

DPCDSB

Father Michael Goetz Catholic Secondary School
School Council Meeting

Tuesday October 28th, 2008

Resource Center
Start Time: 7:00

Present: Raman Raghavan; Benjamin Oquias; Maha Broum; Rosemarie Schoutsen; Norrine Burns; Ashley Khan; Connie D’Silva; Sabrina Delgado; Dotun Alanola; Bob Kostcki; Dina Madeira-Silva; Karen Cole; Lillian Towassetti; Diana Harrisersaud; Shaheen Iqbal; Wendy Goberdhan; Dulice Benjamin; Harold Reyes (Teacher Rep); Ray Frendo (Chaplain); Nancy Begin (non-teaching rep) Laura Green (VP); and Sam Macaluso (Principal).

Welcome and introductions: (Diana Harrisersaud)

The Council Chair Diana Harrisersaud welcomed everyone, introduced herself, the co-chair, the executive members, and the parents present. As a chair she asked assistance and support from everyone. There were no minutes from the first meeting; as a result, this meeting is considered the first official meeting for this year’s school council.

Opening Prayer: (Ray Frendo)

Blessing of the school council: This year is the year of St. Paul whose mission is to unite and build a community of people from different backgrounds. Like in a body where each part is integral to the whole, same is our school council.

Student Council Report: (Ashley Khan)

Highlights of the 2 past months: the election of Grade 9 reps on September 15th. The first week of September was the Grade 9 welcome week with a daily activity to get them involved in student life. In October, students are preparing for a talent show (Goetz-a Java) with talented singers, dancers, and bands of the student body. This week of Oct 27th is spirit week with daily activities that engage all students from all grades (wrap your friend, apple eating, pumpkin carving, and best Halloween teacher costume). On Nov 13th there will be a talent show.

Treasurer’s Report: (Dina Madeira-Silva)

Dina reported on the training session at the central Board meeting which was held at St. FX. She expressed a need to talk to Joanne, the school Head secretary regarding forms needed to perform her duties, which she still feels unsure of. She is handling this position for the first time. From the training session she had learned there are new forms, new rules and new regulation regarding authorized signatures.

The principal clarified that the Ministry of Education has formalized the process of handling council money. For any council expenditure signatures are needed: that of the

principal's, the VP's, and the secretary's, besides the Council's chair's and treasurer's. In response to a question from the treasurer, the principal mentioned there is about \$730 dollars in the council's Bank account at this time.

Parish Report: (Rosemarie Schoutsen)

Rosemarie will be reporting to the council from two parishes.

1. Christ the King Church:

Students from Bishop Scalibrini have the following dates to observe:

Sunday April 26 for the First Communion

Sunday May 24 for Confirmation

For non-Scalibrini kids

Sunday May 10 for first Communion

There is also an RCIA program in the Church. If interested, speak to the priest about dates and paperwork.

In addition the 10:45 mass has been moved to 10:30

There is a choir competition on November 14th.

2. From Sts. Peter and Paul

The church has "Mass Explained" series every Sunday. Most masses are in Cantonese; The English mass is at noon.

Teaching Staff Rep: (Harold Reyes)

Student community is vibrant and alive. Welcoming Grade 9 started even before school began. Their orientation started in August and teachers were part of the welcoming process. The highlights of the first two months:

- PD Day on September 12th which was an opportunity to reflect on Catholic teacher's role: Why we exist as a Catholic school? How can we make it known? FMG is Christ-centered through virtues.
- Another big event was the opening Mass on October 1st which brought the school together.
- After school extra curricular activities: Spirit and tone do not happen by accident but it is a community effort. Goetz does not only have sports activities but also social justice and charity clubs, all guided by teachers or teams of teachers. There is something for every student so that when they graduate they take something out into the community.
- Terry Fox Run on September 26th showed cooperation and civic spirit in school.

Question: (Dina Madeira-Silva) How do students get involved in these activities?

Answer: (Reyes and Principal): Mostly, students hear about these clubs and activities on morning announcement on the PA. A hard copy of these announcements is kept in the office in case a student misses them. Besides, there is a binder with school clubs, description, meeting location and schedule. Students also know about these clubs through word of mouth and networking with each other. A display of these clubs was organized in September to let grade 9 students know about them. In addition, teachers in their classrooms encourage their students to join.

Non- teaching Staff Report (Nancy Begin):

Nancy introduced herself as the Child Youth Worker. She works with the guidance counselors, the social worker, and with the chaplain. She deals with issues that interfere with a student's academic success such as stress, anxiety, depression, low self esteem, etc... She is in school on a full time basis while the social worker is in school 3 days a week. Sometimes, students come up to her on their own, or are referred to her by parents, teachers, or an administrator to get support.

Nancy mentioned her work with Ray (The Chaplain) on Christmas baskets, where homeroom classes collect food and clothing items and give them to needy families in the community. A motion that the council sponsor one of these families was approved with details to come in the next meeting from Ray. The kickoff date for Christmas basket campaign will be November 24th and will go on for 3 weeks before delivering them. Families are recommended from two community parishes: Christ the King and St. Vincent De Paul.

Nancy also showed willingness to organize guest speakers for the parents on the council to speak to them about issues they request. Examples of topics may be parenting the teenage kid, drugs, health, anger management, self esteem, etc... If a parent would like to invite a guest to speak on a certain topic, the idea need to go through the council, the chair will then carry it to the principal, and he will let her know.

Chair's Report (Diana Harripersaud):

The council has two chairs who will take turns residing on the meeting. Diana spoke about two training session she has had as a chair, one in Pocock for all Peel school council chairs, and another at Xavier for DP council executives. The chair's role is to facilitate the meeting and keep it on topic as well as keeping track of time. The chair can not make a motion nor approve motions (usually the chair will ask members to approve a motion. The minutes need to be written down in two weeks for review, but will be approved on the following meeting. When approved, the minutes will be posted on the school's website and a hard copy will be kept in the main office. For approval of minutes, only parents vote. Teachers and school administrators do not vote on them.

Diana also mentioned how important it is to check the Board's and school's websites to find out about the coming events. The Board's upcoming events for this period involve a parenting evening with Joe Rich (family counselor and author) on February 12th, 2009. On Saturday April 4th, 2009 Father Norm Roberts will present a workshop on raising Catholic kids. There will be a volunteer of the year award. Application packages will be available in school in April 2009.

In addition, Diana brought to the council the news of a new regulation limiting trans-fats in food sold in schools in Ontario as of September 1st 2008.

Diana considers the biggest responsibility for her is to listen to parents and represent them. She opened the floor for discussion of the council goals. The principal finds that

the major goal is to convince our kids who go to this school to put their future kids in Catholic schools. A parent responded to this by a note that we may talk about this with Grade 12s, not with the 9s, 10s, or 11s.

Goals suggested for the council are:

- Helping needy families in the community, not only on Christmas but throughout the whole year.
- Having guest speakers to educate parents on day-to-day pressures, i.e., AA, drug abuse, self esteem, mental health, police, and on a lighter note, possible careers. Also have speakers to educate students on dealing with pressures and morals ex. On abstinence vs. birth control
- Having Prefects in the school. These are Grade 12 students who are assigned to keep an eye on other kids who might do things against school rules and code of behaviour.

The Principal Mr. Macaluso spoke about dice playing which has been a major issue in the school for the last 2 weeks. Students are unaware of the playing as a problem. They play everywhere: in the cafe, front of the school, across the school in the plaza and in the park behind the school. In Ontario it is illegal for any one under 19 to gamble. Today on the PA the principal made students aware of the illegality of gambling and its consequences if caught.

Begin: Sometimes you have cases when students complain of parents who gamble. As a result of this situation students are stressed out. Students whose parents gamble need a support group. Answering a question, Begin said that this problem is more common among boys than girls, and that there is no card playing problem in the school.

Principal: There are signs in the cafe, and warnings brohibiting gambling in the agenda as well as on the website. The reality is that it is happening. But how do we deal with it? The principal is asking, begging and fighting the system that accepts the lotto. We hear about winners but not about losers, so students are misled. Our students do not have much money. They play with loonies, toonies so any loss is big. The police officer assigned to our school can come to speak to the council. He has always been here, has a good relationship with people in the building.

Our goal is to continue to communicate. There will be a message from the principal to all parents in November. Another goal is to educate. Students are our best teachers. In our school a good thing is that students do not fight it when they do something wrong. In response to a question regarding lunch period, the principal said that he welcomes students in the building on their lunches. They can sit in the cafe, work in the library, be on the property, but 4-period day means students go home early with less supervision if parents are at work. It also requires more rooms to accommodate all courses in less time. There is an idea to have a grade-level lunch each period, and keep all students in school periods 1 and 5. If there is an intention to follow up with this change, it will be presented to the council for opinion on the matter. The principal may ask Phil Baca the head of the guidance department to speak to the council on the planning of lunches.

Diana (Chair): A reminder to the council members that there will be no dealing of personal agenda in council meetings. In these meetings the council deals only with matters of common interest to parents. Our job is to partner with the school, and to encourage other parents to participate to make the council aware of issues or suggestions they have.

Diana also spoke about the role of the council to raise funds and use the money wherever the money is needed in the community.

Principal's Report: (Mr. Sam Macaluso)

Reminder of important dates:

Thursday October 30th is Awards Night;

Wednesday November 5th is Take-Our-Kids-to-work day;

November 13th the report card goes home and

November 29th is parent/teacher interview night.

November 25th is our next council meeting;

Christmas holiday starts on December 22 with Friday the 19th as the last day before the holidays, school opens on January 5th 2009);

January 21st exam starts and ends on the 27th;

Second semester starts on January 30th; and on February 5th report card for first semester goes home.

A parent of a G 9 student complained that forms for Take-Our-Kids-to-work got home late. The principal said that school got them late but he will let organizers (The Learning partnership) know that we need to get them earlier.

Today students were reminded baseball caps have to taken off at the door of the school; dice playing is not allowed either.

The school has done great so far. In art we have musicals prepared for various occasion. Our sport teams have won and been to playoffs in football, basketball, volleyball and tennis. To encourage students keep the Goetz spirit we let players wear their team jerseys in school all day on the day of the game.

We have a communication tool to students in feeder schools whose principals have agreed to give us a space in their newsletters to let them know about our events. They have also included a link to Goetz on their websites.

Goetz has 1948 students which make us one of 3 biggest schools in the Board. The VPs have been overloaded with all kinds of infractions (lates, uniforms, etc...) We are looking for additional support for additional staff (an additional VP).

Our next step is to convince our kids to send their kids to Catholic schools. Public schools suffer from declining enrollment and are trying to keep kids at school.

VP's Report (Laura Green):

Literacy test takes place in March. Every student must pass it to graduate. We are preparing our students starting in G 9. Students need to be prepared regarding the test format and the different kinds of questions. (For example, how to answer multiple choice questions, a summary paragraph, and essay, etc...) Whenever needed, we provided one on one instruction, especially for at risk students. School's focus is to in-service teachers on the test. There will be an after school literacy camp in March. More information will go out first or second week of second semester. It is a high stake test since students must pass it. Students worry about it. Goetz has got funding to support intensive preparation for the test because its scores are about 2% below the Board's average. If a student fails the test, they will get other chances to write it. 85% of students pass it. 15% work on it and they are mostly ESL students. For IEP'd students, there is a number of accommodations such as double time, preferential seating, scribing, computer use, or working with a resource teacher. The accommodation is based on the student's IEP.

Closing prayer: (Ms. Shoutsen)

Adjourning at 8:55