

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

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Meeting Date – December 11, 2019

Meeting Time – 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Adriano Perusin, Principal  
Donna Vaillancourt  
Laura Francis  
Michelle Sparrock-Henderson  
Kevin Wells  
Angela Lombardi  
Lynda Hendriks  
Vimla Martinez de Hoz

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### MEETING MINUTES

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

All council members joined together in opening prayer.

#### **Aryana Zarandi – Student Council President – general discussion**

Aryana was invited to speak to the council to explain the initiatives and role of the student council to engage students and make school a better place. The council is working with such organizations as: Halton Food for Thought in our community; nationally with Coast to Coast Against Cancer Foundation; and Internationally with Me to We.

The council schedules 1 event per month to raise funds such as October Pink Day. Aryana noted that our school raised \$2325.00 which was matched by the Canadian Cancer Society. Total of \$4650.00 will go towards Breast Cancer Research. The council provides a vehicle for students to use their voices with surveys and other outreach.

Aryana explained that the Inside Ride was difficult in terms of engagement since the rules require 15 teams with 6 team members and a minimum entry of \$50 each. Instead may move to Relay for Life this year.

Beginning February through June our commercial kitchen will be used on Fridays by St. Andrew to cook meals that will be delivered Saint Patrick's in Hamilton. Student will be given volunteer hours for their help.

Quick discussion that during exams students will now be required to wear school uniform instead of civvies clothes. Decision was made to ensure students are focused on exams without worrying about what to wear.

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.

### **Andrea Seaver – Public Health Nurse, Halton Region**

Andrea was invited to make a presentation to the council on: Talking to your teen about Vaping and Cannabis. Andrea provided 2 handouts which will be uploaded to the STA website and a separate email to parents will be considered.

### **Vaping**

- There have now been up to 50 deaths in the US associated with vaping and the assumption is that there are potentially harmful chemicals in these products that are damaging lungs. At least 80 known chemicals have been identified in vaping products.
- Long-term consequences of vaping are unknown and Government Legislation has not kept up - so vaping products are currently readily available to our kids (legal age to purchase is 19). It is believed that the second hand vaping cloud is equally dangerous.
- The products are attractive to kids with various smells and flavours and many see it as a cool thing to do and feel peer pressure. The Canadian Pediatric Society and the Canadian Cancer Foundation have called for banning flavours. Health Canada has announced that effective January 2020 advertising will be banned in public places and on-line. The Minister of Health is now asking for all hospitals to submit reports of vaping related illness so they can begin tracking and gather data.
- Some products contain nicotine and even those that say 'nicotine free' may contain nicotine since it is virtually unregulated. In many cases the nicotine content is much higher than a cigarette which makes addiction more likely.
- The tobacco companies own the vaping brands and have been quite clever in the advertising used to reach our kids and the way the products are disguised to look like such things as: pens, magic marker, USB flash drive, water flavor additives, etc. The latest development is sweatshirts and hoodies called vape wear.

## **Cannabis**

- “When I was a kid...” doesn’t really work when talking with your kids as the cannabis today is a whole new ballgame. The THC - mind-altering chemical that gives those who use it a high - is now 15-30% compared to 30 years ago at 3-5%.
- Cannabis is not a benign drug but an addictive substance with a risk of developing dependence 1 in 6 among those who start using it. It is especially risky to our teens as the brain is not fully developed until the age of 25.
- Regular use among adolescents is associated with an increased risk of experiencing long term psychotic symptoms (changes in thoughts, feelings and behaviours), especially when there is a family history of psychotic disorders. Some studies have suggested that cannabis may also increase the risk of anxiety and depression over time and can affect: ability to learn; concentration and attention; anxiety; reduced reaction time; and increased risk behaviour.
- Parents are encouraged to speak to their kids about Cannabis and to watch for: declining school work and grades; abrupt changes in friends; abnormal health issues or sleeping habits; deteriorating relationships with family; less openness and honesty.

**Next meeting: Tuesday February 4th – 7pm**