

School Council – April 30, 2024

In Attendance – Brian G (Principal), Kim PH (Teacher Rep), Sheryl Boswell (Youth Mental Health Canada), Nicole Lee (SOSA FOS4), Catherine R, Claire R, Jan S, Danielle S, Shannon B, Louai Mi, Kristi G, Susan M, Sharmila K, Simone B, Mark D, Katherina M

Regrets – Jerome Galante

Minutes

Meeting began at 6:19

Land Acknowledgement

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes from January Meeting

- Minutes approved; motioned by Danielle, approved by Claire

PRO Grant Planning

- Presentation by Sheryl
- Need to firm up date; Sheryl available May 9, 14 – preference seems to be May 14 at 7:00 pm
- Brian has an additional \$500 in funds for School Council that can also be used in addition to PRO Grant funding
- YMHC charitable, non-profit organization ;
- largest online mental health platform in Canada
- teaching background from elementary through adult education
- area of expertise is school phobia, avoidance and absenteeism
- written a handbook; first warning signs can appear in students at the age of 5
- working towards a cultural shift in mental health services in Canada
- has developed 5(?) fillable handouts for families
- what do parents need to attend? Childcare? Later in the evening? Virtual? Resources? Incentives? Prizes?
- Will create a mental wellness action plan in the workshop
- ****put out through School Messenger, school social media accounts, Hub, announcement TVs**
- **Needs: laptop/projector setup, microphone, speakers for video**

Bell Time Update

- Thanks to SOSA Lee for attending tonight's meeting
- Letter examined by members of senior team/managers; advocacy valued that was submitted
- 2 large buses, 5 mini buses, 13 taxi runs coupled with a bus/driver shortage; most secondary schools have a minority of students using school bus transportation vs the rest of the school population
- At the moment, no ability to request bell time study as it will need to be board wide; significant interconnectedness between bus routes for HWDSB and HWCDSB and amongst individual schools
- Bell time study required because of the interconnectedness of the bus routes; related issues are funding for transportation and driver shortages;
- Bell time study looks to minimize the number of buses needed to transport all students who need it
- Concerns with HSR changes as well; Nicole will look into it with Transportation
- Can hypothetically adjust by 10 minutes but it has to come out of lunch periods which are teaching periods. Not enough classroom space to run a 4 period day.
- Can't adjust end time
- Group questioned equitability of decision for the Westdale students

- School wants to work with group to mitigate Period 1 absenteeism; move to a flip-day schedule where Periods 1 and 2 flip each day
- Question: why do many elementary schools start later? Often has to do with young children (3 and 4 year olds) also getting on buses very early
- Question: why is common sense and science not prevailing?
- Question: what if school starts at 10:00? Then bus runs would be after the first runs in the morning instead of being the first ones
- Parents are concerned that bell times are not being addressed appropriately; many points raised about student wellness, mental wellness; concerns about the previous bell time study not being made publicly aware; recruitment of drivers ongoing
- Question: is there a deeper issue of catchment “misalignment”? which is driving bus issues?
- Specialized program consideration also plays into busing and bells;
- Question: who makes/made the bell time decisions? How much does a bus route cost? How many schools start early and what is the latest time?
- Direction to SOSA Lee – please take back that the group overwhelmingly disagrees with the response and will continue to advocate for change

Educational Excursions

- Since the pandemic there have been no approvals for travel to places like Chicago, New Orleans, Nova Scotia etc
- Nicole reports that there will be a shift in September; threshold must be that the students cannot get the experience within Canada

Student Council Report

- No report tonight

Teacher Report

- Family-Teacher interviews on April 4; well attended
- Pathway Planning session for Grade 10/11 families on April 9; well attended
- Currently in the process of timetabling for next year; hold on timetable change requests at this point
- Summer School registration remains open until the end of June

Principal's Report

- Bring Back Breakfast; Tomi was featured in The Spec for her work
 - o Can we ask parents to bring food items when they come to Sheryl's presentation? Cereal? Packaged food?
 - o How can parents donate through School Cash?
 - o Work with Kleri and Tomi to determine details
- NTS Dramafest South Regionals were hosted here and Westdale's play advanced to Provincials
- First week of May is Mental Health and Well Being – courtyard launch, picnic day Tuesday, Just Dance Party, Nutrition Rally with Hamilton Tiger Cats, Animalpalooza
- Over 1500 students projected for 2024/25; status quo for staffing

Chair's Report

- Successful turnout for media blitz with CHCH

Canadian Parents for French

- CPF now offering free memberships for individuals, families
- Schools can join for \$60/year
- Virtual after school programs and tutoring will continue

Further Business

- NA

School Council Principal Placement Form

- Survey needs to be completed and will be circulated

Meeting Adjourned 7:40