

Stratford Central Parent Council
Tuesday, October 20, 2015

Minutes

In attendance: Scott Mitchell; Bruce Whitaker; Dan & Jennifer Kitsch; Kevin Mills; Sue Dias; Sarah Elliott; Sara Bradford; JayJ McKinley; Lisa Cousins; Jen Anderson; Theresa Hopf; Pam Duskocy; April Haynes; Janine Pearson; Sheila Feore; Zach Misener; Sydney Orr; Janette Gryba

Guests: Patty Brine

1. Welcome and introduction

Theme for this year- Empowering Parents to Help their children be Successful in School
*Parent Council is looking at offering a one day/half day Conference for parents – for the November meeting please come with ideas of topics that might be of interest for parents

2. Student Council Report:

- Fall events – Terry Fox Regatta – Grades 7/8's did not participate due to the teacher's job action – only affected the Dragon boating – still had great numbers of student participation
- Semi-Formal Dance (Grades 9-12) – over 200 students attended – had a Fall theme and Student Council provided 'pot-luck' food such as candy apples and mini pumpkin pies
- Monday – RamCast Assembly – new spirit wear fashion show – pictures of clothing will be posted on Student Council Facebook page – will be for sale starting next week
- Clubs are getting up and running – all 'Service' Clubs have amalgamated to make meeting easier – less time conflicts for members – new name = Community Central – planning a Mental Health and Wellness week in February – have an open mental health room run by teacher volunteers available during lunch – will have modules/themes on Fridays at lunch – parent council could link with this by hosting a module 'Understanding Parents'?
- Student Council is planning to have a rep attend all Parent Council meetings this year
- Question arose regarding school teams – how to let parents/students know what teams are being offered and when they start – Bruce will meet with school staff

this coming week and plans to have a list of teams posted to parent council website ASAP (www.stratfordparents.com)

3. Principal Report:

Elementary:

- Extra-Curricular
 - Grade 7/8 Band has begun with Mrs. Woods conducting
 - Soccer teams did well – Grade 8 girls and boys teams won; Grade 7 teams made it to the Semi-finals – Mr. Bailey and Mrs. McCabe coached
 - Cross country runners did well in the 3 meets in which they participated – 8 students finished in the top 10 at the District meet – Mr. Blaine coached
 - Volleyball is the next sport coming up – tournament will be in December
- New SERT is Melissa Mari – she is replacing Mary Coleman who moved to another school
- Progress reports are being delayed due to the job action by Teachers. We are hopeful a settlement will occur soon so that reports will be completed by Teachers. Term One reports don't go out until February so there is still time to complete Progress reports if there is a settlement soon
- Support staff – EA's; Secretaries; Strive EA's; TRA are also on job action – this is impacting the Principal's as they are calling out students from class for counsellors, needles, parents who come to get students, give messages from parents, give lunches and forgotten items at home, photocopying, etc.

Secondary:

- Grade 9-12 Parent/Teacher night is this Thursday, October 22 from 6-8pm in the main gym – appointments are not necessary
- Did not have breathalysers at the Semi-Formal dance – wanted to see how things went – feels this was an encouragement for attendance as they had almost double the number of students attend than was planned – most were well behaved -
- School Improvement Plan – results of literacy and math testing have dropped in recent years – question is why and what can we do?
 - 5 Steps to address: 1) Literacy; 2) Numeracy; 3) Mental Health - student anxiety levels; 4) Pathways; 5) Technology Implementation
 - Need to stretch students in knowledge – kids who struggled in Grade 3 & 6 with literacy and go into applied classes also tend to struggle in Grade 10 with OSSLT – students who struggled in Grade 3 & 6 but go into academic classes don't seem to struggle as much in Grade 10 – why, how and what can be done about it?

- applied level engagement -
 - Literacy (grades 7-10 specifically) - Mental health/ stress reduction - mindfulness workshop - learned some techniques - report on reducing anxiety - an awareness day (February) - had a speaker/ workshop last year + presentation to Parent council
- Implementing strategies –
 - Mental Health –
 - Reducing student anxiety – also need to reduce teacher anxiety academic; social; emotional; physical health – how to help students build resilience
 - Pathways –
 - Bus/shuttle between Central and Northwestern 3x/day to allow students to take classes exclusively offered at one school – evaluating impact and success
 - Technology –
 - iPad use has dropped 10-25% in grade 9’s – slowly getting physical barriers, such as low Wi-Fi access, software updates and internet security, taken care of
 - Smartboards/whiteboards are being installed – computer lab has been completely updated – old computers have been replaced – library and classroom computers have been updated – computer classes were moved up the 3rd floor – ordered 20 mobile laptops for classroom use – now have 1027+ computer workstations in the school – unfortunately the Board has not kept up as there is only a part-time computer technician in the school for 2 half days per week which is not enough to keep up with the demand
- There is good, long-term planning being put in place

4. Senior Staff Report:

- No Report

5. Presentation: Empowering Parents: Helping your Son/Daughter Succeed at School – Student Services Department Presentation by Mrs. Patty Brine

- a) Encourage ‘Good Student’ Habits – Healthy eating habits; regular attendance; punctuality; be prepared for class; take notes (studies show there is a correlation between holding a pen/taking hand written notes and higher information retention and therefore higher grades)
- b) Course Evaluations – be aware of the marking scheme; rubrics; exemplars for any class assignments or tests – teachers usually hand out a hard copy and post on Google classroom; encourage PROOFREADING!; look for minimum and maximum requirements

- c) Tests – encourage studying over several days rather than cramming; study in a quiet area – take away cell phones/TV/Computers/Music – Discourage studying on the bed as this can lead to insomnia as the brain associates the bed with stressful activity
- d) Home and School Communication – know what subjects your child is taking and the names of the teachers – show interest in their education and future plans – check school and parent websites frequently scss.amdsb.ca and stratfordparents.com respectively
- e) What to do if your Son/Daughter is struggling in a subject – contact teacher /Guidance Counsellor ASAP – seek extra help at Student Success; Help rooms; Tutors
- f) Anxiety and Depression – rates among students have sky-rocketed – social media plays a huge role but be aware that students can use mental illness as an excuse to get out of doing things that they don't want to do
- g) Screens – correlations between screens and anxiety as well as trouble recovering from concussions – be aware that most students are addicted to their screens / social media
- h) General Tips – insist on respect for adults and peers – model respect for teachers – allow for consequences and avoid covering for your child – don't text them during class time – YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S PARENT NOT THEIR FRIEND

*The full power-point presentation will be posted on the Parent Council website.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 @ 7pm.

Topic - Discover your Child's Future (interests, passions, careers)