



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 - Sept., 17th, 2018

Members in Attendance; Geeta Malhotra, Andrea Moore, Hanif Dadani, Hebba Fahmy, Mike Armstrong, Kirsten Patterson, Kathy Long, Heidi Tadeson, Rochelle Butler, Oosha Bechar, Angela Murchie, Doug Sim, Reasa Diab, Anuradha Khanna, Kim Kolpin, Greg Cherwaty

1. Members and new parent members welcomed @ 7:10 p.m. Introduction of new school Principal, Geeta Malhotra & new VP Andrea Moore.
2. Agenda reviewed, apologies regarding the inability to announce the meeting as intended using Synervoice. Administration has sorted out issues and will be sure it works for next meeting.
3. May 2018 minutes reviewed but not approved. Items of concern will be added to future agendas as needed. The revised May 2018 minutes will be reviewed for approval prior to the next meeting.
4. No SC election business took place as it was felt that without the Synergy announcement it would be premature. Nominations for School Chair (or co-chair) and Secretary will take place at the October session.
5. No Student Council Report, they will attend next meeting.
6. Guidance Update by Mike Armstrong:
 - Guidance focus will be on communication with parents & students.
 - The official platform of communication this year is The Hub/D2L
 - "Student Services" tab is available to parents, most material is transparent.
 - Guidance now using "instagram" (westmountguidance) to post important info
 - New TV in guidance, using Raspberry Pi to also show announcements.
 - Guidance is also very focused on college/university communications
 - 3 Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs were approved for Westmount
 - Specialties offered are: ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH & WELLNESS & INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY.
 - Parents asked if experts from those programs could present information in the future



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- Question was raised about current Gr. 11 & 12 students regarding “retro-qualification” and Mike said they would be reviewing that possibility for students affected.
- Mike recommended the value of Oct. 24th Board event “My Path, My Way”

7.. Principal's Report:

- a) Ms. Malhotra acknowledged the contribution of former principal Ms.Ferguson.
- b) The tragic passing of Westmount teacher, Cindy Reese was acknowledged. It has been a sad development for many students and fellow teachers. There will be a Celebration of Life upcoming @ Michelangelo's on Sept. 27th.
- c) Westmount had numerous assemblies and the annual ClubFest which were deemed very successful. There was also the games day & BBQ for Gr. 9’s which put emphasis on team building, school spirit and social development. Parents of Gr. 9 students shared positive review from their homes.
- d) Enrolment this year: Total of 1,396 students.
 - i) 310 Gr. 9’s
 - ii) 333 Gr. 10’s
 - iii) 293 Gr. 11’s
 - iv) 460 Gr. 12 & Gr 12+

Parents requested some data on last year’s graduating numbers. Principal to provide at next meeting.

- e) Westmount has 5 new teachers, updates on them in the future.
- f) Upcoming dates of importance:
 - Sept 18th, IEP night
 - 1st PA day, Sept. 21st
 - Sept. 27th, 1st FLEX/FOCUS day, Gr. 9’s will again do gradual entry into routine
 - Oct. 10th, preliminary reports
 - Oct. 16th, 4:30 - 6:30pm, Parent/Teacher Night, Also SC meeting @ 7 p.m.

g) BOARD PRIORITIES & WESTMOUNT SCHOOL PLAN:



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Ms. Malhotra reviewed the board priorities as follows:

- STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
- POSITIVE CULTURE and WELL BEING
- SCHOOL RENEWAL
- COMMUNICATIONS
- PARTNERSHIPS

Specific to Westmount, it was noted that the priorities will be ALL STUDENTS GRADUATING, POSITIVE CULTURE and WELL BEING OF STUDENTS AND STAFF, IMPROVEMENTS IN MATH. Staff will be discussing this school plan to solidify direction and steps forward, Westmount will continue to respect all pathways forward into the labour markets as valuable.

OTHER BUSINESS:

8. Parents asked if we could revisit the process of email list for minutes and school business to best communicate with parents. Principal to review current systems of website postings, announcements and be sure to distribute those opportunities in conjunction with the Parent/Teacher meetings. Some parents had other experience to offer from how other schools handle these things. It was acknowledged that some of the limitations are due to board procedures which have been changing. Everyone agreed that we should try to find multiple ways to engage parents and facilitate communication. Mr. Armstrong added that there is a lot of data suggesting that student success is higher when parents are involved. It was suggested that we might ask a few students to again DEMO "The Hub" and D2L for interested parents on Parent/Teacher night. Parents expressed interest in knowing about CLUBS. It was raised that along with the Club Day at school, there is a list of clubs at the front of the agenda.

9. Ms. Malhotra will investigate and confirm the proper protocol for parents to sign up to the Parent Portal for next meeting.

10. There was a clarification of the positions up for renewal on Parent Council. The position of Chair or Co-Chair, plus a recording Secretary for minutes is needed. Ms. Malhotra also asked if we had applied previously to use PRO Grant (Parents Reaching Out Grant). This grant is available to councils to promote learning and education around running successful SC. A School Council Handbook was made available for parents by Ms. Malhotra at this meeting for anyone



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who wished to review. It was also noted that there are other opportunities available to SC to promote parent engagement. It was agreed that we should discuss some of these opportunities at a further meeting to see if we can take advantage of them.

11. Next meeting will be: Oct. 16th at 7 p.m.

12. Meeting adjourned. A tour of the new Science Labs & Learning Commons was provided for parents who were interested in seeing the school renewal results at Westmount.

POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

- FLEX/FOCUS DAY
- SC PARENT ENGAGEMENT FUNDS
- PAST GR 12/ GR 12+ STUDENT DATA
- PARENT COMMUNICATION via email/website/social media