



1000 New Westminster Drive
Thornhill ON L4J 8G3
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Westmount Collegiate Institute School Council Meeting Minutes January 18, 2017

1. **Welcome – Daphna Romi and Mark Feigenbaum:**
 - Welcome to our first meeting of 2017

2. **Principal's Report – Sheri Epstein:**
 - Last night and tonight – dance show is going on. They held a matinee for some students. Received special permission to host it last night since it was weather inclement day.
 - Music night was cancelled due to inclement weather day in December.
 - Next week is Winterfest – Music night.
 - The Crucible play was last week. Grade 12 arts production. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. At the closing they announced that for next semester they will do The Drowsy Chaperone. A light Musical set in 1928.
 - Students are in the midst of getting ready for exams, and admin is getting ready for staffing for semester 2. We have 4 LTO positions to interview for.
 - Once semester 2 hits, school begins the process for interviewing for the 2017 – 2018 school year.
 - Parent: Is there any way to receive the dates for the Drama, Music and Art sooner, so that we can plan to attend? A: Yes. We will advertise sooner. Dates are given by the theatre. School has no say over performance dates.
 - Parent: How much are second semester timetables changing? A: For grade 9 and 10 who had holes in their timetables, there was a lot of re-arranging. For the senior kids it is more teacher and room changes, but not course changes.

3. **VP Report – Sheldon Zelsman / Lisa Wargo**
 - Grade 9 Math EQAO – Applied and Academic began today and continues tomorrow. Hopefully our students do well. There is no makeup date.
 - Exams are coming up starting Jan 26 to Feb 1st. The basic exam timetable has been posted a long time ago. Students have already received the detailed exam schedule.
 - Make sure they are preparing well and sleeping well.
 - School is offering an after school literacy course for kids in grade 10 that will be writing the literacy test on March 30th. Free tutoring after



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school starting February 14 twice a week for an hour and a half for 5 weeks. Grade 10s will receive a registration form tomorrow.

- We will have a Guest Speaker on February 8th: Michelle Cassidy – Mental Health Lead for the YRDSB. She is an excellent public speaker. She works with teachers and educators to advance our mental health initiatives through the board. Her style is very approachable. This presentation will run instead of our school council meeting. Depending on numbers we will either meet in the Cafeteria or in the Library. Gearing her talk to adults.

4. **Student Council Report – Ronny Litvack-Katzman**

- December 8 we had our semi-formal. It was very well attended. Better attendance than the past 4 years.
- Today hosted Chill Day – handed out stress relief mechanisms, played music in the atrium, had bean bag chairs and offered exam strategies and studying tips.
- February – March we will host a Snakes and Lattes environment. Will serve coffee, tea and hot chocolate, allow for kids to get to know each other better.
- April –kick off for the Relay for Life that will be held in May to benefit the Cancer Society.

5. **Guidance Report – Rod Conte**

- 37 days to March Break.
- Application deadline for colleges is February 1st.
- OUAC application deadline was January 11th.
- Kids are waiting for marks to get transmitting at the end of this semester. There will be a large wave of offers. Biggest wave of offers will be at the end of semester 2.
- We had our assembly on Jan 12 for all grades for course selection. That presentation is on the guidance website. All students received all courses and instructions. They are all posted on the website.
- If the kids have any issues there are forms in the Guidance office where they can get assistance.
- Career cruising opened up on January 13th.
- Feb 24th is the deadline to submit your courses for next year.
- Will send out a verification on March 22nd and will need parents signature on the final course selection. Signed forms will need to be back on that Friday March 24th. From March until June students will not be able to make any changes to the timetable.
- We have workshops to help the students through course selection. Dates and times are posted on the Guidance website and in the guidance office.



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- As of Feb 21st we can take meetings with parents if they need to meet with us. We still have access to make changes up to the verification date.
- Exams are coming up, stress levels are high. Make sure students pay attention to the exam schedule.
- Parent: Re university application, if my son applies to three universities, do the universities see what other universities the kid applied to? A: No, they only see the ranking (if they were the first, 2nd or 3rd choice). After the deadline the open offers get erased. You can accept one and then accept a second offer when it comes in. That means the first acceptance gets cancelled. Keep in mind that some acceptances are tied to fees that are not refundable. There is a lot of time between the offers and having to accept. You don't have to rush to accept the first offer that comes in. You have until the last day to accept.
- Parent: As they get older, there are a lot more electives. Do the students know them? A: Yes, it is all on course selection.
- Rod: Keep in mind that the only compulsory courses to get into a program are English (for all), math or sciences. None of the electives are needed to get into a program.
- By grade 11 you don't need to know what your career will be, you just need your pathway. And to know what you do not want to choose. It will help narrow it down.
- May 26 you will receive an offer/waitlist or refuse. June 1st you must accept.
- Read your offers clearly to know what their conditions are. You don't want to have your offers revoked.
- Parent: When do they make course selections for summer school? A: April or May. Keep in mind that it's a much harder course. It's a great way to get more sciences between grade 11 and 12 to ease up on the sciences during the year if they need it for university applications.
- If a grade 12 fails a course and they need to go to summer school to get the credit, most universities won't wait for that grade to hold the offer. Communicate with the school to let them know and see if they will wait.

6. New Business

- School council forum was great. They have great minds that come to advise you on the board plan for school improvements. Then they had three groups that talked about the three board foci – Math, Mental Health and Modern learning.
- One of the foundations of modern learning is that students should have a say in what is going on in the classroom. That they have a say in shaping how the class might go in line with the curriculum. That



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students have a say in their education. For them to be mindful and genuinely engaged in what they are learning. What type of technology are we bringing into the learning process? How is the classroom shaped for optimal student learning?

- We had a town hall. We took a group of kids from each grade to get the students input into what is working and what isn't. A lot of the feedback was about their learning environment. Questions were asked about changing the common areas. They want lounge chairs for the atrium. Charging stations. They want round tables in the cafeteria as it is more conducive for conversations. They want their classrooms to look different. We have taken their thoughts and ideas. We shared some of it with the staff. We will try to incorporate some of their suggestions. We will continue with the town hall throughout the year to get more feedback.
- Parent: February 3rd transfer date. For parents that want to apply for kids to transfer in, can they apply for a transfer? A: Any grade 8 will fill out a package for their home school and attach a transfer form. For other grades, they fill out the transfer form at their school, have the principle sign it, and bring it in to Westmount.
- Parent: Are you still open to transfers for all? A: We can't take more than 50 additional students. We will eliminate the common lunch for grades 9 and 10. Grades 9 and 10 will have lunch period 3 and 4 but not all during the same period.

Next School Council meeting is on Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at 7:00pm – we will have a guest speaker that day. Following School Council meeting will be March 22, 2017 in the Library.