

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date – October 8, 2019

Meeting Time – 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mr. Adriano Perusin, Principal
Ms. Adriana Rerecich, Chaplain
Donna Vaillancourt
Rocio Farrell
Phaedra Renaud
Vilma Martinez de Hoz
Laura Francis
Michelle Sparrock-Henderson
Adriana Rubach
Lynda Hendriks
Karin Kacvinsky
Kevin Wells
Manju Rose
Kylie Dillon-Alcasid

MEETING MINUTES

1. Opening prayer - Adriana

All council members joined together in opening prayer.

2. Honoring of the Land – Adriana

3. Introductions and attendance – Adriano

4. Review of Catholic School Council Code of Ethics – All

5. Selection/Election of Council Positions:

Donna Vaillancourt agreed to be our Chair for the 2019-20 school year with Phaedra Renaud and Manju Rose as Co-Chairs. Vilma Martinez de Hoz agreed to be our Parish Representative and Michelle Sparrock-Henderson Recording Secretary.

4. Objectives for the Catholic School Council 2019-2020

Mr. Perusin explained 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. To this end we are engaging in spirit days, civvies days, and even small things such as the consistency of keeping the same locker throughout the 4 years at STA.

5. 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.

Mental Health – a priority

The school currently engages in many areas to facilitate good mental health in our students with such things as: RAM Mentors, Safetalk, Raiders Thrive (Mental Health Awareness Student Leaders), Friday Morning Workout Club, Speedy the Therapy Dog, Yoga, etc. There are many resources for students to access.

There was a discussion around the concern that many kids will not reach out to any of these resources if they are in trouble. Many students do not really want to ask for help and don't always realize when they need it. There is a need to be proactive in bringing help to the classrooms. It was agreed that consideration should be given to introducing the CBT triangle (cognitive therapy) in class to help teach students how to cope with daily stress and learn to improve anxiety. There was also discussion about the speaker Mike Stroh (Founder & Director of Starts With Me) and the need to have more speakers like him speak to kids and parents about overcoming mental health issues. Discussion about the potential for webinars or on-line talks since it is difficult to get parents and students to come out. Mr. Perusin agreed to invite Patricia Connor (Chief Social Worker with Board) to speak with the parent council about next steps. It was also decided that the students should give us input on how to approach mental health training and assistance.

Uniform Development

The rugby shirts are a big hit. One request was to consider a school cardigan and an IB hoodie or sweater.

There was a discussion around the current rule for all black shoes. Other schools in our area are allowing black with white shoes. Mr. Perusin will reach out to the Principals of these schools to get feedback if the black and white policy is working.

Decision has been made to continue to allow shorts in the winter as long as the uniform rules are followed.

Faith Formation Building

All agreed that we need to do more with parents and students to help others in the community. Saint Patrick's in Hamilton has a soup kitchen and this is a high need red zone area. Starting in February St. Andrew is going to cook a meal in Oakville once a month on a Friday night and deliver it next day to Saint Patrick's. Since our STA kitchen is deemed a commercial kitchen, we will ask for volunteers to help in our kitchen.

We also discussed the potential to arrange trips to Good Shepherd in Hamilton to serve meals. Three trips are also being organized to go to Good Shepherd in Toronto.

My School Day App

We are trying to move students and parents and teachers to this app. By next semester all announcements will be on this app. Encouraging teachers to move here – at this time google classroom attaches to this app.

STA Cares Development

The fund currently has around \$8000 and we continue to gather \$10/semester for civvies days. In the past these monies were used to provide lunch cards for some of our students and surplus donated to Halton Food for Thought and to help kids in need in our community.

Other discussion

In the previous year parents purchased the cap and gown for graduating students. For future graduations consideration to be given to purchasing the caps but recycling the gowns as it is wasteful to keep them.

EQAO scores will be discussed in future meetings after the data has been tabulated and compared to demographics at other schools.

Next meeting: Tuesday November 12 – 7pm