

Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School

School Council Meeting – November 3, 6:30 – 7:45 pm

Attendance: Richard T, Amaris P (Student Rep), Erica L, Laura G, Naheed R, Francis H, Silvie M, and Chris F (Staff Rep); Amani R.

Absent: Neil B, Zaina A, and Jennifer F

Welcome and Introductions: New faces joined us for this second meeting so we had a round of Introductions.

Agenda and Meeting Process

Naheed chaired the meeting; we briefly reviewed the agenda for the meeting and this was approved by the group.

Richard requested the compilation of a Master File with an updated list of everyone's email addresses and contact information.

Banting Updates

Richard provided an update on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). The test is mandatory for students in grade 10 & 11 and for students who are graduating this academic year. The Ministry of Education piloting a digital version of the test. The test can be written at different times at the school starting with grades 11 and 12. Every student will have access to a chromebook device to do the test; this will ensure a circulation of the devices to accommodate the number of students who have to write. Information about the test will be sent to families by the end of the week, including information about a practice test.

Amani reported that the Banting Food Drive was a great success. Banting student collected over 1500 cans of food for the Northwest Resource Learning Centre.

Chris F reported that it's great to have in-person classes again with strict adherence to COVID protocols. A number of clubs are up and running. These include: Coding, Banting Business Clubs (meet twice a week, once in person, about 30 students); stock market competition – meet to discuss concepts (e.g. short sales); debate, band, and drama clubs are running; Indigenous Student Association and the Muslim Student Association; math club, senior band, and wild card committee. Banting fall team is heading into play-offs; choir bands are running activities inside and outside the school.

The newly renovated library and learning commons are in full use with COVID-19 protocols in place and teams of students are using the space to work together (e.g., grade 10 civics).

Richard reported that there is still no access to lockers and the cafeteria. These are not currently in use because social distancing and other COVID-19 protocols cannot be implemented. Access to lockers would cause a traffic jam; and the cafeteria can only accommodate 50-55 people out of a population of 1500 students

Food trucks are servicing students off-site; they are not allowed on school property because COVID protocols can't be enforced.

Amaris reported a good turn out for Halloween; students participated in Diabetes Awareness week; as well, the Coffee House was a success.

There was a discussion about the Parent Involvement Fund and the group generated ideas about how best to use the funds to involve parents in the school. These include:

- Asking students: 'what do you want your parents to know?'
- Bridging opportunities for parents and students to work together (e.g., a fun activity to bring these two groups together)
- Screen family movie; offer a curling family night
- For international students: opportunity for parents to bring in dishes to share (with attention to health protocols)
- Virtual speaker for youth and parents struggling with mental health issues (e.g., Be Kind to your Mind; art therapy; social workers)
- Resource booklets for parents (but this can be pricey)
- Financial literacy sessions

Richard suggested that these (and additional) ideas can be sent to members and posted on the website.

Francis H recommended that the school sports arena should be updated and that we should generate fundraising ideas to do this. Noting that Banting has a good reputation, this could be leveraged for community and financial support. Updating the arena and promoting sports is good way to address mental health needs. Richard agreed that it's important that the sport arena is tidy as this is good for student success; it's also a way to promote excellence and belonging. A good place to start is to replace the bleachers.

Silvie: 2020 was a difficult year for everyone because of COVID – there were lots of mental health challenges. The Council's vision included trying to keep people connected so that they would have hope and faith; the Council supported teachers' priorities with input from parents. We have to give a shout out to the principal, teachers and School Council for showing leadership and maintaining connectivity.

Chris reported that the guidance department has requested that the School Council should make a short video to welcome grade 8 students in the place of an in-person family night. The video should feature a positive welcoming message and posted on the school's info page. School Council members were happy to support the request.

The group agreed to encourage more people to join the Council.

Next Meeting – December 1st @ 6:30 (Francis has offered the group access to a zoom link with no time limit for future meetings).