

**St. Rita Advisory Council
Minutes of 1st Meeting
October 14th, 2021**

Attendees:

Melissa Adamo, Michelle Assenza, Inez Bertao, Nicole Cedrone, Lauren Chicorli, Lisa D'Amico, Linda DiGeronimo, Suzy Falzone, Lucy Ferreira, Steve Gardiman, Paul Gastaldin, Lesley McGougan, Victoria Miele, Anna Patafio, Francesca Petryshun, Jessica Pruitt, Steve Quartarone, Tina Recine, Charlene Savory, Mike Savory, Charlene Smith, Eileen Terry, Sheri Thiffault

Regrets:

Maria Castrucci, Jessica Watt

Welcome

- Mr. Gastaldin and Nikki Cedrone open meeting at 7:04pm
- Welcome to the first council meeting for the 2021/2022 school year

Nomination and Voting Session for 2021/2022 Council Executive Members

- Mr. Gastaldin led the nomination and voting process for executive members.

RESULTS:

Chair: Nicole Cedrone

Co-Chair: Michelle Assenza

Secretary: Victoria Miele

Treasurer: Suzy Falzone

OAPCE Rep: TBD

Parish Rep: Lucy Ferreira

Community Rep: Charlene Smith

Teacher Reps: Maria Castrucci & Lesley McGougan

Total of **TBD** Voting Members, plus the **6** Executive, plus **2** Teacher Reps =

TOTAL OF TBD VOTING MEMBERS

Land Acknowledgment

- Mr. Quartarone led the acknowledgment

Opening Prayer

- Nikki led us in prayer

Opening Remarks

- Nikki mentions to remember that our role as an advisory/parent council is to support the school and staff. We are not here to speak about personal issues, such as individual student or in-class teacher conflicts. We aim for the betterment of initiatives within our school and surrounding community. We run our meetings with respect and note that even if you opted to be a non-voting member this year, you still have a say/a voice/an opinion on school matters and topics brought forth in these meetings
- Each member of the new executive team introduces themselves

Principal and Vice Principal's Report: Mr. Gastaldin & Mr. Quartarone

- Mr. Gastaldin thanks members of council whom reached out to him over the past few months, during a difficult personal time

Staffing/Reorganization

- The school had a pre-September reorganization, which took place at the end of August. It was a great plan which divided students up nicely
- Additional changes were needed for the September reorganization, as there were 40 students who moved to full remote. With these changes, we ended up losing 1 classroom, but the shift created a 0.5 FDK classroom (max 15 students) which brought down the size of the current FDK classes
- The class size averages in FDK are 19 students. Primary average is 20.17 students per classroom and junior/intermediate is 25.4 per classroom
- Sincerest thanks to all of the parents for their cooperation and flexibility with regards to classroom changes, as we know it can be difficult. A big thank you goes to Mr. Quartarone and the staff as well, for helping to coordinate this reorganization, as there are a lot of mitigating circumstances that affect student placement and/or movement
- Depending upon changes in numbers for students returning from remote to in-person, there may be another reorganization set for the end of February 2022, as directed by the School Board. This was communicated by the Board to all parents
- New staff members include:
 - Mrs. Gallant – our new 0.5 Assistant Secretary, replacing Mrs. Egan, whom retired in June
 - Mr. Ariganello – Grade 5-6 teacher
 - Ms. Anton – FSL/Planning Time – LTO replacing Mdme. Magnaldo who is on sick leave
 - Ms. Salmon – 0.5 ERW, afternoons

Sept 30th – Day of Truth and Reconciliation

- The school purchased buttons for all students from Grades 1-8, in recognition of the terrible tragedies that occurred in the past with our Indigenous children and families. It is important that we educate our students on this so that they are not forgotten and that something like this will never happen again
- Throughout the week of Sept 27th, we used the announcements in the mornings as an opportunity to reflect on this history
- Classes ran their own activities to acknowledge, reflect and highlight the importance of the day

Picture Day – Thursday, November 18th

- Edge Imaging will once again be doing our school pictures, which are scheduled for Thursday, November 18th
- Retakes and grad photos will be taken in the new year
- We are currently completing our Grad Composite, from last year's grad class pictures, which were taken in early July. There has been a delay with this, as the rep we usually use at Edge Imaging had left unexpectedly

Sacramental Dates

- Fr. Nosan has just recently given us some extremely tight timelines for dates
 - Reconciliation:
 - THIS WEEK! Yesterday (Weds. Oct 13th) was one date, and today was the other date (Thurs. Oct 14th from 3:30pm-5pm). This was for the group that missed it last fall
 - First Communion:
 - We have no dates as of yet for First Communion. Should get them from Father this week. Might be one Saturday in November. This is for the grade 2 group that missed it last year (therefore current grade 3's)
 - Confirmation:
 - This is for the grade 7 group that missed it last year (therefore current grade 8's):
 - Weds. Oct 27th at 6:30pm and 8:00pm
 - Fri. Oct 29th at 6:30pm and 8:00pm

- Mon. Nov 1st at 7:00pm
- The church is allowing 11 people per family into the church for Confirmation. The 11 people include the Confirmandi and their sponsor

QUESTION: Does Lucy (our council's parish rep) have to be there on those nights?

- She should try to be there, but note that it is not a requirement of her position

QUESTION: Will each student be assigned a date and time for Confirmation?

- Yes, hopefully tomorrow, the school will send out the communication regarding your child's date/time

Terry Fox Run

- Thank you to Mrs. Gabrielse for organizing our Terry Fox event, which took place on Fri. Oct 8th
- Donations were accepted online, and currently sit around \$700. The portal is still open for any further donations
- Students walked with their classes around the school, and some of the older grades did a neighbourhood walk, at various times, to maintain social distancing

New Math Curriculum

- There is a 4-year math strategy, which aims to:
 - Improve student outcomes in math,
 - Solve everyday math problems,
 - Prepare for the society of tomorrow,
 - Develop foundational ideas earlier (i.e., some concepts are taught a year earlier than previously),
 - Use grade 8 as more of a consolidation year for all concepts
- The most significant change is access:
 - The curriculum can be printed via .doc/.pdf
 - It is also now accessed digitally (via a Digital Curriculum Platform), which means it is more interactive for the teachers, as they can use pop ups that will help identify link examples/other information
- Similar to last year, all schools are following a 'Scope and Sequence' that is consistent across the Board (whether remote or in-class), to ensure a seamless transition for those students who might want to switch learning modes during the re-organization in the new year

Transportation/Busing

- When possible, students that are taking a bus will sit with either their sibling (first) or a classmate of the same cohort (second). There may be a few instances where the bus capacity does not allow for this arrangement and students may need to sit with each other, even if not in the same cohort
- Note that even if busses don't look full, it could be because there are kids whom are away. All kids registered to take a bus, must be allocated a seat - there is no courtesy seating this year
- The shortage of bus drivers has impacted busing times, especially in the PM. Some busses have actually been doing multiple runs, and STOPR is aware that buses continue to run behind schedule
- Also, as an FYI, it is Bus Driver Appreciation Day on Weds. Oct 20th

School

- This year, the school's focus continues to be the well-being and nurturing of our children, as we continue to navigate the pandemic
- While there is always a focus on curriculum, there is even greater attention to the mental health of not only the students, but our staff and families alike
- We continue to ask for patience and understanding as we can all appreciate the stresses on families, staff and students

- Many social justice activities are occurring or starting up again, like the Thanksgiving food drive, the Terry Fox Run and Day of Truth and Reconciliation, as we continue to focus on the positive contributions, we can all make towards our communities
- The school continues to cohort students in zones at recess
- Days in which the field is too wet, have been challenging. A pavement only recess for the whole school was only a one-day trial, as it simply didn't work. Therefore, some provisions have been made, such as: 20-minute outdoor pavement intervals, or having Grades 1-4 outside in the AM and Grades 4/5-8 outside in the PM
- Outdoor break times continue to be scheduled by classes throughout the day for students to get breaks from mask-wearing and to get some fresh air
- We have also once again applied for the 'Experiential Learning Grant', which is for \$2000, and if granted, can be used towards great experiences for the kids. Last year we allocated the money towards Scientists in the School
- We will also be asking our community to please let their children know to keep their Pokémon cards at home. They will no longer be allowed on school property, as there have been issues with playing/trading/etc, of these cards, which will no longer be tolerated

COVID-19 Update

- We continue to monitor and remind our students of proper hygiene and physical distancing in line with Peel Public Health Guidelines
- Masking has continued in class, and we have allocated an isolation room, used for pre-assessment and screening, where students/staff can go if they are showing any symptoms
- If there is a class dismissal, the standard timeline for this dismissal is 10 days from the time the cohort was last together
- If there are students who test positive on a bus, then the bus cohorts are to be dismissed
- Siblings of students should stay home based on Peel Public Health recommendations, but are not required to isolate within the same home - however should avoid close contact with the student, as much as possible. Fully vaccinated siblings, or previously positive siblings, are exempt from the sibling protocol
- Peel Public Health defines an 'Outbreak' as 2 or more lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 with an epidemiological link, through 14 days

QUESTION: If there is a case in your child's classroom, but your child is fully vaccinated, do they have to stay home?

- We believe so. It might only be for 24 hours, though. Due to the fact that we haven't had any cases in our school this year, we aren't necessarily sure. There is always Peel Public Health protocol to follow, so unless a situation comes up at St. Rita, we don't necessarily know all of the specific rules

Outside Food

- We continue to have parents drop off lunches for students during the day, however we would like to remind everyone that due to COVID-19 restrictions, there is no outside food allowed in the school. Students should be bringing a lunch with them to school every day

School Council Chair Meeting

- There is a meeting for our School Council Co-Chairs on Thursday, October 21st at 6:30pm. Mr. Gastaldin/Mr. Quartarone will send the reminder email, along with the zoom link, to Nikki and Michelle

Parking

- Please remember that the parking lot is reserved for staff parking only, as we are not only St. Rita's staff, but St. Leonard's staff as well. You can use the Kiss & Ride, but please don't double park

anywhere within the lot, as parking control tends to be onsite, and it causes unnecessary congestion

Committees & Updates –

Budget Committee

- Every year, alongside the Treasurer (Suzy Falzone), there is a budget sub committee whom helps allocate money within the advisory council's budget
- Nikki asked for volunteers; thus, the budget committee is comprised of:
 - Michelle Assenza, Nikki Cedrone, Suzy Falzone, Lucy Ferreira and Lesley McGougan
- This committee will arrange to have a zoom meeting prior to the next council meeting, and present the proposed 2021/2022 budget to council
- There is a balance of \$20,394.79 in the school council account, as last year we only did the Domino's pizza fundraising initiative, and there is definitely money to be spent if the school needs anything

QUESTION: Can Mr. Gastaldin or Mr. Quartarone please let Suzy know if the teachers or school needs anything, prior to the budget meeting? This way the items can be line-listed

- Yes, the teachers are being notified this week to identify items they may need for their grades

QUESTION: What if parents have ideas for the budget committee, when should they be discussed, or should they be emailed to the office? For example, maybe a revamp of the JK yard?

- Any ideas can be brought forth within meetings, however as noted above, Mr. Gastaldin and Mr. Quartarone will speak to staff about their primary needs, and we will take it from there in order of importance

Parish Update

- All updates regarding sacraments are listed above under 'Sacramental Dates'

Fundraising Committee/Lunch Update

- Each year there is a fundraising committee that meets to discuss options for school/community fundraising initiatives. Last year, due to COVID-19, the only fundraising initiative that took place was a Domino's pizza deal, where \$5 from every \$20 order placed on a specific day by a St. Rita family, was donated back to our school. It went well, as we raised \$890
- The lunch program will be talked about within the committee, as Linda has received some information from the past participating restaurants and how they have tried to pivot their offerings. Note that we are unable to run our usual lunch program because, as per above, outside food is not allowed within the school at the moment
- Nikki asked for volunteers; thus, the fundraising committee is comprised of:
 - Inez Bertao, Linda DiGeronimo, Suzy Falzone, Victoria Miele and Sheri Thiffault

OAPCE Information

- Nothing to report

ProGrant 2022

- The ProGrant can indeed be done virtually this year, as we did not do anything for this last year
- Nikki asked for volunteers; thus, the ProGrant committee is comprised of:
 - Michelle Assenza, Lauren Chicorli, Lesley McGougan, Jessica Pruitt and Eileen Terry

Other

- Every year, the council earmarks money for families within our community who may need some financial assistance due to unforeseen circumstances such as, house fires, their child in the hospital, etc. Nikki informed council that in the summer, one student from St. Rita, whose mom is on council, underwent brain surgery, and therefore on behalf of council, the family was provided a cheque for \$250 to help with expenses. This family has expressed their thanks to council for the thoughtful gesture

QUESTION: Is there an update on vaccines for students in grade 7/8, not regarding COVID-19, but regarding their regular scheduled HPV shots?

- We have no update on this at the moment, as we are unsure if they are even allowed within the school to administer any vaccine at this point

QUESTION: Will St. Leonard's School be at St. Rita's for this entire school year?

- Yes. It took them some time to get the proper insurance and their entire porta-pack wing is being torn down to make way for an extension on the school. They are estimating that they will be back in their school for Sept 2022

QUESTION: Will there be any school sports teams this year?

- We just received a memo this evening, and it looks like some sports teams will indeed be happening, but there are various restrictions and pieces that need to be put in place, prior to this happening. It looks like basketball, volleyball and track and field might be the only sports taking place, for the intermediate grades, not junior. There will be contact tracing protocols, they will only be playing one other team, there will be no tournaments or spectators, etc. All of these details will be outlined to parents once we read through the memo

QUESTION: Some of the intermediate students have been asking about clubs like the social justice one. Will they be taking place, even if kids are from different classrooms?

- In the memo mentioned above for the sports teams, there is also a portion speaking to clubs like rosary, chess and social justice. We need to review it and then communication will be sent out, however they might be able to take place during lunch and after school with masked students, contact tracing, social distancing and hygiene etiquette

QUESTION: Will the kids be dressing up for Halloween at school?

- We have not received communication from the Board, as of yet. We assume that students will not be allowed to have costume masks on, as they will also need to be masked due to COVID-19. More information and communication to families will follow

- Tuesdays and Wednesdays don't work for council meetings, so they will take place on Thursday's
- Meeting concluded at 8:05pm

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, November 25th at 7:00pm