

WESTMOUNT SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES - October 17th 2017 (7:00-8:45 pm)

Members in Attendance: Angela Ferguson, Mike Armstrong, Dianne Millar, Adam Potvin, Cheryl Farr, Hanif Dadani, Kim Kolpin, Kirsten Patterson, Greg Cherwaty, Anuradha Khanna.

1. Principal opened the meeting and welcomed members at 7:00 pm. Members requested to sign attendance and provide their email contact (**Total 10**)
2. September 2017 minutes reviewed and approved
3. **SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS:** No member contacted school for interest to Chair the school council. Mr. Hanif Dadani was re-elected as the Chair for year 2017-18 with 100% majority.
4. **SCIENCE ROTARY SYSTEM and purpose** (by Dianne Millar Science teacher):
 - I. Two science labs are closed due to renovations. Cafeteria is being used as classroom space. To maximize the output, science department has come up with a *2 WEEK SCIENCE ROTATION ON-LINE SCHEDULE* to maximize their work. Each teacher has posted on the “**On-line Science schedule**”, date, time and details about their Work period, Teaching period and Lab time.
 - II. No paper guides or books are provided to students anymore and everything is on D12 On-line.
 - III. Students have to take responsibility to plan their week. They can sign out and join in class with another science teacher, if they want to learn what is being taught by another science teacher.
 - IV. Study material, activity sheets and every other information regarding the science course for students is posted online on D12.
 - V. Students have to self -learn through the online guide.
 - VI. If they are struggling in some understanding they can conference with the teacher and ask for personal lesson with the teacher.
 - VII. It is a challenging school as per learning is concerned because self-advocacy is very much promoted. It is self- directed instead of a self- paced school.
 - VIII. Parents will be able to access the On-line Science schedule once the Parent portal is functional.
5. **WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MATHEMATICS** (by Adam Potvin, Head of Math):
 - I. Math Department comprises of 16 teachers.
 - II. SPIRAL LEARNING is being tried with MATH APPLIED students of Grade 9 and 10. Working with small group of students on Level 1 and 2, students significantly has moved up to Level 3 and 4 in Grade 9. School EQAO results have improved, and are much higher than Board and Provincial results.
 - III. Three steps of learning used are Observation (through class room lecture, group discussions, video and audio links) Conferencing (with teacher one on one basis to clarify doubts and plan individually on how to complete the task) and Final Product

(completion of the individual subunits, final units and final course as per the board expectation)

IV. All the material for learning is posted online, on D12

V. Just like science department students can move between different teachers to learn a concept. There is only one assigned teacher to make final evaluation but students can learn the concepts from different teachers who are well connected with each other in the Dept.

VI. **Question by parents:**

1. *Students are given online practice sheets and matching answer sheets. It was observed by a parent helping his child that some of the answers in the answer sheet were wrong. How is this problem taken care of by the department? Do teachers individually mark the practice work?*

Answer: No individual marking of learning work is done. This is accepted as a flaw of new electronic method of learning.

2. *What is the difference between Applied and Enriched Program?*

Answer: Applied and Enriched students are taught same topics but Enriched students are given extra ONE full day to learn material which is above and beyond their level. With enriched RECIPROCAL TEACHING is used. (Where student become teachers in a group and learn through group task, summarizing, question generating, clarifying and predicting)

6. **HWDSB LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT** (by Adam Potvin, Head of Math):

Mr. Adam Potvin is leading the HWDSB Land acknowledgement in Westmount, which is part of implementing Land acknowledgement act of reconciliation. Statement is read in school every morning and in various board meetings to pay respect to traditional territory of the indigenous people who called the land home before the arrival of settlers from different parts of the world to Canada. Mr. Potvin will be taking workshops with another teacher to plan activities and make it more meaningful to students. Following announcement is made every morning in school:

“The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board recognizes that many indigenous nations have deep-rooted relationships with the land of present-day Hamilton.

We acknowledge our presence on the shared territories of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Missisaugas of the New Credit First nations.

We recognize the long history of First nations, Metis and Inuit People of Canada.”

7. **PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE** Cheryl Farr

Cheryl works on Mondays and her role is to promote health at Westmount. She is also part of the “Westmount Health Action Team” WHAT. On Parent teacher interview night a survey was taken by WHAT to find out factors that could lead to health issues in our school. Fun and interactive events will be planned accordingly to promote awareness. Diabetes and Obesity are growing concerns. A parent suggested that as Public health is a strong lobby group it should use blogs, social media etc.. to increase awareness of harmful effects of too much sugar and salt in diet

these days. Although canned foods are perceived healthy as per H & S foundation but they are high in sodium and other ingredients.

Last year an event was planned on Healthy relationships. This year in Nov a day has been planned when dogs will come with their owners in the gym and students will get a chance to pet them, as it is found that pets relax human mind.

8. **STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT:** No report from student council

9. **TEACHER REPORT** by Mr. Mike Armstrong from Guidance Department:

- I. University PIN has come early to school.
- II. On Oct 12th, assembly was organized on how to apply to universities and colleges.
- III. Guidance encouraged parents to visit student services website, Westmount guidance twitter and Instagram account to access wealth of information regarding volunteering opportunities, scholarships etc. Everyone was also encouraged to view Westmount's bimonthly publication on school's website.
- IV. Guidance has seen positive growth in students with new changes from self-paced to Self-directed program.

10. **PRINCIPAL REPORT** by Ms. Angela Ferguson:

- I. **Parent Portal:** It is a tool where parents can access their child's progress online. On Parents teacher interview night, Access ID and Password were handed out to interested parents. If anyone missed this opportunity or is struggling to login, they are encouraged to contact school directly for help.
- II. **Carpools:** Last month a concern was raised by a parent if school could provide any help regarding carpooling. As per board, school cannot help officially due to liability reasons. Parents can contact on personal level and use tools like social media etc.
- III. **New Method of Assessment:** A PowerPoint was presented explaining new method of assessment, based on Median rather than Mean average. Through example it was explained how this method gives better assessment of students. E.g. if out of 10 tests a student scores zero in 3 tests and 90 in seven tests, he/she will not score 63 mean average rather 90 Median and vice versa if a student scores 63 in seven tests and 90 in three tests, will not score 71 mean but 63 median with this new method. `
- IV. **Paper:** Last year about \$40,000 was spent on paper in photocopying. To reduce this expense the school has decided to go paperless. All books and guide work is now posted online. Photocopying is restricted in school.

Parents concerns:

There were some serious concerns for this new move. It is increasing too much time on electronics, too much dependence on Wi-Fi, data, internet, harm to health and specially to eyes, not catered for all types of learners, social isolation. Also only Grade 9 and 10 are provided iPads by school. Grade 11 and 12 students have to either carry heavy personal laptops or work on small devices like phones and iPod which are very damaging for eyes and back.

Note: If parents have issue specifically for their child they can talk to the teacher. School can accommodate to individual needs and provide them papers for learning.

- V. **Split Classes:** This issue could not be addressed
- VI. **Science Labs:** Due to renovations science department is working in coordination. Everything explained in detail by Ms. Dianne Millar in her presentation of science Dept.
- VII. **Clubs:** School is very open and encourages students to start clubs. Students need to find a teacher who can be their supervisor to start the club.

11. Next Meeting will be on Wednesday Nov 21th at 7 p.m. in room 123.