

Hillcrest High School

Council Meeting Minutes

November 23rd 2022

7:00-8:30 PM

Attendance:

Kate Connolly, Co-Chair, Tori Moore, Co-Chair, Janet Mark Wallace, Secretary, Andrew Wigston, Treasurer, Dinu Chande, Principal, Jamie Bell, Guidance Counselor, Alex Belgrave, Co-President of Student Council, Rebecca Doherty, Student Senator, Christine Dalgleish, Faten Arzouni, Marlene Doyle, Heather Munro, Carolyn Kropp.

Regrets: Michelle Simms, Valerie Edgecombe, Marilyn McMillan

Call to Order

Land Acknowledgement

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

Introductions

All members of School Council had the chance to introduce themselves.

Approval of Agenda:

Moved by Andrew, seconded by Heather, to approve the agenda for November 23rd 2022. Carried.

Approval of Minutes from October 26th 2022

Moved by Kate, seconded by Tori, to approve the minutes of October 26th 2022. Carried.

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

Alex reported that School Council is planning a Culture Day, a Talent Show, a Movie Night December 8th, a Bake Sale and a Pyjama Day, before the end of 2022. Wellness Wednesday is still taking place on the last Wednesday of the month in the art room, where there will be access to art materials, and music playing, for students who want to benefit from wellness through craft activities.

Tuesday November 22nd saw a medical emergency at Hillcrest when a staff member had a severe allergic reaction to a scented product. Anyone who enters the building at Hillcrest must respect the “no scents” policy to avoid triggering such allergic reactions. Particularly dangerous is the application of aerosol products within the school, such as in the change rooms or hallways. Additional signage and information will be necessary to make sure everyone is aware of the importance of this policy. Newcomers to the school may not initially be aware of why we need compliance with the policy, so more publicity is essential.

Some students are not tapping their bus cards going back and forth to Elmvale. Since bus routes are determined partly due to data collected from card tapping, it is important that students tap their card when boarding. Some drivers are not allowing rear boarding on the bus, as the honour system is not working. There also appears to be a lot of vaping and cannabis use on the bus and within the school. A complaint to OC Transpo about this yielded one visit by a Transit Supervisor, after which things improved for a few days.

Rebecca Doherty attended the most recent Student Senate meeting three weeks ago. They talked about three main topics. The first is the launching of OCDSB Cares, an anonymous online reporting tool that allows students to communicate concerns they have about their or another student’s well-being. The second is the free provision of menstrual products in OCDSB schools, starting in February. The third is the increasing of recycling opportunities in the schools.

Principal Report:

Report cards are now available on line. The school is re-introducing the mailing of paper report cards, as some families were not accessing the digital versions.

Friday November 25th is a Professional Development Day, so no school for the students. The topics for learning are: Trauma Informed Education, and Online Safety and Cyber Protection. These days are opportunities for staff to work with colleagues that they don’t necessarily get to work with on a day-to-day basis, and many great ideas are shared. The Ministry of Education mandates some of the topics, as well as the Board. The Board provides great resources which the school can then tailor somewhat as well to meet the needs of the school.

On Wednesday November 30th, there will be a catch-up immunization clinic at the school for any vaccines missed during Covid virtual schooling. Parents will be sent the forms to fill out requesting that their child receive any missing vaccinations.

On December 1st, the Grade Tens with English this semester will write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test, which is a requirement for graduation, mandated by the province. For those who need to repeat the test, there will be another opportunity next semester, and again in Grades Eleven and Twelve. Some students may end up taking the OLC (Ontario Literacy Course) instead to meet the graduation requirement if they weren’t successful on the written test. Not also students perform their best in a test environment.

By way of follow-up to the School Climate Survey, Kate met with Faten and Michelle to further discuss the results. Kate then met with Dinu, and again with the two parents. Dinu intends to

follow up on the question of student sense of belonging at school. Three initiatives are being considered:

1. Members of the Administration visiting classrooms and inviting students to share their thoughts. This will capture some voices, but not others.
2. Convening a Principal's Advisory Council with a cross-section of students, to solicit input.
3. Pizza lunches with the principal – a chance to drop in and provide input on how to better create a sense of belonging at school.

The following initiatives were identified at the October meeting as being possible responses to the School Climate Survey:

- Open House (reenvisioned to increase number and diversity of families attending)
- Full school emphasis on building relationships with students - Admin, Teachers, EAs, etc
- Student Council - school events starting again
- Start up BBQ with Grade Assemblies
- Link crew activities (example, Gr 9 transition activities, academic check in)
- Tues/Thurs homework club after school
- Clubs (linked on website)
- Muslim Student Association, Black Excellence Club
- Student Success Initiatives
 - Creative ways to engage students
 - Authentic Student Learning Experience (ASLE)
 - Junior Achievement Entrepreneurial Hoops Program
- Community supports - Black Youth, Somali Centre, Ottawa Public Health, etc
- Staff Professional Development
 - STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Math
 - Destreaming and Achievement differentiation
 - Belonging
 - Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP)
 - a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning
 - Close the achievement gap for underserved students
- OCDSB guidance counsellors for 2SLGBTQ+ & Black Students

Other Ideas:

- Chai & chat - bring in community groups, families
- Equity/Belonging Group
- Special Education, Guidance and Student Success Information Evening- (how to request and access services, assistive technology session, special topic (keynote speaker); guidance services; Credit recovery and the ASLE.

The results from the School Climate Survey group together a number of questions that are quite diverse in nature, to give an overall picture of student satisfaction and wellbeing at school. For those parents concerned about the results, it may be beneficial to look at the aggregated responses to individual questions as well as the summary data.

Question: Does the Board share resources that have worked elsewhere?

Answer: There is a lot of sharing amongst Admin colleagues through the Board, but in particular within our Superintendency Family of Schools.

Question: What can we do about the lack of engagement, lack of academic challenge, that is reflected in the survey results?

Answer: Across the District the sense of student engagement is down. There are a lot of social and emotional gaps related to the pandemic that are causing a sense of lack of engagement. There is also the issue of students not seeing themselves reflected in the curriculum. Relationship building, culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy, and differentiation will be key.

Question: What is the limit on class size?

Answer: There is a range, with up to 32 students for upper level University level courses, to 20 for technology classes, for reasons of safety, and lower for some of our locally developed courses.

At the school Remembrance Day Ceremony on Friday November 11th, a fight broke out. While we can't speak specifically about what happened and the actions taken by the school, I can speak in general about the process we would follow after a fight or violent incident.

There is a detailed process of gathering evidence from witnesses in order to get a clear picture of what happened and how to prevent it from occurring again. Consequences are progressive – if the same individual is involved in a second fight, the consequences would be much more severe the second time around.

Mitigating factors are always considered. Lots of communication with families of all students involved. Reintegration and safety planning for students. Possible support from additional staff (School social work, psychologist, youth work, conflict resolution specialists)

Staff Report – Jamie Bell

The Hillcrest Guidance Counselor, Jamie Bell, was invited to the meeting to provide the following report on how course registration is done at Hillcrest.

Timeline for Course Registration

November/December - Course Interest Survey of all students from the board. This is being led by our superintendent and we're just waiting for the final copy. ALL COURSES

December/January - Admin, Guidance, and Department heads will take this information and narrow down which courses are being offered as part of our course selection for next year. SOME COURSES

February - Course selection begins as soon as students are settled in their semester 2 courses. This is usually 2-3 weeks after the start of the semester.

Course selection is done through the online platform called **Xello**. Students will have sessions with guidance to talk about their options and things they need to consider (ie post-secondary, graduation requirements, eLearning requirements, etc).

Students must discuss this with their parents before submitting online and then a paper form goes home for the parents to approve the course selections. This paper is returned to guidance.

Course selections are essentially "VOTES".

Students are voting for what they want us to run next year and saying that they would like a seat in the class which helps to determine how many sections we will run.

For example, if 25 students request SCH3U, then we will only run one section of this course next year. If 45 students request it, then we run two sections.

March/April - We take the data of all the courses that students have selected and determine which courses will run based on student selection **AND** how many sections we have been allocated from the board which is directly related to projected enrollment. We balance the requests with our staffing allocation to start to build the timetable for next year. As a small school, we would love to offer all elective courses, but have to prioritize compulsory courses, as well as those that are prerequisites for all post-secondary pathways while also ensuring that we offer enough engaging options for students who are on the pathway to trades or the world of work.

May/June - Timetable is finalized based on what will get the most students into their preferred and/or alternate classes. Guidance then spends the remainder of the year and summer fixing conflicts.

September/ February - Students have three weeks to change their courses before the board has designated it is too late to change. If a course is full, students are placed on a waitlist and it is processed as quickly as possible. We always bring in extra staff at these times of the year to ensure that we are serving as many students as we can. We also look at registering students for elearning courses while having conversations with them.

eLearning

Daytime eLearning courses are done through asynchronous learning (aka modules/videos/ and assignments/discussion posts). Although students can log in at anytime, they are given a block in their timetable where they have time to complete their eLearning courses work. Many choose to do this in the library. Others choose to do this from the comfort of their home in the early morning or evening. This is NOT live learning like Ottawa Carleton Virtual (OCV).

Students entering into their senior years (current grade 10's & 11's) are now required by the ministry of education to take 2 eLearning courses by the time they graduate. The current grade 11's were granted one credit for their time learning online during COVID.

This requirement can be completed through eLearning, virtual night school, and virtual or eLearning summer school. We understand that this might not be the best mode of learning for some of our students. Parents may opt out of this at any point during their students' education through an online form. Guidance will be adding this requirement to their graduation review next year to ensure that all students are successful in achieving their high school diploma in whatever mode of learning they choose.

eLearning courses for the next year are requested during course selection.

Students need to express their interest on their course selection form in Xello. HOWEVER, this means that we cannot guarantee that they have a seat in a class in person if they are not satisfied with their eLearning course or if it does not work with their other courses in their timetable.

We've gotten around this in previous years by sending out a google form in June with the eLearning courses for the following year.

If a student does not express their interest but arrives in September wanting an eLearning course, we register the student as fast as possible in the online eLearning consortium called PRISM. It's first come first served for all courses for the entire year

There are OCDSB courses, which our students get priority in and then there are courses that are out of board which we access through PRISM. All of the courses go on the same waitlist - I just register them.

You can see the current course offerings from across Ontario here:

<https://www.elearningstudents.ca/course-offerings-2022-2023>

Night school courses are registered for in September for semester 1 and January for semester 2

- These are currently offered live virtually

Summer school courses are registered for in April

- These are offered live virtually, in person, and through eLearning

International Language school is offered in September for full year Saturday school and then again in November for semester 2 night school.

Greening Report: Janet Mark Wallace

On Thursday November 17th, we had confirmation from Dan Fournier, the Architectural and Engineering Project Officer for the OCDSB, that the Board will permit the planting of ten trees

we applied for, to go in the northeast corner of the grounds, through the Schoolyard Tree Planting Program. The trees in question are white pine, downy serviceberry, paper birch, sugar maple, bur oak, bitternut hickory, and hackberry, arranged in a grove in the southwest corner of the field to provide shade to this part of the grounds. The planting will take place in May and the school community will be responsible for keeping the trees watered for the next three summers.

In the veg gardens, we managed to fit in nine Garden Fridays this fall, from mid-September to mid-November, due to incredible luck with every Friday being sunny and dry. Three students in particular seemed keen to keep the garden momentum going through the winter. If we can keep the garden group alive through the winter, it will help raise awareness about the need to recruit tree waterers for the summer months.

To this end, we proposed an indoor plant propagation activity on Wednesdays at lunch, to create plants for the stairwell windows of the school. The idea would be to create baby plants for people to take for their classroom, office or home, or to leave them on the ledges to provide greenery and filter indoor air in the winter. We may enclose little notes in the plants inviting people to take them, and including information on the plants themselves and on the Hillcrest garden. Janet can supply all the soil, pots and plant material Mr Duncan has offered to supervise this activity in his classroom on Wednesdays. Anyone interested in the winter gardening can contact Janet, Mr Duncan or the Student Council leaders

Treasurer's Report

There has been no activity in the School Council Account since we last held a meeting in October. The balance is at \$745.84.

Chair Report

The results of the School Climate Survey will be discussed on an ongoing basis throughout the remainder of the school year.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:30

Meetings for 2023: Fourth Wednesday of the month

January 25, February 22, March 22, April 26, May 24, June 28