

Unionville High School – School Council Meeting

Date: Apr, 25

Council Members: Anoosh, Felix, Gloria, Mandip

UHS Staff

- Mr. Edmund Leung (Math)
- Mr. Zachary Teitel and Ms. Melissa Del Rosario (English)
- Ms. Suelyn Cheong (Principal)
- Mr. Belmonte

Agenda:

- Welcome
Land Acknowledgement
- Subject Presentations - 7:02 pm – 7:15 pm
 - o Math by Mr. Leung
 - o English by Mr. Teitel and Ms. Rosario
- Special Guest Speaker – Dr. Ann Lopez – 7:15 pm
Conversations on Identity and Belonging – part 3 of a 3 part series
- Q & A

Minutes:

- Welcome by Ms. Cheong
- Land Acknowledgment by Mr. Gheewala
- Welcome participants from other schools outside of UHS.
- Math (Mr. Edmund Leung)
 - o Introduced the math team
 - o The goal is to provide optimal learning for all learners, challenging students to think critically and solve problems collaboratively.
 - o Destreaming approach – work with real-life problems collaboratively, teamwork, using a spiraling approach (each topic is revisited multiple times, deepening as they move along), develop perseverance in solving math problems.
 - o Encourage different ways to solve a problem, using vertical classroom (whiteboarding in teams) to show thinking processes, and solutions.
 - o Various assessment approaches to show understanding, to evaluate the learning process
 - o Extra help is provided for those who need it.
 - o The math team believes that
 - All students are capable of learning math to a high degree
 - All students leaving the math classes should believe that in themselves.
- English (Mr. Teitel and Ms. Rosario)
 - o Beginning next year, switch ENG3U/C/E to NBE3U/C/E
2 courses next year, and fully switched over to NBE by 2023-24

- o A response to the Truth & Reconciliation 94 calls to action (In particular ER# 62 and # 63) – in addressing topics such as residential schools to honor the history, and to develop intercultural understanding
- o Key understanding
 - Community
 - Ancestral knowledge
 - Traditional knowledge
 - Land
 - Interconnection of all things
 - Cultural diversity, indigenous and treaty rights
- o Benefits to students
 - Universities and colleges will consider this as fulfilling the same credit as ENG3U1. It is also indicative of a learner who's trying to make society more just and inclusive.
 - Students input, ideas, and voice will help to shape a new learning program.
 - Students will play an active role in the process of reconciliation.
- Special Guest Speaker – Dr. Ann Lopez
 - o Professor of educational leadership and policy in the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.
 - o Director of the Center for Leadership and Diversity and Provostial Advisor, Access Programs.
 - o The immediate past president of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME).
 - o Dr. Lopez spoke on various topics
 - Focus on students – how does education make students feel their worthiness? How to improve on that?
 - Our entities capture all aspects of who we are – they are assets.
 - A teacher's background and various identities are assets that they bring to the role. Likewise, students bring different assets from their identities.
 - Conversation on identities in school
 - Students who feel that teachers see them as who they are, and understand their identity, are more engaged and have better academic success
 - Helps us to culturally border-cross – opportunity to learn to interact with a wide variety of students with different identities, the effort is affirming, is to say “I see you”.
 - How to ensure that the school space is a space where everyone feels like they belong, are seen, and heard?
 - Build relationships with students and families, ask questions, learn about them
 - Check our bias, unlearn our bias
 - Curriculum – inclusive and teaching aspects from different cultures, accomplishments, and history of different groups, not just Euro-centric.
 - How do we affirm students and their unique identities in the teaching and learning space?
 - Lovingly redirecting students – not just discipline, attitudes matter

- Teaching and learning begin at the door, students learn via seeing, experiencing, and watching, not just in class.
 - Policy and practices need to align – to affirm so students will reach their potential by ability, not stereotypes.
- Factors that impede a sense of belonging in schools and how do we overcome them
 - Sometimes traditions can be exclusionary
 - Students' feelings of not "belonging" to certain subjects
 - It is hard work and needs to be intentional to address
 - Identify students who are not faring well because of the system
 - Acknowledge the problem, unlearn bias, and learn new ways to address
 - Not by the individual – approach and solve as a team
- How do we support students to successfully engage in cultural border-crossing? In the context of increasing diversity? Important in conversations on identity and belonging
 - Acknowledge we all come with different identities, experiences
 - Begin to recognize what we don't know – do not be afraid to ask questions from others on things that are different, that we do not understand
 - Work intentionally to challenge misconception – naming the issues, learning, unlearning, relearning, for educators, families and students.