

School Council – December 19, 2023

In Attendance – Brian Goodram (Principal), Kim PH (Teacher Rep), Len Lu (Triune), Nicole Lee (SOSA), Nick Benner (HWDSB Communications), Louai Moghrabi, Shannon Boyle, Danielle Schwalm, Claire Rivlin, Kristi Gringhuis, Jan Sumner, Susan McBurney

Regrets – Jerome Galante, Catherine Roberts, Anita

Minutes

Meeting began at 6:20

Land Acknowledgement

Roll Call

- Claire, Kristi, Louai, Len, Nicole, Nick, Brian, Jan, Shannon, Danielle
- Introductions – Nicole Lee (SOSA), Nick Benner (HWDSB Communications)

Approval of Minutes from October Meeting

- Minutes approved; motioned by Shannon, approved by Kristi

Student Council Report

- Internal elections and re-elections finished; added 9 new members – Grade 9 rep, 2 social events coordinators, 2 comm coordinators, 2 graphic designers, 2 student senators
- Looking to add translators for MLL; consulting with ESL/ELL department
- Candy Grams (50 cents each), gingerbread house decorating, spirit days this week
- Planning free hot chocolate in January
- Spring semi formal – mid March or April 11/18; Principal Goodram confirmed April 18 date
- Communicating with Westmount for a Grade 12/12+ Post-secondary networking event; may do a joint Relay for Life event
- Westdale Buzz is the Triune Instagram account

Teacher Report

- Since last meeting staff have been active in a number of departments taking students on a variety of field trips, the musical theatre class welcomed 4 associate schools (Kanetskare, Dalewood, SWO and Guy Brown) for a matinee performance; some students from SWO and Guy Brown also attended a music clinic after
- Student services selected the Queen's Chancellor Scholarship nominees and supported students in applying for the Queen's Melvin R Goodes Scholarship
- Counsellors have been targeting Grade 12 students and assisting with college and university applications for the upcoming deadlines (Jan 15/Feb 1) and sent home reminders to families about these deadlines

Principal's Report

- Staffing update: interviewing this week for an additional 4 semester 2 permanent jobs
- Opening Learning Commons all 5 periods next semester
- Alt Ed Lines added: purposeful staffing; using one in consultation with Graduation Coach for Black Students; using one with ESL qualified teacher; serving underserved students and populations
- Depth and breadth of opportunities is amazing at the school
- Robotics Team: Guardians of the Allen Key placed 4th recently and Innovate Award
- Waterpolo Sr Boys playing for city championship tomorrow
- Mean Girls production wrapped up
- Festive Music concert last week

- Thank you to group for gift card drive; staff supporting \$2500 in gift cards and community has donated \$3500
- Proud of the work of Kleri; secured \$10,000 grant from PC Charity to support hampers for 40 families

Chair's Report

- Claire thanked the group for coming
- Looking forward to discussing PRO Grant topics

Canadian Parents for French

- Registration for virtual after school programs opened this week
- Teacher candidate students get experience in these programs

Communication Strategies to Improve Parent Engagement

- Nick attending from conversation at our last meeting about engaging newcomers
- Nick thanked group for invitation (his first!); noticed language/communication came up in bylaw review and wondered about discussion
- Claire noted that we wanted to promote more positive interactions between school and community; positive communication; equitable actions; noted that our council is not representative of our school community
- Brian noted parents/families have different obligations which could prevent participation in meetings
- Claire suggested an email from HWDSB reminding families about the translate feature
- Claire asked if all languages at Westdale are represented on the board translate feature; Nick noted that they used Student Census data to inform language features
- Len asked what the top languages were spoken in the HWDSB; Nick noted that HWDSB posted a "Top 10" list of languages on the website
- Claire asked what Nick's role covers; he noted that there is a lot of letter writing, social media, videography, website updates, graphic design
- Nick noted that other schools have done outreach to engage community
- Nick's Tips
 - o Don't post PDF documents as they won't be translated the same way an email, or news post can be
 - o Copying and pasting a document instead of posting the document will allow for translation
 - o Participate in events like MLL Night, Families New to Westdale, unrelated to school council, to invite families to participate in school council
 - o leverage existing school events to have school council represented
 - o be concise in communications, especially important ones (less is more!)
 - o ask families how they want to receive communication; create Microsoft form to gather information
 - o using data and analytics to understand the problem; Bitly used to shorten links; can also use Bitly to see how many people click a link
 - o send home simple print materials with students (students often #1 interpreter for families)
- Brian noted that he will post minutes directly in WordPress instead of a Word Document
- Jan noted that many still do not have internet, data, don't know how to use computers/phones and that we are missing this demographic altogether

By-Law Changes and Vote

- all in agreement with changes proposed
- motion to accept changes: motioned by Shannon, seconded by Kristi
- Brian will make changes in document
- Nicole noted that they should be reviewed every year

PRO Grant Suggested Topics

- Jerome – spoke with Sheryl Boswell from YMHC – Youth Mental Health Canada; can check out website and could attend meeting in January if needed to
 - o Claire will email Jerome to ask Sheryl to attend January meeting
 - o Brian can help support PRO Grant application
- can we find fusion between social media, mental health and sleep for teens

Further Business

- Nicole: working on request for changing bell time; proven more difficult than anticipated; must collaborate with HWCDSB for transportation; no bell times study planned right now; no good news yet but keeping issue on everyone's radar
- September 2024 not promising but not impossible; Nicole thought flipping the bus times was going to be the solution but learned that there were more factors than anticipated
- Claire: can we survey teachers for their thoughts on Period 1 classes?
- Brian will compile Period 1 data
- Len offered to run survey with Triune
- Shannon asked if there was late data for Period 1; Brian noted that data was shared last year
- Danielle asked if year over year data for Period 1 could be compiled to give weight to discussion
- I noted that some subjects are challenging to learn in during Period 1

Meeting Adjourned 7:21 pm