

Bell High School
Council Meeting - Virtual
November 29, 2021
MINUTES

Attendees: Jon Harris, Fred Schultz, Karyn Curtis, Jing Wu, Cherise Elliott, Janice I, Maris Stasko, Ann Matejicka, Laura Wang, Simon Yang, Jen Jarabek, Diane Dreef, Donna Owen, Vivian C, Jen Samuel, Kevin Parades-Tremblay, Mary Clement, Scott Ritchie, Wayne Chung, Jeremy Laliberte, Pam VanDerLoo

Welcome and Introductions – Ann Matejicka

Ann welcomed participants, each of whom introduced themselves.

Approval of Agenda – Ann Matejicka

The agenda was approved, with the addition of a report on OCASC by Donna Owen. Motion to approve: Fred Schultz; seconded: Karyn Curtis

Approval of Minutes –Ann Matejicka

Minutes from the October meeting were approved, with the correction of a typo. Motion to approve: Jeremy Laliberte; seconded: Jen Samuel

Student Council Report – Laura Wang, Simon Yang

- Our Wellness group has decorated the main office and area, and our walls feature sticky notes with messages of gratitude.
- Clubs are starting to transition from virtual to in-person. There are a number of protocols to be observed with in-person meetings, including taking attendance, a seating plan, and social distancing.
- Our Grade 12 reps are working on a contract for school merchandise. A design competition is underway. They are also developing resources to help students applying for post-secondary studies.
- There will be a Spirit Week December 13 to 17, which will include Ugly Sweater Day and other dress-up days, and various activities, which will be cohorted.

Principal's Report – Jon Harris

- We have been very busy since the last meeting. The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Tests (OSSLT) were completed last week. We ran two cohorts of Grade 11 students, due to last year's cancellation. Grade 10 OSSLT will be conducted in Spring. The tests were run digitally, and went very well.
- The new Superintendent of Instruction for Kanata-West end schools is Nancy Brady.
- We have received 250 new chromebooks. There is a dedicated set for the new Grade 9 math curriculum. We have also re-stocked the lending library, so students may borrow them through the library.
- There have been incidents of vaping and vandalism in the boys' bathrooms, which have generated safety concerns. As a result, we have had to remove the doors. There are no sightlines and this action has been approved by the Facilities department.
- There is considerable interest in the reinstatement of lockers. This is made difficult by the fact that students must be separated by grade and class, in secondary and elementary respectively. It is hoped that we will be able to release lockers in the next semester.

- Many clubs are up and running. We are waiting for more information and direction from the Board on intramural sports and clubs.
- Parent/Teacher interviews are November 30. They will be held virtually.
- Report cards went out last week.
- There are PCR test kits available in the Main Office for students, staff and families.
- The Ministry has indicated that rapid tests will be available; however, details are lacking. We will provide information as it is received.
- Parents and guardians are reminded not to drop off or pick up students in the bus lane, due to congestion and safety concerns. The staff, arena, and gravel parking lots are available for this purpose.
- Honours (80% and above) and Silver Medal (90% and above) certificates are ready for last year's Grade 9 to 11 students.
- Staff were treated to a fantastic blacklight puppet show, performed by Perry Van Allen's Drama class. It was wonderful to see the students' talent, creativity, and enthusiasm, and it is hoped we will soon have more opportunities for such high-quality productions, such as an Arts or Drama evening.
- In response to a question regarding learning blocks for Intermediate students, Jon agreed that 20-minute blocks are not ideal. Jon will discuss possible solutions with Intermediate Vice-Principal Rod Oickle.

De-streamed Math – Diane Dreef, Head of Math, Business and Computer Studies

- Diane was an instructional coach with the Board, and a Math teacher prior to coming to Bell this year.
- Grade 9 Math is now de-streamed. Previously, students had to choose between Academic and Applied.
- The goal was to offer a more abstract, and a more practical, course. However, the result was the creation of two pathways, the former to university or college, and the latter to college or workplace.
- It is felt that Grade 9 is too early to make this decision, and that keeping options open leads to better outcomes and opportunities for students.
- The curriculum has been modified accordingly. It is now closely aligned with the elementary curriculum, and includes financial literacy (appreciation, depreciation, interest, etc.), data analysis, and coding, among others. Coding is useful to reinforce math concepts and learn computational thinking. We use block-based coding, which is a drag-and-drop system.
- A guide for parents on the new curriculum is available: Grade 9 math: a guide for parents (gov.on.ca)
- It is anticipated that all Grade 9 subjects will be de-streamed next year.
- In response to a question, Diane indicated the coding language used is Scratch, which is free and works on all devices.

Staff Report – Maris Stasko

- Senior girls' volleyball will be a training squad this year rather than a competition team, as we get back up to speed. Junior girls' and boys' teams will start after the holidays.
- Girls' touch football is starting.
- Bell's boys' hockey team plays their championship game tomorrow. Go Bruins!
- Girls' hockey team is beginning to train.
- Nordic and alpine skiing, badminton, and wrestling will be offered if coaches can be found.
- Intermediate Music has received ukuleles, and will start working with them shortly.

- There are many math contests in the new year for secondary students.
- A shout-out to Vice-Principal Stephanie Russett for planning and organizing the OSSLT, and ensuring it ran smoothly.
- Maris shared a beautiful music video made by Mme. Hartshorn's Intermediate music students.
- In response to a question regarding a possible swim team, Maris indicated that a Board directive precluded access to pools, and we currently have no swim coaches.

Treasurer's Report – Jen Samuel

There is \$2,883 in the Intermediate account, and \$5423.21 in the Secondary account. This has increased slightly due to a Parent Involvement credit.

OCASC Report – Donna Owen

- The Board is currently reviewing its Appropriate Use of Technology policy, and is seeking feedback. Information can be found at: Appropriate Use of Technology Policy Review - Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (ocdsb.ca)
- It is also reviewing electoral boundaries, as city wards have changed. It is not clear how these changes might affect catchment areas and feeder schools.
- The Board motioned to replace the OCASC seat at the Committee of the Whole with a representative from the Parent Involvement Committee. Donna has concerns that the latter is heavily influenced by Board staff and is not representative of parents.
- There was an update on music programs: OCASC Music Update - Google Slides
- The pandemic has negatively affected music programs, many at the secondary level have been cut, interpretation of Board guidelines is inconsistent, and there are equity issues.
- The Special Education Advisory Committee has raised concerns about the lack of Educational Assistants across the Board. The Board has been unable to fill absences, and is now relying on unqualified personnel.
- In response to questions regarding Bell's music programs, Jon indicated that Intermediate Music has been deeply affected. This is concerning as it provides the developmental phase for Secondary music. At the Secondary level, band and some music sections are running, but others (e.g., vocals outside of timetable) are not. This is based on the number of students selecting the programs. As our enrolment has decreased, the options have become more limited. We run lower-ratio classes where students tend to be less successful, e.g., ESL. We also offer several one-off courses, such as Design and Tech. Additionally, Bell is a continuous-intake school, so we must ensure there is room for new ESL students year-round.

Other Business

In response to a question concerning the possibility of Intermediate students opting to stay indoors during recess breaks, Jon indicated that, as students are cohorted by class, it is not feasible to provide both indoor and outdoor supervision simultaneously. In inclement weather, recess is indoors.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m. Motion to adjourn: Fred Schultz; Seconded: Kevin Parades-Tremblay

Next meeting Monday, January 31, 2022