
SIR ROBERT BORDEN HIGH SCHOOL

Annual Report June 2017

ABOUT THE COUNCIL

According to the Sir Robert Borden (SRB) School Council Constitution, the SRB School Council's mandate includes "serving as a liaison among the school, the Board, parents, students and the community, advising on areas of school policy, maintaining a school wide focus within the parameters established by the Board." The Council also "proposes initiatives aimed at maximizing educational opportunities and enhancing school life and establishing its goals, priorities and procedures, while promoting the best interests of the community."

COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR:

Council Role	Council Member
Principal	Wendy Verreault
Vice-Principals	Katie Crombach Ken McQueen
Student Representative	Joshua Wolfsohn
Teaching Staff	Kim Bruton Michael Blakely
Non-Teaching Staff	
Community Representative	
Co-chairs	Monica Nevins Carmen Parsons
Secretary/Treasurer	Samira Ouaz
OCASC Representative	Maria Schnarr
Western Area Review Representative	Tracey Graham
Council Members at Large	
Torie DelGrosso	Mary Doueidar
Ann McEachern	Ema Chaudry
Jen Poole	Cynthia Jones Kalhok
Ismail Elmi	

A huge thank you to all council members for their commitment and contributions throughout this year.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

In 2016-17, there were six Council meetings. Most council meetings included

- a school report, by student representative Joshua Wolfsohn, sharing non-academic events organized by and for students throughout the year;
- a teacher report, by teacher representative Kim Bruton or Michael Blakely, sharing notable academic activities or events; and
- the principal's report, by Wendy Verreault, providing a global perspective on SRB, leadership initiatives within SRB, as well as the impact of various board-wise initiatives on SRB.

Other members also reported to Council. The SRB School Council representative to OCASC (Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils), Maria Schnarr, shared news and ideas from the regular meetings of this body to help inform our School Council's discussions, particularly regarding Prom. Also, particularly early in the year, Western Area Review Representative Tracey Graham reported on the consultation process and developments in the plans.

In addition, each meeting included a special presentation on a different topic:

- September 13, 2016 : preceded by a Prom information meeting (Wendy Verreault)
- November 8, 2016 : Overview of the SHSM (Specialist High School Major) programs offered at SRB (Architectural Design and Emergency Services "911"), by teachers Mr. Snyder and Mr. Green. This included a tour of their classrooms and the equipment students use, as well as an impromptu testimonial from a recent graduate of the SHSM program.
- January 17, 2017 : a hands-on tour of the Career Cruising course calendar and the on-line selection form, used by students, with their parents' input, to make their course selections for the coming year (VP Katie Crombach).
- March 21, 2017 : The Western Accommodation Review Plans and their impact on SRB and its population (Wendy Verreault). Members of the Greenbank Middle School Council also attended.
- May 9, 2017 : Cooperative education at SRB, by teacher Mr. Zubryn. This enthusiastic presentation was preceded by an engaging slide show demonstrating the rich variety of cooperative education opportunities that students at SRB have undertaken in recent years.
- June 13, 2017 : In cooperation with Greenbank Middle School Council, the Council meeting was preceded by tours and information for incoming parents, to welcome them to SRB and SRB Council.

Aside from special presentations and reports, two major themes of discussion dominated the conversation through the 2016-17 school year: prom and the Western Area Accommodation Review.

PROM

Prom (an evening of dinner and dancing for graduating students) has been organized by students and independently of the school (a historical decision dating back some 15 years, at best guess). Principal Verreault has been working for the past several years on changing the tradition to one of a school-sanctioned prom, which would imply lower cost, less emphasis on after-parties, and greater inclusiveness to all students.

This year, Council Member Maria Schnarr stepped forward to participate in meetings with the student prom organizers, working actively to understand the many factors which have impeded the change to a school-sanctioned prom. Chief among these is the recruitment of Grade 11 students to the prom committee, early in their Grade 11 year, by the external prom company (with the help of the current Grade 12 prom committee members). Those students consequently feel invested in continuing the tradition with the external prom company. Ms. Schnarr also reported on the success of various other high schools in the OCDSB who have recently switched to some form of school-sanctioned prom; in some cases this change in tradition was the outcome of a democratic student vote.

Here at SRB, Principal Verreault held several information meetings for students and parents about the attractive possibilities of a school-sanctioned prom. This sparked much discussion about prom among the students, and there was some impetus to go ahead; but in late December and early January it became clear that proceeding would lead to two proms. Nonetheless, significant progress was made, including that the prom committee agreed to have SRB manage the prom finances. An ongoing objective is to have the prom committee be elected as part of the student council to ensure representation of all students.

WESTERN AREA ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

The school year 2016 began with the publication of the Initial Report of the Western Area Accommodation Review. This was an OCDSB-led planning process which considered the distribution of students and of student space in Elementary, Middle and Secondary Schools in the western region (defined as the schools leading to Bell High School, Merivale High School, SRB, and Woodroffe High School). The objective of the review was to recommend changes to take place for the 2017-18 school year (including, controversially, school closures) in line with several goals, including offering more equitable access to programs, having larger school populations to enrich program offerings, and phasing out stand-alone Grade 7-8 Middle Schools in favour of Grade K-8 or Grade 7-12 schools. The OCDSB led a consultation process with

stakeholders through a variety of online surveys and in-person meetings, then published its final report in March 2017.

The outcome of the review is the closure of Greenbank Middle School, and the integration of Grade 7-8 into the student population of SRB. Principal Verreault reported extensively on the plans for creating a Grade 7-8 space within SRB, distinct from the Grade 9-12 population. These include several renovation projects, including new lockers, bike racks, renovations to several classrooms, the replacement of the ceiling in the upper gym, and the addition of portables to accommodate potential overflow in the fall. Longer term plans include the construction of a new gymnasium, funding from the Ministry for which has recently been approved. (The construction this summer of a new learning commons (library) is not part of the Review.)

COUNCIL FINANCES

The SRB School Council receives an annual allocation of \$500 from the Ministry. All Council funds are held in the school bank account and administered by the school. The principal's report at each meeting includes a discussion of the Council Finances. This year, the School Council elected to purchase a microwave for use by students, as well as three Chromebooks and one Tech Tub. The Chromebooks will either be loaned to students from the Learning Commons, or kept in one of the portable classrooms next year.

The CFO and the Manager of Financial Services of the OCDSB have circulated a Memorandum regarding the management of School Council Finances in cases of school closure. If Greenbank Middle School Council ends the year with a positive balance, this balance will become part of the SRB School Council funds, and a new section in the School Council Finance Guide offers guidelines on how such funds would be used (primarily: to represent the original interests for which the funds were raised), and best practices for greatest transparency.

PLANNED FOR 2017-18

Principal Verreault has confirmed school council meeting dates for 2017-18 : September 12, November 14, January 16, March 20, May 8 and June 12 (at 7pm in the newly renovated SRB library = learning commons).

I submitted a PRO grant application on behalf of the School Council, entitled "Parent engagement from middle school through high school". The project proposal was: "One or more workshops for parents will be organized in the evening throughout the year, with possible themes including: guiding children to financial literacy; helping children excel in mathematics; understanding post-secondary options and pathways; healthy relationships for teens and

internet safety.” If successful, the funds from this grant could be used to support activities that welcome parents to SRB as partners in their child’s education. Ideally, planning would begin at the September 12 Council Meeting.

School council elections will take place at the first meeting of the fall, September 12. With the larger student body (and presumably larger council) next year, having co-chairs (one for Grade 7-8, one for Grade 9-12) could be a good choice. The SRB School Council Constitution is posted on the website; the composition of the new school council, as well as the structure and content of its meetings, or the creation of any subcommittees, are open to revision by council if it deemed this necessary.

As co-chair of SRB School Council, I had the privilege of representing the council at the SRB Awards Ceremony in October, as well as the Grade 12 Graduation in June. It has been an exciting year at SRB, and it was a privilege to work with such a dedicated team of parents, and under the leadership of Principal Verreault. I look forward to participating in Council next year as a member-at-large.

Monica Nevins

June 13, 2017