

St. Andrew's Regional High School

Local School Council

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2023 – approved May 24, 2023

Present: Angela Grohovac (AG) Father Eduardo Santos, Renee Derksen (RD), Victor Araujo (VA), Steve Pearse (SP), Euan Skinner (ES), Katherine Thiessen-Wale (KTW)

Regrets: Manuel Achadinha (ICS board representative)

Principal: Glen Palahicky (GP) via Zoom

Guests: Ciaran McLaverty (CM), Rachel Johnston (parent of student), Michele Sanders (MS - teacher representative)

Quorum achieved.

Call Meeting to Order: AG at 6:34 p.m.

Opening Prayer: Father Eduardo

Statement by Guest:

Rachel Johnston, parent of a SARHS student, wished to attend the meeting to speak about the process relating to a student appeal of disciplinary action that was considered by LSC in April, 2023, and submitted a document summarizing her thoughts and experience for LSC's consideration.

AG thanked Ms. Johnston for her submission and informed her and LSC that a mediator from Peninsula Restorative Justice would be initiating discussions in the form of a restorative circle with students involved in the situation leading to the student appeal in the near future. The goal is to have this work largely concluded before the end of the school year.

Ms. Johnston left the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Approval of Previous Minutes: Motion by RD, seconded by SP to approve March 2023 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Approval of Agenda: VA requested that there be an addition to the agenda regarding the topic of a dance academy.

Moved by VA and seconded by RD to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

New Business:

Nomination Committee:

AG informed LSC that ES will be leaving LSC next year, and given the departure of another LSC member earlier in the year, there are several vacancies to be filled at the upcoming annual meeting. KTW will obtain information as to the term expiries of AG and SP, and all LSC members are asked to approach potential candidates to join LSC. CM confirmed that two-thirds of LSC members need to be Catholic, and given the current membership, two new members would not be required to be Catholic.

Dance Academy:

VA noted that while enrolment numbers are going up, local public schools are facing decreased budgets for music programs, and there may be an opportunity for SARHS to attract students by offering a dance academy program. There are many students currently at the school who are interested and involved in dance, and it may be worth exploring the idea of including a dance instructor as part of the arts program. Instructors from local dance studios are known to teach at public schools offering dance academies (Claremont and Royal Bay), and currently public schools' dance academies are oversubscribed with lengthy waiting lists. This would provide an opportunity for both female and male students.

AG noted that if an academy is offered as part of the curriculum, there is an opportunity to attract students who would not otherwise attend; the experience has been that students have left SARHS to attend sports academy programs offered in nearby public schools. These programs operate with instructors who are qualified to teach other subjects in addition.

ES noted that students enrolled in the academy at Royal Bay take dance during what would be their physical education class times, and have dedicated use of the stage, and most is done within the existing timetable. Fees for the academy at Royal Bay are approximately \$1200 per year and the program runs for the full school year. Claremont also has a dance academy, which is scheduled with most of the program occurring outside the timetable (similar to how band and choir is scheduled at SARHS).

CM advised that in terms of logistical requirements, the main challenge would be having sufficient space, since there is only one gym, and it is already challenging to have two phys ed classes sharing the space. The stage is frequently in use for drama classes. Next year it is expected that there will be four Grade 8 classes, and so another teacher will be needed to support student numbers. As well, there are now five phys ed electives being offered, which further complicates the schedule.

Other factors to consider would be whether the program would be offered for students in all grades, or only some; whether a current teacher could be a co-ordinator for the program, and whether infrastructure requirements (e.g., sprung floors) would be needed. There could possibly be integration of transport to a dance studio for morning practices, etc. rather than holding all instruction at the school. CM noted that when there is a special class (e.g., the honours program that used to be offered in Grades 8 and 9), the separation of students into streams within the grade affects relationships and interactions among the students; it should be considered that integration and cohesiveness among students within the school may be affected by implementing specialist programming.

VA was asked to do some research on both potential models, and look into whether there is information available on SARHS' previous rowing academy to see what might be possible.

Old Business:

Landscaping: Tabled for future discussion as GP is looking into it.

PIP hours: RD indicated that given the time of year, it is pressing to determine what will be done in terms of the PIP program and communicate to parents. Unless someone can immediately commit to managing the submission of cheques before the end of the school year, there will not be enough time to implement the program for the year. Because we asked families to submit PIP cheques for the year, and some families have completed entry of PIP hours on the form that is currently posted to the website, it is necessary to decide if we are proceeding to implement, or will postpone accounting for hours for another year (it has already been a number of years that implementation has been postponed.) In order to implement, it is necessary for somebody to administer the program by cross-checking entries in the database with cheques collected.

CM indicated that at the most recent PSG meeting, PSG members wanted to understand whether the program would start this year or next, and how it would be applied – e.g., if a family has students at both an ICS elementary school and SARHS, would PIP volunteer hours need to be completed at both? RD indicated that while models at other schools vary, the program is usually organized at the individual school level. However, no current PSG members wished to take on administration this year; there will be new PSG leadership next year. While PSG is focused on fundraising and support, LSC's role is generally more focused on policy oversight and decision-making.

AG indicated that it is also necessary to decide where the monies collected in lieu of completion of PIP hours will be allocated; options are to allocate the money to debt payment or to the PSG. If all money were collected in lieu of completion of PIP hours, the total could amount to between \$20,000-\$30,000.

ES moved to postpone implementation of the PIP program through collection of monies in lieu of completion of volunteer hours for the current school year, and apply donations received to budget for the next school year. Motion not seconded.

SP volunteered to take it on administration of the PIP program for the remainder of this year; VA volunteered to assist.

Following discussion it was agreed further that monies would be partly allocated to debt and partly provided to PSG to support a school legacy project.

Concerning administration of PIP for future years, RD reported that she looked into the software for this purpose that is used by many Lower Mainland schools and obtained much helpful information from the vendor. The total cost would be \$700 annually plus \$250 to set it up, including entry into the system of the school family list and training, etc. In speaking with the vendor, RD learned that other schools who use the system have a broad range of possible volunteer opportunities for parents to complete hours, including volunteering as parking attendants/traffic control at the school and providing coffee service after parish masses. Opportunities for volunteerism are entered into the system by school administration, teachers or coaches early, and parents sign up for them as far in advance as possible, allowing them to plan their schedule to accomplish the hours over the course of the year. In virtually all of the schools, parents administer the program, rather than school administration doing so, and this is often done by assigning two parent assistants that each manage one of two categories – for example, one parent enters, administers and tracks sports volunteer opportunities while another tracks music/parking/parish opportunities. These positions in themselves require volunteering 2-3 hours per week, which accomplishes their hours for the year. Once a parent completes their quota of hours, the system will signal that they are complete and their cheque may be returned. At the end of the cycle, parents who have not completed are given the message that their hours are incomplete and their cheque will be cashed. The system doesn't process payments, but invoices them and parents need to come in to pay. There can be an option for parents who cannot volunteer to simply pay in lieu.

MS inquired as to whether there is a means of the system tracking whether parents have completed their Responsible Ministry/Covenant of Care documentation (criminal record checks), allowing for volunteerism. If that were possible, and if parents could indicate through the program their willingness to participate in a career day, or offer other experiences (e.g., attending to speak in class), teachers would be happy to use these additional resources. It would also be helpful to understand how families are removed from the system upon leaving the school.

RD committed to seek answers to additional questions and report back to LSC.

Cell phone policy: Further to the discussion at the last meeting about possible restriction of cell phone use by Grade 8 students, SP reported that he has done research on this and feels there is a compelling case for restricting cell phones, but there are a lot of considerations around practicality, enforcement, etc.

There is a solid basis in evidence to support restriction of cell phones/electronics among students during school hours as mental illness, anxiety, depression have increased among teens since 2012, and studies demonstrate there has been a loss of ability to retain knowledge due to interference with sustained concentration, etc. Cell phones tend to inhibit in-person socialization, and social media negatively impacts mental well-being. The more time that is spent speaking face-to-face, the better impacts to mood and well-being. Constant use of devices disrupts sleep and increases social anxiety. A policy restricting cell phone use that is aimed at improving students' well-being and future life skills and can be implemented in a manner that is not draconian or overly punitive would be beneficial.

CM noted that use of phones in the classroom for research purposes is very occasional, and the policy restricting use would not be disruptive to learning. AG confirmed that the policy would be intended to apply specifically to cell phones and not be applicable to tablets or laptops used as learning aids.

As currently, one of the issues is students receive calls from their parents during the school day, VA suggested that parents be required to sign the policy, so the parents are equally accountable for upholding it.

MS indicated that teachers would be supportive of the policy and recognizes that the policy would align with the school's objective to be a place that keeps its students safe. However, it may be difficult for teachers to enforce the policy if there is resistance.

SP recommends application of the policy to the school as a whole (i.e., not just at the Grade 8 level) to optimize academic achievement and support mental health. GP noted that if the proposed policy is to be applied to the whole school, there is a bigger matter of implementation and there should be discussion with staff to determine if it will be too difficult. CM recalled that an independent school attempted a ban on cell phones and it became more challenging than anticipated for staff trying to enforce the policy.

AG noted that the incoming principal needs to be involved in discussion of this proposed policy amendment (no phones permitted at school from September to January for Grade 8s).

SP moved to:

- (a) adopt the amendment to policy as drafted by RD (no phones permitted at school from September to January for Grade 8s),
- (b) require that both parents and students in all grades sign the cell phone/electronic device policy,
- (c) require that parents commit to abide by the policy, by not phoning or texting students on students' phones during school hours, and instead calling the school office in the event it is essential to reach students during school hours, and
- (d) impose a consequence of phones being removed from students for the balance of the school day in the event that they are found to be in violation of the terms of the policy.

VA seconded. All in favour - Motion passed.

Reports:

Chairperson's Report: AG confirmed that she participated in numerous meetings relating to the student appeal hearing in March and April, and post-hearing, communicated with the students and their families and sought a restorative justice facilitator. AG believes she has found the correct facilitator who will be supportive of the school's culture and is willing to spend the time to meet with each of the students individually in preparation. AG also sent out nomination package for Council nominations, and hopes for several nominees to be identified in time for May AGM.

Teacher Rep's Report: No report.

Principal's Report: GP reported that Grade 8 interviews are going well; there will be at least 90 Grade 8 students coming in September, and over 50 international students. The incoming principal will be coming to meet staff on May 23. Thank you to VA and family who donated the beautiful new rug at the front door. The musical performance (Oliver!) is premiering next week. Still waiting to hear back on quotes for landscaping.

Human Resources: No report.

Finance: SP reported that finances are in good shape, with a budget surplus anticipated by the end of the school year.

PSG Liaison: AG reported that the PSG is contributing \$6,000 for mobile lab, and \$1,500 for mats to protect against stage, with a balance of funds being allocated to scholarships. The PSG AGM will be on May 19.

Policy: Report appended. As above, RD reported on the PIP program and committed to seeking additional information in response to questions from LSC members.

International Liaison: No report.

Buildings and Grounds: CM summarized various initiatives being undertaken to further enhance school buildings and grounds, including: installation of a recirculation pump for hot water in the office kitchenette; completion of remediation of deficiencies during Spring break, aside from ventilation in the band practice rooms and office, and bells in the band room; gym floor refurbishment; classroom door closers and elephant feet repair; brake maintenance for the school bus; repainting of the exterior wall that had been defaced with graffiti; repair of drama table and blinds.

Sincere thanks to Victor and Carmen Araujo who donated the entranceway rug depicting the school crest – it looks fabulous!

A remaining item to address is replacement of the smart board in Room 237. A list of items and projects to be addressed in the upcoming year will be assembled. It was suggested that a multidimensional microphone for the laptop to enable better audio for LSC meeting participants who join the meeting via Zoom would be beneficial.

Tricouncil: No report.

Next LSC Meeting: APM May 24 2023 at 6:30 p.m., followed by Regular LSC meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

St. Andrew's Regional High School Local School Council

April 26, 2023. Policy Report: Renee Derksen

For discussion and decision: 2023 PIP, 2023/24 PIP and Electronic Policy for Grade 8

1. 2023 Parent Involvement Program

As a further update to the research requested by LSC on the PIP process that I provided on January 25, 2023, it was identified that both a volunteer coordinator and school administration resource are required to execute the process in 2023. LSC is to determine if these resources are available, decide on the PIP plans for 2023 and communicate the update to parents in the near term.

2. 2024 Parent Involvement Program

LSC requested research into an online tool to support the PIP in 2024. OnVolunteers Software (OVS) provided details on their program and a demo to me. The software is used by schools across Canada; in Vancouver, clients include Little Flower, Vancouver College, St. Augustine etc.

OnVolunteers Offer of Services Summary:

- OVS is "software as a service", available 24/7/365 via a prepaid subscription.
- The annual software subscription cost for 201-400 family/user accounts is \$699 + applicable taxes.
- The required Getting Started service is a one-time service, available at \$299 + applicable taxes; it includes volunteer portal configuration, data entry (OVS to enter the families list, volunteer activities and jobs) and 3 hours of Administrator/Activity Coordinator web training. Additional training is available in 2-hour packs for \$99.
- The data entry of school volunteer information provided in the Getting Started service is only within the first 30 days of implementation.
- The annual subscription begins at the start of the implementation when OVS would receive and upload the school's families list - and invoice for the service. Payment is due upon receipt of the invoice. The date of the invoice is associated with a school's account, unpaid accounts exceeding 45 days trigger a hold on the school's account.
- New software releases (new features and enhancements) occur 2-31 times a year.

- Unlimited email and web conference Technical Support for the school's volunteer administration team is included in the annual subscription. Parent 'how to' questions are handled by the school's volunteer administration team.
- Response time for technical support is within 24 hours, normally between 4-8 hours; the resolution of issues is based on a severity-based priority.
- School account databases are backed up weekly and monthly. In the event of a catastrophic event, e.g. server intrusion, which causes service disruption, the OVS team will endeavour to get the school account running within 24 hours. In case of data loss due to an event, school accounts will revert to the data from the previous week.
- For schools in Canada, servers and databases are hosted in Toronto, Ontario.
- The school may end the subscription any time, a refund on the software subscription will be provided on a pro-rated basis. 100-100 Guarantee - if within the first 100 days of usage, from the start of implementation, the school chooses to stop using the OVS, OVS will refund 100% of the annual subscription price paid.
- The Privacy Policy is available on the website and within the application. OVS will never share schools' information. Communications are limited to a school's volunteer team only; OVS does not contact families/parents directly.
- To join OVS, a Principal would reply to sent an email with a short statement of agreement with the Offer of Services.

Program Management:

In all (except for one) of the Vancouver Catholic schools, the Parent Participation Program (PPP) is run completely by parents. In most cases, the school assigns a "PPP Coordinator" who oversees and runs the PPP. This person typically has one other parent to help run the PPP.

A Vancouver school that is about the same size as SARHS is Our Lady of Perpetual Help (~320 families, 375 children) has 1 PPP Coordinator, 2 parent assistant and assigns parents as an "Activity Coordinator" to each volunteer category or event (a total of about 10-12 parents).

A large school, like Vancouver College, is a K-12 school with ~900 families/1,100 students, has a team of 6 to run the PPP and about 25 activity coordinators.

The one elementary school (St. Edmunds in North Van) wherein the PPP is run by school staff, the school secretary and the office manager run the PPP. In all cases, each parent is usually given the full allotment of service hours for the whole year, e.g. 30-50.

SARHS Model suggestion from vendor:

Management: A team of 3 to oversee/run the volunteer program: 1 school staff and 2 parent leaders.

Support: a parent 'coordinator' for each of your volunteer categories/events that report up to the 2 parent leaders.

Next Steps

- LSC to evaluate program requirements including resources, budget, volunteer planning by teachers and administration, approvals, execution and overall program.
- Note: Volunteer requirements are significantly higher in the lower mainland. Volunteer ideas include parking attendants, office volunteers, weekly Mass coffee service etc.

3. Electronics Policy for Grade 8 students entering SARHS in 2023/2024

LSC's request for an amendment to the current Electronics Policy -Off & Away - to reduce the electronic access for grade 8 students was to support successful social integration into the school. To support LSC's recommendation that Grade 8 students would have limited or no access to phones during school hours until December:

Current: Only if permission was given by the teacher to use electronics for a specific learning outcome or outcomes, the student code of conduct requires during instructional time that all students will:

- Keep their electronic devices turned off and away and
- Store their devices in a handbag, backpack, locker or receptacle provided by the school.

3Proposed amendment: Grade 8 students may not use electronic devices on the school grounds, during school hours (including the lunch hour) unless specifically directed by a teacher, until the end of December; in January, Grade 8 students may use devices outside of instructional time on the school grounds.

If LSC recommend this policy, communications may include:

- School staff and administration
- Website
- Parent Handbook
- St. Patrick's School
- St. Joseph's School
- School newsletter.