

Riverdale Collegiate Institute
School Council Minutes
May 26, 2016

Present: Kenn Harvey (Principal), Matilda Kissi (Chair), Nicole Herbert, Mirka Macalik, Michael Dranitsaris (VPX), Fiona Christie, Derby Crewe, Leo Augusto, Sergei Nechaevski, Kaya Malcolmson, Julia Hagon, Yao Yu, Jonathan Blumenthal, Kingly Yee, Khatera Ahadi, Anastasia Triadafilopoulos, Ava Rutgers

Regrets: Ronda Kellington

Welcome / Introductions

1. Student Council Update

- a. New student council was introduced and outgoing VP external affairs, Michael Dranitsaris was thanked
- b. Senior prom was held at Atlantis on May 19. Venue and event were well received
- c. May 27, students raising awareness amongst teens about driving safety. Fundraising in the afternoon for OSAID, Ontario Students Against Impaired Driving
- d. Robotics team is organizing a fundraiser for Fort McMurray, goal is \$2500.
- e. Robotics team competed in world robotics championship in St. Louis
- f. Athletic banquet will be held on June 3
- g. Music Banquet was held May 25
- h. Due to culminating activities and exams, there will be no other events in June

2. Matters Arising

- a. PRO Grant applications due May 29. Fiona will prepare an application for next year's Parent Social outreach.
- b. Parent Social was successful at accomplishing what it set out to do: raised parent awareness, collected feedback on parent interest in future events, provided opportunities to chat. Costs were about \$750. Donations collected for RCI Breakfast Club totaled \$160.60. Several suggestions for future events came from attending parents. Thank you to all the parents who volunteered to organize the event and those who manned the refreshments tables. Looking forward to more events next year and encourage more parents to participate. The Social Committee plans to run a fall event to capture and welcome incoming parents.
- c. Nicole reports Mental Health Week events (May16-20) went well. Positive Post-its student campaign was very popular as was Green Tea Wellness Break on Friday for staff. Mental Health announcements ran each day. Thanks to Rebekah for facilitating the week; SASSD and the FoS room for writing the post-its; Vidya, Heather, Entesar and the office staff for their help at the staff tea.

3. Principal's Report

- d. Labour update: as year end approaches, there may be some escalation in disruptions. Some possibility of summer school strike.
- e. School discretionary budget will be largely allocated to technology, new computers and hard wiring labs due to the incredibly slow wireless system.
- f. Culminating activities and exam prep for all courses are posted on the school website.
- g. Music nights were held May 17 and 18.
- h. School Climate survey, 86% of students liked their school. Its clean, healthy and the office staff are friendly. Generally in line with the TDSB. Only issue highlighted was in how kids feel they are doing in school. RCI reported 10% fewer kids than TDSB who would rate their academic accomplishments as excellent. RCI kids are anxious about their grades/ mental health concern due to stress around academics. This is in keeping with what we know about student anxiety here.
- i. To address the high stress levels at Riverdale during year-end activities, there is discussion among staff of working towards redistributing assessment schedules. Due to RCI being one of the few non semestered schools, moving culminating activities to earlier in the year (Feb?) is under discussion.

4. Ward 15 Update

The final ward meeting scheduled for this month has been cancelled.

Learning Centres

- a. LEARNING CENTRES (LC) are part of a new strategy by Director of Education John Malloy, to address directions from the Wilson and Hall reports, to clarify roles and improve governance.
- b. The geographic boundaries of Learning Centres redistribute superintendents, and Families of Schools (FoS) will be replaced with Learning Networks. Within ward 15 (part of LC4), there will be 3 Superintendents handling our schools. Riverdale's new SO will be Mary Jane McNamara.
- c. Policy continues to be controlled by trustees, while superintendents are responsible for day to day of school.
- d. The Learning Centres will be in place for the upcoming school year. For more information:
<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/AboutUs/DirectorofEducation/LearningCentres.aspx>

5. Chairs' Update

- a. PARC update: May 3 meeting - recommendation: Eastern CI program is closed. Twelve meetings were held and the final recommendations were:
 - Eastern Commerce CI be closed effective September 2016
 - Greenwood SS will be relocated into Danforth CI
 - SOLE SS will be relocated into Monarch Park.
 - The Greenwood property will be leased, possibly to another school board. TDSB staff will present the report with recommendations to the Board on June 15. Anyone wishing to share their thoughts can do so in writing to Linda at linda.mendonca@tdsb.on.ca by 4 p.m. June 13th, 2016.

- b. Eastern will be set up as an eventual K-12 First Nations School and will continue to house the board archives.
- c. Thanks to the Riverdale PARC team: Matilda, Ronda, Michael, Kenn for attending many extra meetings.
- d. Goals Evaluation: Nicole took the opportunity to go over what council has accomplished this year. We have addressed many of the areas identified by our parents through discussions, presentations, and our newsletter. In order to better fulfill our communication objectives, we again ask Kenn to get the TDSB SC email account set up. We still want to create a council Facebook page.
- e. PCEO survey: the TDSB has released a parent survey to gather information from School Councils. Nicole & Mirka went through the questions and Mirka will electronically submit our answers. Nicole suggests that we could use some of the survey questions next year, as a learning tool for our parents.

6. Planning for next year

- a. Meeting schedule: Council dates need to be decided upon now, to meet the school's print deadline for the student agenda books. The group agrees that we will reduce the number of formal meetings from 8 to 5, and to make them more efficient. Dates in the first term will be the 3rd Thursday of the month, and in the second term on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Council sets October 18 as the Fall Parent Social Event. Dates for meetings are: Sept. 22, Oct. 20, Jan 19, Mar. 22 and May 17. Event dates are Nov. 17, Feb. 15 and Apr.19
- b. Operating Procedures update: This document seeks to record council process and information to assist new members with consistency. Nicole presented the updated document, including a new list of workshops we have run.
- c. Fall Parent package: The group agreed to continue to include the usual council documents in the back to school mailing: direct appeal fundraising letter, tri-fold pamphlet, invitation to Gr.9 Parent Orientation night. We will add election info and an invitation to our new October social event. Contact Ronda & Nicole to help work on these documents.
- d. Welcome session: In order to create a more welcoming reception, we would like our September meeting to be less meeting and more info session. Provide background info like school profile demographics, SC mandate, schedule in hard format. Collect parent input with chart checklist of potential workshops/sessions, suggestion box style cards for parents, opportunities to move around & chat. This will also enable council to start planning the year earlier. We will still need to run our election during this meeting.

7. New Business

Kenn consulted parents on whether gender identifiers should be removed from academic awards. The group discussed the pros and cons of the existing format. While non-gender criterion are desirable for equity reasons, it may create a situation where unintentional bias results.