

Westmount School Council Meeting - January 2022

Date: January 12, 2022

Location: Video Conference

Time: 7:00 pm

Chair: Baljit Singh

Council

Vice-Chair: Roti Akinsanmi

Treasurer: Navdeep Kailey

Secretary: Thomas Chan

Communications Director: Kathy Good

Fundraising Director: Kim Anthony

Parent Engagement Director: Ashley Wilford-Matthews

Special Events Director: Ameet Kooner

Director-at-Large: Dawn Courtman

Director-at-Large: Laura Teterenko

Administration

Superintendent: Joe Frank (Absent)

Principal Elementary Campus: Hal Curties

Principal Mid-High Campus: Graeme Finlay

Student Council representative: Jun Heo

Note: Video recording of this meeting is also available online ([link](#))

1. Opening Remarks and Approval of the Agenda

Baljit Singh provided an introduction

- One change to the agenda was that Superintendent Joe Frank was not present at the meeting. The principals will be making some comments based on their discussions with the superintendent.

Motion to approve the agenda: 1st Kim Anthony, 2nd Navdeep Kailey. Agenda approved.

2. Approval of minutes from December 8, 2021 School Council meeting

Motion to approve minute: 1st Ashley Wilford-Matthews, 2nd Navdeep Kailey, all in favor, none opposed, minute formally approved.

3. Student Council Report - President Jun Heo

- Before the break, we took down all decorations. We did candygrams, and the overall reception has been positive. A lot of students enjoyed them, but we have received some criticisms, which are being taken into account going forward for our next event - which is also candygrams for Valentine's Day.
- Regarding general student sentiments, a lot of high school students (grade 9 to 12) seem pretty happy about exams getting canceled. However, I have seen a lot of younger

students getting frustrated because we keep giving them restrictions and taking away restrictions. Even on Student Council, we're not able to do anything to our fullest extent.

4. Reports from Council

a) Parent Engagement Report - Ashley Wilford-Matthews

- **Coffee Talks** - The first coffee talk of 2022 was the Elementary Coffee Talk, providing an opportunity for elementary parents to ask questions prior to the start of school. Parents engaged in positive discussions around clarifying new and current policies. The next coffee talk is for Mid/High parents on the 21st
- **Kids' Mental Health Support Event** - Due to parents' concerns about kids' mental health, there will be an additional parent engagement session led by Jill Foreman to provide strategies, tips, and tools for faculty and parents. More information can be found in the upcoming school newsletter.

b) Treasurer's Report - Navdeep Kailey

- **Total Revenue \$33,500** - With half the year down, the projected budget of \$33,500 is covered. The bulk of this revenue comes from direct donation campaigns (\$12,460), Stampeders revenue (\$3,264), and the bottle drive. The total funds for the bottle drive are coming in the following weeks.
- **Council Expenses** - Parent dedication cost \$300 for one of the sessions. Still under the \$9,400 category. The school expenses have not yet been accounted for. This will occur in January or February.
- **Adjusted Bank Balance \$73,812**

c) Fundraising Report - Kim Anthony

- **Bottle Drive** - Please bring your refundable bottles Thursday, January 20th. Please wear a mask. If you aren't able to make that date, you can arrange for your refundables to be picked up at your home. Still working on revenue from the previous bottle drive (September to December, 2021), but turnout was a good.
- **WCS Family Cookbook** - Book was released in December. Revenue is over \$2,000. There are still cookbooks left for purchase. If you have not received your purchased cookbook, please contact the WCS.
- **WestJet Raffle** - Coming up in the spring. Rafflebox will continue to help with this fundraiser online.
- **Direct Donations** - Donations can be made online. These donations will go toward additional parent education sessions throughout the year, field trips (bussing and Covid-related expenses), and guest speakers. The donations will go wherever is needed most according to Administration.

5. Principals' Report - Hal Curties and Graeme Finlay

a) Elementary Campus Update

- **Covid Protocol Updates** - Alberta's Chief Medical Officer announced that rapid test delivery is delayed. As soon as they are received, they will be handed out to children to bring home. Each child should receive enough tests over time for each student to test twice per week.

Additional masks have not arrived yet, though the elementary school still has a supply of masks. 300 masks were handed out on Monday. The biggest problem with the masks currently is that they are too big. Once the masks arrive, they will stay in homerooms for teachers to distribute as needed. Kids are typically going through more than two masks in a day, so keeping four or five masks in each child's backpack is ideal.

For fully vaccinated children, isolate for 5 days or until your symptoms are gone. After a five-day absence, children are expected to wear a mask at all times for the following five days, except during isolated lunchtime.

PCR tests are being rationed, so one will not be administered a PCR if the rapid result is positive.

AHS is no longer reporting positive cases to schools, and the school will stop reporting to parents of positive cases. This is due to the shortage of PCR tests, and therefore positive cases are not confirmed. If your child tests positive, please alert the school.

If students are being kept home as a precautionary measure, homework will not be provided to those students at home. Parents can use the PowerLearn portal to review curriculum themes and topics.

If your child is sick long-term, teachers have work packages that they can share.

- **Absences** - There have been 60 student absences per day, with 50 of those being precautionary absences. The remaining are due to students isolating after travel or because a family member tested positive for Covid. Averaging 2 staff absences per day, which is close to average. No concern at this point.
- **Professional Development** - Jill Foreman, late in January, will work with teachers on mitigating the long-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Additional professional development sessions will focus on math, student and teacher wellness, and Indigenous knowledge.
- **Student Wellness** - Money will be invested in ways to make classroom learning more interesting and fun. Money will be invested in field trips as well. Student services will wrap up academic recovery in early February, and more wellness work will take its place.
- **Application Process** - 422 applications for elementary campus, with 390 students fully qualified for the 100 open spots.

b) Mid-High Campus Update

- **Exams** - Grade 9 is required to write the PAT, as it was not canceled by the government. 10, 20, and 30 level courses have optional exams. Second semester begins January 31.
- **Lunch in Classrooms** - Due to the rise of the Omicron variant, all students are required to eat in a classroom.
- **Clubs & Athletics** - Clubs and Athletics will continue. Schedules may be slightly modified due to the week off, however all practices are closed. This is essential for students' mental health.
- **Absences** - Faculty have been notified that some students tested positive over the holidays. There has not been a rise in absences. No issues with staff absences.
- **Masks** - There has been a rise in students wearing N-95s. When eating or drinking, students are asked to keep their masks on as much as possible, and never taking them fully off.
- **End of Term** - All report cards will be updated by January 28th in PowerSchool.
- **Open Information Night** - This is an opportunity for parents to see what high school looks like at Westmount specifically.
- **School Closing** - This will be determined by staff availability, which is currently not foreseen to be an issue.
- **New Research Partnership (Laurie Alisat Update)** - with University of Calgary. We've received our ethics approval for a study of gifted students and their teachers regarding their experience of Covid and the impact it's had on their wellbeing, teaching, and learning. Students and teachers are invited to be co-researchers for this project. Students will assist with designing survey questions and data analysis. The conclusions will be shared with the community.

6. Q&A for the Administration

- a) **Question: How likely is it that any in-person celebrated events for high school graduation will be held? When is it usually?**
 Two events that happen in Spring are high school graduation and grade 6 overnight trip. Administration is still planning for both of those events to go ahead and will cancel if absolutely necessary. High school graduation to be held at the Red & White Club. Date to be determined. If graduation has to be canceled, there will be a live release of a video, and the last two weeks of June will allow family to come to the school and celebrate.
- b) **Question: Guidance on how to access rapid test kits?**
 Staff, unfortunately, do not know how to access the rapid tests. The hope is that two rapid test kits will become available for each student.
- c) **Question: Are negative rapid tests required after completion of quarantine to send kids back to school?**

If children are fully vaccinated, quarantine is five days or symptom-free, whichever is later. HS recommends isolation and mask-wearing for the following five days as well. Students who must isolate have access the cafeteria. For those unvaccinated, quarantine is 10 days or symptom-free, whichever is later. No negative test is required.

d) Question: Can parents send their children to school with cloth masks to wear over surgical masks?

Yes, that is fine. Cloth masks are ineffective by themselves, but with a surgical mask underneath, they are effective.

e) Question: Will there be in-person interviews for kindergarten admission? When will they be announced?

No, there will not be in-person interviews for kindergarten through grade 4 due to safety concerns. The admission process will rely on the information in psychological assessments, the parent inventory for finding potential, and then any other factors that are discovered in the application form.

f) Question: When will parents hear about kindergarten spots?

The deadline for offering spots is mid-to-late March.

g) Question: Has any funding been given to Westmount by the Alberta or Federal government to take care of Covid issues?

Last year Westmount received federal funding that was used for supplies and enhancing cleanliness. This year, there has been no additional funding. Funds for supplies and enhanced cleanliness have been sourced elsewhere.

h) Question: Can parents chip in to purchase a HEPA filter for classrooms?

The elementary campus has MERV 13 filters in all classrooms. A number of parents have offered to supply air purifiers for classrooms. The problem is the electrical system does not have the capacity to run air purifiers in each classroom.

i) Question: The kids cannot wear masks in band class. Is there an action plan for dealing with that?

The kids wear masks at all times in band, except when playing instruments. Instruments also have coverings over the bells. There not have been any additional recommended measures to employ. If parents are concerned, the band director will temporarily move the student to a percussion instrument.

7. Closing remarks from Chair

8. Meeting Adjourned - 8:10pm