

WRAPSC Minutes – October 2nd, 2018

Motion to approve May 8th, 2018 Minutes.

Motioned by Erica Beck, seconded by Beth Robson. Approved.

Motion to approve October 2nd 2018 agenda, with a change in order of the meeting

Motioned by Mandi Bond, seconded by Garth Yule. Approved

Attendance: 36 People, 5 Guests; representing 28 Schools.

I. Welcome

- Angelica Allen welcomed the members of WRAPSC
- Talked about the school council email address.
- A. Instructions for new school council emails:
Every Elementary and Secondary school has a school council group where the principal is the manager and will manage the membership.

The email address is: xxx-schoolcouncil@wrdsb.ca where xxx is the school's three digit alpha code. These groups have been provisioned to add users with an external email address. (A non @wrdsb.ca address)

To add an email address have the manager (principal) add a member by:

1. Logging in to their @wrdsb. Gmail account
2. From the waffle (9 dots at the top right) choose Groups
3. Choose My Groups
4. Find the XXX School Council group in the list
5. Go into the group
6. At the right choose Manage
7. Add Direct Add Members or Invite Members
8. Because it is an external email address, a welcome message will have to be added.

Note: This group's management and membership is not automated so the principal will be responsible to add and remove.

II. Resistor Case: How to Make Attention in a Digital World by speaker Marcel O’Gorman

- Professor O’Gorman opened his talk with an explanation about his team’s experiments, and research into people and device dependency. There have been some articles that have been published in the Globe and Mail (Attention Crisis), as well as, online research (digital sins, tech lash) with a more in depth breakdown in this topic.
- Marcel proceeded to explain how phones can attribute to distraction in the classroom as well as outside of it. Teachers are getting frustrated as they feel as though the Board has given up on helping with this problem. School boards have a BYOD (Bring your own device) philosophy, which leaves teachers to use their own discretion on how to handle this situation within the classroom. What the Board may perceive as a tool to help with studies, teachers may perceive it as a distraction. Phones have been designed similarly to slot machines, creating an addiction like need to always check or use your device, making it harder to concentrate.

- Research has shown that children and teenagers have trouble multitasking while they are using a phone, making it harder for them to prosper to their full potential. Those who have trouble concentrating in class without a device, also tend to have an adverse reaction when using a device in class, as getting frustrated or anxious if taken away. Manfred Spitzer wrote a book in 2012 on Digital Dementia, which is a term used to explain the breakdown in cognitive abilities due to over-use of digital technology.
- With schools who have been able to ban devices in classrooms, studies have shown a 6.41% improvement on tests, opposed to those who do not have a ban. France has actually banned devices in classrooms based on this research. With a leveraging digital philosophy, WRDSB is unable to place a ban of devices in classrooms due to accessibility laws.
- There are a few ways to help children refrain from using devices during class times. An app was created called Flipd, which will make social apps disappear during programmed times. There is also a product called Yonder, where you place the phone in a magnetic locking pouch. Marcel's team from UW developed their own case, which is called the Resistor Case. It is made out of recycled bottles, a Velcro seal, and hammered in rivets. The cost of this case is approximately \$10.00 to create. St. Mary's has already held sessions for students which allowed them to build their own Resistor Case. Its advantage is that access is under student control, but the loud Velcro opening discourages them from opening the case in class.
- **ACTION:** Marcel and his team are looking for schools interested in using this case within their classrooms. Marcel can be contacted via email at marcel@uwaterloo.ca.

III. **My Way - System Administrator of Learning Services Joe Bell**

- Joe Bell gave us a breakdown of how the MyWay portal works on WRDSB school websites. He went through the various applications and broke down how each one works.
- WRDSB in-house IT created the portal, which is located on every school's website. Within the portal, students will have access to some of the apps listed below:
 - 46 online Courses, in which there are currently around 1300 students already enrolled. These students do have online interaction to teachers for support.
 - Google apps for education also known as GAFS
 - Google hangout, which allows the students to talk with other students and teachers.
 - OYAP Is for an apprenticeship program, for either red seal or not red seal. This app has a lot of information on how to they break things down, as well as their hours and safety training.
 - **Mathify** is a program to help with math homework, by giving students access to live tutors who are math teachers.
 - **My Blueprint:** This new program allows students to keep easy track of their credits, and to research what credits they need to apply for different apprenticeship, college or university programs. It has surveys that help determine student aptitude levels, and also links to post-secondary information. There are resume helps and all sorts of other sources of information. Guidance Counsellors at local High Schools are phasing in the use of this program by students.
- These are a few of the apps that are located within the student portal. A student will be able to access the portal through their OEN number. There are some programs that are designed for all K to 12 students, and some that are only specific to grade 7 to 12.
- This system talks to Trillium nightly to keep its information up to date.
- **ACTION:** WRAPSC members recommended that this presentation be given to individual school councils (perhaps by Principals or Guidance Counsellors), as most of the people present did not realize how much information was available.

- ### IV. **Break** - Melissa Jenkins introduced the Suggestion box, that will be located by the sign in sheets. This will allow members to suggest topics for WRAPSC, or make other comments.

V. Review of Last Year's WRAPSC – Melissa Jenkins

- Melissa gave a quick recap on the topics each speaker presented. Below are each speaker and their associated topic, for more in-depth review, please refer to the corresponding monthly Minutes on the WRAPSC website:

October

- Ian Gaudet, Controller Facilities services, provided information and answered questions about the board facilities (ie: Portables)

November

- Jill Magazine, Safe, Care and Inclusive School (SCIS) committee.
- Kerri Gettliffe on School Council 101, and round table discussion. Also spoke on nutrition programs with the region.
- Steve Sherlock, Principal of Baden, on the role of a Principal, with regards to a school council.

January

- Todd Vercoe of Act Out, which is a board approved, non-profit charitable organization.
- Laurie Bains, WRDSB communications department, present information on CASL compliant communications.
- Nick Manning, Chief Communication Officer, presented on google groups and how they could be used by school councils.

February

- Matthew Gerrard, Superintendent of Business Services, discussed budget and funding. Discussed using school day for fund-raising.
- Lauren Agar, Manager of Planning, discussed LTAP (long term accommodation plan)

April

- Betty Pries made a presentation on transforming polarize thinking.
- Bryan Huck and Kai Schofield discussed workshops for increasing financial literacy for children and adults.

May

- Katie Gingerich discusses The Ripple Effect Program (TREE)
- John Bryant, Director of Education, discussed the boards strategic plan, and answered 4 questions asked by WRAPSC.
- Jenn Crits, Principle within the WRDSB, shared her success in building a stronger relationship with her School Council and community

VI. PRO Grant and PIC Grants information – Mandi Bond

A. PIC Grant

– Ministry of Education gives every school council \$500.00 every year. We are currently waiting on WRDSB's answer on their standpoint of Councils spending the money or if the principal is able to direct the money. Practice across the Board varies widely, with some principals leaving it up to School Councils and others using the money on other projects. Some boards (ie. Ottawa). direct the money directly to councils. Money can be used in funding parent engagement activities (ie. Refreshments, translating documents, incentives, advertising, etc.).

ACTION: Last year, Matthew Gerrard sent an email informing school administrators that the \$500 would be transferred into school council accounts. However, the accompanying directive still made it unclear as to whether the school councils need to be consulted on the spending of the money. Steering Committee will follow up.

B. PRO Grant

- Future PRO Grant may not exist under new government.
- PRO Grant applications opened in February, closing in the beginning of June. Amount of the Grant is up to \$1000.00
- Numerous school councils can band together to form larger projects.
- Have yet to hear back about applications. We are hoping to be hearing back by mid to end of October on status of grant applications, and if grants are to be active this year.
- Reminder to be mindful of money allocation, just in case PRO Grant funding is cut.

VII. Round Table Discussions – Ontario Education Policies

- Provincial changes in education were discussed, as was what form of action, if any, WRAPSC should take (ie. Letters, email, etc.)
- Following are the major points of the discussion:
 - Trying not to reinvent the wheel, by seeing what other WRAPSC committees have done or started doing.
 - Putting together a “Tool Kit” with information about changes, contact information, template letters, etc.
 - Inviting ETFO to give a teacher’s perspective and information
 - Nurses union templates and resources
 - WRAPSC reps taking information back to their school councils to see what input or ideas they may have.

Meeting Concluded at 9:18pm

New steering committee members are:

Angelica Allen (KCI - Kitchener – High School); Mandi-May Bond (Tait Street - Cambridge – Elementary); Melissa Jenkins (Clemens Mill - Cambridge - Elementary - PIC Rep); Beth Robson (Sandhills PS - Kitchener - Elementary - PIC Rep); Amber Doey (Tait Street - Cambridge - Elementary); Garth Yule (Driftwood Park - Kitchener - Elementary); Nicole Huskins (Doon PS & Huron Heights - Kitchener – Intermediate & High School); Heidi Holmes (Centennial PS (Waterloo) - Intermediate).

APPENDIX:

VOTING FOR SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEES

With the upcoming municipal elections on Monday, October 22, 2018, and online voting now open. We would like to remind everyone to exercise their right to vote, and encourage everyone to make an informed decision. With all the different positions to be voted on at the municipal level, the positions of school board trustees do not receive as much attention. Now is the time to read about the candidates positions on what they consider to be key issues facing our board at this time. Please spread the word to your parent committee that it is their choice, and an important one when it comes to their child’s education.

The following links are for the respective city’s webpage that lists the registered school board trustees.

Cambridge: <https://www.cambridge.ca/en/your-city/certified-candidates.aspx#>

Kitchener: <https://www.kitchener.ca/en/city-services/list-of-candidates.aspx>

Waterloo: <https://www.waterloo.ca/en/government/electioncandidates.asp>

The following excerpts, “Why Vote”, and “School Board Trustees – Who are they? Why are they important?” are from the Ontario Municipal and School Board Elections website. <http://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org>

Why Vote

School Board Trustees hold the only democratically elected office that is solely responsible for education. A trustee is responsible for identifying the needs and priorities of their community and for ensuring these are considered in the decisions that result in practical educational opportunities for students. It is the local trustee who make sure that the community has a direct way to express its views on vital education decisions that affect our day-to-day lives. You have the right to vote for who represent you and important matter. This is your opportunity to make a difference in your community.

Trustees are responsible for establishing policy direction

Policies set out the expectations about what should happen or how services are to be provided within the school board. A well written policy describes to parents, the public and the board’s staff what they can expect. The board of trustees ensures that the Director of Education carries out responsibilities for implementing the board’s policies. They entrust the day-to-day management of the board to its staff through the board’s Director of Education.

Trustees champion equity in education

Trustees work to ensure equity across the school board so that every student has the opportunity to succeed regardless of background, identity or personal circumstances. The role of school board trustee involves bringing the voice of everyone, including marginalized communities (e.g. Indigenous students, newcomers/immigrants, people coming from low socio-economic backgrounds, etc.) to the board table.