

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

---

Meeting Date – December 8, 2020

Meeting Time – 7:00 pm – Microsoft Team Meeting

Members Present: Adriano Perusin, Principal  
Adriana Rerecich  
Michelle Sparrock-Henderson  
Kevin Wells  
Phaedra Renaud  
Kyle Dillon-Alcasid  
Angela Lombardi  
Manju Rose  
Ciara De J??  
Judy-Ann??  
Unknown???

---

### MEETING MINUTES

#### **Opening prayer and Chaplains Report - Adriana**

All council members joined in opening Prayer and Honoring the Land.

Advent Service will be pre-recorded and released to community next Monday. Students are putting together a virtual Christmas production with caroling and a dance number so they can give a Christmas message to residents in long term care. They will record and send the file to several long-term care facilities.

Student council is also doing a gingerbread decorating contest next Thursday. They are also going to do a drive through for donations – will let us know by Monday what they are asking for.

Continue to post Raiders Thrive videos on YouTube – last week talked about the monotony of the school day and how events are not happening the way they usually do. Video talks about how to break the monotony safely.

### **Covid update**

Thankfully, we have had no cases recently so have had little contact with Department of Health. Very few issues within our building as students are following all protocols and teachers are reminded to model the rules.

Discussion about opening windows to get air circulation in classrooms. Most of the building windows do open and teachers are encouraged to do so. Some classrooms on inside of the building have no access to window. Hepa Filters are changed regularly, and standards are extremely high, so our building is in excellent shape in terms of air quality.

### **Quadmester 2 update**

Transitioned to quadmester 2 and midterms coming up in a few weeks. Reinforcing with staff to focus on communication with parents as much as possible to keep them up to date if students are having problems. Some are struggling as Christmas approaches – November is a long month and daylight savings – have all brought on stress and anxiety.

Quad 2 ends at the end of January. Marks will be based on culminating and assignments with no exams.

Discussion that there needs to be teacher/parent communication regardless of how well student is doing. Also discussed the need for teachers to provide students with feedback on assignments and quizzes with clarity on breakdown of their marks, mistakes made, etc. Discussions ongoing at the board to discern how teachers are marking and if assessments have been fair or overly generous.

There is a message going out to parents and students for grade 9 Math EQO. There will be a trial run on-line which will not count towards mark.

Virtual academic support – still working on this to improve it. Lots of kids do not want to talk to someone who isn't their teacher and some subjects do not warrant.

### **Building initiatives**

The weight room is almost complete and looks great. We added some new equipment and some extensions of existing equipment are still to come. Department head of Physical Education is taking a lead on this to create a great environment for the students and staff.

Spent approximately \$20,000 to purchase 75 new chrome books in anticipation that there could be a full lockdown in the future - which would move all students to Cohort C.

Doing some aesthetics in the building with new signage that graphic designer is creating. Also ordered 20 new frames to showcase some amazing student artwork.

Larger initiative for green room #306 where our printers are housed – laser printer, 3D printer, t-shirt press. This room has not been used effectively because of venting issues which we are trying to problem solve. Bringing in an engineer to ensure we can access roof with vents or move down to first floor near auto room. Put in proposal to facilities manager/senior administration and awaiting approval.

Purchased a dozen new Guitars to replace damaged ones.

### **School promotions and transition for next year and numbers coming into STA**

Our number of students is currently down to approximately 1170 enrolled. There are currently 4 feeder schools to STA - St Vincent, St Luke's, St. Dominics and St Nicholas. We have a large grade 12 cohort of over 300 students leaving this year and these feeder schools only have roughly 140-150 students coming to our school. Hoping to add with students for IB, and public schools to help compensate for this deficit. At this point not sure if our number overall will be up or down next year.

Discussion about potential of attracting French immersion students to our school.

Also need to focus on feeder schools in areas where high schools are over-capacity. Maybe consider a pickup spot where students are bussed down from north of Oakville.

Also need to focus on identified students with IEP's as our school has a targeted approach to individual students versus some schools that only have one size fits all.

Also need to focus on our tech courses such as auto as some schools such as OT do not offer.

Looking to add to our IB program such as another language back into the program (Spanish or Italian) and Business Management.

AP has one-off courses so there are preliminary discussions about the idea of creating one-off IB Certificates – ie. Certificate in Biology.

### **SHSM (Specialist High Skills Major) programs starting**

Our school currently offers SHSM in Health Care and ICT Computer Science programs.

Quite a few of our staff are interested in adding more SHSM programs such as: sports management, sports leadership, woodworking/manufacturing, law, and auto. (We had planned a dual credit with mohawk for auto this year, but it was cancelled due to Covid - looking for next year.)

### **Representation Matters committee**

We have a group of students who are working on inclusivity and respect for all students. Have been working with a group with 3 girls leading with 2 staff members. A survey was sent out yesterday to determine how the school has dealt with contentious issues such as gender, race, etc. The students put together the questions and the research department adjusted and sent out. This survey will show how kids perceive the school and how we address these issues.

We will take the learnings from what we are seeing in the world to ensure every voice is included and every person is at the table. Will share results at next meeting.

### **Messaging**

Communications Department is looking for messaging to send out to students and parents prior to Christmas break – to ensure we all follow Covid protocols during the 2 weeks off. Student council will be doing posters, tiktok videos, etc.

Parents were asked to email ideas for reinforcing messaging to students and parent community.

### **Graduation for grade 12**

Adriano has met with Principals of Loyola and HT to discuss graduation this year. We are all in a holding pattern at this point but assuming there will be another virtual grad like last year. Trying to keep consistency with 3 Oakville schools but awaiting further direction from the board.

Have not even done student photos at this point. May have to ask Pegasus to rent a space in Oakville and set up appointments (since cannot come in building). Suggestion that we also consider using empty schools for photos.

Parents encouraged to email any links for suggestions on technology ideas that were done last June at other schools to enhance the graduation experience.

### **Donations**

Have donated approximately \$3000 from STA care fund. Purchased grocery gift cards for families in need. Saved another \$3000 to cover Easter, etc. Contacted families by email so they know it is coming.

**Parish rep update – Ciara**

Spoke to a few churches and they want to let us know we need to register ahead of time for Christmas mass since churches are only allowed 30% capacity. Masses will also be live streamed.

Father Con at St. Andrew Church sends out a letter every week and suggestion that STA broadcast it too. Adriana will reach out to Father Con. Adriana will let us know what they are looking for regarding gift card donations this year.

**Next meeting: TBC**