

## St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School Council Meeting Minutes

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Meeting Date – November 12, 2019

Meeting Time – 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Adriano Perusin, Principal  
Donna Vaillancourt  
Rocio Farrell  
Phaedra Renaud  
Laura Francis  
Michelle Sparrock-Henderson  
Karin Kacvinsky  
Kevin Wells  
Manju Rose  
Angela Lombardi

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### MEETING MINUTES

#### **Opening prayer - Adriano**

All council members joined together in opening prayer.

#### **STA Social Worker – Mr. Michael Assiamah**

Michael was invited to speak to the council to explain his role at our school and his efforts to aid in the objective to focus on student well-being. Michael holds the dual roles of Social Worker and Attendance Counsellor for STA. In addition to our school, Michael also supports the Elementary Schools in our area. He noted that there is a new addition to our school staff named Ashley Kinnon who offers additional support as a Child Youth Care professional (and is also MSW Master of Social Work).

Discussion as follows regarding Michael's role and parent input:

- Works with staff to remove obstacles and provide a community to support student welfare and comfort.
- Books appointments with students as required.
- Monitors attendance and performs outreach to students with prolonged absence from school (15+ consecutive days). Attendance has always been a priority relative to

student welfare and it is also important in terms of school funding since the School Board claws back funding for students who are not consistently in attendance.

- Works with Oakville Trafalgar CAPIS (Child & Adolescent Inpatient Unit) to monitor our students in crisis with the transition from inpatient care, facilitating re-entry into our school.
- Monitors and tracks absences with priority codes – ie. Code C for 15+ consecutive days absent.
- Works with parents to obtain informed consent for students who need assistance while providing advocacy for both parents and students.

There was a continuation of last meeting discussion that the number one priority is to make our kids feel comfortable and to let them know their safety is paramount with an emphasis to make them feel good about coming to school. There has been outreach to all staff in an effort to engage them in this continued goal and the school offers new and ongoing support programs such as: RAM Mentors; Best Buddies; Safetalk, Thrive (Mental Health Awareness Leaders); Fun Fit Friday; Speedy the Therapy Dog, Ping Pong; After School Weight Room, etc.

There was continued discussion about the idea of outreach to all students to teach about mental health and mindfulness to help cope with daily stress and anxiety. There was also a conversation about asking students for input on how to approach these issues. A School Climate Survey will be conducted in upcoming months and we will compare to previous surveys.

### **Ms. Helen Dennis – Librarian**

Helen explained that there will be some changes to the library to make the space more inviting and welcoming. We have to balance the goals of creating a warm gathering space with the need for quiet space. We have looked at other libraries in local Colleges and Universities for ideas.

The library tab on the STA website has been updated and Helen took the council through some of the amazing resources available. Students can log in at home or on campus using their Aquinas Gmail and access databases that are accurate and reliable such as: Britannica, Cavendish, EBSCO, Facts on File, Gale, Infobase, JSTOR, Learn360+Classroom Video, Maclean's Archive, Naxos Music Library, Questia (IB access only), Salem Press, and Universalis. The website provides such things as book summaries with accompanying articles with site sourcing. Students are encouraged to use this vetted data base for work at STA and preparation for College and University.

### **School Signage update**

We have applied and are awaiting a permit for an electric sign out front at the parking entrance (near score board). This permit is also tied to a storage facility for which the building materials have arrived. Apparently the hold-up is partially due to the need to remove some trees in order to put up storage shed. Also there are some homeowners in the area who are opposed to the light from a sign in their neighbourhood. There is currently an open permit with the town and Mr. Perusin will reach out to the facilities manager to get an update.

### **STA Cares Development**

The fund currently has around \$11,000 and we gather \$10/semester for civvies days. These monies will continue to be used to provide assistance to some of our students and families with lunch cards; gift cards at Christmas; Halton Food for Thought. Suggestions for other donations are welcomed.

### **School Generated Funds**

Ideas are under consideration to decide where the surplus of SGF funds will be allocated. Some of the potential expenditures currently being assessed are such things as: create an Apple Lab for approximately \$70,000; purchase a new stack for weight room for approximately \$10,000; purchase more stand up desks; create some warm, welcoming space in the library; pending school sign \$25,000-\$50,000. Other suggestions are welcome.

### **Other**

There was a discussion around the current rule for all black shoes. Mr. Perusin will update us next meeting on his follow up with Bishop Reding to gather insight into their shoe policy.

**Next meeting: Wednesday December 11 – 7pm**