

HHM School Council Meeting

November 13, 2018

Business Arising from October meeting

New council representatives

- new teacher representative
 - Jamie Parsons
- new student representatives
 - Jack Brown
 - Erin Lee

Minutes from October 16th meeting

- Jean Harding made a motion to approve the minutes
- Sheldon Barry seconded the motion
- Minutes approved

Prom discussion/communication strategy

- Update provided by Sheldon Barry
 - met with student council
 - no decision made yet for the 2020 graduating class
 - for the 2019 graduating class, it has been proposed that no formal dinner will take place
 - Date: June 27, 2019
 - a meet and greet will take place between 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm (location to be determined)
 - avoids tendering for amounts over \$10,000.
 - decorating will be focussed on the meet and greet location
 - Fundraiser will no longer be required (\$100 ticket prior to Christmas)

 - a Safe Grad for 8:00 pm to 12:00 am (with some flexibility to go later) has been proposed for the 2019 graduating class
 - there has already been some work towards this event done by parents
 - January - a message will be sent out to parents to form a committee
 - awards will happen at Safe Grad

 - motion made by Colin McNeil to go forward with the proposal for the 2019 prom
 - seconded by Kelly Brewer-Balch
 - approved

The Quality of Life survey discussion has been moved to the next meeting as the website was down

The School Development Report is yet to be approved, Sheldon Barry will forward when available and discussion to follow at the next meeting after receipt

- the plan for the last school year will be forwarded by Sheldon Barry to Council members
- It was explained to the Council that the external review involves a committee of people interviewing staff, students and evaluating data and the school 5-year model and the quality of life survey.

New Business

Guidance/Mental Health discussion

Boyd Perry/Julia Warren were in attendance to discuss their role dealing with Mental Health and anxiety issues at Holy Heart

- mental health concerns are the number one concern for schools across the country (higher than attendance and academics)
- the campaigns for the removal of the stigma attached to mental health has helped, however how to do that has been left to individual schools
- a very serious and significant task
- grossly underfunded
- guidance counsellor to student ratio is 1 to 500 within Holy Heart
 - this number varies significantly from area to area (population driven)
 - no firm data on ratios across the province, but the ratio at Holy Heart is likely to be similar to other high schools in the province
- A comparison to an Ontario school (9 - 12) with a population of 1500 was offered to explore the differences
 - guidance and counselling department consist of 5 counsellors with a full-time secretary with a child youth worker, a _____ and a _____. **Blanks to be filled in by Boyd Perry/Julia Warren, please!**
 - in Ontario, the counsellors are not responsible for psycho-educational assessment or student support services.
 - disparity in roles and responsibilities is significant
 - 280 Holy Heart students currently receive services
 - diagnosis of mental health or learning disorder
 - very little time for proactive efforts
 - both guidance counsellors at Holy Heart are booking appointments 2 weeks in advance
- How is anxiety dealt with in the school environment?
 - making the initial recommendation for diagnosis/supports
 - making sure any supports are in place
 - primary counsellor for assistance before outside supports are put in place
- Even after a student is diagnosed, being medicated, oftentimes anxiety is happening within the school environment and being dealt with by counsellors when available.
 - it may be that all that can be offered is a quiet room (outside of the counsellor's offices)

- Boyd Perry explained that there is an epidemic of young people who do not have the coping skills to deal with what life presents to them (failure, opposition, etc.)
 - Holy Heart has been leading the way among schools with dealing with mental health issues, e.g. mental health day
 - Boyd Perry advised he has spoken with the provincial government regarding these issues.
 - The current structures in place are not sufficient. Right now, it is mostly reactionary due to resource constraint.
 - Requests for increased resources do not seem to be resulting for action.
 - Holy Heart administration has allowed for autonomy for guidance staff and this has allowed for increased access to students.
 - 20% of school time for the current counsellors will be dedicated to psycho-educational assessments going forward from this week.

- Is there any kind of program that can be brought into the school?
 - oftentimes dealt with on an individual basis
 - Students can come to the Guidance office and sit quietly.
 - The goal is always to get the students to go back to class.
 - The counsellors will deal with emergent situations as required.

- One proactive measure taken this year is a meeting with Grade 10's that dealt with anxiety and some ways to deal with it.
 - this was a 1-time event that tried to offer strategies to these students

- What can parents do?
 1. Document your concerns.
 2. Students and parents more likely to be heard
 3. Role of School counsellor needs to be updated/better defined.
 4. Federation of School Councils - Don Coombs may be a good place to start.
 5. some correspondence from the School Council to the district and/or the province detailing the needs of students would be beneficial

- Related information
 - with Holy Cross students added into BR's population and then following onto us
 - their guidance ratio was 1 to 200+, but with the addition of this group to our population, the resource ratio has not been kept.
 - The recommendation is 1 to 250 or 300.
 - Newfoundland is one of the only provinces to have the title of Guidance Counsellor as opposed to School Counsellor
 - 20% of the students assigned to them are likely seen with 80% who are not seen by guidance (it is really unknown whether they need it not).

FOLLOW UP:

- Donna will follow up with Boyd and Julia to learn and present information to the School Council about how we can go forward with this issue with the intent to make changes.
- It may be beneficial to work with students through our student council members in addition to parents (potentially through a survey, if allowed).
- Sheldon and Fiona will work with our student school council members to put out a survey to see if student needs are being met from a mental health perspective. This can then be communicated to parents.

School Council communications:

- minutes back on the website?
- Sheldon is responsible for posting the minutes on the website **and** will make sure this information is put back onto the site

NEXT MEETING: January 15, 2019 at 5:00 pm