

MINUTES

St. John CSPC Meeting

April 20th, 2021 | *Meeting called to order by Mr. C*

In Attendance

CSPC members: Nadia Niccoli; Claire O'Shea; Marianne Internicola; Marlo Taylor; Terry-Ann Isaac; Cathy Blewett; Shelan McCreary

Regrets: Sonia Pagliarello; Carmen Vanderreest; Melanie Battaglia

Faculty / Admin: Ms. Horbay; Ms. Hatch-Ennis; Mr. Comacchio

Approval of Minutes & Outstanding Updates

Marlo passed the minutes from the February meeting and Claire seconded the minutes

Principal's Report

Staff Update:

Ms. Martinez De Herrera – secretary for the remainder of the year

September 2021 Registration: Registration is still open. Parents can register at soar.tcdsb.org

Catholic Education Week: Will take place from May 2 – 8. The Board and St. John have a few events planned for the week and are prepared to be modified according to the format schools will find themselves in during the week. St. John has 2 presentations planned:

The first is for students on Tues. May 4 @ 12:30 (grades 6-8)

The second is for parents on Wed. May 5 @ 7:00

Junior / Intermediate Novel Studies: 17 different novels have been purchased. Teachers are helping to read them to suggest what grade could benefit from each text. The goal is to avoid students reading the same book more than once. This means teachers are going to identify 1 book for each grade from grades 4-8 (including combined grades). Once the titles have been selected, we will come to CSPC and request funds to help with the purchase of the books.

Anti-Racism Conference – May 11: Students in grades 7 and 8 will be participating in this full-day conference. Classroom teachers have registered for their classes.

Covid Protocols at St. John: St. John students, parents and staff have been doing a great job with the recent move to online learning. We understand the additional work that is involved for all members of the school community but we appreciate your commitment to ensuring our students are ready for online learning. Teachers and administration are here to assist you. PLEASE NOTE that attendance is taken both in the morning and afternoon, so we ask that students are present as often as possible. If you know your child will be absent, please continue to book the absences on SafeArrival.

Extended French Info Night: We have had a VERY positive response to the Extended French program for Sept 2021. We have approx. 30 students, currently in grade 4, that parents have requested to go into Extended French for grade 5 next year.

Grade 8 Graduation: Grade 8 teachers and administration will be meeting to discuss the plans for this year's Grade 8 graduation. We also need to plan for last year's grade 8s to collect their diploma as well as any awards. Those details will be provided to the grade 8 students and their parents when the plans have been confirmed. We will be asking CSPC for financial support.

Welcome To Kindergarten: Will be done virtually again this year. Date will be for mid-May.

Financial Update

Claire presented the month's expense report and discussed the following:

- May need to increase allocated budget for In-School Performances, Principal's Discretionary Fund and funding for materials (new books for novel study) – council agree to revisit this topic during the June CSPC meeting once we can determine outcome of the outstanding four pizza lunches
- Pizza lunch committee confirmed they could organize the four lunches if we return to in-person learning in June

Action: Mr. C and Liz to confirm with the board whether four pizza lunches would be permitted

Special Discussion – Racialized Incidents

Open discussion on racialized incidents in the school and community and how we can support in addition to the D&I activities already underway.

Ideas raised included:

- Broadening the D&I committee to include more members and added focus on LGBTQ1A and accessibility in school
- Consider board-level and school level initiatives – and need to take an honest look at practices
- Ms. Bain has been identified as the school's Equity Lead
- Diversity training for principals and faculty (in progress)
- How do we get the word out that racialized incidents are happening at the school and in our community – how to raise awareness and rally for broader support; messaging to the school community to acknowledge this is happening? Will we see stronger messaging from the board on their position?
- Need to prioritize funding for next school year

Action > Mr. C asked all parents present to help garner support for the upcoming Anti-racism workshop by highlighting it with other parents and encouraging attendance

Q- How much would it cost to open the workshop more broadly? Focus for this session will be for Gr. 6,7,8 students and all St. John parents; committee and Mr. C will explore other options that would be suitable for younger grades for future sessions.

Action: Mr. C will clarify how much superintendent will provide in funding and what more we need

Committee Reports

Fundraising (Sonia Pagliarello):

Committee has been researching variety of items that could be branded with the St. John logo for a fundraiser; council liked the variety of options and agreed this could be an option for next year; given circumstances and timing not to pursue for this school year.

OAPCE (Shelan McCreary / Terry Isaac):

N/A

Parish (Carmen Vanderreest):

N/A

Diversity & Inclusion (Terry Isaac, Melanie Battaglia & Cathy Blewett)

In the March CSPC meeting, this Committee's update brought to your attention the reality that racialized incidents have been occurring and continue to occur at St. John (and within our board which we will speak to) without successful interruption. As a follow up to that announcement, Mr. Comacchio, Terry and Cathy have been busy!

1. In March, SJCS submitted a proposal to the Pro-Grant program for a parent workshop on Race. We are pleased to tell you that we have been (given) \$500 towards the cost of a parent workshop and, to that end, we have booked a speaker named Greg Frankson, to talk with St. John parents about how to talk to your kids about race. Greg is a Toronto-based poet, author, educator and community activist, who has worked in the public, private and third sectors as a diversity, anti-discrimination and anti-racism facilitator and consultant. The workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5th at 7:00 pm on Zoom. The flyer is included in the slides for tonight's meeting and we would like to say a special thank you to Kirk Purdon - dad of Sandy, in Grade 8 - for designing it!

We want to stress the importance of this workshop to all SJCS families, because we see it as a first step in actively training our kids to become anti-racist grown ups.

2. Terry and Cathy were fortunate enough to have a Zoom meeting with Derek Chen, the TCDSB Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education and Community Relations on March 9th. (It was Derek who introduced us to Greg Frankson.) We talked with Derek about:

- The idea of a "script" that teachers could use on-the-spot, when racialized incidents occur in the classroom.
- How important it is for Mr. Comacchio to be made aware of racialized incidents, so that data can be collected, even if the incidents are resolved at the classroom level.
- What training and resources are available to staff, because we understand and appreciate that some staff are uncomfortable talking about race.
- Including the Grade 8s (and possibly the Grade 7s) in the Black Student focus groups that Derek's department are facilitating.
- An Anti-Racism conference that is planned for May.
- The fact that schools are meant to have an Equity Lead on staff, and who could be that lead at St. John.
- Organizing a meeting with our local superintendent, Kimberly Dixon, to talk further about resources and supports around racism in the school.

3. Following up on our discussion with Derek Chen, Mr. Comacchio, Terry and Cathy met on Zoom with Kimberly Dixon. We talked about many of the same things as were discussed with Derek Chen. In addition, Ms Dixon talked about:

- Implicit Bias training for all TCDSB staff, which is in the process of being rolled out. Ms Dixon believes that the "script" we are asking for is something that staff will get from this training. The challenge right now with training, during Covid, is that there are not enough supply teachers to cover teachers during the school day, and so most training is taking place on a volunteer basis, outside of school hours. Once school gets closer to normal, coverage will not be an issue, and so teachers will be able to participate more fully in the training.
- Providing financial support for the Greg Frankson workshops, for which we are grateful.

4. We want CSPC to be aware that now is the time that we need funding for anti-racism work. We strongly believe that this framework is much more crucial than new gym equipment, computers, musical instruments, etc., as this issue addresses students' lives. And sadly, we are all behind the eight ball where these matters are concerned. As such, we will be looking for investment in anti-racism training starting in the 2021/22 school year.

5. The committee also had the privilege of being introduced to the founder of the Education Bank. A gem in the city that addresses the economic inequities in our communities that negatively affect the learning of our students. During this time of isolation and hardship, families in need can access their many resources. We look forward to partnering with the Education Bank in a more purposeful way in the near future.

<https://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca/family-service-centre>

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2021/02/23/an-education-bank-opens-in-scarborough-to-help-families-with-school-materials-and-more.html>

<https://www.thestar.com/local-toronto-scarborough/news/2021/04/25/canada-s-first-education-bank-in-scarborough-could-fail-without-additional-support.html>

Action: Terry Ann to send details to Mr. C who will send a communication with details to the parent community

Q&A / Misc.

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Mr. C at 9:01pm.

Next Meeting

2020/2021 CSPC Meeting dates:

- ✓ November (Finance Meeting) – Tuesday November 3
- ✓ December – Tuesday December 1
- ✓ February – Tuesday February 23
- ✓ April – Tuesday April 20

June – Tuesday June 8

September 2021 (AGM) to be determined