

# Sherwood Secondary School Council 2009/10 Annual Report

June 1, 2010

## Members of Council

Parents: **Robin Gagnon (chairperson)**, **Brenda Della Maestra (recording secretary)**, **Blair Gerrish**, **Sue Shuttleworth**, **Don Wilson**

Teacher Representative: **Sandra Valeri**

Student Representative: **Nic Neu (President)**

Principal: **Randy Gallant**

Vice-Principals: **Jim Braun**, **Evelyn Wilkie**

I wish to acknowledge the dedication of the members who serve on School Council and very generously donate their time throughout the year. Council met the first Tuesday of the month (four each semester) for a total of eight evening meetings. Additionally, 1-2 guests were present at six of those meetings. Council meeting dates are published on the calendar in the student agenda.

## Goals

School Council is an advisory organization whose purpose is to improve student achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. This is primarily achieved by making recommendations to the Principal. Sherwood School Council had a very rewarding year. All parents from our school community are welcome and encouraged to attend our Council meetings which are held in the school Library. Each meeting this year included reports from our Principal, Vice-Principals, Teacher Representative, Student Council Representative and Chairperson resulting in a very informative outcome.

The Sherwood website features a School Council page that outlines the dates of meetings, meeting minutes, annual report and newsletters. The site continues to be managed by a keen group of students under the direction of Ms. Daphne French so please check frequently for reference and newsworthy information. Parents may review School Council information posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway and a School Council binder provides all the historical information of record.

Council continues its drive to effectively communicate with parents and the community. Parents who provide an e-mail address to School Council Executive receive Council information electronically. A summer newsletter was distributed by mail from the school and two other newsletter handouts were circulated at each of the Parents' Nights providing valuable information. In addition, School Council issued a news handout for parents who attended the Grade 9 Information Night in January. School communication was further enhanced with the posting of two electronic newsletters on the Sherwood website.

The Grade 9 Information and Open House outlined programming information, academic and enrichment opportunities along with specialty programs for incoming and existing Sherwood families. It was a grand opportunity to visit classrooms and glean information from Guidance Staff and Department Heads.

Parents had an opportunity to enrol in *Parent Assistant* while attending March Parents' Night. Parents may pick up user passwords by visiting the Guidance Office with photo identification.

## Activities & Accomplishments

Each meeting had a very full agenda and Council had the pleasure of listening to a number of informative presentations. The programme information shared by Technology, Special Education and Music Department Heads will help parents and their children make informed decisions with regard to course selections at Sherwood. Mr. Paul Woods and members of the "Support Orphaned Children Kisumu School" or S.O.C.K.S. fundraising group (Sherwood Alumni) informed Council of their efforts to raise the profile of Covenant Home orphanage located in Kisumu, Kenya, and their outreach providing children an education, shelter and a future.

Our Principals, Safe Schools Committee and School Council are always looking for ways to improve the facility to benefit students and keep them safe so "Plant and Safety" are standing items on our agenda. Concrete slabs at the school entrances were evened out; windows in the gym doors were installed; vents in second-floor classrooms were cleaned and painted; the emergency procedures manual was revised; and anti-bullying awareness continued through a variety of initiatives. The drive to reduce and eliminate school graffiti continues and there is a plan in place for carpet replacement in the Library as part of the School Improvement Plan. This

is the second year that R. Gagnon liaised with the Safe Schools Committee. Ontario's new Safe Schools Policies took effect February 1, 2010.

There was no change to the Sherwood Principal Placement Profile Survey currently on record with the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board.

School Council applied for a Parents Reaching Out Grant and used this funding for a parent information evening in February entitled "Facebook 101 & Twitter". Guest speaker, Mr. Chris Vollum, enlightened our school community on the risks of using social networking sites especially as it pertains to privacy, security, and its impact on real-world careers, reputations and more.

School Trustee Laura Peddle attended our March Council meeting and was able to provide insight surrounding the timelines for the Accommodation Review process pegged to start in January 2011. School boundaries is a second important topic for discussion during the fall election campaign and Trustee Peddle announced that she is standing for re-election in Ward 6. The Education Centre consultation process continued with an opportunity for the public to share views and opinions during workshops held in March. School Council looks forward to continued communication with our Trustee.

### **Financial Statement**

Sherwood School Council did not participate in fundraising but received \$500 from the Ministry of Education for Mobilization and Parental Outreach along with the \$1000 PRO Grant. The majority of this funding (\$1,441.63) was allocated for the February evening event with the balance (\$58.37) targeted for stationery supplies for the School Council binder.

### **Goals for Next Year**

- Enhanced Parent Information Nights
- Continue Staff Presentations

### **Summary**

Please consider volunteering for School Council where you have an opportunity to meet other parents, teaching staff and demonstrate support to your children. Your voice is important. You will benefit abundantly from School Council participation (only 8 meetings/year); gain suggestions and advice from fellow parents; examine new ideas and policies; influence decisions that affect your children's education. Over the past year, there was an opportunity for parents to contribute comments through HWDSB online surveys on the Trustee Expense Policy, Gender Equity Policy, Student Fees Policy, Nutrition Policy, Medical/Health Supports Policy Scoping Document, Secure Schools Draft Policy Directive, and School Year Calendar for 2010/11. School Council members also had an opportunity to sit on the Out of Classroom/School Policy Committee.

The Ontario Ministry of Education held a town hall meeting in November at Ancaster Secondary to discuss the importance of parent involvement and sought online feedback on the draft policy "Parents in Partnership—A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools. Ms. Leona Dombrowsky is Ontario's new Minister of Education. The HWDSB Trustees and Superintendents from Wards 6, 7 and 8 held a combined Ward Information Night (WIN) meeting in January at Hill Park Secondary. Topics were Nutrition, Facebook and Trustee Role/Committee Commitments.

A nomination form will be part of a School Council newsletter distributed by mail during the summer. Please return it to the school, principal or School Council chairperson if you wish to become a member. Council reconvenes September 14/10 at 6:30 p.m. For further information, you may contact the School Council via e-mail with this address [Sherwood.SC@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:Sherwood.SC@hwdsb.on.ca) or visit Sherwood's website [www.hwdsb.on.ca/sherwood](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/sherwood).

Sherwood School Council is devoted to improving education for our students and we do it in partnership with Student Council and Sherwood Staff. We appreciate the year-long work from our Principal Randy Gallant, Vice Principals Jim Braun and Evelyn Wilkie exhibiting continual leadership and dedication to Council and students. We wish the **Graduating Class of 2010** continued success in all future endeavours. Go Saints!

With kindest regards,

*Robin Gagnon*

Chair, 2009/10 Sherwood Secondary School Council, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada