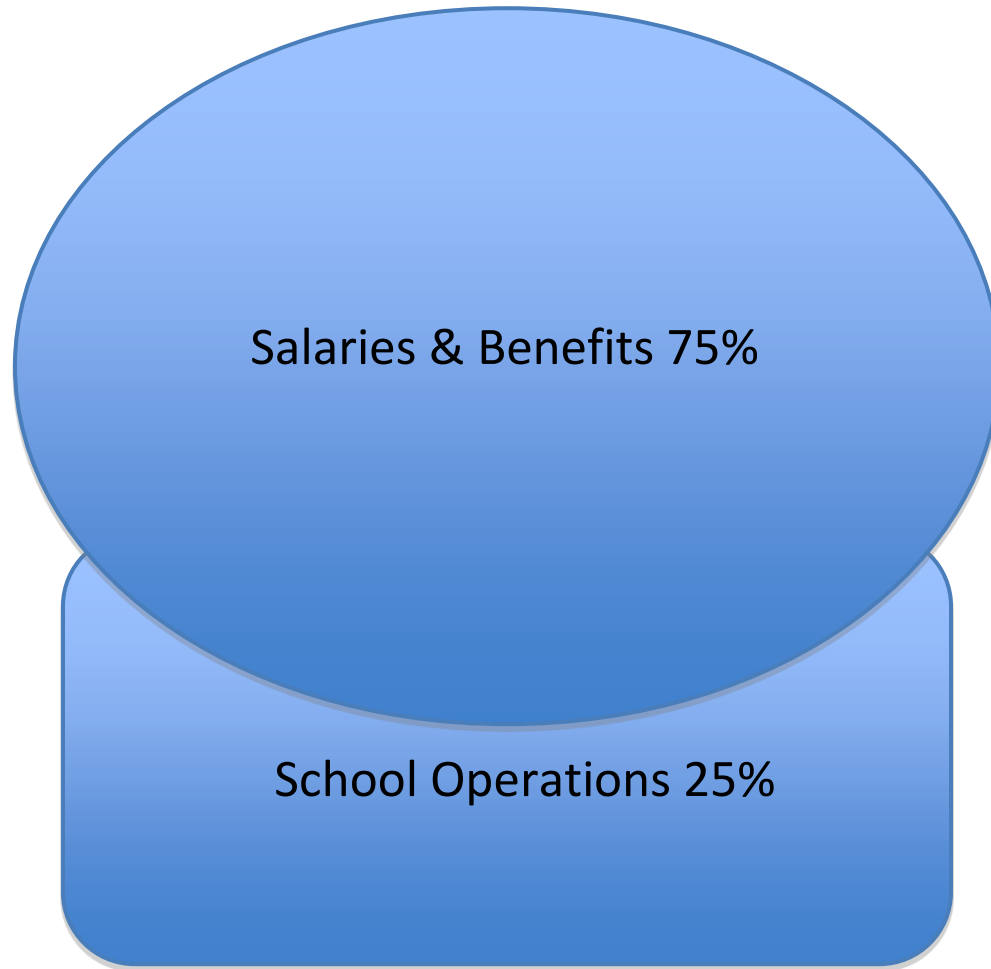
^^ In 2014-15 there is a 'specialist' Main Lesson teacher for Grade 1, but a blended Class 1-2 for all other elements of the day

# Separate Specialist Teachers are employed for these classes

\*\* Future projections based on having available space & enrollment

Legend	Configurations	Resources (Budget/YTD)	Expenses (Budget/YTD)
	2013-14 Class Configuration & Staffing	\$331,000/ 312,000	\$371, 000/378,500
	2014-15 Class Configuration	\$445,000 (with 7% fee increase)	<b>\$445, 000</b>
	Future Class Configurations & Staffing	Resource/Expenses <i>must</i> be balanced!	

Financial Picture for 2014-15:



Total of all Expenses must = Total Revenue