

RHS School Council Committee Minutes

Date:	Tuesday, October 12, 2021	Time:	7:00 PM - 8:19 PM
Location:	Virtual; Zoom	Chairs:	Cindy Jadayel & Nancy Dean

Attendance:	<p>Marty Carr, Allison Cowan, Cindy Jadayel, Nancy Dean Solange, Janet Dill, Eleanor Fast, Stephanie Glover, Batool Hashim, Dave and Lynn Langner, Mariam Isac, Lindsey Barr, Karima Kafif, Katie Lee, Brian Malama, Mbanga, Nasser, Sahand, Dure Adan, Asia Ahmed, Claire Fisher</p> <p>Staff: Principal Rachelle Sintic, Vice Principal Greg Wysynski, Bev Melymick, Ron Watkins, Laura Wheeler</p> <p>*26 people in Attendance</p>
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Agenda Items & Call to Order

1. Welcome & Minutes Approval for (month of September)
2. Teachers Report and Guest Teacher (Bev Melymick, Ron Watkins and Laura Wheeler)
3. Principal's Report (Rachelle Sintic)
4. OCASC Report (Nancy Deans)
5. Chair's Report (Cindy Jadayel)
6. Comments / Concerns
7. Next Meeting (Tues, Nov 9)

1. Welcome & Minutes Approval

Call to Order at 7:08 PM.

Minutes Approval (month of September)

Moved: Katie Lee Second: Eleanor Fast

Marty Carr suggested removal of her role as Vice Chair given the dual chair role.

2. Teachers Report and Guest Teachers

Ron Watkins (Head of Math Department and Head of Art Department)

Math

There are several subject areas trying to de-stream in grade 9 at RHS but ministry has gone forward with de-streaming math in grade 9. We are building our program based on new curriculum. So far things are going well. At RHS we started doing some of this a few years ago so it's a smaller change for us as compared to most schools. What is new for RHS is a brand-new curriculum for grade 9 math. It's mostly finished but is not 100% complete and will be sorted out as released and as we go through the semester. Kids seem well prepared for this change. Good changes in K to 8 math that are welcome changes. We are excited for our grade 9s this year. A welcome addition to the curriculum is financial literacy. Math teachers are pleased as it has not been part of curriculum for a long time and it's a valuable topic.

Question: How many classes does the de-streaming impact?

We don't know the answer to this yet, but we will see ahead what grades 11 and 12 will look like. This affects a lot of students. Without exact numbers we know a lot of students take grade 11 math as there are a lot of college and university programs that require grade 12 math. One of the reasons we're doing away with applied and academic classes in grade 9 was to avoid students being in applied pathways and shutting doors for students. Now every student entering high school can follow whatever pathway they choose in grade 11 and not rush into it. We don't know yet what grade 11 choices will be and if they will change from current four choices.

Question: Pre-covid there was math help offered. How is it working now for students needing extra help?

We've worked out a way to have math help again. It's pretty much same as before but are asking kids to sign in (for contact tracing). Any student can come to Room 234 at lunch (the math help room). It takes place every school day except Wednesday. The students are required to stay for a full lunch. Teachers are there to help any student with questions. It has been well attended so far this year.

Arts department

We have music again - not woodwinds. Heather Holmes, the music teacher, is back and excited about teaching music. We are starting small but hopefully will have more ahead.

We now have an Art and Culture SHSM (Specialist High School Major). It's a specialist major and program for students to have a focus on arts and culture in studies. It's a positive change and we are excited about this in the arts department. It comes with funding and if we can get enough students, it can enhance funding. There is a commitment to co-op education. There are 15 students so far. We are trying to get kids in grade 10 interested for grade 11. They have to register. (Rachelle) We will learn more about what's involved. It typically takes programs like this 2-3 years to really take off. (Greg) There's a specific package of courses that have to be taken for the SHSM. They can be in a number of different categories through their course selections. They also get trade certifications in this program like WHMIS and first aid, etc. as well as extra art experience they wouldn't have in their regular classes.

https://ocdsb.ca/secondary/programs/Specialist%20High%20Skills%20Major/arts_and_culture

Comment: Nancy Dean Solange

I am the arts advisory person at the OCDSB as well and will be meeting on the 18 th . If there is anything you'd like me to bring forward let me know. There are protocols from Ottawa Public Health regarding singing and wind instruments. Some schools are doing it. I would like to see a one-pager on the SHSM. We did not get enough information last year and grade 12 students missed out. This is an awesome opportunity for our kids. It takes a long time, but if we can get more information accessible that would be great.

(Rachelle) We are working on an LTO (long-term occasional staff) to support the SHSM and we're not sure we can do that yet. We spoke to Board at the end of last year about potentially removing it from school because of lack of staff, but our staff has stepped up and we are going ahead. For example, our art teacher wasn't even sure they would have the role continued yet they were calling parents and encouraging kids to get involved. Schools with large music programs have been able to go ahead and hold wind instruments outside. They have resources and many kids signing up for programs. When we're looking at our numbers, we have to look at the entire school and from an equity perspective what we can run for the whole school. We have chosen strings for the fall and will see what we can offer in the next semester. Ottawa is not supposed to play wind instruments inside the school at this point. We are working closely with OPH on this. The OCDSB is playing it safe, and we know staff are doing their best to keep kids safe. They are loosening things up already. Starting today kids can now do some small group work. We're hoping that things keep opening up.

Comment: Nancy Dean Solange

What I'm wondering is if there is anything we can do to support it. It's sad to hear that we don't have the resources at the school to support this program. If the Board is putting it on, how is the OCDSB able to put forth a program that they can't carry out. What can we do to sort out the need and get the support? Rachelle asked Nancy to send her an email and discuss it before her next meeting.

Laura Wheeler - Physical Education and Sports Update

Acting for Danny Leeson as head of physical education and library while he's on leave. Learning the role as athletic director. Physical education is going great. Classes are going ahead outdoors where possible and indoors. We put out a call at the school for interested coaches. Can't have coaches coming from outside the school (vaccinated or not) and need to skill and training to coach. Cross country running (all ages and genders), and senior boys' volleyball team are the sports going ahead for the fall season. Unfortunately, there are no spectators for sports this year. There are protocols e.g., Cross country must mask at starting line and finish line. Just put out the call for winter sports. Some staff are on leave that would normally be coaching and have some staff that have moved to virtual school. It has been a taxing time for staff and some simply don't have the extra time to do so. It was a bit of a chaotic start to the season and a difficult fall season. We had a very short time to decide on teams. Coaches must do concussion training before the season starts and parents also have to go through and sign off on it. It has to do with Rowan's law which is a good addition. Transportation for sports is solidified and seems to okay so far.

Question: Any chance there will be hockey this year?

Non-contact hockey is held in the fall, and we didn't have a coach for the fall season. Contact hockey is winter and we haven't done it before I believe.

Library update

We are still giving out books on an online hold system. Students can fill out form on software and they get delivered to class. There is no typical in-person library time. We can accompany students in the library with protocols and still showing students research skills. Some grade 9s and 10s have never been in library space and it's nice to show them our resources. We do take book donations. We are keen on young adult fiction and graphic novels.

Bev Melymick

School clothes are for sale again (e.g., hoodies and t-shirts). Students can get information from me or at the front table or online at <https://ridgemoonths.secure-decoration.com/>.

Students are coming to me for volunteer hours helping in the garden and breakfast program. Needed are 20 hours. Working in the cafeteria. Hopefully will be up and running next September with a refurbished cafeteria. Student council is up and running and student reps are decided for the year. Doing a book sale for Mr. Collins – he wrote some children's books – on sale as a business class collaboration.

Kids are busy getting in. We've been lucky with the weather, but doors need to stay shut in the morning, encouraging students to dress for the weather. Masks are on. If they don't have one, they grab one at the table. Custodians are great keeping school neat and clean. There are times washrooms are closed for cleaning mid morning and again in afternoon (20 min). Trying to manage doors as safely as possible and encourage outdoor time.

(Rachelle) Unfortunately, given a recent TikTok challenge, one of the sinks in a single use the washroom was ripped off. Now only have one single use washroom left and it will take some time to get replaced. We don't have a lot of washrooms in the building and the single use Washrooms are important. It will be fixed but will take time and kids should not have to wait for this. Other TikTok challenges have led to kids choosing to not use a urinal and creates a need for more cleaning etc., in the bathrooms.

Karima Kafif - Ottawa Public Library update

Librarian at the Greenboro branch responsible for all teen related items. For all of the southeast area I am the contact. It's good to hear from Laura and learn what she's doing with the library. Now at the Ottawa Public Library we have more regular hours and getting back to programming. For all programs we ask that people are vaccinated. We keep the teen area welcoming and offering graphic novels, Manga and other options. We are happy to offer any help needed by a teen (e.g., research, space to work, computer help, access to computer or printing). Please send them to me. I am happy to help them. Please feel free to share my contact information with any teacher or student. Teen Librarian:

karima.kafif@bibliootawalibrary.ca

3. Principal's Report (Rachelle Sintic)

In addition to math help, homework club is up and running. It's free and virtual. It is so busy that there were over 100 students early last week and 70 at last one. It's mostly math and science but there is also some senior English where there is a need. Tell your kids to talk to the teacher first at lunch time then if you need more help register for the homework club. We are currently preparing for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). The Ministry has waived it for the last 2 years and is continuing to waive it for grade 12's graduating this year. We will be preparing for it twice this year. Any grade 11 and non graduating grade 12's will be writing the OSSLT. In the spring grade 10's will write it. There are strict guidelines (e.g., it has to be completed on a Chromebook. The tests will run for 2 days. We are watching ministry videos for instructions on administering. Once we know more, we will send information to parents.

The entire staff began concussion training today. Laura Wheeler has played a role in checking on kids as needed and reaching out to parents. Parents will get a phone call if there is a need to follow up on a child if they've been injured. We have been short staffed in the office – but now finally have a new person. Ria Rollins is replacing Reham. She is already learning so much and she fits right in.

Grad photos are coming soon, and we will be sending information home in November. RHS and Featherston Elementary School are working on a de-streaming pilot together. The math and admin teams will be working together and looking at how to improve practices.

Appropriate Use of Technology policy review (Rachelle and Greg)

There is a new policy and procedure for appropriate use of technology. School councils are being given the opportunity to consult. We will share that with you tonight and we can talk about it for 30 min at the next meeting to see if you have any input that we can pass along. It is a long procedure and will take some time to read. There is a google form to fill out. The form asks three questions:

Are there elements of the current policy that are out of date, missing or no longer relevant?

Each year parents are asked to complete the media permission form, appropriate use of technology form. Does this address the issues of appropriate use for students?
What other feedback do you have?

<https://ocdsb.ca/cms/one.aspx?portalId=55478&pageId=37059829>

4. OCASC Report (Nancy Deans)

Nancy Dean-Solange

Had an OCASC Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils meeting last week and will be meeting again in a couple of weeks. The main topic to raise is advice for the new appropriate use of technology information. Will try to find a video of the presentation and ask for thoughts. We are looking to make things easier for people. Also working with other high schools. We learned about some top 3 concerns among parents across a few schools.

Concerns about music not returning, while sports are returning.

Asking about extracurriculars and virtual clubs

Parents and volunteers getting back into schools

(Rachelle) As of today, they are allowing some smaller groups to come together as long as we have a large enough space to accommodate so things like R***project team can work with the Somali community. We can start our GSA clubs in person. Anything in support of student body can start running clubs this week. We can't be in the building too late after school, but we can now accommodate some groups. Suzanne **our MLO was going to start up with boys and girls group and prayer has come back. They are doing Friday prayer in the gym. Working with Abdi. Right now, the room is too small but will be sorted out.

5. Chair's Report (Cindy Jadayel)

We are now using our RHS email address instead of my personal one to send out school council information, since access has been reconnected. Recently we were contacted by OPH, RN Nour Khalaf, asking for us to advertise with our students a Mental Health Workshop on a Sunday coming up. Presenters will be UOttawa Nursing students. They are trying to reach out to help teens cope with issues due to the pandemic. The title is mental health during COVID-19 and coping strategies and dealing with stress. The Graffiti wall will be coming to RHS which is great. Reiterate that we also have Ridgemont Spirit Wear available to order at

<https://ridgemoonths.secure-decoration.com/>

Book Sale: We were set to go just when the pandemic started and have been hanging on for 1.5 years. Marty Carr & Stephanie have collected 10-12,000 books so far for a book sale. Nancy made a poster and Marty and Stephanie advertised it in the Vista newsletter, as was booked through Community Use of Schools, however, again it's on hold because of covid protocols with OPH. There is not a final answer yet if it can be held outside. Rachelle will look into options for us and let us know asap.

6. Comments / Concerns

Questions about class start times and lockers:

Class starts at 9:10 and students can come in at 8:55. They have 15 min to get in and as soon as they enter they need to go to the classroom. Trying not to have 800 students coming in at the same time.

There are no lockers this year. They are a COVID hot spot. Has worked out well so far. If someone needs a spot to store things, they can go to the office, and we can help.

Comment about communications

Information and links on website would be helpful for parents.

Would like to invite Student Council to meetings going forward

7. Next Meeting (Tues, June 8)

Agreed; Tuesday, June 8th at 7 PM on Zoom