

RHS Meeting Minutes

Title:	Ridgemont School Council		
Date:	Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020	Time:	7:00 - 8:15 pm
Location:	Virtual; Google Meets	Facilitator Chair:	Cindy Jadayel

Attendance:	Stephanie Glover, Elizabeth Bryce, Susan Lambert, Claire Fisher, Maha Abousharki, Wendy Luciani, Katie Lee, Allison McIlwaine, Salah Ataalla, Allison Cowan, Dave and Lynn Langner, Eleanor Fast, Fatma Ghanem, Marty Carr, Joanna Binch, Jon and Kate Degan, James McDonald, Maryan Ali, Michelle Bleau, Muftah Elbeggo, Nancy Dean Solange, Nicole Gibeau, Saima Qureshi, DhanSubba, Sarah Dewar, Shahina Khudair, Shahla Khan Salter, Esmail Chakra, Wejdan Alkaldi, Basidiya Drammeh, Janice Chamberlain, Salah Attallah, Lola King Christabe, Zeinab Alkhatib, ("Jelly the 6 th " -parents of Joshua in grade 9) *41 people in Attendance
Staff:	Rachelle Sintic, VP Nancy Henry, VP Greg Wysynski, Bev Melymick

Agenda Items & Call to Order

1. Welcome
2. Minutes Approval for June, 2020
3. Principal's Report (Rachelle Sintic)
4. Teachers Report (Bev Melymick)
5. OCASC Report (Nancy Deans)
6. Chair's Report (Cindy Jadayel)
7. Student Council
8. OPL (Michelle Bleau)
9. Comments / Concerns
10. Next Meeting (Tues Nov 10th)

1. Welcome

Call to Order at 7:05pm. We thank everyone for making the time in your busy schedules to join us tonight. Our first scheduled meeting in September was postponed, due to the fact that the principals were waiting for approval from the Board to hold a meeting (once everything settled down with the re-organization in a stage 2 pandemic) and instructions on how to hold the school council meetings online.

2. Minutes Approval

Approval of Minutes (June) Moved: Cindy

Second: Eleanor

3. Principal's Report

The students have been great following the rules, sanitizing their hands as they enter with their masks on. They seem happy coming in, as Bev has music playing and welcoming them each day. Our custodial staff are cleaning constantly and we are reinforcing rules for everyone's safety. There was a Committee of the Whole Meeting about having our SRO removed and in the end, we established that the community want their voices to be heard. Myself and the 2 VP's have been going around to speak to the kids in about 12 to 14 classes and get their feedback as to how they would like to have their voices heard about this issue, how our SRO, Fran, makes them feel and we have had lots of feedback.

We had one case of Covid-19 linked to RHS, but the student had not been in the building for the 10 days/2 weeks prior, however, we wanted everyone to be aware just in case. OPH protocols dictate that we sent out another message about any positive case. An entire class had to be isolated for about 10 days and were switched to online learning for that time. We have a direct line and a school nurse available at our school (Sam) for anyone with concerns; they can always call in and speak with us. The self assessment was sent out and we encourage everyone to follow that guideline. We are glad that the families are communicating with us and any students with symptoms are asked to get tested. We are working very hard to keep your kids as safe as possible.

4. Teacher's Report

The kids are great! I enjoy greeting them every morning; they are good to distance themselves. For those that forget once in a while, we pass them a mask. We have a great Chat (virtual) going on with the students, for girls and guys. For the Guidance Appointments, all the communication is done through a form. Our gym classes, including Dan Leesen and Katherine Lalonde, are doing great with our groups, online is working out just fine.

5. OCASC Report

The Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils have been discussing in length the subject of School Council and the rules around who can be a School Council voting member. Typically every year, there are elections, often roles and finances. The question was about virtual parents and how they could be involved. The Parents involvement Committee make recommendations to the Board, it's great, if you have the opportunity to be involved, the next public Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on October 13th, 2020, from 7 PM to 9 PM.

At the Board meeting, they added another layer regarding the Constitution, as a parent, you can elect yourself and be a voting member.

Each virtual school is going to have its own Council, however, the parents of virtual learners can now be involved with both school council meetings, but not a voting member in both.

They said that school councils have to record the meetings, we investigated to find out that it actually just means that the recording refers to minutes, not necessarily video recording.

If anyone would like to be the OCASC Rep, please give it a try, you will enjoy the meetings!

6. Chair's Report

Just to put you all in the picture of an issue that arose this summer – the OCDSB Board of trustees proposed to remove the SRO (School Resource Officer) from Ridgemont and Gloucester high schools, which was shocking, as no one at all was notified about this proposal (not the principal, staff, school council, etc). We quickly formed a team (many thanks to Marty) to halt this decision – as we believe that public consultation should be done before a huge decision like this is made. Our Trustee failed to communicate any of this information with our school. Ellis did amend the motion to direct the funds back to the schools, but this would not solve the problem at all, as in the circumstance that the school population (including first and foremost the students) vote that they want to keep the SRO's in our school, our office cannot directly hire the police through Ottawa Police Services (must go through the Board). Marty wrote a great article in the newspaper, which helped bring attention to this issue and I wrote a long letter to Lynn Scott, cc'ing all 12 school trustees. To make a long story short, our School Council team put a lot of pressure on the Board of Trustees to meet with us virtually before

their budget meeting, which swayed them not to make this decision without public consultation. Although I'm on the side of keeping the SRO's in RHS (as we have a highly ethnic community, many newcomers from refugee camps, many students from the lower socio-economic conditions and SRO's are a preventative of all kinds of incidents), we will support whatever decision is made, as long as there is fair public consultation. We certainly will not oppose any changes that are clearly desired from the consultation and survey results. A big thank you to Stephanie, Nancy Deans, Mariam, Shahla, Paul and Elizabeth for their participation in our quest to have our trustee seek consultation before making a major decision.

Our School Council Elections have been extended by the Board until Oct. 14, however, we will not be meeting again before that. If anyone of you is interested in taking the role as Chair, I would be more than happy to have you take the position, and will offer my full support with anything you may need. We also have the positions of Vice-Chair, Treasurer, OCASC Rep and Secretary all open for anyone here interested in taking them. Decision: For the School Council positions, we did not need a vote, as there were no contenders and some members were still willing to stay in their positions.

Chair - Cindy Jadayel

Vice-Chair - Marty Carr

Secretaries - Stephanie Glover, Wendy Luciani and Allison Cowan

OCASC Rep - Nancy Dean Solange

Treasurer - David Langner

7. Student Council

Shaniah Deliscar was supposed to join us, but realized that her request was regarding funding for Prom after grade 12 graduation and the school plays no part in it. The new Student Council Reps have not been elected yet, due to school closure / pandemic disruptions.

Nancy Henry is part of the School Board Committee that brings student council members together to hear their voices. (Nancy) We are waiting from the Board to find out exactly how the student elections will work. I will be working on getting student council elections going within the next month.

8. OPL

The Libraries have just opened again, as in June people had to book appointments to come in. Now the computers are up and running and people can browse, however, there is no seating or tables, so unfortunately students cannot stay to study. We are

offering online programs, for example, Dungeons and Dragons group and cooking classes by a professional chef (for teens and adults), all free over Zoom.

9. Comments/Concerns

(Cindy) If you would like to be an Email recipient and/or be sent information by myself about our School Council, you are all welcome to contact me (cmjadavel@gmail.com).

As for School Council, the invitation will be sent out to every parent, along with the Minutes and Agenda for the upcoming meeting.

(Rachelle) I typically send 1800 Emails with the information, including virtual learning families and in certain languages in demand.

(Greg) We are looking to standardize the School Council Meet, so that the link will be the same each month.

(Shahla) I am wondering about Parent-Teacher Interviews, will they continue virtually? Also, the voting, rules and constitution: When I started to be involved with School Council, there was only 1 parent (Lisa Dahl) with the then Principal (Richard King), so the goal is to have as many parents as possible to participate and give their feedback, so in terms of council, anyone we could get, we would be happy to have them on board. It would be great to get others to participate in taking a Council position.

(Rachelle) Covid-19 cases are not increasing, so far, so good. According to OPH there are no dangers in the school – kids are remarkable how they are following the rules so carefully. Our custodial staff worked hard to organize the hallways, classes, etc. And in fact, other school staff have come to RHS to take idea and pictures to get ideas from us how to organize for social distancing (we are pleased to share our ideas/ways with anyone).

(Nancy D) I am curious about the music program, is Strings still a possibility? also about scheduling of the classes, as there was an issue about the music class being cancelled.

(Rachelle) When we arrived in Sept, we had 216 out of 838 choose virtual learning, many because someone in their household being immune-compromised, so we had to make the decision based on numbers and on ensuring that students would not be touching the same instruments. Our system is run in a quadmester now, so we will soon see how the numbers go and the main reason is the safety piece, perhaps if we had more instruments, we may be able to offer the music class. In normal circumstances, we would contact the parents to inform them about time table changes, but in this situation, we had a huge amount of students fall into this category. We were still doing timetables on Labour day weekend. We are open to looking further into opening up Music class. (Nancy D) If the reason is lack of enough instruments, is there anything we could do to help support the purchases of more instruments for our students. We appreciate the huge amount of work that staff had to do in a limited amount of time, I am thinking that if us parents can help, please let us know.

(Cindy) I can't speak for any of you, but we were confused beyond confusion the first week of school. The start date unclear, timetable unknown until the students arrived, we didn't even know until well into the 2nd week that classes are running virtually the days the students are not physically in school. I'm sure I'm not the only parent confused, as some parents messaged me and I didn't have the answers for them. Question: Is there a way that our office administration can get super organized and email the families with the curriculum subjects and class schedules (both in school and online) before the next switchover of subjects?

(Rachelle) Yes, it has been a confusion for many, I am not sure if we can get the staff to add more work by emailing all of the parents the timetables, communication was not great at the beginning, as we, ourselves, were unsure and awaiting more info from the Board to know how to explain things to the families. The way that it runs now is students have 2 classes, for in-class students, if the last name first letter is between A - H they are Cohort A and if the last name first letter is between I - Z, they are in Cohort B. They rotate in-class days, one week 2 days, the other 3 days, and there is a calendar on the website showing the schedule clearly. On the off day, the teachers are doing a Google meet with the students for 15-20 minutes, there should be some work given for the school days at home, most teachers are doing this, please let us know if this is not happening or if you have any concerns. We need to know if any of the teachers need support to meet with students on the school days not in the school.

(Zeinab) Our children are divided in 2 separate Cohorts, can you explain how it works when one is home on a school day? (Rachelle) Usually it is the regular teacher that goes online with the students on their scheduled day at home, but sometimes it is a substitute teacher.

(Cindy) Regarding OCDSB Communications: last Friday, they sent a parent update: Ottawa Public Health Self-Assessment - Question, yes, of course we are expected to screen our children, but are we also requested to attest to their good health (or not) online? ..this is what was said by a radio host on CFRA this morning - that we are expected to fill out the COVID 19 screening tool as a daily morning routine before school.

(Rachelle) It is expected at this point that the families do a self-directed health assessment and at this point, we do not have any system that students or families have to sign anything; no reporting system. For people with symptoms, they are asked to communicate with the school.

(Shahla) Ridgemont High School is on Instagram, just fyi.

(Susan L) Question: Is it true that the schedules are switching from week 1, then week 2, will be switching soon? (Greg) After the Thanksgiving holiday, there will likely be a switch. (Rachelle)

Please check the calendar on the website to double check. (Wendy) We also received this information from a teacher.

10. Next Meeting

Tues Nov 10, 2020 at 7PM on Google Meets