



## School Council Meeting Minutes – January 23, 2018



### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Parent Council Members, Staff & Guests Present:

1	John Susi	<b>Principal</b>
2	Angie Barden	<b>Vice Principal</b>
3	Kerstin Baker-Ash	<b>Vice Chair (Parent)</b>
4	Bettina Arapi	<b>Secretary (Parent)</b>
5	Christine Musitano	<b>Teaching Staff Representative</b>
6	Erik Dela Cruz	<b>OAPCE Representative (Parent)</b>
7	Bonnie Wiltshire	<b>Parish Representative (Parent)</b>
8	Camillo Cipriano	<b>Superintendent of Education</b>
9	Christian Cepeda	<b>Council Member (Parent)</b>
10	Gaby Ball	<b>Council Member (Parent)</b>
11	Christine Prentice	<b>Council Member (Parent)</b>
12	Nikola Blair	<b>Council Member (Parent)</b>
13	Floriana Rego	<b>Council Member (Parent)</b>
14	Thyrza Naraine	<b>Council Member (Parent)</b>
15	Stephanie Bressette	<b>Council Member (Parent)</b>
16	Sheetal Melino	<b>Council Member (Parent)</b>
17	Tina Fargiorgio	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
18	Andrea Kim	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
19	Corinna White	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
20	Joanne McKay	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
21	Stacey Da Costa	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
22	Paola Lecanda Aguilar	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
23	Rosemary Simic	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
24	Kaylyn Dorland	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
25	Christine Dief	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
26	Karrie Thomson	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
27	Darryl Tielemans	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
28	Michelle Terra-Allen	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
29	Michelle Digout	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
30	Victoria Tinebra	<b>Teaching Staff</b>
31	Mary English	<b>Teaching Staff</b>

## 2. Opening Prayer

Read by Bonnie Wiltshire, Parish Representative

Jesus, our Saviour and Friend,  
You have shown us so much love.  
You are gentle with us, You heal us,  
You died on the Cross for us.  
Now You ask us, "Do you love Me?"

As we come to know You better, and see all that You have done for us,  
May our hearts be filled with love for You.  
Make us eager to always do what You ask of us,  
And to see Your face and love You in everyone else we meet,  
Especially those we may find it hard to love.

It is Your love which turns our lives around.  
By trying to love as You have loved us,  
we become more and more like You.  
Guide us always on our way,  
Show us each day how to love You more.  
Spirit of the living God, fill our hearts!

Amen.

## 3. Principal and Vice Principal Report:

### a. Ford – Drive for Change Writing Contest for Maple Leaf Tickets

- As a leading 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and WE school, we were awarded tickets to attend a Toronto Maple Leaf's game from Ford Canada, Drive for Change Program.
- To enter to win students had to write a letter to explain in detail how they drive changes in their community and beyond.
- We received a lot of letters and selected 14 students to attend the game with one family member.
- We received amazing letters, some emotional letters about donating money and clothes, helping in senior homes, starting their own charities, and much more.
- We are in awe of all the wonderful ways our students work to make a difference in our community.
- They give of their time, their money and of course their energy to support those in need.
- We thank them for showing us that everyone, even our littlest learners are trying to make the world a better place!

**b. MathUP**

- We will be working with a program called MathUP.
- 16 schools have been asked to participate in the program that was designed by a local publishing company.
- Created by Marian Small, MathUP Classroom is a comprehensive, online, instructional solution that helps build teachers' knowledge and understanding of mathematics so they can better help their students.
- We will need to come to an understanding where our math needs are.
- We are checking where students from grade 1 to 8 are at when it comes to using very simple math skills.
- We will be sharing more results as they come along and compare notes with the other principals from the schools selected.
- Our objective is to make sure both staff and students are comfortable with understanding and using math principles.
- We are using a step-by-step process, insights, and tools that are all based on evidence from our own students' learning.

**c. Upcoming events**

- Jan 23 – Graduation Photos
- Jan 23 – Bus Safety Presentation
- Jan 23/24 – New Kindergarten Registration
- Jan 25 – Bell Let's Talk Day
- Jan 25, 26 – Gr. 7 Carrier Centre Trip
- Jan 25 – P/VP for the Day Activities
- Jan 26 – Sports Jersey Day
- Jan 26 – Gr. 5 Floor Hockey Tournament at JV
- Feb 02 – P.A. Day
- Feb 06 – Rosary Apostolate
- Feb 13 – Gr. 7-8 Mardi-Gras Dance @ Gym; 1 – 2pm
- Feb 14 – Ash Wednesday Liturgy @ 1 – 2pm (Valentine's day activities will be moved to Feb 13 instead)
- Feb 16 – P.A. Day
- Feb 19 – Family Day
- Feb 22 - Boys Basketball Tournament
- Feb 22 – Boys Volleyball Tournament at JV
- Feb 22 – Report Cards Sent Home
- Feb 23 – Girls Basketball Tournament
- Feb 23 – Girls Volleyball Tournament at JV
- Feb 24 – First Reconciliation @ Holy Rosary Church, Gr. 2, 11am-12pm
- Feb 28 – Gr. 7-8 Hockey Tournament
- Feb 28 – Pink Shirt Day

#### **4. Parent Communication**

##### **a. Online Parent “Chat Room”**

##### **b. Facebook Groups**

##### **c. Use of School Council Email**

- A concern that keeps coming up now is parents communicating inappropriate information, speaking about staff, students and adult volunteers in a derogatory way using social media.
  - For students we have cyber bullying policies in place with police follow up if necessary but how can one control what parents post on social media sites?
  - How would these parents feel if teachers posted about them?
  - We all know how each of us would feel if the same happened to us or our child ☹
  - If any of these groups (e.g. FB - Milton Mommies) post inappropriate information, it should be reported.
  - We need strategies on how to follow up.
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- The same goes for emails between council members, we must protect the privacy of our students and not discuss personal student or staff matters within an open email to school council.
  - It has always been made clear to school council members that the school council email distribution list is not intended to be used for personal matters, messages or to make accusations against anyone. These are private and confidential matters that must be handled with the dignity and respect that they deserve directly with appropriate staff or administration.
  - As outlined at the beginning of the school year and stated in our school council by-laws, the school council members are representatives of the parents within our community and place the collective interests and needs of the students of Queen of Heaven Catholic School above any personal interests!
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- We are looking for advise or feedback on what would be the best way to get that message out to parents.
  - The suggestion was made that we could contact the administrator of each of these social media groups.
  - Milton mommies, for example, are not necessarily managed by a parent from our school.
  - There are Facebook sites specifically for Queen of Heaven parents that already enforce a strict set of rules and will not allow any inappropriate content to be posted on their sites.
  - There are children that are being discussed online which is just awful. There needs to be zero tolerance.
  - Whatever is posted online is available to a huge community and loses any personalization.
  - We need to figure out how to protect these persons (all) and keep them safe.

- We need to put a strong message in our weekly updates and make sure that it is understood that these incidents (posts) need to be reported and that it is always encouraged to come and talk to us if there is a problem rather than posting (venting) online.
- The suggestion was made to include this message in the speech at curriculum night at the beginning of the year.
- We can use a variety of approaches.
- People have become so comfortable to carelessly communicating online not understanding the consequences.
- **Parent:** We need to be much more open and transparent, especially given the gravity of the concern. If there is cyberbullying, which is listed as one of the more severe offences, it needs to be taken very serious. If a child is offered top of the line education but Christian values are not established than we have failed and opportunities were missed.
- **Parent:** Email is not the proper form to communicate issues when looking for feedback from council members; having a council meeting, talking about strategies is far more beneficial.
- It was important to have added the step of meeting with the council rather than just jumping to the parent community with information.

**5. Engaging Parents in conversations about eliminating racism:**

- a. Creating a school-wide approach to increase awareness and zero tolerance – to include activities/strategies for students, staff, parents**
- A slide show was presented about racism and where it falls within our board policy, as well as how we can create a safe & inclusive environment for all people.
  - See slide show content below:

## **Racism - Creating an inclusive and safe environment for ALL**

### **Definitions:**

<b>Racism:</b>	Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.
<b>Diversity:</b>	The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within society...including ancestry, culture, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.
<b>Equity:</b>	A condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people.
<b>Inclusive Education:</b>	Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

*(Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009)*

## **HCDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Policy II-45**

"The HCDSB recognizes that all people are created equal, in the image of God, each with inimitable characteristics deserving of dignity (Genesis: 1:27). In accordance with the Church's teachings, it is the policy of the Board to provide in all its operations an educational environment which supports and enables diversity within its Catholic community."

"The Board recognizes that any form of social or cultural discrimination is incompatible with Catholic moral principles and is in violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code."

"The Board recognizes the importance of antiracism and anti-harassment policies in promoting and maintaining a Catholic educational and working environment which fosters racial and ethno-cultural understanding as well as a policy which accepts and celebrates all types of diversity."

## **How do we support an understanding of Equity and Inclusion at Queen of Heaven?**

- **HCDSB Focus on Faith themes** each year highlight that we are all created in the image of God and that we are called to recognize the inherent dignity of every person
- **Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations** that call us to be **Responsible Citizens**;
  - Promote equality, democracy, solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society
  - We are called to be respectful and affirm the diversity and interdependence of the world's peoples and cultures

- **Religion and Family Life Curriculum**
  - Each grade has a **Fully Alive** theme focusing on our role within the community and family
- **Regular and ongoing Individual, groups and classroom conversations** led by the teacher from grades K-8 to reinforce Gospel Values, inclusivity, equity and our call for solidarity

## Moving Forward for Staff...

- **Principal and Vice Principal** visited every gr. 1-8 classroom to deliver a **lesson on Diversity, Inclusion and treating everyone with Respect and Kindness** (week of Jan. 8/18)
- **January Staff Meeting:**
  - Staff made aware of general concerns about racism and inclusion and concerns expressed by the community.
  - Staff will continue to make P/VP aware of any incidents of Bullying or Racism.
  - Teacher and Admin continue to collaborate and decide on how to best address the concerns in an age appropriate manner.
- **HCDSB February 16th PD Day:**
  - Focus on Equity and Inclusion
  - Racism and Islamophobia

## Progressive Discipline:

*“Progressive discipline is a non-punitive, whole-school approach that uses a continuum of corrective and supportive interventions, supports and consequences to address inappropriate behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote positive behaviours. Consequences include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviour and assisting pupils to make good choices”*

(Policy No: II-39: Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools / Code of Conduct Suspension & Expulsions)

## What does our school data say???

- In November 2017 all grade 4-8 students completed the HCDSB “Our School Survey”
- Our data will be shared at our next School Council meeting for parent review and discussion
- General Topics: School Culture, Bullying, Support at School, Safety at School, etc.
- Generally, on the positive side, our students scored higher than Canadian averages and higher than averages of other “like schools”

## Home and School Connection

.....How can our School Council help???

.....Education is a partnership between home/school/Church

How do we engage parents in the conversation regarding educating their children about race, equity and inclusion to create a safe and respectful environment for ALL?

### Norms for our conversation:

Moving forward: We are looking for positive suggestions and solutions for parents to implement at home, in support of what is already being done at school?

We acknowledge that specific incidents have occurred that have led us to today's discussion. We do not need a recount of specific incidents that have occurred at school.

- This is where we ask for help...
- How do we get the message out?
- We had sent some links to articles out with the agenda for reference:
  - <http://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/why-white-parents-need-to-talk-to-their-kids-about-racism>
  - <https://www.todaysparent.com/family/parenting/talking-about-race-you-know-were-black-right/>
  - <https://www.todaysparent.com/family/parenting/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-racism-an-age-by-age-guide/>
- If it means to have further meetings, etc. we can certainly do that.
- We are looking for positive solutions & suggestions; we are aware that there have been incidents and do not wish to speak about personal incidents here as the purpose now is to figure out how we get the right message out.
- **Parent:** Perhaps we need to have an assignment sent home for all students where they have to write an essay so the subject gets talked about at home.
- **Parent:** It is great that we are talking about this, black history month is coming up in February which is a great opportunity to get the younger kids introduced to the subject. The board may even provide material for this.
- **Kindergarten Parent:** We have to send information home much earlier; perhaps getting children to share where they are from to emphasize that we are all different but all same.
- **Parent –** Sometimes, we try to gloss over the differences when we have to be cognisant about the fact that we are different but must celebrate and accept these differences. We cannot pretend that we are colour blind.
- **Parent Suggestion:** We could organize an 'International Night' to celebrate diversity. We could elect a diversity council perhaps to host an event for this, replacing one we currently have.



- Parent: What does diversity mean to parents, children and teachers? Do children really understand what it means not to be included? We need to break it down so everyone can understand what it means. Proper training needs to be put in place.
- This could be very simple... 'Am I hurting you?' Empower your own child to stand up for themselves.
- There are situations that require learning as they cause misunderstandings even when not being racist. As an example, a child was not provided ice as the bruise cannot be seen due to their skin colour. Little things like that should not get overlooked.
- **Grade 8 Teacher:** Kids have questions that parents need to know how to answer. We may have to have some uncomfortable conversation, be honest, be true, so that kids feel safe to share their concerns. What made the holocaust so terrible, why should black history month be celebrated...we need to be willing to open ourselves to uncomfortable conversations.
- **Grade 1 Teacher:** We can talk about Jesus, it is just so simple, treat other as you would like to be treated. What you say or do should be loving and kind. Racism is a huge problem in our whole world not just in our school. Children need to receive the same message everywhere.
- **Parent:** This is a very complex issue that cannot be solved in one night. You can promote awareness but you cannot influence what is being taught at home. Here we have an opportunity to teach, coach, mentor and the child may take a stance against their up-bringing. It is very important that the issue of racism is explicit. Separate issues have different consequences. We must speak about it openly and communicate that it is not tolerated under any circumstances. When an incident occurs the parents get talked to and the children get talked to but the impact on the victim is carried for years and it affects how that child interacts with others in the future.
- Don't focus on the parents, focus on the children. In this day and age even children have an understanding what is happening in the world as current politics are ever so discussed. This is the issue we are dealing with; this is our stand.
- Parent: Mental health is the biggest issue. What are we doing to support the mental health of the victim?
- Part of that comes with the conversation held with the parent. We have a child youth counsellor or outside agency available to help. Parents have to be part of that conversation.
- **Parent:** This is an uncomfortable subject a child needs to be advocated for. A child experiencing racism needs the help to report it. Any concerns need to be reported. It needs to be tackled as a severe issue.
- **Parent:** It cannot only be an reactive strategy!
- **Teacher:** A lot of the problem is put on teachers but parents are a critical part.
- **Parent:** Individually kids may think that they are all alone, we have to celebrate all the cultures, finding role models within the broader community. A proactive approach might be beneficial.
- **Teacher:** There are two kind of kids, some tell all and others say nothing but instead share at home. If kids feel they cannot share with us, they need to be empowered. Parents have to encourage students to speak up.

- **Superintendent:** What can the school board do differently? Students are not always comfortable to speak to their teacher as they may not look the same. It is up to the board to make some changes. The first step is having these awkward and uncomfortable conversations.
- As with the 'hands off' school policy that all students know and report, we need to have the same for racism. We should not just be changing the behavior of the aggressor but also empower the victim. Educating all students.
- **Parent:** There are actually three types of students, some will not speak up, some do and some simply can't due to a disability but still feel that same isolation. We also have to look at how we are working with them.
- **Parent:** Perhaps we can add some sort of a box in each classroom where students can report incidents anonymously (a safe box). We have to teach our kids at home and not just put it all on teachers. We should send a form home outlining the consequences and make parents sign them. We have some funds from the pizza pizza trip raffle and may be able to bring in a speaker for the subject.
- We have already looked into a speaker and there are even some ministry grants available for guest speakers. The superintendent has also already offered to support us should we not be able to afford it.
- **Parent:** Perhaps a workshop on how to have those difficult conversations for the adults. With lent we could have a theme and focus as we did for advent. We usually send a kit home for advent and could have something like that going home on the subject. Is there a confidential hotline to call anonymous?
- We do not have a confidential hotline at board level as it is very hard to follow up not knowing any names.
- **Parent:** Out of fear kids do not speak up, there are very intrinsic cultural differences. The safe environment is not felt by everyone so that they are able to speak.
- **Teacher:** Kids and our students know better what is really going on at the playground. We should have a student committee to help plan changes.
- **Parent:** We have to communicate strongly where we stand, that we have a ZERO tolerance for this and that we will hold people accountable.
- **Parent:** We need to communicate the proper procedures as per the board and that there can be police involvement requested.
- Consequences have to be assigned in an age appropriate manner and many other factors have to be taken into consideration on a case by case basis.
- Due to time constraints we will need to continue in another meeting.
- This cannot be solved in an hour and may never be solved to the liking of everyone.
- Perhaps we need a committee so that by 2019 we have a firm stand established.
- **Teacher:** We must continue to take the small steps to affect change. If we keep unpacking it, that is going to create the shift.
- **Parent:** There must be schools that have already tackled this problem successfully. We need to get in contact with them.

- **Parent:** The next step should be to go home and think about this and then meet another night to come with more suggestions. Teachers and parents can come up with suggestions.
- We have a lot of concerned parents and staff and have heard a lot of positive suggestions. We can make this an open item on the next meeting. This is only just the first step. We had some great ideas.
- We already have zero tolerance at school and situations are always being dealt with in age appropriate manner.
- We need to empower the kids and have those difficult conversations.
- **Parent:** Do we have to wait another two month or can we have a separate meeting about this?
- **Vice Chair:** Puts motion forward to have a separate meeting, going over the points we put together.
- **Superintendent:** Suggests that we do not need to have a full council meeting. From a logistics point a smaller group might be better.
- Perhaps we can come up with a special committee now and that committee would have something to present for next council meeting in March.
- The following members have volunteered to be part of our School Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee:
  - Bettina Arapi, Kerstin Baker-Ash, Nikola Blair, Erik Dela Cruz, Roselien Markovic, Thyra Naraine, Genevieve Odom, Christina Prentice, Floriana Rego, Bonnie Wiltshire, Michelle Digout, Melissa Dennie, Christine Musitano, Victoria Tinebra, Angie Barden and John Susi
  - A date for the meeting will be communicated at a later time.

## 6. Future Agenda Items: C

- Continuation of Math discussion including updates in regards to MathUP

## 7. Future Meetings:

- Tuesday, March 06/18 @ 6:30pm
- Tuesday, May 15/18 @ 6:30pm
- Tuesday, June 19/18 @ 6:00pm

## 8. Adjournment: 9 pm