



Westmount Secondary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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PRINCIPAL: Geeta Malhotra
VICE-PRINCIPAL: Joshua Connor, Andrea Moore
www.hwdsb.on.ca/westmount

WESTMOUNT SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES - May 14, 2018

Members in Attendance:

Angela Ferguson, Hanif Dadani, Robert O'Brien, Angela Ceccato, Greg Cherwaty, Heidi Tadeson, Anuradha Khanna

1. Members welcomed, signed attendance sheet & provided their contact info
2. Principal gave a tour of the newly renovated Learning commons and some science rooms. The renovation project should hopefully complete before the school year 2018-19.
3. March 2018 minutes reviewed and approved
4. No student council report as student was absent
5. No teacher report as teacher was absent

Principal Report:

- a) The school will be divided in various Departments & wings like Math and technology, Arts and language etc.... for efficiency and convenience.
- b) "Flex day" is planned to get a new name "Focus day" with the hope that it will reduce student absences on flex day and will encourage students to focus and catch up on work on Focus Days.
- c) The Principal, teachers, students, of Westmount along with other HWDSB staff and students had life time enriching, learning experience through YMCA Canada's Culture Exchange program to remote Inuit community of Pangnirtung, Baffin Island, Nunavut, near Arctic Circle in April 2018. In the month of May students from Nunavut came to Hamilton as part of the exchange.
- d) Westmount transitioned from Self-paced /Self-managed to Self-directed learning criteria since last 2yrs. Difference between both explained by the principal. Information sheets handed to parents for better understanding.\

Questions/Concerns on methods of implementing self-directed learning program at Westmount.

a) Is Westmount an online of in-class school?

Some courses are becoming more like an online course. It is confusing for students and we feel they are getting demotivated to attend school as they see no benefit of studying at home versus in school.

Answer: Our expectation is that students attend school every day. Although we are putting resources and guides online these are just guides. Teachers are valuable to the



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learning process and their relationship and teaching is most important.

b) Is it fair to change students who joined self-paced/self-managed to self-directed in the 2nd or 3rd and especially last year of school?

Students who came for self-paced program are moved in grade 10, 11, and 12 to self-directed without any training for self-directed program in their grade 9 years . This has confused them and may affect their marks for post-secondary.

Answer: Westmount has always been a self-directed, self-paced school. We are not a booklet school. We have been working with teachers - all teachers - to help build skills of self-direction for all students as these are skills that will support them in their post-secondary endeavours.

c) Is this method of schooling preparing future generations to cope with rising global challenge in the work force today?

Answer: Absolutely. It teaches students the inquiry process. It teaches the curriculum. It teaches skills such as initiative and self-advocacy.

Some teachers are reducing in-class learning to bare minimum.

Students are being expected to learn and understand subject content on their own through power point and web links. If students have to learn everything on their own then why should they come to school? What is role of school then?

Answer - This should not be the case. Teachers are there to support learning and students should not be left on their own. They may be asked to explore topics but teachers should assess, evaluate and help consolidate this knowledge and the skills.

Other Concerns Raised (Not ADDRESSED)

- Post-secondary expectations on students
- Mental Health
- Additional academic supports and resources available for students
- Impact on student learning of new methods of teaching

Next meeting

Date in fall 2018 will be sent after the beginning of the new school year.