

Vanier Catholic Secondary School Council

Wednesday, November 28th, 2012

7:30 pm

Minutes

Attendance

Members:

Paul Flaherty

Dianne Tait

John Berg

James Mooney

Terry Prenolso

Yolande Cherepak

School Administration:

Ed Frisson

Kyle Jansen

Guests:

Andy Hureau

Cynthia Matichak

1. Opening Prayer

Council opened the meeting with The Lord's Prayer

Guest, Andy Hureau, handed out a description of his concerns about the speakers at the "Passion with a Purpose" 2011 school Lenten series (attached). He would like an explanation in writing about why secular issues were presented under the guise of a Lenten celebration. He wants to see the social doctrine of the church reflected in the school's choice of Lenten speakers.

Action item: Paul will work with Ed to send a response to Andy which indicates understanding of his concerns and the new approach the school is using to select speakers for the school.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Terry, seconded by John to approve the agenda as presented. Carried

3. Adoption of October 17, 2012 Minutes

Moved by James, seconded by Dianne to approve the minutes as presented. Carried.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

Action item: Kyle will check into posting Council meeting dates on the VCSS website and in the newsletter. He will also look at posting the newsletter on the website.

5. Principal's Report

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

-Same Sex Attraction – Department of Education representatives were also present at the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse workshops. Four representatives from Vanier had attended the Department of Education workshops on this topic.

-Academic Awards – Ed will look to recognize these students’ in the media at the end of the school year, subject to privacy concerns being overcome.

Guest, Cynthia Matichak, has concerns with the Bishop’s policy on same sex attraction, including the wording, and is not comfortable with the policy being on the VCSS website. Paul suggested that Cynthia talk to Bishop Gary since he wrote the document and worked in conjunction with the Department of Education. There was a discussion about: VCSS’ responsibility to follow the Church’s teachings since it is a Catholic school; how the Bishop is the ultimate authority on how the Catholic schools are run; and how this policy is comparable with what other Catholic high schools in Canada are doing.

Cynthia also asked if the Catholic religion curriculum is available, particularly for grades 11 and 12. Ed responded that the current curriculum is about 20 years old and is in the process of being reviewed and updated. They are hoping to finish the grade 8 and 9 reviews by the end of this school year. It was noted that grade 12 students have a choice of four courses for their religious education class credit.

6. Follow up of School Growth Plan & Review, and Handbook

Discussion about higher absenteeism in female students than male, and what may be the reasons. Ed noted that Vanier has the best attendance record of the three high schools in Whitehorse.

7. Review Department of Education Draft Dispute Resolution Policy

Council would like to take a look at F.H. Collins new Dispute Resolution Policy before adopting one.

Action item: Paul will ask F.H. Collins about their policy.

John brought forward the question as to whether or not Council members have liability insurance.

Action item: Paul will ask Lori Choquette if Council has insurance through the Department of Education.

There was also a discussion of the proper chain of communication for parents who have a concern about their child. The school policy requires that communication start with the teacher, then the principal, and move up the line as required. Ed stated that if a parent came to him first, he would be happy to listen to them.

8. Align on Code of Conduct & Code of Ethics for Council

Discussion on possible conflicts of interest: a member is married to a teacher or administrator; a member benefits financially (ie. through a business) from paid activities. Potential conflicts of interest would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and the member may have to leave the room for that part of the discussion. Dianne suggested that all new council members should receive a copy of the codes.

Moved by John, seconded by Terry to adopt the Code of Conduct & Code of Ethics for Council as presented.

9. **CEAY Update**

Dianne gave the following update: The first meeting will be on December 11th at 7:00pm at Vanier. The Executive Members are: Monica Lauer (CKES), Mark Shumelda (CKES), Terry Prenoslo (VCSS), and Dianne Tait (CKES).

All council members from the three schools are members of CEAY (15 members).

Other members of the CEAY Executive are: Bishop Gary Gordon; Administrators (Ed Frison – VCSS, Marj Hlady – CKES, Ted Huppe – HFES); Sr. Religious Ed. Coordinator, Daryl Sheppard; and Superintendent Mike Woods.

10. **Other**

• **Letter from Parent**

A parent expressed concern to the Council about several issues including the school music program, the French program, Father Claude's departure, and the 'religious tone of the school'. It was noted that the first point of contact for this parent should have been the school principal.

Ed addressed the programming issues. Due to declining enrolment in the concert band program last year, this year the school has looked at alternative music programming including the addition of rock band and music appreciation classes. Enrolment has risen from 15 to 40 students. If a student is looking for the band concert experience they can get credit if they attend the All-City Band practices and concert.

Regarding the French program, Ed stated that Vanier cannot maintain two streams of French and can only offer post-intensive French classes which accommodate the elementary students from their two feeder schools (CKES and HFES). French teachers have been in training for two years to prepare to teach the post-intensive French classes. It was suggested that Vanier explore getting a French school monitor to assist with the program. Ed noted that Vanier does not have a mandate to be a dual-tract school.

With regard to the parent's concern about Father Claude's departure from Vanier, Council thanked Father Claude for his efforts in the last school newsletter and staff will be thanking him for his efforts over the years at their Christmas celebration. The change in chaplains at the school was a mutual decision between Father Claude and Bishop Gary.

With regard to the 'religious tone' of the school, the Episcopal Corporation (Bishop) works with the Administrators to define the religious activities within the school in accordance with the Catholic faith.

Action item: Ed and Paul will draft a letter of response to the parent.

• **Status of discussions re. F.H. Collins gym closure and impact on Vanier.**

Mike Woods responded to a request from Paul on the status of a solution for the closure of the F.H. Collins gymnasium. He stated that they continue to look at options including potentially using Vanier facilities F.H. Collins' sporting activities during user group hours in the evenings. He indicated that there will be no disruption of Vanier student and staff use of the gymnasium particularly during school hours when it is the busiest.

- Bishop Gary will be attending the next meeting on December 12th.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm