

September 29, 2014 Wm. Aberhart High School Parent Council Meeting called to order 19.03hrs by Tamie Annis-Johnson, Principal. Gord Baldwin, Assistant Principal, present.

Positions to be filled for 2014 – 2015 year.
Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer.

Volunteers are Chair Sheila Tomlinson. Vice Chair Susan Bennett. Treasurer Jennie Kwan (Born). Secretary open.

Excellent turn out, especially Gr 10 parents. Thank you all for attending this evening.

- Tamie shared the sad news of the loss of one of our Gr. 10 students. There will be no details released in respect of the family privacy. She expressed much pride in how the students conducted themselves through the funeral and with preparation to see if there was anything that they could do to make sure they respected the family and their culture. Please reach out to Tamie if any of you or your children require additional grief counselling or support. The CBE's Critical Incident Response Team and Abe Counsellors and Administration have provided on-site support to those students who wanted to access them.
- Principal Advisory Council, comprised of Aberhart students with the goal of improving communication between students and administration. They would like to have a representative present at future Parent Council Meetings.
- Calgary Herald published an article regarding class size. Tamie and Gordon provided a copy of the article, some questions for small group discussion (attached) as well as a hand out with a cross section of class sizes at Abe for the group to review. September 30th the funding will be locked down. The general consensus was that a reduction in class size is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future so parents focused on how students can continue to experience success in this "new reality." Administration explained that they have more flexibility in how they organize for instruction and can work with smaller groups of students while engaging others in independent work such as research or inquiry based projects. Tutorial time is also a way for students to access one on one teacher support. Parents didn't feel that their child's relationships with teachers were being compromised by the class size.
- Some discussion around students struggling to get in to classes that they want. Tamie said that timetabling for a regular program, a French Immersion program, a Spanish Bilingual program, and Advanced Placement classes as well as non-compulsory but highly subscribed courses such as band and choir make for complex scheduling scenarios. Student Services tries to ensure that students have at least one of their first choice options in one of the semesters but it is not always feasible, especially if they also want 3 sciences and 30-level math. If students are willing to look at online and/or

distance learning options as well, they might have a better chance of getting all the courses requested.

- Parents asked if there was a possibility of getting course outlines.
 - All teachers are required to provide Course Outlines at the beginning of each semester.
 - Home Logic: provides a summary of assignments and assessments completed and parents can see if their son/daughter have outstanding assignments.
 - Course outlines will also be on D2L if the teacher uses D2L. Parents would like to see all teachers use D2L. Majority of parents at meeting were familiar with D2L from Junior High (G.P. Vanier) and used it to keep up with how their child was doing. Tamie and Gordon will let teachers know that parents would appreciate this and look for ways of supporting teachers who don't yet use it – i.e. provide a workshop/support during non-instructional time. It is not mandatory at this time.
- Learning Centre: There has been an investment of staff and the Centre now has 2 full time staff (Teachers/Learning Strategists) and a clerical position. Students who benefit from a quiet place can write tests in the Learning Centre, if needs be. It is primarily for students who have special education needs – i.e. a learning disability, social/emotional challenges, anxiety disorder, etc. The Learning Strategists teach students how to access assistive technology such as “Read & Write Gold” and “Dragon Speak” (speech to text/text to speech software) and ensure students are developing the strategies in their Individual Program Plans. They also support their colleagues if they are interested in suggestions/strategies for meeting the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms. This is a great resource if you feel that your child may have an undiagnosed learning challenge.

Possible agenda items for future School Council Meetings that came up during this first meeting are:

- Options for use of funds collected at beginning of school year
- Discussion of options regarding formation of School Society
- Tour of Learning Centre
- Demo of Home Logic
- School Council Award criteria
- Suggestions for speakers and topics

Meeting adjourned at 20.05hrs

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sheila Tomlinson