

Vanier Catholic Secondary School Council
Wednesday, January 16, 2013
VCSS Library
7:30 pm

Minutes

Attendance

Members:

Paul Flaherty
Dianne Tait
John Berg
James Mooney
Terry Prenolso
Yolande Cherepak

School Administration:

Ed Frison
Kyle Janzen

Guest/Parents:

Andy Hureau
Cynthia Matichak
Tjitske van der Eide

1. Opening Prayer

Paul opened the meeting with the Our Father.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Terry, seconded by Dianne to approve the agenda with the following additions:
Professional Learning Community (PLC) Teacher Training and Locker Checks to be discussed under item 5, Dealing with Visitors and Time Limits, Financial Status Updates, School Growth Plan, Dual School Credits. Carried.

3. Adoption of December 12, 2012 Minutes

Moved by James, seconded by Dianne to approve the minutes with the following addition under Item 6: French programming was again discussed. School administration is committed to inquiring about the possibility of adding an additional French monitor to the staff. Carried.

Approach to draft minutes: Draft minutes will be circulated to all council members no later than one week prior to the next meeting.

Council decided that approved council minutes will be posted on the school website from now on.
Action item: Yolande will regularly provide Kyle with approved minutes.

[Guest Presenter, Andy Hureau presented at this time. He has on-going concerns with the "Passion with a Purpose" 2011 school Lenten event, and is not satisfied with Council's letter of response. Mr. Hureau submitted two documents: 1) A description of Catholic Social Justice, and 2) a memo outlining his concerns.]

4. **Business Arising from the Minutes**

History of enrolment: The data analysis coordinator for the Department of Education, Ashraf Mahmoud, is preparing a five-year summary of student enrolment at Vanier. Ed will ask Ashraf to also do a comparison with other high schools in the Yukon. When the summary is complete, Ed will present it to School Council. Completion date is presently unknown.

French programming: There is concern among some parents that, at Vanier, there is not adequate follow-up to the feeder schools' grade 5 intensive French program. Currently, students are separated into classes by the Grade 8 French teachers under the direction of the department head. It was suggested that the school look for a way to stream grade 8 students with different levels of French. Students could be assessed by French teachers in grade 7, and class levels could be fine-tuned when the students begin school at Vanier. Kyle suggested that the department head could meet with Council if requested. Ed stated that the French program is presently under review.

School Calendar Changes: Lori resubmitted the seven options with the addition of corresponding semester break dates. The deadline for comments was extended to January 31st, 2013. A survey for the school community has not been developed and will be discussed at this meeting.

5. **Principal's Report**

Ed highlighted items from the Principal's Report (attached).

School Safety Plan: Kyle distributed a copy of the draft school lockdown procedures (attached). It was suggested that the school should do the lockdown drill at the beginning of the school year.

April conference: This conference will be open to staff and partners of Catholic education, as well as the community. Financial support has been secured through the CEAY and the Diocese of Whitehorse (Yukon). Financial support by the YTA is pending.

Additional discussions:

Professional Learning Community (PLC) Training: Ed described how the PLC training allows teachers to explore a topic of interest and improve their own professional practice for the benefit of students. PLCs are built into Vanier's school schedule every second week. This schedule requires the school to provide supervision for bus students every second Friday afternoon during last block.

Locker Checks: School policy allows for locker checks at any time, particularly if administration suspects that a student may have something in their locker which is harmful to themselves and other students. Only three or four lockers have been checked this year, and the general practice is that checks are done with the student present.

6. **Building Advisory Committee Meeting Update**

The Chair reported on five issues which were brought up at the December 14th meeting and which will be addressed through the committee:

- i) *Ventilation in the shop room welding booth* – Costs have risen due to the need for an architect. Tender will go out in January.
- ii) *Small gym stage* – Cost is ~ \$5000 to 6000 – Possible completion during March Break.
- iii) *Floor refurbishing in the office, staff room and three classrooms* – Cost will be ~ \$50,000 – To be completed in 2013.

- iv) *Expansion of a trades wing, cafeteria, or artroom* – Although this project may be longer-term, the committee wanted to bring it to the forefront of discussions – Gord deBruyn will be producing a concept design.
- v) *Instalment of projectors in classrooms and library* – Ed provided an update on this issue: Property Management deals only with emergency repairs and no longer does these kinds of jobs or general maintenance. Therefore, the school will be hiring a contractor out of its operating budget for these instalments. Unitech will be providing a quote.

7. **School Calendar Discussion**

Council has identified that of all the seven proposed options, only Option 2 can accommodate the following criteria:

- i) Term end and start dates should allow for only 2 or 3 days difference between the length of the terms (ie. Option 6 terms have a difference of 9 days) so students are not shortchanged.
- ii) Yukon High Schools are still tied to BC provincial exam dates (particularly in January and June) and the school calendar should take these dates into account. There are presently five exams from Grades 10 to 12 which are mandatory.
- iii) The two-week March Break is beneficial to those who participate in the Arctic Winter Games, and teachers are in favour of the two-week March Break.

Action item: Council has decided on the following course of action:

- i) Invite the school community to provide input via an on-line survey. The survey will include a short description and rider at the beginning, a comment section at the end, and questions which incorporate the following points (see below):
 - a. Length of March Break;
 - b. Calendar year start and end dates; and
 - c. Need for a common calendar for high school and elementary, as well as for Whitehorse and rural communities.
- ii) Post the survey and the Department of Education's seven options on the school website.
- iii) Inform parents of the survey via the website and the school robo-calls.

8. **CEAY Update:**

CEAY has an amended three-year MOU which includes funds to hire a part-time Executive Director (ED) to help implement the strategic plan (10 – 15 hrs/week). The ED contract will be renegotiated every year. The job description is complete and will be posted soon. The position will be advertised in school newsletters and websites, the Sacred Heart Cathedral bulletin, local newspapers, and the CEAY website. John asked who the evaluation committee would be and Terry replied that it was yet to be decided.

9. **Correspondence**

Letter from Kim Solonick – Yukon Women in Trades and Technology (YWITT) - Jamie discussed the previous letter from Ms. Solonick and the Chair confirmed that Ed had responded to her concerns.

Letter from parent – The parent has concerns about: 1) the music program and how the school can retain the present music teacher, 2) necessity of pre-requisite classes, particularly the Grade 8 religion class, and 3) the French program. Paul responded to the parent by encouraging them to talk directly to the principal about these school matters.

Action item: Paul will forward the letter to council members.

10. **Dealing with Guests and Time Limits (in camera)**

Council welcomes and encourages parents, guardians, teachers, students and the general public to come observe council meetings as guests. For guests who want to present an issue at the meeting, Council has decided to implement the following process in order to efficiently and effectively conduct meetings:

- i) Guests should notify the Chair a minimum of one week prior to the meeting date, that they wish to present. At this time, the Guest will let the Chair know their topic and desired outcome.
- ii) Up to two Guest presenters per meeting will be accommodated. Each presenter will have 15 minutes to present and discuss their topic.
- iii) Guest presenters will present after the Principal's Report, and are welcome to stay for the rest of the meeting if they wish.
- iv) This new process will be posted on the VCSS website, along with a Communication Process web (adopted from the draft CKES Council Policy No.: 2012-01) in order to assist individuals on where to direct their concerns.

Action item: Yolande will prepare a summary of this process for the website and posting will be subject to approval by the Chair.

11. Financial Status

John requested a financial update of this Council be available at meetings.

ACTION: Yolande will prepare a summary of Council's financial status to date for this fiscal year and present at the next meeting.

12. School Growth Plan

Guest Presenter, Cynthia Matachuk would like more information on who has been involved in the School Growth Plan and will connect directly with Ed about this. She may also potentially present at the February meeting.

13. Dual School Credits

Guest Presenter, Tjitske van der Eide is wondering why there is such a concern about semester breaks and accommodating dual credit students when there are so few children taking programs at Yukon College (~ 13 students during the 2012-13 school year).

There was a discussion about who benefits from Dual Credits, particularly 1) high-achieving students who take academic courses and want to prepare for post-secondary learning, and 2) at-risk students who benefit long-term from an early introduction to the trades.

Administration recognizes that higher achieving students can likely handle the overlap of courses, and that there is a lot of potential for trades and apprenticeships within the high school system.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00pm.