

**Unionville High School**  
**School Council Meeting Minutes**

Monday, November 20, 2023  
7:00 pm – 8:30 pm  
Location: UHS Library

**AGENDA:**

1. Welcome
2. Updates from USAC
3. School Council Forum Report
4. Subject Department Presentations:
  - o Music
  - o History
5. Admin Updates
6. Treasurer Report
7. Grade 8 Open House on November 15, 2023
8. Student Activity Fee Participation
9. Shadows of Racism: Voices Unheard THE TABLE
10. Hong Fook: Introduction and Mental Health Workshops (Family Communication)

**1. WELCOME**

- Meeting was called to order at 7:00. AS shared a powerful land acknowledgement video prepared by Alexander Mackenzie High School.
- Translation from English to Mandarin is being offered.
- Parents are asked to connect with AS, if there are other language translation services needed.

**2. UPDATES FROM USAC**

- Unionville Students' Activities Council (USAC) are not ready to present any updates.

**3. SCHOOL COUNCIL FORUM REPORT**

- Several UHS parents attended the East School Council Forum on October 19, 2023, and were offered the opportunity to participate in a plenary session and up to 2 workshops.
- Parent #1 discussed the plenary session focused on the “Benefits of Human-Powered Travel to School”, with benefits ranging from improved academic performance and student well-being to increased school safety and improved air quality.
- Parent #2 discussed the workshop entitled “Supporting Math Learning at Home” which focused on 5 strands of mathematical proficiency and the role of math in everyday life.
- TVO Learn Mathify: <https://mathify.tvolearn.com/> offers free 1:1 tutoring for math tutoring with an Ontario certified teacher for students with their OEN.
- Several math-focused website links were shared with parents:

- The YRDSB Secondary Math Learning Overview: <https://www2.yrdsb.ca/schools-programs/school-programs-nav/school-programs/mathematics/secondary-math-learning-overview>
- The University of Waterloo Centre for Education in Mathematics and Computing: <https://www.cemc.uwaterloo.ca/>
- Math before Bed: <https://mathbeforebed.com/>
- Estimation 180: <https://estimation180.com/>
- Which One Doesn't Belong: <https://wodb.ca/>
- Between 2 Numbers <https://www.between2numbers.com/>
- Visual Patterns: <https://www.visualpatterns.org/>
- Would you Rather Math: <https://www.wouldyourathermath.com/>

#### 4. DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS

##### a. Music – Mr. Wigglesworth

- Current enrollment of approximately 120 students in the Arts Unionville (AU) - Music program and over 515 students from the general UHS population taking classes in core music (jazz, guitar, and musical theatre).
- Many music-focused opportunities for students including visiting guest artists, field trips, and performance opportunities.
- Music department is focused on developing and growing the core music program to offer access to AU disciplines (vocal and strings) for students who did not have many opportunities during elementary school, due to the pandemic.
- Other areas of focus include music and well-being and culturally responsible representation of music.
- There will be a free holiday concert on December 20, 2023, in the cafeteria.

##### b. History & Social Sciences – Ms. Faulkner

- Focus of the History & Social Sciences Department is to provide students with the opportunity to learn about diverse experiences of humankind while becoming critically thoughtful and informed citizens.
- Because many children are susceptible to believing what they see and read online, education in history and the social sciences will provide them with the necessary tools to navigate these complexities while making sense of what is happening in the world.
- Grade 10 History and Grade 10 Civics (0.5 credit) are mandatory courses.
- Grade 11 and 12 courses include World History, Canadian Law, Anthropology, Psychology & Sociology, Philosophy and Challenges & Changes in Society.
- There is also a move towards experiential learning where assessments will focus on the students' strengths.
- One parent questioned discussions of 2SLGBTQIA+ within the history curriculum. SN and Ms. Faulkner clarified that UHS follows the Ontario Secondary School curriculum (<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/>) and reiterated that UHS is an inclusive and diverse community and that we respect and support all persons.

#### 5. ADMIN UPDATES

- Board-wide network outages, due to hacking, caused much chaos over the past few weeks, resulting in no email access for many days. These outages will not impact university grade submission (deadline dates have been adjusted accordingly).
- Keys dates:
  - November 20 – 29: OSSLT literacy testing (for eligible Gr. 10-12 students)
  - November 27 – December 15: Grad Photos
  - November 29: Adjusted dates for Full Disclosure

- Report card distribution dates are pending, and parents will be updated via the UHS weekly newsletter.
- 6. TREASURER REPORT**
- The UHS SC budget is limited with an available balance of \$347.92.
  - UHS SC executive team will meet to discuss possible fundraising opportunities.
- 7. GRADE 8 OPEN HOUSE**
- Several UHS SC members attended the Grade 8 Open House event at UHS on November 15, 2023 to welcome new families to the UHS community.
  - Events that were highlighted included our 50+ school clubs, Fall Fest, Semi-Formal, Mayfair, Sprit Weeks, and the Grade 9 Camp Day.
- 8. STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE PARTICIPATION**
- A friendly reminder regarding the optional & voluntary \$45 UHS Student Activity Fee
  - AS has re-iterated that the Student Activity Fee supports a variety of school spirit events and activities for ALL students, and not just extracurriculars clubs.
  - Currently ~53% of the school population has contributed, however our goal is to reach 80% of the UHS student population.
  - Parents are urged to take 1-2 minutes to pay via School Cash Online at <https://yrdsb.schoolcashionline.com/> (have your student number ready).
- 9. SHADOWS OF RACISM: VOICES UNHEARD THE TABLE**
- Students have come together to share their immigrant experiences of journeying to and adapting to life in Canada in collaborative vinyl recordings. Some of the artwork for the vinyl's are on display outside the main office.
- 10. PRESENTATION ON EFFECTIVE FAMILY COMMUNICATION: Hannah Xu from the Hong Fook Mental Health Association**

Some key themes throughout the discussions:

- As parents we need to form a secure attachment relationship with our children, as this is protective against stress and other physical, mental and relational health symptoms in adolescents.
- Attachment relationships with our children are built on trust, communication, and the lack of alienation.
- We can use the C.A.R.E. system to foster a secure parent-child attachment relationship:
  - **C**aregiving
  - **A**ccessible
  - **R**esponsive
  - **E**ngaged
- There are some common blocks to the development of a secure attachment relationship with our children, including feeling unneeded as a parent, communication barriers (cultural or generational gaps), financial stresses or tackling our own emotions (fear, self-blame, guilt, etc.). We must work through these blocks by being responsive as parents.
- As parents we can't always solve our child's problems, but we can VALIDATE their feelings by acknowledging that the way they are feeling is normal.
- Validation is the act of listening, acknowledging, and accepting your child's feelings, even if they are negative. It entails listening to them express their emotions without

ignoring, dismissing, or judging them, even if we don't agree with their emotional response.

- Validation assures our child that their feelings, thoughts, and internal experiences are valid and increases their self-worth.
- If consistently invalidated, children may start questioning their own emotions and may learn to express their emotions in other ways like defiant behavior or self-harm.

### **Steps to Validation**

- i. Notice your child's emotions.
- ii. Say something validating (I can see why you are upset... That must be frustrating... Tell me what happened... I'd feel that way too...).
- iii. Repeats steps i & ii.
- iv. Provide emotional support (hug, reassure)
- v. Provide practical support if needed (problem solving, redirecting)

### **Validation Guidelines**

- Active listening is key – stop, listen, and observe – slow down your response and notice your emotions.
- Recognize that your teen is acting emotionally.
- Ask questions if needed.
- Try to understand their behaviors from your teen's perspective.
- Respond to their feelings and reflect back without judgement.
- Acknowledge your teens perspective.
- Apologizing is a powerful tool, as parents we should be able to apologize to our children.
- Do not judge or lecture.
- You and your child influence each other and change each other. Children do not need perfect parents to thrive.
- Authoritative Parenting is key - parents that are nurturing, responsive, and supportive, yet set firm limits for their children.

### **Some suggested reading:**

- Parent Effectiveness Training (Dr. Thomas Gordon)
- Untangled: Guiding Teenage Girls Through the Seven Transitions into Adulthood (Lisa Damour, PhD)
- How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk (Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlich)

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.**

**NEXT MEETING – January 22, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.**