

Minutes of the OCASC Secondary School Committee
Thursday, February, 2008
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Fisher Park PS

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), Liz Melanson (Lisgar), Anne Teutsch (OCASC Chair, Merivale), Tanya Bradley (Earl of March), Brenda Packman (Woodroffe), Paul Welsh, Executive Director, Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services.

Agenda covered at meeting:

Introductions

Presentation: Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services

Agenda and Minutes/Action items

Trades and Technology/Secondary School Program Review report

Chalk It Up

Other Business

Rideauwood Family and Addiction Services: School Based Program

Guest Speaker: Paul Welsh, Executive Director

Paul Welsh started the meeting with a blind survey of the SS reps, asking the following questions:

- a) Who has a family member with an addiction
- b) Who knows what a healthy exercise and diet program is
- c) Who follows it
- d) Who makes New Year's resolutions
- e) How many follow through on those resolutions

The results were consistent with the results of a general population poll. It is typical that no less than 75% have a close family member with an addiction. Everyone knows what a healthy lifestyle is and no one follows it. Everyone has made New Year's resolutions and no one always follows them.

That laid the groundwork for the next question: Why do we expect those in difficult socio-economic conditions and those in poverty or homeless to be any different?

Rideauwood implemented a school based substance addiction program in 1986 on an outpatient basis. They are in 33 schools, serving 1000 clients annually, 2 days a week with a treatment, not prevention, program dealing with substance abuse. They are the largest school based alcohol/drug treatment program in Ontario. Some of the Ottawa Carleton Board schools are Bell, Lisgar, AY Jackson, Ridgemont, South Carleton, West Carleton, Merivale, Osgoode, Elizabeth Windward and Frederick Banting.

There agency has 2 separate clinical imperatives; Youth Addiction Treatment, Parent Programs (2,000 clients a year) and Adult Addiction, Family Member (1,000 clients a year). Separate counselors treat adult addictions in order to better serve youth with addictions that are in a family with adult addiction.

The definition of youth for the purposes of the school based program is that the student must be in school and can be up to 21 years of age. Sometimes youth 22-23 years of age are served if they have always lived with parents. If the youth is 18 years of age but homeless, they would be served in the adult program.

In later years, the agency moved into other areas of drug treatment. Their Adult and Family Member programs are:

- Adult Addiction Treatment (mainstream)
- Drug Treatment Court / Justice Canada
- Homeless Women's Shelter Addiction / Shepherds of Good Hope
- Concurrent Disorder/Homeless Addiction / Option Bytown, CMHS
- Court Diversion / Attorney General
- Family Member Education/Counselling
- "Family Spiral", 2 evenings on addiction, impact on family, strategies
- Family Member Program: 4 day program plus weekly groups for 1 year
- Problem Gambling Treatment, Family Program
- Ontario Works (welfare) Addiction Services Initiative / Ottawa MCSS
- Relapse Prevention Program

Youth Addiction Treatment and Parent Programs:

- School Based Programs: 1,000 clients/year
- Agency Based Youth Treatment
- Specialized Parent Programs: 450 clients/year

- Pregnant Teen/Young Women Addiction Treatment
- Youth Mental Health Court Addiction Treatment
- “Operation Go Home” Homeless Youth Addiction Service
- Youth Probation (Youth Justice) Addiction Treatment
- Prevention Education to 5,000 clients annually
- Somali Youth Addiction Prevention Program (2009-2012)
- Parent Programs provide counselling, once a week for 1 – 2 years
- Parent Education on Addiction and Kids: 6 week counsellor led group
- Weekly Counselling Group for 1 year +
- Monthly Counselling Group 1 year +
- Individual/couples counseling as needed

Paul Welsh laid out the cost of the programs compared to the cost of not addressing the drug and alcohol addiction in our society. The cost of addiction in Ottawa is 23 million dollars a year. In Canada it represents 23 billion dollars a year, 3% of our GDP. In our homeless population, 2 out of 3 have addictions costing \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year from health related issues, violence, car accidents, police intervention and ambulance. These occurrences happen 15 – 20 times a year. In the prison population, 80% are addicted, costing \$100,000 - 120,000 a year. If they receive treatment as a result of the 3 year drug treatment court, 80% do not re-offend.

Rideauwood School Based Addiction/Substance Abuse Treatment

Program provides 14 hours a week to each school. It is treatment not prevention.

- Trains the school (Vice-Principal, guidance, teachers, social workers) to understand recognize alcohol/drug related problems. Careful , constructive and effective referrals to Rideauwood
- High proportion of referrals engage in counseling in schools
- School/Rideauwood team ensures careful and consistent help throughout the school
- Provides Assessment, Treatment Counselling 1 – 3 times/week in school, referrals if needed
- Serves parents in school and/or at the agency Parent Programs
- Additional services also provided to students and parents at the agency
- Parents served in the Parent Program 1 – 2 years
- Outcomes evaluated: excellent results for students and parents with high client satisfaction
- Funded by OCCSB, Ministry of Health and LTS, Ottawa, Community Foundation, OCDSB, MCSS, MCYS and United Way
- Major expansion of funding and system integration facilitated by OCRI

Paul Welsh then described the typical client profile of students they in the school, students with daily drug/alcohol use and problems at school/home/community.

- Using drugs 23 days out of 30
- Drinking heavily 9 days out of 30 (binge drinking of 5 or more drinks at a sitting)
- 2/3 “high risk for drop out” at referral
- 2/3 have failing grades at referral
- 60% grades 9 and grades 10 (problems start in grades 6,7,8)
- 45% girls, 55% boys
- Most are know to police, 10% on probation
- School problems (Grades, Credits, Behaviour, “Safe Schools” infractions)
- Usually use up considerable amount of Vice Principal’s time

The outcomes and changes are documented in June as the end of the school year. These changes are not the final outcome of treatment as treatment continues regardless of the school year end. Of the 74% identified as “High risk for drop out” at referral,

- 80% complete the school year
- 46% improve their grade point average
- 33% increase credit achievement
- 2/3 have passing grades

Many students remain in service over 2 school years or more. Many students and parents continue service over the summer. Schools become supportive environments for those trying to avoid drugs/alcohol-using crowd.

Rideauwood works on the harm reduction to abstinence continuum. Other services do one or the other and it doesn’t work. Students cannot be punished into treatment. It has to be sold to them. The service doesn’t do brief interventions. They work with staff so they understand the approach and don’t make references to “bad” behaviour or abstinence. Self reporting is reliable if no sanctions are involved. The service does not disclose if a student is using drugs because of the repercussions of the Safe School Act. They work with students so the application of the law is understood. Rideauwood coordinates with the School Resource Program, although the link is not visible. Any abuse must be reported or if the drug use is on school property. There are some parents who have an issue with Rideauwood working in the schools.

Base on the Ontario Student Drug Use survey, 15% report symptoms of dependence: 16% alcohol and 15% to drugs.

The waiting list for students is 5 – 16 weeks

Rideauwood works with the family whereas other agencies service only with the kids. Parents feel that the system is not kind to them when it is only the students in treatment: told to lighten up and made to feel ashamed. Rideauwood considers parents the best resource to help turn students around.

As with the general statistics, the cost of the service is far less than the cost of not doing something about the problem. In our schools, the addiction, drop out and crime cost is \$1.4 million per student. School based treatment cost \$1,000 a year. The taxpayer saves \$5.60 for every \$1 spent on treatment (Ontario auditor 1999). The Ottawa-Carleton Catholic Board has treatment in over half of its high school. Elementary schools need earlier intervention, counseling services: 'prevention' in grade 7 & 8 may be too late.

Paul Welsh spoke about concurrent disorders which are mental health and substance abuse and addiction combined. Schizophrenia is detected in early years. Drugs are thought to trigger the first episode. . Depression is also associated with alcohol abuse. "Mask, mimic and exacerbate" were the words used to describe the disorders. Both need to be addressed at once.

What can School Councils do?

- Inform your own school and school councils: every school "has children with addiction related problems. It is cheaper to provide the service than ignore it.
- Encourage trustees to expand the service in every high school
- Encourage service in Senior Elementary feeder schools
- Inform you MPPs, encourage funding
- Inform your MP, encourage funding
- Addiction is not a leprechaun...it won't disappear if you look away...but informed, compassionate and long term action works!
- Rideauwood changes addiction in individuals and in family, school, workplace and community systems
- They provide education, professional training and counseling for action and on addiction

Agenda and Minutes/Action items

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

Other Business

- Lisgar shared information about their upcoming lecture "No Child Left Thinking": Testing, "Accountability" and the Threat to Canadian Democracy, Guest Speaker: Dr. Joel Westheimer
- A reminder of the announcement from last meeting: 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, March 5, 2009 7:30 p.m.
Fisher Park PS

Please note the early start time

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

April 9
May 14
June 11

Action Item Summary

ID	Actions	Assigned to	Date Raised mm.dd.yy	Target Date mm.dd.yy	Status
----	---------	-------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	--------

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