

Issue

- School's arts electives are subpar, especially in the areas of drama and music

Specification:

- There is no continuation of the drama course past grade 10

Ideas:

- Continue the drama course into the grade 12 year
 - There is a grade 11 drama course, but it isn't a continuation of the ADD201(g10 drama prod), it is an introduction to drama much like ADA101(g9 dramatic arts) is.
- Create a strings course specialization
 - There are no strings instruments at the school which eliminates the possibility for a much desired strings course.

Policy:

- To address the inadequate musical and dramatic education at our school, some strings instruments will be bought to begin Marc Garneau's strings courses specialization. In addition, drama courses that continue the teachings in ADD201(Grade 10 Drama Production) will continue into at least the 11th grade if a grade 12 course will put too much strain on the drama teachers. The first strings course will be a grade 10 elective, with grade 9 as the general music course currently being taught. Moreover, the money for the strings instruments will come from the money that is often wasted in the band program.

Out of the many students and teachers we interviewed, we understood that many students had a passion for the arts but have not been given the chance to explore and develop that passion with the helping hand of our school and faculty. That is why we, at the Garneau

Democratic Party, wish to provide ample opportunity for students to explore music and drama.

Issue

- School's high truancy rate as well as high number of students showing up to class late.

Specification:

- Many students skip or do not show up to their classes, particularly their first period class

Policy:

- Lates and absences will now be recorded on an online system that allows parents and students to see their lates and absences in a log, as well as readily inform the school of planned absences.
- There is an emerging problem that is not being addressed; the high truancy and number of late arrivals at Marc Garneau. In addition, there are many cases where students have commitment to clubs and other extracurriculars that take them outside of school during school hours. These students should be marked as excused absences, but are more often than not marked as unexcused absences. The current system of attendance is marking the students present, late, and absent on a paper class list that is sent down to the office. This system is woefully inadequate at keeping track of the large student population at Marc Garneau for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is no appropriate time to take attendance; roll call at the beginning of a class doesn't accommodate for those who arrive late, roll call during the class interrupts the lesson, and students are getting ready to go to their next class at the end of class. Second, the amount of paper sent to each class each day accumulates over the course of a year, which adds to the amount of waste. Finally,

changing the attendance record for late students is messy, not to mention time consuming for many teachers. To combat this issue, our policy is to make attendance completely electronic. By using a software known as PowerTeacher, which allows teachers to record attendance, update marks, and write report cards, the rate of mislabelled student attendance will drop drastically. Our policy also calls for letting parents and students know of students' attendance in a more permanent approach, by letting parents see a log of their child's attendance, as the phone call to home does not carry the same effect as seeing an entire log of truant behaviour. Parents can also note down planned absences with review by the child's teachers, which allows for easier attendance taking. We only need to look to neighbouring school districts to see the efficacy of this policy; Durham District School Board has adopted SchoolConnect's "Safe Schools" Program, which gives parents an easy method of reporting student absences, along with the ability to lookup their child's homeroom, grade, and teacher information online. The program has relieved the stress of marking lates and absences on schools and has shifted it to a secure, electronic database, which is much more efficient and is quicker than a paper system.

In summation, we are not calling for the TDSB or the school to spend a lot of money to create an online system of attendance, we are calling for our school to make a small investment to adapt the online software that will make attendance for both teachers and students a more transparent and manageable process, rather than the arduous, Kafkaesque system currently in place.