

# OTSS School Council

## Ottawa Technical Secondary School- School Council

Minutes of School Council Meeting held on September 9, 2014

### Opening:

The monthly School Council meeting of the OTSS was called to order on September 9, 2014 by Bruce Giles at 7:00 pm., Co-Chair, School Council.

### Present

Bruce Giles  
Jane Alexander  
Sarah Rush  
Jenifer Tremblay  
Christina MacDougall  
Andrea Fisher  
Linda Kuo

- **Approval of Agenda and Minutes from June 3, 2014-09-17**

Approved by Bruce Giles, seconded by Linda Kuo.

- **Election for this year's School Council Executive**

Due to some members of current School Council Executive unable to attend the September meeting, School Council Executive elections were rescheduled to October's meeting.

- **Happenings at OTSS Principal / Staff report**

### Happenings at the school – Jane Alexander

- Though the group was small, I thought the discussion was very useful.
- Principal's report:
  - Great start up to the school year. Staff consensus is that the tone is positive and that students are settling in well.
  - We addressed the students in our opening day assembly, and the Grade 9's again during their orientation. The big message that staff wants to impress upon our students is that we want each of them to feel comfortable to be themselves in a safe and nurturing learning environment. The best way to be respected and accepted is to be respectful and accepting of fellow students and staff.
  - Our Link Crew (13 senior student mentors) organized a great Grade 9 orientation and BBQ lunch.
  - Our enrolment looks strong, and we should hit our prediction of 450 students. This allows us to maintain all of the program options that we have in place.

- The student handbook is now available online. Any student who wished to have a paper agenda was provided with a copy.
- Upcoming events: Stuntman Stu anti-bullying presentation to all students, 10am on September 23rd. Meet the Teacher evening, September 25th, specific schedule to be confirmed

#### **4. Updates from departments:**

##### **Guidance:**

-A smooth start up. Timetable changes are complete.

##### **Math & Science:**

-Teachers are posting their new assessment plans to our new "MaMa" website, which will allow them to better track student progress within the curriculum.

##### **Technology:**

- Students are in the midst of completing their safety training in the various shops and will be starting projects soon.
- 2 classes of a new technology course, Jewelry making, are running this year. As well, the Painting and Decorating program will be focusing on including more interior design elements.
- Technology teachers are participating in new collaborative initiatives with numeracy (partnering with Math teacher Lil Jones) and literacy (partnering with Librarian Nadia Thornton).

#### **Physical Education, Athletics and the Arts**

##### **– Mustang Report**

##### **Fall Varsity Sports**

Staff are busy promoting fall sport opportunities for school teams. Each school year, the winning combination of willing volunteer staff-coaches & committed student-athletes create memorable experiences for all involved & promote school pride. The deadline to enter NCSSAA Fall Sports is this coming Thurs. Sept. 11th. So far, the following teams have a good chance of entering: Sr. Boys Soccer\*, Sr. Boys Volleyball\*, Co-ed Cross Country running & Sr. Boys Non-contact Ice Hockey. Eligibility is restricted to max. 5 years since entering H.S. &/or year of birth (1995 is this years limit).

##### **NOTE:**

- *Where girls teams do not exist for a particular sport, girls are permitted to try out/play on boys teams.*
- *Where junior teams do not exist in a particular sport, Jr.'s may try out for Sr. teams, Coaches usually reserve spots on the roster for player development & program sustainability.*

##### **Fall Vocom Sports**

Once again, O.T.S.S. is proud to continue its award winning intramural program in partnership with Sir Guy Carleton S.S. There are typically 13 different sports offered throughout the year featuring more than 20 teams (boys, girls & co-ed). Program goals include:

- be on a school team
- develop team work skills

- play in a supervised safe environment
- improve their fitness &/or sports skills
- make new friends
- uncover a strength or hidden talent

The Vocom Sports League kicks off each fall with Ultimate Frisbee followed by Flag Football & Soccer. Please encourage your son or daughter to join.

### **Health & Physical Education News & Special Events**

The Phys. Ed. Dept. continues to find creative ways to promote & encourage healthy active lifestyles by offering a variety of fun lunch time activities for students, accessing the on site fitness center, gymnasium &/or school sports fields.

Our annual School 'Terry Fox Walk, Run, Ride & Roll', will take place Thurs. Oct. 9th This is our 10th year of involvement demonstrating a compassion for those facing this health challenge. Students will benefit from a short assembly before participating in the all-school activity. It is a truly inclusive event, i.e. students moving in a variety of different ways - walk, jog, roller blade, cycling, wheelchairs & walkers.

Second semester this school year will see the return of grade 10 Rhythm & Dance course taught by Mrs. Mecredi, as well as, a new grade 12 Outdoor Education course under the direction of Mrs. Rush.

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### **What's on in The Arts**

- Educational research continues to confirm that 'The Arts' is a rich & rewarding subject domain, with legitimate employment opportunities, develops an appreciation for culture, helps students discover skills & talents that foster positive self-esteem & even contributes to student success in other subject area's.
- The Arts is an inclusive subject area, involving all of educational program area's; adaptive & system classes (Physical Support Program, General Learning Program & Autism). Our cast of talented Arts Teachers are; Mr. Brown (music), Mr. Crew (drama) & Mrs. Williams (visual arts).
- 'The Arts' have worked hard over the years to develop strong connections with several community partners, one of which is with the Great Canadian Theatre Company (GCTC), where in fact, Mr. Crew's Drama classes will enjoy their 1st field trip of the new school year on Sept. 24th to see, "The Boy In The Moon".

## 5. Therapy Dogs at OTSS

- The following proposal is for a Therapy Dog at OTSS and submitted by Sarah Rush
- A Pilot Program in the Behaviour Intervention Program

### The Facts

- **Fact:** Varied academic research suggests that education programs involving dogs help students with the developments of social skills and communication. Working with dogs teaches patience and builds empathy
- **Fact:** Caring for animals can improve self-esteem, alleviate anxiety and depression, improve social skills, and foster verbal and nonverbal communication
- **Fact:** Animals can be used as sources for motivation and behaviour management for students who are receiving special education services for their emotional distress.

Students with a history of non-attendance and truancy benefit from building relationships with classroom dogs and thereby potentially re-engaging in school.

### Perceived Benefits

- Student's attitudes towards school will improve
- Students will find companionship with the dog
- Students will use the dog to remain in control of their emotions and behaviours
- Students will use the dog as a de-escalation tool to calm their minds and bodies

### Implementation

- Conduct preliminary meetings - with administrators, parents, classroom paraprofessionals and students for the following reasons: a) briefly explain idea and goals, b) to gain initial support and c) to learn of dog related allergies or phobias.
- Select a dog - In this case it would be staff member Sarah Rush's 3 year old, Pyrenees-Retriever mix. "Fozzy" is fully vaccinated, has zero history of aggression, is very well socialized with kids of all ages and has been recommended for the Ottawa Dog Therapy program.
- Establish Classroom Policies and Behaviours

The staff of the Behaviour Intervention Program will collaborate with school administrators to develop classroom policies and procedures. There will be a team meeting with the classroom paraprofessionals to solicit their ideas and concerns.

- Obtain Written Consent - see sample form

- Provide Information to Colleagues

#### **6. Parent Reference Library**

Parent Reference Library is up and running and hopefully all the books available will be listed on the school's web-site. There is also a suggestion put forward that the libraries also include videos along with books. Also the suggestion was made if any parents had any books they believe other parents may be interested in, they can be donated to the Library.

#### **7. Ideas for upcoming meetings**

A request was put to the floor if anyone had any possible solutions to attract more parents to future meetings. One suggestion is to have guest speakers on topics of interest to parents. Also member were requested to give it some thought and this subject would be brought up again at the next meeting.

#### **8. Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting of September 9, 2014 was adjourned at 8:30pm  
The next meeting will take place on October 7, 2014