

St. Vincent School Council Meeting (Virtual)

Monday February 1, 2021 @ 7:00pm

Attendance:

Penny Uniacke (Principal)
Gabriella Van Hooydonk (Non-Teacher Representative)
Regina Dykman (Chair)
Ashleigh Stone (Teacher Representative)
Sonia Guglietti (Parish Rep)
Gina Millington (Community Rep)
Jane Pustai (Secretary – Rotating Position)
Carolyn Holmes
Jasmin von Horsten
Siobhan Kukolic

Welcome and Introductions (RD)

Opening Prayer (SG) (Grade 8 prayer)

Approval of Minutes (RD)

- The December 7, 2020 meeting minutes have been distributed and reviewed. SG approved the minutes; CH seconded.

Principal's Report (PU)

Catholicity

- The New Year liturgy in January went very well. It was the first liturgy with families home.
- There will be a liturgy for Ash Wednesday on Wednesday February 17 at 10:45am. Father Con will join. This liturgy will be virtual regardless of whether the students are back at school. A link will be sent closer to the time. Discussions are still taking place regarding if/how the ashes can be distributed safely (if students are back at school). If it can be done, it will be in the classroom.
- Pancake Tuesday (in its usual form) cannot happen this year since we are unable to distribute food or have parents in the school. If the students are still learning online on Pancake Tuesday, we can consider other ideas - perhaps making them at home. If the students are back at school, parents can choose to send pancakes for lunch, but need to be reminded that they must be sent with the child (in thermos for example) and cannot be dropped off at lunch time. Pictures/Twitter can be utilized regardless of whether students are home or at school.

Curriculum

- Term 1 report cards go home on February 24.
- Due to the new Math curriculum, there is only one Math mark this year – as opposed to marks for each strand.
- Social/emotional reporting is also new this year (in Math) but this will not happen until Term 2 per the Ministry. There will be a comment on the report card to this effect, indicating disruption in school year due to COVID.

- In response to a question from RD about the basis for assessment while the students are learning virtually, PU confirmed that teachers use their professional judgment regarding what best reflects the student's learning and grade to be given.
- RAZ kids update – participation has gone up to about 60% which is a big improvement.

Home/School Connection

- We continue with our connection with STA. They have done a few virtual visits with the Grade 7's and are going to start doing the Grade 6's and 5's.
- We continue to provide updates on our website, Twitter, Weekly Update emails.
- Our CYC has been doing virtual Lego and Art club. People are to send in their pictures, as we tweet them out. The CYC is also doing a recess club with Grade 1's and 2's and she is open to doing it with other classes as well, so teachers will connect with her on that.
- United Way Paint the Town Red Day is on February 12. Students will be encouraged to wear red and donate a toonie. All donations will be done through Cash Online. This will be included in the Weekly Update email. All money will support local United Way initiatives.
- Parents are encouraged to continue checking D2L / virtual classrooms to stay connected via teacher announcements.

Black History Month

- The various classes continue to talk about the history and contribution of Black Canadians.
- The plan is to also look at the current environment and have discussions in the context of events that took place in 2020.
- Look for updates on Twitter and in the Weekly Update email.
- We recently had a Holocaust Memorial Day – this was an opportunity to recognize this day in classes through a liturgy.

Health and Safety

- Per the Minister of Education's recent announcement, there are changes in protocol once students are back at school.
- Students will now wear masks at recess, as they cannot maintain proper social distancing outside.
- The students will continue to have masks off during times when they are eating. In addition to this, if students require a mask break they can ask to have a few minutes in the hallway alone to do so.
- Teachers will now be wearing shields or goggles (in addition to their masks) when within 6 feet of a student. If they are more than 6 feet from students, a mask alone is sufficient.
- Masks continue to be required in the gym. Basketball, or any other high intensity games, can no longer be played. Teaching staff can look into other games that can be done safely in the gym, with social distancing.
- A notice to parents will be going out, encouraging them to send two masks to school with students. The office will continue to have extra masks to provide when needed.
- In response to a question from RD, PU confirmed that teachers are able to have mask breaks when in their classroom alone, or by utilizing any other empty room in the school (ex. small rooms in the library).

Financials

- Indoor/outdoor equipment was purchased for the younger students and we are now in the process of ordering items for the older students.

- The remainder of the items in our financial plan pertain to upcoming events such as graduation and sacraments.
- Towards the end of February the Church will make a decision regarding sacraments for Grades 2 and 7.
- Very likely that graduation will be virtual again this year. It is tentatively booked for Thursday June 24th.

Council Chair's Report (RD)

Spirit Day Brainstorming

- We would like to bring back Spirit Days for the students, but timing is unknown. Ideally the students should be back at school for at least a month to get familiar with the new routine.
- We should keep a list of possible ideas to use when the time comes.
- Virtual ideas could be utilized as well, depending on how long students continue to be home.
- AS suggested an ABC countdown (a letter each day of the month – ex. A is for bring an apple to school).
- For older grades, SG put forward the idea of a pop culture quiz or Canadian trivia game – perhaps via Kahoot.
- GM suggested a mask competition or crazy mask day.

Procedure VI-84

- This document was distributed to the Council members for review in advance of the meeting.
- The Board is asking Council to review the membership requirements for Council.
- We need to discuss and provide our Council's feedback and potential recommendations on changes.
- Consensus among many members that the requirement to be Catholic is not in keeping with being inclusive.
- In response to a question from RD, PU confirmed that in order for a student to be registered at a Catholic school, only one parent needs to be Catholic (and show baptismal certificate). The child does not need to be Catholic, nor the other parent.
- Council members stated it is important to avoid using labels and avoid creating any barriers for parents who are willing to volunteer their time to be on Council. We would not want to miss out on great members because of this requirement. The fact that a parent is interested in being involved in the school community should be enough – everyone deserves a chance.
- RD encouraged any Council members who wish to share further views on this to reach out to her privately by Wednesday this week. She will then draft our response and send to the Board.

Next Meeting Review

- Next meeting is Monday April 12. We typically do not have a meeting in March, but given the current environment there could be a need.
- We can pencil in Monday March 1 as a possible meeting and confirm closer to the time, as a meeting can be called at the last minute.

Selection Criteria for School Principal

This item was covered at the end of the meeting once PU, AS and GV had left the meeting. Only parent council members were present

- RD referenced the selection criteria in the "Selection Criteria for School Principal" document distributed in advance of the meeting. Each parent council member is to email RD by

Wednesday this week with their ranking (1-5) of most significant to least significant criteria. RD will then draft a response to the Board.

Parish Report (SG)

- Church continues to be closed and sacraments continue to be postponed.

New Business (RD)

Cards/Letters for LTC Residents

- CH suggested that our school may want to participate in writing letters to seniors in a Long Term Care home. This has been done by other schools and very much appreciated by the seniors. Perhaps this can be done for Wyndham Manor residents at Easter.
- There was great support for this idea amongst Council members. Also, sharing this locally (ex. via Twitter) could inspire other schools to do the same.
- PU noted that this initiative would align well with the school's Lenten project.
- RD confirmed that PU and CH will take this away.

Thanking our Teachers

- GM noted that our teachers are doing a great job managing all of the demands of teaching during a pandemic – particularly the demands of online learning. We should encourage parents to reach out to the teachers to show their appreciation.

Closing Prayer (GV) (Hail Mary)

Next Meeting: Monday April 12, 2021 @7:00pm