

Harbord Collegiate Institute School Advisory Council

Minutes of Oct 28, 2024 meeting

6:30 – 7:30 pm Virtual (over Google Meet)

In Attendance:

Steve Yee (Principal)
Catherine Williams (Teacher rep)
Chirag Joshi (co-chair)
Shammy Singh (co-chair)
Cynthia Pay
Sarah Layton
Morwyn Brebuer
Mei Burgin
Sarah Warden
Laura Cheng
Maggie Kinnear
Nadine Sookermary
Sandra Abreu
Rachel Melzer
Karem Gatea
Jason Applebaum
Ivonne Franco

(1) TDSB Land acknowledgement – Chirag Joshi

(2) Welcome and Introductions

(3) Approval of the Agenda and Minutes from 30 Sep 2024.

(4) Principal's report (SY)

- Parent Teacher Interviews Oct 29, 1:00 – 3:00pm and 5:30 – 7:30pm in 5-minute segments in the gym. Steve is aware parents sometimes have difficulty booking time. If teachers are fully booked, parents can contact teacher to discuss another time.
- Dental screening with public health dentists is coming up, email went out to parents to sign up. Screening is free, and some other dental services may be free as well
- Take Your Kid to Work Day is on Nov 6 for Gr 9 students to go with parents or family member to join them at their workplace. Permission form will go out for parents to sign.
- Elections for SAC positions: nominees have submitted videos, which have been reviewed by Mr. Barkas to ensure they are appropriate, students will make changes if necessary. Classes will be shown videos during period 2 tomorrow and students can vote. Gr 9 reps and External Affairs position to be voted on.

- 1 on 1 devices (Chromebooks for all Gr 9s) – first batch have arrived, parents had to sign up to consent to receiving them. Admin is looking at how best to distribute them (each device is designated to specific student), likely will be distributed Tuesday Nov 5. 109 students will get their Chromebooks in first batch and ~100 in second batch

Q: have any parents not yet sent in their form?

SY: Steve thinks perhaps about 20 parents have not responded, there is still time to respond

Q: When will second batch of devices go out?

SY: in next month after next deadline for parents to send in permission forms

- Digital literacy week last week organized by Mme Schuster (lead tech teacher) and Tiger Tech group, happy to see students involved
- Fall sports wrapping up, teams heading into playoffs, we are cheering them on!

(5) Caring/safe school committee report – Sarah Layton

- No formal meeting yet.
- **SY:** Ms. Bylykbashi had met with some students that had expressed interest, but she will reach out to rep to set up a meeting
- Focus is on physical safety and mental health wellbeing

(6) Ward 10 rep report - Leea Puntanen absent

- Steve will have Leea send report to council for distribution

(7) Grade 9 rep report and parent question/concerns - Mei Burgin

Thanks to Mr. Yee for sending email out, parents are happy to have a Gr 9 rep on council

(a) Bullying and vaping in washrooms

A parent described a serious episode of bullying of her son in Gr 9 in a washroom

SY: across TDSB washrooms are a place that students congregate, it has been a concern for years. Vaping is often odourless. Admin has spoken to TDSB personnel about solutions, asked can they take off the doors? Privacy is not the issue, but fire safety is a problem. They asked can they leave doors open then close them when fire alarm goes off? We're still trying to figure this out and are in meetings with the executive superintendent about this as well as other administrators in other schools.

Regarding this student, there was an item taken from the student and we dealt with it immediately.

Re: Vaping, the ministry is looking to put detectors in, but we aren't sure it is going to help much. We are looking at addressing it. The corner store across the street appears to be selling vaping products, we've had Toronto Public Health come in to discuss dangers of vaping with students.

They have discussed employees disguised as students going in to see if they are selling, we haven't heard back from them, Ms. Bylykbashi is in touch with board re: this issue.

SY noted that this isn't a huge issue in terms of number of incidents, but they do take it seriously when it happens. Unfortunately, there aren't enough admin staff to be everywhere at once.

Comment from parent that focus seems to be on policing students, but we also need to engage students as much as possible, to determine their thinking and what their expectations are from us.

SY will bring this suggestion to seek out student voice back to Safe and Caring Schools Committee.

Q: Can doors with windows be installed? Can cameras aimed at entrance to see who is going in and out be installed?

SY: We do have cameras angled toward washrooms, but this doesn't help with some of these situations. Doors with windows have been suggested by a previous super. Window would allow us to see privacy wall, but we can't see anything else and can't smell or hear anything

(b) Cafeteria food sensitivity information

One parent raised that her daughter is lactose intolerant so there's not much that she can eat in the cafeteria, any future plans to cater to sensitivities?

SY: We have touched base with new head of server John, (and his supervisor) to see if he can come up with menu that serves these students. It's difficult to balance the costs with having that with the number of students that will buy these specialized items. But we are in discussion about this.

A parent noted that his daughter has allergies and could not find allergen information in the food in the cafeteria

SY to connect with John (head of server) to implement labels and poll students re: allergies and sensitivities

(c) School even transportation policy

One parent commented that athletes are taking TTC to and from games, and asked if this is standard as her daughter's previous school had a school bus

SY: In downtown Toronto, it is typical for student athletes to take TTC as it is impractical and not feasible to have bussing. In the past we have given TTC tickets to students in need, now we advise the coach to let us know who needs them. We spend \$9000 per year on TTC for students in need, comes out of our school budget. There is access to bussing provided by TDSB, but you must live very far from the school to qualify.

A reminder that there are only 5-7 away games per year for most sports

Q: can coaches help to assist creating a carpool group, getting parents talking to each other?

SY: yes, we can talk to Mr. Sturgeon (ACL Student Life/Athletic Teams) to assist with this.

(8) Teacher report (Catherine Williams):

- Report card season: increasing number of unexplained absences, no excuse for students that day. Parents not calling into school to let the school know their child is away
- Does attendance policy need to be revisited? Do parents need to be reminded of policy?
- Parent comment: she called office before 8 am, and they still got a call in the evening, then they learned that they were supposed to call after 8 am. Can we get clear instructions as to what we're supposed to do? Steve to investigate this to see what happened and send out instructions.
- Timing very strict as to when you can report absences online (in TDSB app), can this be opened up? Steve responded that this would likely be centrally controlled but he can check

Q: re: credit rescue days, more warning would have been good to arrange something for their kids to do

Q: when do students get report cards?

A: via email with password, week of Nov 11, interviews are first then report cards come later, this was arranged through central TDSB. Reminder that this is a snapshot at midterm time, lots happens after this

Q: re credit rescue – can attendance be collected in a simpler way?

A: For next year: by 9:30 we should have the attendance reported. By 12:30 for 2nd period and 3:00 for afternoon classes, receipt of work for that day

(9) Other business arising

- Cynthia and Shammy raised the idea of a Facebook group again for parents, but not through school or SAC. Parents interested in becoming Admins should text Cynthia.

(10) Advisory council housekeeping

- TDSB Workshops and Innovation Grant through PIAC, minimal time to discuss
- Harbord CI SAC needs to have their own bylaws; Chirag will fill in and circulate

Adjournment of meeting by Chirag Joshi at 7:42 pm

Next meeting in person on Nov 25 at 6:30 pm in the Library