

## **Unionville High School – School Council Meeting**

**Date:** April 24, 2023 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

**Council Members:** Anoosh, Felix, Wenjie, William, Neely, Mandip, Sonya

**UHS Staff:** Mr. Amol Gheewala, Ms. Susie Nunes Ms. Effie Kyriopoulos, Ms. Suelyn Cheong

### **Agenda:**

- Welcome
- Updates from USAC – 5 min
- 1. ADMIN Updates – 5 min
- 2. Subject Presentations:
  - Moderns – Mr. Lansing – 5 min
  - Physical Education – Mr. Wilson – 5 min pre-recorded video
- 3. The Gift of Learning – Stress and Our Kids – Resiliency for Life @ 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm – Jackie Robertson

### **Minutes:**

#### **Welcome**

- Ms. Cheong welcomes all parents that were joining In person and online.
- Ms. Cheong read the land acknowledgement
- USAC update (Ms Faulkner, William Zhang and Aditya Manyal)
  - Coming Wed Unity Day – celebrate diversity, culture
  - May – 17 – clubs will be hosting activities and events. Demo, sports, and other activities – will have a shortened schedule for the day.
  - Student election – google form will be posted. Close on May 5<sup>th</sup>. 10 candidates will be selected followed by elections.
- Ms. Cheong introduced Anoosh (Chair of the School Council), and share her thanks from the Admin team to the School Council.  
Anoosh – it's a team effort, thank the UHS staff and admin team for their great effort.

#### **ADMIN Updates – by Ms. Cheong and Mr. Gheewala**

- UHS has about 1950 students – the cafeteria is often busy and there is actually lunch through all 5 periods of the day with some sitting on the ground. Students have examined 3 proposed plans and have selected one of them for providing additional seating utilizing existing space. There is a budget of 30K to help implement and solve the problem.
- Other activities
  - April 20-30 = DECA International in Orlando (Mr. Chang led the student team)
  - ESCS – Every School Counts Survey
  - May 3-5 E-distribution of midterm report
  - May 5 – PA Day
  - May 9 - AU Dance highlight (tickets available from School Cash online)
  - May 10 -11 Music Spring Celebration
  - May 10-12 – OFSAA Badminton (Mr. Tam to take 2 students representing UHS for the province)
  - May 10, 16, 24 Dog Therapy
  - May 11-13 AU Drama to NTS in UT (National Competition)
  - May 12-16 – U of Saskatchewan (11 students will be going to U of S to do some research)

- May 17 - Mayfair
- May 18 – Youth Speak Presentation
- May 30 - Drama Presentations
- June 1 Prom@Paradise banquet hall
- June 5 Music Banquet
- June 7 Arts cafe
- June 8 Athletic banquet
- June 14 Arts U celebration
- June 21-27 exams
- June 27 – Graduation@Venu Event Space

## **Subject Presentations**

- **Moderns – Mr. Lansing – 5 min**

- Various French courses are offered. The department will look to offer Spanish, as well as Mandarin
- Classical studies are being reconsidered.
- The focus is on lifelong language learning
  - Instilling students with a love of lifelong language learning
  - Train competencies to beyond school and into the workplace
- Mr. Lansing Showed a flow of the FSL Core Fresh Courses.  
Students who successfully completed FSF4U will receive a Certificate of completion and would be candidates for DELF testing for an internationally recognized level of French ability.
- French has been destreamed and there is no longer an applied stream but just the academic curriculum.
  - To promote equity – provide students with opportunities to have as many options for as long as possible
  - There are some challenges – working through them with board resources (dealing with a larger and more diverse range of comfort levels with French background moving into academic French)
  - FSF10 – is a beginner course.
- Activities
  - Field trip to BIFF's Bistro (French restaurant)
  - Field trip La Troupe des Anciens – performed plays for students.
  - See movies online, watch concerts
  - Field trip to ROM
- Looking to reintroduce some activities (Spanish, French) from the past.
  - St. Conat Outdoor Ed. Immersion in Quebec
  - March Break Trip to Europe
  - Trip to Spain, Italy

- **Physical Education – Mr. Wilson – 5 min pre-recorded video**

- Specialized course – outdoor ed education (2 sections instead of 1 this year), students travel on excursions and field trips,
- 3 days 2 nights camping trip (in Algonquin) Rock climbing, mountain biking, dog sledding, mini hikes
- Grade 12 kinesiology, and leadership courses available
- Athletic teams through all 3 seasons, soccer cross country volleyball, basketball, badminton, rock climbing, track, ultimate frisbee, slow pitch. UHS has one of the top student participation rates.

**Presentation from Jackie Robertson (Registered Psychotherapist) on Stress and Our Kids – Resiliency for Life**

Some key themes throughout the discussions:

- Parents need to give adolescents the tools to learn resiliency. We cannot be snowplow parents (ie, we cannot simply clear all things in their way). Doing everything, shielding them from every decision and every issue is not helping them to face the real world.
- Building resilience is about building a relationship with adolescents. Engagement is important.
- Understand that adolescents may not show appreciation for what parents are doing.
- Parents should refrain from jumping to conclusions or an implied consequence.
- SAFETY trumps everything. If there is a safety issue, then parents need to step in.
- Concerned/fearful parents can become too controlling. This does not work well with adolescents.
- Practice makes progress – we are working towards these.

1. Defining resilience

- Resilience is the ability to overcome adversities (acute or ongoing traumatic experiences, hardship or suffering).
- People and communities who have developed resilience can resist the efforts of hardship or bounce back and return to, or even surpass their previous level of functioning.
- Resilience occurs in the context of adversity
- Is the capacity to utilize the resources around us to bounce back
- Hidden resiliency – when solutions are not always the ones parents want  
Process – not an end product. Teens might come up with answers that we may not like or be comfortable with – but it is still resiliency.

2. The developmental stage of adolescence

- Early Adolescence – 10 -13
- Middle Adolescence 14-17
- Late Adolescence 19-21
- We focus on the middle stat. Some characteristics
  - A continuation of puberty
  - Romantic Relationships and exploration of Sexuality
  - Starting to consider outside perspective (not just always thinking about oneself)
  - Higher stakes with emotions and feelings
  - THERE IS NO PASS to it – all teenagers have to go through this – this can be a very difficult and roller coaster process. Not an easy place to be.
  - The The brain is not fully developed till 25 for a male, and younger for a female. Be aware of this and understand where children are at when communicating and engaging – do not expect them to fully think things through as an adult.

3. Resilience Factors (Michael Ungar)

Structure	Sense of Belonging
Consequences	Rights and Responsibilities
Intimate/Sustaining Relationships	Safety and Sup[ort
Other Support Relationships	Positive Mindset
Powerful sense of Identity	Physical Well-being
Sense of Control	Financial Well-being

- Note that these factors do not work the same way depending on the stage. For example, a positive mindset may work better with earlier teens than late teens– parents need to be aware of this and not treat and deal with kids of different ages the same way.
- To teenagers – we should act as coaches – on the sideline, and provide advice. We should not be playing the game for them.

- Resilience Indicators
    - In a difficult spot, I do what be done to make it right
    - I influence where I can rather than focus on what I cannot
    - I don't take criticism personally
    - I generally manage to keep things in perspective
    - I am calm in a crisis
    - I am good at finding solutions to problems
    - I wouldn't describe myself as an anxious person.
  - Our role is to help our children to try and get there – they are not there. We are to coach and mentor them – show them the tools that they can use to develop these.
4. P.A.C.E – Playfulness Acceptance, Curiorisity Empathy
- **Playfulness** – parents are solution-focus – instead of always coming up with a solution right away, can consider doing something fun – don't have to always come up with a solution. This builds relationships.
  - **Acceptance** – accepting that is what they feel, not necessarily agreeing to the feeling. When we accept, it does not mean we agree – but accepting allows communication. The adolescent is ego-centric – everything evolves around them – so it can be difficult to be accepting. However, it is important to accept how they feel.
  - **Curiosity** – wanting to know more about what they are thinking – take available opportunities to get them to open up. Timing is important. Parents cannot dictate when children will open up.
  - **Empathy** is about hearing the pain and difficulties of adolescents. It is saying something “with a period” without a “but”. We accept their feelings. Parents need not agree to the sentiments or their inclinations, but we need to accept this is how they feel.
  - P.A.C.E. parenting
    - Positive Childhood Experiences
      - Feel free/safe. about talking to your family about feelings
      - Feel your family stood by you in difficult times
      - Enjoyed participating in community traditions
      - Feel of sense of belonging in high school
      - Feel supported by friends
      - Feel at least 2 non-parent adults who take an interest in you
      - Feel safe and protected by an adult in your home
    - Remember their developmental stages
      - IDENTITY
      - INDEPENDENCE
      - INDIVIDUATION – children may be forming relationships outside of the home as they try to establish their identity. This can be a sports team, other clubs, circle of friends. This can be very positive. Parents need to understand and appreciate these developments.

PACE opens up lines of communication.

5. Power of Connection
- Connections are important. Relationships are important for communication.
  - Rules without relationships lead to rebellion
  - Connections before corrections
  - Seek clarification and understanding of their perspective (We have our own bias, temperament, our culture, and life experiences which adolescents do not necessarily share, or is capable of understanding without the type of life experiences we have had)

- Assist in problem-solving – but not solving it for them all the time
- Repair often
 

Adults are responsible for repair. Resiliency is not about the lack of difficulties, but someone who is there with you when you face it. Parents need to repair any problems with their teenagers so we can stand by them when they have a need.
- Your child can make mistakes and have their own solutions. A secure connection allows for their own personal growth.
  - Sometimes, it is useful to stay silent for a while (before we jump in with a correction or solution) but is difficult. This signals we are not just reacting, but we are taking it in their sentiments, their point of view, and their predicaments. Again, accepting it is how they see it or want to solve it does not mean we agree – but they need to know that we hear them first.
- SAFETY trumps everything – if teenagers are picking bad choices, parents must jump in.

#### 6. Promoting Resilience in Teens

- Promote/maintain a teens' sense of belonging to their community
- A secure attachment to at least one adult – is very important
- Give youth “something to shout about” (passing and giftedness)
- Look for “Hidden Resilience” in “negative” situations
- Ruptures and repairs should be routine (kids don't know how to repair, and they may move away from you if not repaired). We want to create positive connections.
- Shift the focus from professionals to the community/family
- “Not Knowing” approach – genuine curiosity, openness
- Allow for teens ownership and empowerment for their own solutions, even if they are bad. Natural and logical consequences can be good learning experiences.

Interesting videos:

- [It's Not About the Nail](#)
- [Brains: Journey to Resilience](#)