

Hillcrest High School Council Meeting Minutes

January 26th 2022

7:00-8:30 PM

Attendance:

Kate Connolly, (Co-Chair), Andrew Wigston, (Co-Chair), Carolyn Kropp (Treasurer), Janet Mark Wallace (Secretary), Geordie Walker (Outgoing Principal), Janice Isaac (Incoming Principal) Tricia Jones (Vice Principal), Melissa Campbell-Schwartz (Vice Principal), Marilyn McMillan (Staff Rep) Ahmed Yasin (Student Senator), Shom Patel (Co-Chair of Student Council) Akash Karunaharan (Co-Chair of Student Council), Brian Raymond (Past Chair) Sandra Koch (Past Treasurer), Louise Doherty, Rebecca

Recording of Meeting

Participants were advised that we intended to record the meeting. Recordings of the meetings are available for viewing by contacting the Principal.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM

Land Acknowledgement

- We acknowledged that we are meeting on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin territory.

Approval of Agenda:

Moved by Andrew, seconded by Janet to approve the agenda for the January 26th meeting.

Carried.

Approval of Minutes from November 24th 2021:

Moved by Andrew, seconded by Kate to approve the minutes of November 24th.

Carried.

Student Report: Student Rep, Co-President(s) and/or Student Senator

Change to a Schedule of Four Classes per day

Shom reported that some of the Grade Nines and Tens at Hillcrest have had questions about moving to the anticipated new schedule of four classes per day in February for second semester. Geordie responded that there will no doubt be an adjustment period, just as we've had to adjust constantly due to changing Covid requirements. The Guidance Counselors will be available to help with the transition.

Janice added that she's been fielding similar questions at her school, and that she has been reassuring students that the schedule will be similar to what they were used to in Elementary School, with several shorter classes per day as opposed to two long blocks.

Akash inquired whether we had heard when to expect the results of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test that the Grade Elevens and Twelves wrote in December. Geordie responded that there was no update on this at this time.

Principal Report: Geordie Walker, Trish Jones, Melissa Campbell-Schwartz and Janice Isaac

Covid Update

Trish reported that Ottawa Public Health had supplied the school with enough Rapid Antigen Tests to distribute two tests to each student for home use as required. Since the tests came in boxes of five, they had to be opened and reassembled for distribution. Student Council did the actual work on this and it would not have been possible to distribute the tests in time without their help.

The school is also due to receive a shipment containing one three-ply mask for each student, and more HEPA filters, which will provide a complete refresh of the indoor air five or six times per hour.

Schools will no longer be responsible for reporting all cases of Covid-19 to Ottawa Public Health. There will be a web site for families to voluntarily report cases to OPH.

Geordie offered his particular appreciation and admiration for the thorough job that Tricia did over the last two years implementing the Ottawa Public Health guidelines and keeping the spread of Covid within the school to remarkably low levels.

Transition to new Principal

Geordie's official last day as Principal of Hillcrest High School will be Monday January 31st 2022. Janice Isaac will take over on February 1st. She has already been to a number of meetings with staff to facilitate the transition.

Janice Isaac introduced herself. She's very happy to have been placed at Hillcrest, as she lives not far away from the school. She grew up in Metcalfe, and taught English at Nepean and Lisgar high schools. She served as Vice Principal at Woodroffe and AY Jackson high schools. She's heard lots of good things

about Hillcrest, and experience has shown her that an active School Council can make significant contributions to the life of the school.

Bell's Let's Talk

January 26th is Bell's Let's Talk Day, which aims to raise awareness and funds around mental health issues. Brian added that Let's Talk started in 2011 and he had the chance to watch it develop over his eight years as Chair of Hillcrest School Council. The campaign has raised 1.3 billion dollars since inception.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day

International Holocaust Remembrance Day takes place Thursday January 27th. The UN urges all of its member states on this day to honour the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and million of other victims of Nazism, and to develop educational programs to help prevent future genocides.

Quebec City mosque shooting

January 29th is the five-year anniversary of the Quebec City mosque shooting, which killed six worshippers at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City. The thoughts of the Hillcrest Community will be with the many Muslim members of our school on this day.

Equity and Racism at Hillcrest

The Staff Hillcrest Anti-Racism Committee is continuing to meet once a month.

A Community Hillcrest Anti-Racism Committee meeting took place on January 13th.

Guidance Department

The Guidance Department continues to be available for Virtual Drop-In hours for students with any questions. Some students are concerned about the transition to four classes per day.

Grade Eight Day

The Board has decided that the information day for Grade Eight students headed to Hillcrest in September, will take place virtually.

School Photos

There is no news yet on whether there will be school photos this year.

Questions

In November, School Council was told that the Education Quality and Accountability Office Grade Nine Assessment of Mathematics test would take place in January. The test was then canceled. Will students who had Math first semester have the chance to take the EQAO test second semester?

Answer: We have not been told by the Ministry that there will be a second chance for Grade Nine students to take the EQAO test.

Question: Students missed some days of class in January due to the fluctuating Covid situation. Will there be a balancing of days with the second semester to make up for the missed days?

Answer: In consultation with Canterbury and Ridgemont High Schools, the Hillcrest Administration opted not to try to rebalance the two semesters. It would have been far too complicated from a staffing point of view.

Question: Has there been a recent change to where parents can drop off and pick up students?

Answer: Parents can use the north or south parking lot to drop off or pick up their children. These rules have changed, as last year, parents were not allowed on the school grounds at all. Above all, we are required to keep cars from entering the roundabout, as this is reserved as a fire lane.

To wrap up the Principal's Report, Geordie thanked all members of School Council for their participation during his tenure as principal. He especially applauded the efforts this year of the Student Reps, Shom, Akash and Ahmed, for the levels of participation that they've been able to inspire among their fellow students on Student Council. The weekly Student Council meetings have been drawing out as many as thirty student participants, and this, during a difficult and constantly changing year.

Staff Report Marilyn McMillan, Staff Representative

At Janet's request, Marilyn inquired of the Guidance Department how to spread the word about opportunities for students looking to fulfill the volunteer hours they need for graduation. Jamie Bell, head of the Guidance Department, recommended that she be contacted via email so that she can inform students of possible opportunities. Jamie is building an active Google Doc that can be updated with changing opportunities, and it will be sent to the students regularly throughout the year.

Another avenue would be to send a poster with all the details to Jamie, who would forward it to the Student Council to post on the school Instagram account.

Greening of the School Grounds

This coming semester, Marilyn is working with the Foods Teacher, Trevor Duncan, to present a combined Foods/Science course. They hope to make use of the four vegetable plots situated just

to the north of the front doors of the school. They will begin by having the students survey the school community on how to best make use of the growing space.

Janet reported that she and Marilyn had a long conversation just after New Years to talk about how to assess interest levels in Greening the School Grounds. As the pandemic wears on, there is increased community concern about establishing safe outdoor gathering spaces, with tree cover and other amenities that will encourage people of all ages to connect with the outdoors. We have a volunteer from the community named Gillian Cooper who has over twenty years' experience with school gardens and would like to help us apply to the Schoolyard Tree Planting Program to receive trees in the spring of 2023. The deadline to apply is June 1st. If we are successful in being granted trees, we will need to recruit volunteer waterers among the school population for summer of 2023. More information will be forthcoming at the February School Council meeting.

Treasurer Report

Following the November 24th School Council Meeting, Carolyn Kropp offered to fill the role of Treasurer on Hillcrest School Council. She was confirmed in this role at the December 15th exceptional School Council meeting. Since then, she has had a number of virtual meetings with the Secretary, Janet Mark Wallace, and the new Chairs, Kate Connolly, Andrew Wigston, to sort out the roles. Janet delivered to Carolyn all the files that had been passed on to her by the outgoing Treasurer, Sandra Koch. There remains the issue of transferring signing authority at the Billings Bridge Toronto Dominion Bank, from Janet, to Carolyn and Kate. This can be done over the phone via teleconference.

Carolyn confirmed that the Council bank account has a balance of \$2410.90. After Expenses in the amount of \$1665.06, the bank balance will stand at: \$745.84.

Carolyn confirmed that Council still needs to reimburse the school for the following expenses that were initially paid out of the school budget:

Lasert engraving is for the Belonging Room	\$186.39																			
Printwell printing is for the 2020 PRO seminar on vaping/sexting	\$112.99																			
Sherwin-Williams paint for 2020 PRO seminar on vaping/sexting	\$335.44																			
MCIS Translation for posters for 2020 PRO seminar on vaping/sexting	\$280.24																			
VenRez is for the white board tables	\$750.00																			

The total amount that we owe to the school is: \$1665.06.

At the May 26th 2021 School Council meeting, Council voted to spend \$750 on the purchase of White Board Tables. Carolyn confirmed that the actual number of White Board Tables that the

school ordered added an extra \$776.02. The school has paid for the full amount of \$1526.02, out of the school budget at present. Carolyn asked if Council was prepared to spend the extra \$ when we only have a certain amount in our bank account. Council agreed to not spend the extra \$776.02 and Principal Walker agreed that the school had no problem covering this amount.

Carolyn wanted to highlight that without any new fundraising, we won't have much left in our budget. Council has traditionally spent between \$250-500 on the end-of-year bursaries. We also like to keep \$100 in the account at the end of June for the following year. This should be kept in mind as we make funding decisions.

The Ministry normally awards \$500 per year to Parent Reaching Out Grants, to allow schools to present an event or activity that will encourage parent involvement. The school budget will receive this cheque, and they will need to forward Council a cheque in the amount of \$500. Carolyn will follow up with the school Secretary to see if the \$500 amount has come in. Council will need to start to think about how to spend it on Parent Engagement before June 2022.

Carolyn also proposed a Principal gift for Geordie Walker to celebrate his retirement. There was a proposed vote for spending \$50, which everyone agreed on. As an aside, there was a concern that Council cannot spend money on gifts for staff. It was going to be confirmed and a final decision made by the Exec.

Question: Outside of pandemic times, what has been the main source of fundraising for the school?

Answer: The main source of fundraising in the past has been through voluntary school fees, usually collected at the beginning of the year.

Chair Report: Kate Connolly and Andrew Wigston

Following the November School Council meeting, Janet asked Kate and Andrew if they would consider joining the Executive of Council as Co-Chairs so that Janet could focus on the Secretary position. They agreed to run for the position of Co-Chairs. An election was held via virtual meeting in December to confirm them in this role. Although the entire Hillcrest parent population was informed two weeks prior to the election, only two parents turned out to cast a ballot.

Consequently Kate and Andrew feel as though their mandate as Co-Chairs is not clearly defined yet and look forward to more robust participation from the parent community as the year goes on.

Open Questions

What is the best way to solicit views from Student Council about their role vis-à-vis School Council?

Answer: Contact Shom, Akash, or Ahmed and they can communicate with the student population via their weekly meetings or via Instagram.

Farewell to Principal Walker

The entire Council joined in thanking Geordie for his contributions during his years at Hillcrest and wishing him a wonderful retirement.

Next Meeting Wednesday February 23rd 7-8:30 PM

