

Riverdale Collegiate Institute
School Council Meeting
October 24, 2013

Present: Rebekah Tsingos, (VP), Trevor Bullen (VP), Nicole Herbert (Chair), Saddeiq Holder, Kim McClory, Derby Crewe, Matilda Kissi, Cathy Kettle, April Moon, Carol Baum, John Scully, Shelagh Taber-Walsh, Lisa Xiong (Student Council VPX), Harumi Yamamoto, Laura Fitzsimmons, Catherine Hayos

Regrets: Susan Farrow, Mirka Macalik, Kenn Harvey, James Chow, Lakshmi Kygo

1. Welcome

Nicole welcomed everyone and the group introduced themselves. In the absence of our Secretaries, Carol agreed to take notes.

2. Student Council Report. Lisa

Spirit Week (September 30th to October 4th) was a success. There was a lot of participation from the student body, especially the Grade 9s.

Miss Raymond's home form won the annual Cheer-Off.

RCI attempted to break the world record in the Guinness Book of Records for the world's largest science experiment in a single classroom. Results are pending.

Halloween Dance next week in the Café. Tickets are \$7 and the event is being sponsored by Menchies who will supply those attending w/ free yogurt. Tickets are being sold until the 30th of October. [School dances, overseen by staff advisors, are attended by only about 100 kids, mostly from Grade 9 and 10 and restricted to RCI students only.]

On Halloween there will be a kind of spirit day and extended lunch hour in the atrium with dance and band presentations after in the auditorium. Theme is "Fear Factor w/ Food", there will be face painting as a fundraiser for prom, and there will be video featuring students.

On November 8th there will be an assembly to raise school spirit, with an activity day the day before. There will be a competition between home forms to see who can perform the school song the best.

3. Matters Arising. Nicole.

A second **parent survey** is being developed that will build on last year's survey. Contact Nicole if you'd like to join the committee.

Guest speakers for this year - possible options: Kids Help Phone with student and parent resources; Toronto Public Health Community Development Officer with enhancing the safety lens. The group agreed to have both of these speakers.

*Parents attending the meeting agreed that if there were special presentations they would be prepared to start the Council Meeting earlier to get business done, rather than staying late.

4. Project Neutral. John Scully.

John spoke about a program in the Toronto neighbourhoods of Riverdale and the Junction to "Transition Neighbourhoods to Carbon Neutrality." The program consists of undertaking a survey in order to discover the carbon footprint of an individual household and then using the information to take action to lessen that carbon footprint. This is the second year of the survey and John is prepared to work with the RCI administration to see if this initiative could complement curriculum in the classroom and to work with students to motivate them to encourage their parents' participation in the survey. There is a reward of \$500 to the school that submits the most surveys. Last year only 2 RCI households participated.

*The parents attending the meeting supported the notion of this project.

*The parents also thought it was worthwhile encouraging the Project Neutral people to compose the survey in other languages.

John will work with Rebekah to involve RCI staff and students.

Nicole will post the PN information on our next newsletter.

5. Principal's Report. Rebekah Tsingos

Kenn Harvey is accompanying a school trip to Japan and is posting the experience on a blog:

<http://kakehashirci.blogspot.ca/>

Rebekah addressed an issue raised by a parent regarding the timing conflict of sports team events that are held during the school day. The mother of a Grade 12 student who plays Field Hockey on the school team told the meeting that her daughter had missed 5 Biology classes in a row because games were being scheduled in the middle of the school day. She stressed that the message that must be communicated

is that academics have priority over sports. Rebekah noted that some sports that require specific conditions/locations have limited access to facilities and that can result in this type of scheduling.

The parent body concurred that a student's academic work shouldn't be compromised because they have joined a school team. Shelagh and Nicole will prepare a letter of concern on behalf on the council.

Club Fair was held over the lunch hour on October 23rd. It was very well attended and there was opportunity for students to choose from over 80 clubs. Rebekah noted that the school awards grant money to help the clubs operate.

Rebekah mentioned the Grade 9 Science experiment to be the largest ever, and that almost every Grade 9 student was able to participate. Thanks to Derby and Sandy for helping out.

Report cards will be distributed November 20th. Teachers are encouraged to maintain ongoing communication with parents so that no report card "should come as a surprise."

Parent – Teacher interviews take place on November 27th and parents will have an opportunity to sign up for 5 minute sessions online. It was noted that evening slots book up, so it's advisable to try for the afternoon session. The interviews will be held from 1pm-3pm and from 6:30-8:30. Another tip was to not book interviews back-to-back, but to allow for travel time of at least 5 minutes between appointments.

6. Chair's Report. Nicole.

The board has chosen Donna Quan as the new Director of Education.

Lakshmi is attending the Ward 15 meeting tonight. For ward council minutes, go to <http://www.cathydandy.ca/>

Nicole passed around info on upcoming parent workshops, as well as info on TDSB School Council additional insurance. This insurance covers council for activities beyond those we undertake, so we won't need to purchase this extra insurance.

7. School Statement of Needs. Nicole.

There were a few minor suggestions for refining the document that represents the parent body's expression of need in a principal for Riverdale Collegiate.

Suggestions included altering the priorities and including academic achievement as a recognized goal. Shelagh will send notes to Nicole to update the draft. Nicole will request input from the Student Council prior to finalizing the draft.

8. Goal Planning. Nicole.

Council will work on action planning for items identified by us and the school admin for council goals. Due to time constraints, time will be taken at next month's meeting to prioritize the list below and expand on the issues represented by these topics:

Student Mental Health and Wellness

Student Attendance and Engagement

Pathway Education (programs, career planning...)

Community Partnerships

Parent Involvement in the 4 TDSB mandated parent committees

Nicole will send out info for the School Improvement Plan (SIP), to assist parents in assessing the list.

9. New Business

No time for new business.

Next meeting: Thurs. Nov. 21, with guest speaker from Kids Help Phone

Presentation: "Connecting with your Teens" by Sandra Davies, Toronto Public Health Nurse