RCI School Council Meeting September 25, 2017

Minutes

Review and acceptance of last meeting minutes nominated and seconded.

**Student Update (Omar Fakih & Falhad Salah)**

* students are voting on Grade Representatives this week, so there has not been a meeting of RUSTCO as yet.
* RCI School Council asked what the student body would want if we could raise money for them to donate. Discussion around potential items such as a third microwave or fans fo the classrooms. Good fans are about $80 each from Home Depot, but equity issues need to be considered (which classrooms, teachers who use their own money to buy fans for their rooms, etc.). RUSTCO to discuss and get back to RCI School Council with ideas.
* Discussion around if the RCI School Council did fundraising again this year (e.g. Pizza Lunches), would RUSTCO be able to help? Yes, RUSTCO would assist to raise student awareness, market the event, etc.
* RUSTCO wants to raise school spirit. One way is to have a Semi-formal where all grades can

enjoy a night together, make new friends who can also be their homework buddies, don’t have to wear uniforms. Allows real bonding between grades. Possible date is February 16 (day before Family Day)

* Last year’s semi-formal didn’t happen – too expensive, location was too hard to get to (not on transit) and not enough marketing or notification before the event. RUSTCO will focus on finding a location closer (maybe on transit) and more affordable.
* Semi-formal location ideas (on transit). Hasn’t been as successful (too far), but hoping to make it closer and more affordable, fundraising ideas, and how to get more participation
* Discussion around what kind of fundraising the school does already:
* Different groups fundraising in different ways (Me to We – bake sales, Robotics – BBQ & Bake Sales, etc.)
* RUSTCO hasn’t done much fundraising before, thinking about a BBQ, dress-down day
* The School Council did pizza lunches last year to raise money for the 90th Reunion. They were fairly successful and may be more successful this year if the students know the money is going towards something for them (fans, microwaves, etc.)
* Friday is Orange Shirt Day to recognize residential schools. There won’t be a charge for this event, but RUSTCO is considering Dress-Down Days as a fundraiser this year. The newsletter can be used to notify parents of these and make sure their student has a toonie to pay (help to reduce students trying to not pay).

**School Elections**

Parents volunteer for the following positions to make up the Executive Committee:

* Chair – Harpreet Gulri
* Secretary & Communications – Kimberly de Witte
* Treasurer – Richard Villavicenco
* Ward 7 Reps – Lucy Coyle, Mageswaran Palany & Farhia Warsame
* Fundraising – Donna Maiato & Farhia Warsame

Minutes will be emailed to attendees of the School Council meetings (using the sign-up sheet) for review and comments. Approved minutes will be posted on the website to be available to all parents.

**Administration Report (Paul Edwards)**

There has been a significant accident this weekend. There is a certain protocol in the Board that allows us to only divulge information that the parents give permission to divulge.

News broke this past Sunday of an accident and three 2017 RCI graduates were involved

TDSB sent 3 social workers to assist RCI’s social worker, a temporary child & youth worker and Guidance department. That support team was available to students and staff all day today and will be here tomorrow. The students did use the help.

RCI is in contact with one of the three families. We ask that you keep them in your thoughts and prayers. The 3 RCI alumni are in hospital along (2 serious) and one student from another school is in critical condition.

631 students this year. Our target for the current staffing was 614. A snapshop of student numbers will be taken on October 31st to determine if there is a need for more/less staffing.

Another .5 staff will be hired for the second semester for co-op. Real plus to give more students work experience in the real world.

One teacher could not come back in September so there is one supply teacher. A contract teacher has been hired and will start on Monday.

The office staffing is going really well, students are settling in and doing well.

Other questions?

Parents are concerned that just three weeks into the year and Grade 9 Masters kids already can’t do the math. They are struggling with the sheer volume of work. No opportunity to make friends, build relationships because they are doing so much homework. And some of the homework doesn’t seem to be necessary, it’s busy work. Although parents understand with math in particular, practice is required to master the concepts.

The pressure in Grade 9 is so great.

The volume of test material is great too

In the master’s the teacher assumes the student already know it or the student should teach themselves. The teachers aren’t trying to find out if the student has the knowledge, but just expecting them.

Administration response – The math department has set up math help in the morning at lunch and after school. We can pass along this schedule sooner rather than later. There is free online math tutoring program by TVO. Brochures have been given to students. Also the Khan Academy.

Four years ago there was a similar concern and the staff put on a Math Night to show parents and students how we do math. There was only one math staff change from last year. We will bring it up to the staff again. Maybe some more overview of what we’re trying to teach them.

There is always a transition from elementary to high school. There is an early warning system in the form of a letter in mid-October. Our staff would call parents if they think a student is at risk. The staff is profession and caring. Students’ grade is based on curriculum, not the enrichment part.

Mr. Edwards will bring these concerns back to the Math department. Perhaps the School Council would want the Math dept to present at a meeting.

**Tips for Student Success (Karen McCrimmon & Carla Cernic)**

Concerns about guidance or student services, please send those to Carla Cernic, new head of guidance

Students who feel connected to their school do better academically.

Transition to high school is stressful. Having each student feeling like they have a caring adult in the school is critical. Guidance will be checking in with each Grade 9 students to make sure the transition is going well.

Transferable skills are important ways to be successful in university and the real world. Organizing schedules to have time for homework and social is an important transferable skill.

Attendance is crucial to success in school (late and absenteeism).

Much easier to create a good habit than to break a bad habit.

My Blueprint:

* helps students ‘map backwards’ – what they want to do, and what courses they need to take to get there
* Budgeting section
* Scholarship opportunities
* Parent account available
* Helps students set some goals, help them stay motivated in High School
* In Grade 10, students spend a lot of time on this in the Careers course

Organizational Skills is a huge way to help your student succeed. Most students don’t have good organizational skills. They have time in class to complete work, but they said ‘I work better at home’ and then they have ‘so much homework’. Ask your student if they had time in class, what they are doing, how do you like your teachers, etc. Don’t believe them when they say they have no homework, especially when they have math or science.

Provide a space at home for working, but get them away from their phone.

Breakfast program is fully up and running each day before 8:45

Grilled cheese, scrambled eggs, pancakes, etc.

Students are asked to donate change to keep the program going, but not required

THRIVE – student-led group around mental wellness that will meet during lunch on Fridays. Thinking about creating a Wellness Room, positive messaging, ways to increase resiliency. Mr. Edwards has an open door once a week for students to see him.

Clubs you can join at anytime throughout the year.

Kids aren’t using their agenda; there is a School Agenda app online that some schools use. Teachers can push out communications to parents and students

Several teachers are using Google classrooms

Won’t be adding parents’ email to the class list, but parents can contact the teacher through email at any time.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Next Meeting Topic re: Social Media 101

Student Help Phone are coming to speak with staff on October 6. Karen McCrimmon will ask again then about coming to our October 30 meeting

Maybe somebody from Culture Link? Julie Ardell is the liaison

Karen McCrimmon and Kimberly to look at other options from the Mental Wellness contacts from last spring.

Robotics (Lisa Truant-Tam)

If any parents want to help out, the Robotics program is looking for help with new students and parents. Even if you aren’t scientifically inclined, there’s a place for you, check it out. There’s a website through the RCI homepage. It’s a lot of fun!!

Grade 8 Info Night is same night as UFA’s

Donna – interested in setting up a committee with influential alumni to help better the school through fundraising for something big. Paul to connect Donna with them

Child minding provided by Karen’s students next meeting.