

Minutes of the OCASC Secondary School Committee
Thursday, January 8, 2008
7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Canterbury High School Library

The objectives of the Secondary School Committee are to:

- (a) Increase parent knowledge of and involvement in secondary school education in Ottawa-Carleton;
- (b) Promote the development of school councils and parent associations to represent parents of students in each Ottawa-Carleton secondary school;
- (c) Sponsor and encourage research into and study of education issues and concerns in Ottawa-Carleton secondary schools;
- (d) Formulate recommendations regarding secondary school education in Ottawa-Carleton, and to assist in implementing such recommendations.

Participants:

Nadine Clarke (SSC Chair, Canterbury), Alix MacLean (Nepean), Bob Weist (Canterbury), Liz Melanson (Lisgar), Judy Smith (Sir Robert Borden, Sir Guy Carleton) Juliet Hamilton (Bell), Anne Teutsch (OCASC Chair, Merivale), Carol Spence (Canterbury), Cheryl Silas (Osgoode), Tanya Bradley (Earl of March), Lorna Worley (Sir Wilfred Laurier), Eileen Jessop (Colonel By), Elizabeth Verbruggen (John McCrae), (Frank Wiley (Principal, Canterbury HS), Sgt. Mark Houldsworth (Ottawa Police Service School Resource Officer Program).

Agenda covered at meeting:

Introductions

Canterbury HS Tour

Presentation: Youth Intervention and Diversion, Ottawa Police Service School Resource Officer Program

Agenda and Minutes/Action items

Trades and Technology/Secondary School Program Review report

Chalk It Up

Other Business

Canterbury High School Tour (Principal Frank Wiley)

Nadine introduced Canterbury Principal Frank Wiley who answered questions from committee members prior to the tour. Principal Wiley noted that the current enrollment at Canterbury is approximately 1330, with approximately 500 students

coming from the local catchment area and the rest of the student body coming to Canterbury for the Arts Canterbury Program. Of the latter group about 250 are bussed in. Principal Wiley noted that Canterbury is very much at capacity at this time and that the school may soon have difficulty accommodating both the students in the catchment area and those choosing the Arts program. Principal Wiley then conducted members on a tour of the school, mainly focusing on those facilities that are used in the Arts Program. The tour included visits to the auditorium, the print making room, the clay room and kiln, the dance studio, music rooms, and included a visual feast of student artwork displayed in all areas of the school. Principal Wiley explained that the major part of the funding required to provide the necessary facilities and materials for the Arts Program (e.g. the special lighting and sound equipment in the auditorium) is not provided by the Board but is raised through student fees and fundraising by the school community.

Presentation: Youth Intervention and Diversion, Ottawa Police Service School Resource Officer Program

Guest Speaker: Sgt. Mark Houldsworth, Ottawa Police Service

In introducing Sgt. Houldsworth, Nadine noted that there is often less parent engagement at the secondary school level, and that therefore many parents are not aware of the School Resource Officer Program. She noted that each school is assigned an SRO and that schools should be encouraged to invite their SRO to speak to the school community about the program and its benefits.

- Sgt. Houldsworth explained that the SRO Program is a partnership between the education and the criminal justice systems. The two systems have come a long way in learning to work collaboratively since the program was initiated in 1990-91.
- At present the workload for SROs is very high—there are 4 school boards and 352 schools covered by the program, with 24 officers covering them all. On average SROs work in the program for 2 to 3 years; ideal tenure is 4 years.
- SROs receive extensive specialized training including information on child development and on community resources available to youth, e.g. they work very closely with the Rideauwood Addiction Treatment Centre and other agencies that provide addictions counseling.

- An SRO is “the perfect police officer”: they investigate crimes, problem solve within the community they serve; provide counseling. They are very pro-active, focusing on crime prevention and education—at least 40% of their time is spent working pro-actively in the schools to prevent problems from arising.
- Sgt. Houldsworth noted that the SRO program is presently undergoing change to create a more centralized deployment process. He believes the changes taking place will allow for a more strategic and efficient deployment of the SROs. The new deployment method will see the program working more closely with individual schools to target their specific areas of need. He explained that the key to the success of the SRO program is to ensure that officers learn how they will best fit into and assist the school communities they serve.
- SROs are trained to use a specific threat assessment model so that they can choose the best type of intervention possible and neither over-react or under-react.
- In response to a question regarding how SROs might deal with schools that have more gang activity than other schools, Sgt. Houldsworth stated that he believes the new centralized deployment method will enable the SRO Program to better serve the schools that have more serious difficulties, and to be a bit more responsive to their particular problems. Sgt. Houldsworth noted, however, that while the city of Ottawa does have a gang problem, gang activity in our schools is not significant, and is not a problem in the way that it is in other cities.
- Sgt. Houldsworth explained that internet crime is a real problem for the SROs because it tends to persist—a dispute starts and then simmers and runs on and is difficult to cut off. These particular crimes are very time-consuming for the SROs.
- SROs respond to community complaints re: drug use outside of schools, and will patrol and intervene. When students are apprehended for possession of drugs they are taken to the principal and dealt with by the school. No charges are laid. However evidence of trafficking will result in charges being laid.
- A committee member asked why the SRO Program and OCDSB schools work with Rideauwood for counselling services rather than the Dave Smith Centre.

Sgt. Houldsworth responded that the SROs do work with other counselling agencies as well as the Dave Smith Centre, but that for youth counselling Rideauwood is the main service provider. Nadine added that next month staff from Rideauwood will be speaking to our committee about addiction counselling services.

- Principal Wiley interjected that a new Board process for allocating these kinds of services to schools is coming on-line. Due to OCDSB efforts to build partnerships with community agencies, new funding for counselling and other types of services will allow for more services to be made available to schools beginning next year.
- Sgt. Houldsworth noted that under the new centralized officer deployment system he is hoping that SROs will be better able to connect with the students in their Secondary school feeder schools before they move on to high school.
- Sgt. Houldsworth was asked how the SRO program addresses specific problems or issues that arise due to the cultural diversity in our schools. He explained that cultural sensitivity is a component of the SRO training, and that they also benefit from the police department's Race Relations Program. He noted that the SROs work collaboratively with a number of agencies representing the diverse ethnic and cultural groups in the city, e.g. the Minwaashin Lodge and other aboriginal organizations. He indicated that SROs also participate in the diversity training programs and collaborative dispute resolution programs that are offered by the OCDSB to Board staff.
- Principal Wiley emphasized that the SRO Program is one of the most vital programs available to our schools, and that the officers are a key part of the school team. He feels that even though the program is severely under-resourced, it nevertheless has a significant impact in terms of maintaining a safe and secure working and learning environment for staff and students. He strongly encouraged SSC members to invite their SROs to speak to their school councils and their parent communities. He also strongly encouraged parents to write to Police Chief White to let him know how much our school communities value the SRO Program. Principal Wiley also spoke about how Canterbury Arts and the SRO Program collaborated to challenge Canterbury students to create a media campaign to educate students and the community on child and youth prostitution, and how this benefited both the students involved and the broader community.

- Sgt. Houldsworth explained that the SRO Program is run and resourced at the discretion of the police chief. He noted that the Police Services in many other cities have been forced to close down similar programs due to budget cutbacks, and that from the reports that he has received these police departments recognized after the fact that it was a mistake to cut their SRO programs. In closing he reiterated that the SRO Program officers and managers are very interested in making contact with school councils and parents and in receiving input on how school communities feel the SRO Program could be made even more effective. A number of committee members made suggestions as to how the SRO Program could better connect with the parent community.

Nadine expressed the committee's thanks to Sgt. Houldsworth for his presentation and for the powerful message that he and Principal Wiley were able to deliver regarding how vital and positive the SRO Program is to our schools. She also underlined the importance of encouraging parents to express their support for the program.

As a follow up on the safety issue, a committee member asked if First Aid training for students is something that the Board should be doing. Principal Wiley noted that a number of First Aid training opportunities are available for staff members, and that students can take CPR training through some Physical Education courses, but that it is not compulsory.

Agenda and Minutes/Action items

There were no changes to the Minutes of the previous meeting.

Two brief items will be added to the agenda under Other Business:

--Request for SEAC Community representatives

--Ministry of Education School Board Governance Review

Nadine noted that the outstanding action items from the November 13th meeting had been taken care of.

Trades and Technology Committee Report –Anne Teutsch

The committee has found that they need to extend their mandate. They are drafting a three-year plan to commence next fall. One priority will be to work on training teachers so that trades and technology skills can begin to be developed in students in grades 7 and 8 through the Science curriculum. Anne also gave an update on the

Specialist High Skills Majors Program (SHSM), which was recently introduced by the Province. Our Board has now expanded some of our T & T Focus Programs, such as the House Building Focus Program, into SHSM Programs. Focus Programs offer participating students 4 credits, while the completion of a Specialist High Skills Majors T & T Program will see a student take 10 credits and receive a specialist area certificate at graduation. In response to a question about the Arts Focus Programs, Anne noted that they are newer than the Trades and Tech programs, less well established, and essentially are still being piloted by the school board. It is hoped that as word of these programs circulates interest and enrolment will grow and more will be offered, as it is one way to provide expanded specialized learning to many students. In response to a question as to whether rural students are able to access Focus Programs, Anne confirmed that any student who wishes may enter a Focus Program, but transportation is not provided by the OCDSB.

Chalk It Up

Liz M. (Lisgar) noted that at Lisgar's Council meeting in December the staff representative expressed concern that curriculum changes in grades 9 and 10 Science and grade 9 Geography, which will be implemented in fall 2009, will require new textbooks to be purchased and that this new expense may result in a shortfall in the school's operating budget. Lisgar's principal had noted that while some funds for new textbooks are available from the Board, the method of allocating the funds based on enrolment numbers rather than sections often means that actual textbook needs are not met. Lisgar council wanted to know if other schools were concerned about covering the cost of these new textbooks. Bob W. (Canterbury) asked why there isn't a specific Board funding envelope for this purpose. Nadine responded that this question was raised last year and that investigation revealed that funds were made available through the Board for new Science textbooks, and that when schools were surveyed on this matter very few schools expressed concern.

Other Business

- A request has been made to start the February 12 SSC meeting at 7:00 p.m. rather than 7:30 in order to accommodate our guest speaker from Rideauwood. There were no objections. **The February 12 SSC meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.**

- Beth Doubt requested that the Chair notify the committee that the Special Education Advisory Committee is seeking two new Community representatives.
- The Ministry of Education has struck a School Board Governance Review Committee that will tour the province to examine the role of school board trustees. The committee will be reviewing many aspects of school board governance, including what the main responsibilities of trustees should be, whether they should receive specific training, etc. This committee will be visiting Ottawa on February 4th to meet with representatives from the OCDSB and other Ottawa area school boards.

Next Meeting
Thursday, February 12, 2009 7:00 p.m.
Fisher Park PS

Please note the early start time

Subsequent Meetings for 2009
(at Fisher Park unless otherwise noted)

March 12
April 9
May 14
June 11

Action Item Summary

ID	Actions	Assigned to	Date Raised mm.dd.yy	Target Date mm.dd.yy	Status
ITEMS OPENED as a result of this meeting					
A11	Send link for student University Choices and S. Carleton Newsletter	Nadine	11.13.08	ASAP	Sent 11.14.08
A12	Send link to Board website for FSL and Gifted Review	Nadine	11.13.08	ASAP	Sent 11.14.08
CARRY-FORWARD actions					
A1	Record locations and numbers of students enrolled in focus programs for secondary school (T&T completed)	Anne	09.11.08	11.13.08	Anne reported on the Trades and Technology. Will update after the SS Steering Team meeting
A3	What are schools doing to help students transition to post-secondary education. Consider school councils hosting sessions in which guidance counsellors present options. Check and ask Board to consider preparing a booklet or web based outline for transitioning help	Nadine and Anne	09.11.08	11.13.08	Anne updated that the staff is interested but overloaded now. Follow up with timing later
A4	What is the Board position on students taking a 5 th year. What are the schools authority to allow or limit	Nadine and Anne	09.11.08	11.13.08	Answered than additional questions asked for clarification
A11 of 2007-2008	Check at the end of the SSC term to see if any change to Action # 6 on consultation	All SSC Reps	2007.10.11	2008.06.12	OUTSTANDING
A24 of 2007-2008	Action items 12 and 13: update SSC on gifted centres and mandate at SSPR. Define issues and decisions	Juliet	2008.03.06		uncertain
A06 of 2007-2008	Check whether consultation on program changes occur with their school council	SSC reps	2007.09.13	2007.10.11	Responses that the consultation varies across the board. Some councils are asked for input, some consultation and some no request.
A12 of 2007-2008	Form discussion group to focus on Secondary Gifted Centres issue.	Chairs	2007.12.13	asap	Revised

ID	Actions	Assigned to	Date Raised mm.dd.yy	Target Date mm.dd.yy	Status
A13 of 2007- 2008	Write, get email okays and send feedback on Secondary Gifted under SSPP mandate to Education Committee	Juliet?	2007.10.11	2008.01.22	Revised
A31 pf 2007- 2008	Invite principal(?) from Gloucester HS to speak about LINK pilot project	Chair	2008.05.08	2008-2009	
CLOSED ITEMS as a result of this meeting					
A2	Record those exams which are board wide exams	Nadine and Anne	09.11.08	11.13.08	Sent 10.16.08 and again 11.13.08
A5	What options are there for students and parents to follow up the evaluation and final report for students (after the school year ends and summer starts)? What options to close the feedback loop for students at the end of the school year? Is there a Board process, policy or protocol?	Nadine and Anne	09.11.08	10.09.08	No policy or protocol
A6	What is the credit recovery option?	Nadine and Anne	09.11.08	10.09.08	Credit recovery, credit rescue and upgrading explained
A7	Send link to the elementary phase of the FSL Review	Nadine	10.09.08	11.13.08	Sent 10.16.08
A8 from A4	Can you be on school teams if you are in the 5 th year of secondary school? If you graduate after 4 years, how does your average calculated with the additional courses?	Nadine	10.09.08	11.13.08	Reported 11.13.08
A9	What new curriculum is expected next year which will require new textbooks? Who's going to pay; province or board?	Nadine	10.09.08	11.13.08	Reported 11.13.08
A10	What is the Sir Robert Borden presentation date?	Nadine	10.09.08	11.13.08	Sent 10.16.08
A11	What is the school policy on parents' choice of class timetable for siblings of the same age?	Nadine	10.09.08	11.13.08	Reported 11.13.08