

# 2015/2016 Annual Report

Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute School Council

Annual Report for the 2015/16 School Year

Dear Parents and School Community:

Welcome back! We hope you had a safe and happy summer. The Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute School Council had an active year. School Council elected parent positions consisted of Co-chairs: Susan Paetkau, Michele Schummer Treasurer: Gillian Wyett, Webmaster: M. Schummer, Speaker and Intercollegiate Liaison: Janet Bragg

The purpose of the school council is to help improve student achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. School councils are advisory organizations. A school council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations to the principal of the school and the school board. Boards and principals are responsible for considering the recommendations made by each school council and for advising the council(s) of the actions taken in response to the recommendations.

The school council held 7 meetings which were open to the parents, students and others to encourage input from parents and the school community. At the meetings, student reps provided updates on academic and extracurricular activities, Principal Jovanovic provided information on enrolment, staffing, school calendar, student support, process for student and parent concerns, course selection, postsecondary planning, school improvement plan and school budget and responded to questions, concerns and suggestions from parents. S Kopyto, the staff rep, only attended the September meeting due to local work action by teachers.

Key themes at this year's meeting were as follows. Minutes of meetings are posted online at <http://www.lpschoolcouncil.com>

- Sept 19 included highlights from Assistant Curriculum Leaders (ACLs) from various departments
- November 2 included Barb Swanson speaking on post secondary planning
- Dec 7 included Guidance speaking on course selection, career & life planning
- January 25 included Emil Boychuk speaking on exponential changes in the labor market/future careers
- March 7 included Michele Keeley speaking on parenting teens
- April 10 included JACS speaking on drugs & alcohol use by teens
- May 15 included LPCI School climate survey & planning for next school year

## Issues

Issues discussed at School Council and addressed by the school are listed below

1. Teacher contract negotiations were successfully concluded centrally in October (issues like compensation, prep time) and the school year started up as usual with no visible impact on students. However, local negotiations (working conditions) between the TDSB and Ontario Secondary School Teacher Federation continued and teachers did not participate in ACL and staff meetings, school based professional development, administrative duties and there

was no review of teacher performance. This also affected parent-teacher interviews in November and February which were only held in the afternoon and not in the evenings.

2. There were a lot of staffing issues at the beginning of the year with a number of classes such as music and math without a regular teacher. Short term substitutes were used until a long term occasional teacher could be placed. This created challenges for school administration and students. Parents are concerned with the missed course content and lack of continuity when teachers change over. In the spring, several teachers were declared surplus due to reduced enrolment and bumping. It was expected that more staffing changes will occur for next fall due to ACL recruitment process, teacher transfer requests and bumping due to seniority.
3. Curriculum night was held on Sept 24 for parents of students in all Grades rather than only Grade 9 students as done in the past. This had been requested by some parents and the school agreed. Due to the collective agreements which only requires teachers to attend 2 evenings usually used for parent-teacher interviews, only department heads and some teachers attend. There was an open house format where parents could drop in to see departments and ask questions. The lack of a structured format provided little information to parents and resulted in teachers receiving questions about individual students. The school will decide whether to go back to only Grade 9 parents or to structure the evening to provide more information.
4. A member of the community tried to explore the possibility of installing turf on the football field through North Toronto Soccer Club and the TDSB. Apparently, there is not strong support from the school or trustee.
5. This year's Grade 12 class about 350 students, larger than in the past. This meant that all the students and 2 guests could not fit in the auditorium. The graduation committee initially suggested splitting the class and holding 2 graduations. Students wanted to have one graduation ceremony so they could be together. Parents suggested the school investigate offsite locations such as Montecasino where Glenview goes. The school decided that one ceremony would be held in the LPCI auditorium with guests while grads watched a live feed from the gym.
6. There were problems with drinking and drugs at the Halloween Costume ball and difficulty reaching parents despite the contract signed by students and parents.. Staff supervisors were very disappointed in some students behavior. As a result, staff offered to supervise the Semi-formal in the afternoon (vs evening) hoping to reduce the inappropriate behavior. Student Council decided not to proceed but to hold a coffee house with students playing music instead. The coffee house was held before March break.
7. There are some challenges recruiting teacher supervisors for student extracurricular activities. The school policy about supervision of school sports and clubs was challenged when it appeared that LPCI may not have a junior and senior football team because only 1 staff supervisor and a long serving volunteer coach were available. Parents and community volunteers presented to school council and the school council co chairs gathered the facts into a briefing note, met with Principal Jovanovic and Superintendent Chang to facilitate a review of key concerns and facilitate a meeting with the volunteer coach. In April, the football issue was resolved with a second staff supervisor and an agreement that parents would fundraise for equipment. Unfortunately, other teams such as Girls Rugby did not run because there was no teacher supervisor available.
8. To support the transition of Grade 9 students into LPCI, there is a Buddies program where 60 Grade 11 and 12 students meet with Grade 9 students to share their experience and tips for success academically and socially. They meet Wednesdays mornings before school and also have a 3 day trip to Camp Olympia near Huntsville in October. Principal Jovanovic presented a nearby day camp called Adventure Valley as an alternative especially considering the possibility of ongoing job action by teachers. This could create a shortage of teacher supervisors. Parents strongly recommended that the 3 day trip to Camp Olympia

continue since it really builds relationships and several volunteered to attend as supervisors should the need arise.

9. There are a lot of course choices especially in Grade 11 & 12. The courses offered are determined by staff but ultimately those chosen by students determine which ones are run. There has been ongoing discussion of the reduced number of music students/classes and the increased number of business and hospitality students/ classes. There has been concern by a couple of vocal parents that students do not fully appreciate the value of the arts and social sciences and often chose courses (and teachers) that are easier.

## Presentations

On September 19, 2015, Assistant Curriculum Leaders presented their approach and highlights for Math (M Neag), English (R Mancini), science (C Papaiconomou), languages/french (M Benais), physical education and health (L Wong), guidance (K Mitchell) and social studies (M Kopyto),

On November 7, 2016 Barb Swanson spoke to about 100 parents on postsecondary pathways specifically college and university application processes, resource materials – Ontario, Canada, US and UK, and ways to plan for this transition.

On December 7, 2015 Kim Mitchell and Mark Fischer presented course selection and career planning demos. The goal going forward is that all students in Grade 9-11 update MyBlueprint twice per year. MyBlueprint is used for course selection and also includes modules on goals, resume, strengths, learning style, interest, and career opportunities.

On January 23, 2016, Emil Boychuk from the Association of Career Educators spoke to about 80 parents and students about what futurists are predicting about emerging industries and future jobs in areas such as nanotechnology, 3D printing, drones, green energy, and big data.

On March 6, 2016, Michelle Keeley talked to about 80 parents about teen cognitive, social and sexual development,, building resilience, and the changing parent-teen relationship.

On April 10, 2016 JACS presented on what parents should know about alcohol and drug use by teens including why they try it, red flags, how to help and prevention.

## Fund-raising

LPCI school budget includes up to \$1500 for administrative activities & \$1000 for Parents Reaching Out. Grant. \$1050 was spent on speakers for postsecondary pathways, emerging labour market/future careers and parenting teens.

General donations for school use \$3,280 (cheques) + \$9144 (online) = \$12,424

- \$1,500 was directed to auditorium chairs
- \$9850 was directed to school resources

10 chrome books for world studies (\$3000)

English novels (\$2000)

4 whiteboards in portable classrooms to evaluate if they are right solution (\$880)

DECA club (\$1000)

Green club to do some fundraising (\$300)

Labquest probeware for science (up to \$2000)

teacher appreciation lunch \$670)

-\$1544 to provide student assistance in special circumstances

The financial activity related to the school council's administrative activities is attached.,

### School Climate Survey

There was a very strong student (x%) and teacher (87%) response rate and 159 parents completed the LPCI school climate survey . Highlights shared by the School Principal are:

- School climate needs to be warmer, friendlier and more helpful; school should be cleaner
- Almost all students feel safe, a sense of belonging and do not experience bullying, most feeling comfortable speaking in class and there are opportunities to build their skills; would like increased student voice and citizenship opportunities
- Most students, teachers and parents are happy with extracurriculars offered
- Students want their classroom learning environment enhanced – more technology in the classroom, changed classroom to promote teamwork, more variety in teaching methods, school trips and assignments that students can relate to, extra help, more feedback on classroom participation, homework and projects, encouragement to take risks and try new things
- Relationships between parents and school could improve
- School staff need to treat each other with more respect, communication with administration needs to be better, more technology, textbooks and resources would be helpful
- Parents would like more information on what students are learning, better resources and improved classroom learning environment, more student voice and participation

### Interviews with Assistant Curriculum Leaders

In the spring, the Co-chairs interviewed 8 ACLs on how parents and community volunteers can support teachers and students in classroom, extracurricularly and through fundraising. Their suggestions are

- database of community speakers such as science ( eg engineering, manufacturing)/ list of parents & occupations
- Indigenous artists in classroom, photo printing, props lightning, costumes
- francophone speakers on various topics like careers, travel, environment
- science equipment like labquest probeware eg ph probes and uv lights, bones for forensics
- feedback on redeveloped school website & communications with parents, including image, FAQ, contacts, volunteers
- create the “main event ” showcase, food, silent auction to raise money and boost school spirit
- do more with equipment, space, and funding eg. Exercise room, artificial turf field, upgraded washrooms
- Teacher appreciation breakfast/lunch
- Graduation reception
- parents need to encourage students to take more responsibility to help themselves, complete work when away on family trips
- parents to supervise student volunteers for student breakfast program

## Feedback from Parents

Parents are willing to volunteer to support school activities such as speakers in the classroom and clubs, extracurriculars, field trips, and enhancing the school space.

At our May meeting, school council executives recommended that we move to 8 meetings for the 2016/17 school year and start at 7pm. We proposed 5 meetings which are regular business meetings and up to 3 meetings dedicated to speakers. The parents attending school council agreed because they like to have more time to discuss school policies, issues and activities.

Parents also supported school council applying for a ministry "Parents Reaching Out" grant for speakers on youth wellness/resiliency and math strategies. LPCI has received approval of the \$1000 grant. In addition, parents are interested in having a speaker on social media.

## Meetings with Superintendent Chang

The cochairs met with Superintendent Chang and Principal Jovanovic in March and April to discuss the football issue to understand how we can support strong extracurriculars and clubs at LPCI. Teacher supervision is critical however there is opportunity for parent and community volunteers to work with the teacher supervisor.

We also met with Mr Chang in late May to discuss several important matters.

1. selecting a VP who is strategic, outgoing and action oriented, a strong communicator and connector, builds a culture of innovation, collaboration and openness, leads by example and inspires teachers, students and parents.
2. White boards, smart boards in classrooms to improve the student learning experience
3. prioritizing LPCI facility improvements to create a clean and inviting school specifically updated washrooms, exercise room, teachers' lounge, upgraded cafeteria and shared use with hospitality classes.
4. Expediting a meeting between TDSB staff and the LPCI Foundation treasurer to facilitate transfer of Foundation funds to TDSB and ensure they are held in trust for the purpose intended by the donors

## Next Steps

We believe LPCI is a good school and would like to support it to be a great school that engages and inspires students, teachers and parents. This year, school council has tried to reach more parents by bringing in more speakers, raising funds for equipment and activities that enhance students' learning, learning more about how teachers and volunteers support extracurriculars, liaising with the school administrators and Guidance on communications and opportunities for collaboration, reflecting on the school climate survey results, meeting with the Superintendent on school improvement and accountability and some ACLs on opportunities for parent involvement.

Based on our experience, we suggest continuing to work with the school to enhance communications with parents, support teacher requests for resources to enhance student learning, the teacher appreciation breakfast/lunch, graduation reception and create a list of volunteers to speak in the classroom or clubs and support extracurricular activities based on teacher requests. We also recommend exploring the creation of a "main event" showcase of classroom and extracurricular activities with food and fundraising to share what's happening at LPCI and boost school spirit and support.

It has been a pleasure to serve as your School Council co-chairs for 2015/16 and we would like to thank our colleagues G Wyatt and J Bragg who served as Treasurer and Speaker Liaison, Principal Jovanovic, School Council reps Josh, Enra and Jamieson, Guidance and ACLs for their participation and the parents who take the time to join us for our business meetings and speakers.

Sincerely,

Susan Paetkau and Michele Schummer

September 26, 2016