

Sal Comp School Council Meeting

Thursday, October 19, 2022

In Attendance: Mr. Sandhu (Principal), Trustee Don Irwin & Ms. Duguid (Cosmetology teacher)

Parents: Jacquie Surgenor (Chair), Annette Hubick, Devon Marshall, Andrea Moniz, Joanne Gruenberg & Monica Weiss

Students: Alison SAIL rep, Zac SAIL rep, Juno & Myles

1. Welcome & Introductions (Jacquie Surgenor)
2. Approval of Agenda (Jacquie Surgenor) MOTION CARRIED
3. Approval of Minutes (Jacquie Surgenor) MOTION CARRIED
4. New Business

a. Student Update

-SAIL (Sabres in Leadership) students get credit for leadership and working in the community

*SAIL Students Zac & Ali highlighted what has happened in the first month and what it's been like for near to normal conditions since COVID:

-SAIL students helped organize and run the following since September:

Registration for all students & orientation, welcome week for grade 10s, Terry Fox run which raised \$500, Orange shirt day where they sold shirts for \$5 and did really well, teacher appreciation week with cookies and letters for all staff, held Club Day to show case all the clubs students can be a part of at Sal and held tailgate parties before football games with pizza

Coming up for SAIL students: Students will be participating in Big Buddy Little Buddy program through the Boys & Girls Club, Halloween week will have dress up days and candy, and Remembrance Day coming up, along with a food drive and toy drive and Operation Christmas Child boxes

Q: Students were each asked: "What's near normal been like for you as a student?"

A: A lot more opportunities for all students with no restrictions to live out the high school experience

A: There's a lot of school spirit this year. SAIL has been key in that, along with the Sports teams & having productions back

A: It was hard to see friends and go to events and live life normally until this year. There is so much more opportunities to go to events, see friends...there's a feeling of "connectedness". I have connected more with friends and made friends with other people through option classes, clubs and activities. It's been easier with no masks being worn and are thankful for what all has been happening because we can connect inside and outside of school.

Q: Parent question: "What would you want me to communicate to people who make decisions for your schooling experience?"

A: Being social with others is how we relate to the real world and those in our lives; talking and being interactive is very important for high school

A: We are still growing up. We're still kids. There's the stereotype that we're growing up too fast and that's not always the case. We have so many

opportunities here and they allow students to expand their groups, like musical theatre and cos, high school is where we have branched out from just our Junior High friend groups and its allowed for new friendships, and allows for more career opportunities with the options offered here. They allow us to branch out and you can earn certificates, and save money and get ready for a career. The opportunities beyond core classes is so important.

Parent Comment: There's your advertisement!

Jacque Surgenor: I will share this message that is so important how important it is to have these opportunities with sports, musical theatre, options etc, and advocate to decision makers that this is important to students and staff

b. Teacher Update (Sunny Sandhu)

- Highlight different teachers at each School Council meeting
- Highlight this meeting: Ms. Duguid, our Cosmetology Teacher
- We have the best Cos program in Canada
- Partnerships in the community are important in Cos class, looking at dual credit, kids can save money in scholarships
- Have very high numbers in Cos, have assistants in the classes
- Programs offered: Hair Grades 10-12, Esthetics Program Grades 11-12
- Program is laid out so students can take as little or as much as they want, students direct what they want to learn, Cos is very student directed, students help decide what to teach based on what they want to learn
- Career readiness is huge to Ms. Duguid, she wants to prepare them for the real world; Client Days are Thursdays & Fridays, students have to make sure lab is clean and ready and prepared for clients
- Apart from modules, we give the opportunities to get experience for their resumes, Student A: starting reception program where she'll get a reception certificate to add to her resume. Ms. Duguid is finding students want jobs but don't have tools/experience for jobs...this they can get the certificate, work with till and cash, etc
- Ms. Duguid is passionate about giving them all the opportunities
- Community Partnerships: post-secondary institutions: MC College gives 2 scholarships/year and provide up to date resources, will also take them in for training, will come in and talk to the kids, they accept the courses taught here towards their programming (they inspect our program etc), they get 25 hours credited for each credit taken here which can work out to \$20,000 down to \$12,000 for their post-secondary schooling
- Students can get credits towards apprenticeship, can bypass post-secondary by challenging their exams for hair styling
- International Hair of Esthetics offers up to \$20,000 in scholarships, work experience, esthetics program can completely bypass post-secondary. For example at Vadara a student bypassed post-secondary with her esthetics certificate from here and went straight to work
- Ms. Duguid: I love my job

Parent Q: How does client day work?

A: Thursday & Friday mornings, friends, family and community members can come in and get discounted rates (for example: highlights \$15, color \$30). Anyone can book and it is completely supervised.

Parent Q: Is that advertised?

A: Very aware of the relationship in our community and don't want to undercut the salons we work with so it's by word of mouth from students only. I do sometimes reach out through Facebook if I see someone on there can't afford a haircut. It's not about the money but about learning opportunities for the students.

Mr. Sandhu: We do see a lot of regular seniors come in, and with the mechanic programs too.

-Ms. Duguid shared that Cos is what kept her in school, she loved it and it was her why for coming to school.

*Ms. Duguid, Zac & Ali left

c. Inclusivity Update (Sunny Sandhu)

Update on gender neutral washrooms

-Building is 53 years old, washrooms are Male/Female

-2014/2015 first gender neutral washroom was created. It's upstairs in a not very safe place and needs a key because of fire door regulations

-Parents came to Mr. Sandhu and shared concerns regarding bullying, at risk kids don't feel safe coming into this school. We have good safe & caring data, but we still have lots of work to do, their stories need to be shared

-One issue in regard to creating gender neutral bathrooms is that we are funded Centrally, which means requests go to Central and they come in and prioritize items

-We need advocacy to Central office; it was a parent letter to Central raised this issue as a important priority with Central office.. We will be building 3-5 gender neutral washrooms next to Next Step, which will be closer to Admin so they can have eyes on the area, the students' stories need to be shared. Mr. Spady (principal of Next Step) is sharing the need as well, but Admin get moved around and this issue needs to be advocated for the students in this school. Parents need to continually advocate for this

-Due to the parents and students' letters, our Superintendent came out for a site visit. Now we will be partnering with Next Step to get things done, but our schools need to hear these stories to keep advocating for our at risk students

-Mr. Sandhu has asked for it to be put on the principal agenda for next Leadership meeting

-Some students & parents did a walk through during class break time to experience a moment in the life of our at risk students just to be able to use a necessity. They had to pass the boys locker room through a high volume of students, 1 for 1500 students, it was overwhelming and uncomfortable.

-A parent & students shared letters written by students and parents to share their stories, experiences, and concerns. *See letters below

-Summary: Our transgendered, non-binary students face stress and anxiety having to choose gender assigned washrooms and will choose not to go to avoid unsafe situations. Rude, disrespectful remarks are made and they may be assaulted on their way to use a gender based washroom. These students will put off using one for as long as physically possible and will go to other buildings in the area to use their washrooms. Students hear the message they don't belong in the gender-based washroom and are reminded they are not accepted. LGBTQIA+ students need a washroom where they feel safe. Some students will opt to walk home (20 mins one way), avoid drinking all day, and some experience panic attacks before going into a washroom. The washroom is where students feel the most distressed and isolated and afraid.

-Currently, to use the gender-neutral washroom, a student has to ask for a key from the guidance counsellor and then go down to the gym, up the stairs in an isolated area in the back corner.

Mr. Sandhu: We cannot use age and facility as an excuse anymore, we need to make it a priority and this needs to be heard by our entire school community/district

*Trustee Don Irwin showed up

Parent Comment: Thank you for your honesty and courage for sharing. We can take this to the decision-making level. We have a moral obligation to do something about it, we need the province to fund this, IMR proposal submitted between Sal & Next Step,

Mr. Sandhu: We need to break doors down for the safety of our students, these stories are in every school. We have tried to makeshift things but there is intolerance in schools and society. To walk a day in the life of a student and you could feel what it's like to walk those halls. We need a plan, we are accountable, cost share, what it looks like, an IMR was done but we need to bring this up at school councils and leadership meetings

Parent Comment: Thank you for sharing your story. Thank you for showing advocacy can bring change. Some new schools built are all washrooms are gender neutral, is that better?

Student Comment: Should have both options as it's all about preference

Parent Comment: I would challenge the board on what is their position on being able to do this in all schools. It will take a commitment for dollars but to meet the needs of these kids

Parent Comment: Bring this up at COSC? Add it as an Agenda item? Mom of student offered to be there at the meeting to share her story, just let her know when

*Monica, Myles & Juno left

Parent Comment: What's the IMR process?

Mr. Sandhu: It's about what gets prioritized, this is an aging building, but the requests must be approved. It's not just a Sal issue and it's a safety issue

d. Parent Teacher Interviews (Sunny Sandhu)

-Shared on philosophy of meeting with parents: It is one set time to go meet, but we want people to come in when they need to come in, not just wait for P/T interviews, we meet with parents all throughout the year

Parent Comment: Couldn't be at PT interviews but reached out to a teacher and they were more than willing to meet another time

e. Individual Student Career Counselling (Sunny Sandhu)

-Year 2: Success Team met (counsellors & admin team)

-Career transition data going up, believe it's due to the one-on-one meetings with students and talking about passions,

-Background on ISCC: In 2020-2021 Sal started an initiative to bring every student in with an admin to talk about their passions and career pathways. It was a research-based idea and it takes time but it's a proactive strategy and fits in with EIPS goals for life after high school. Admin meets with students and allow them to look at courses and credits and where they want to apply, look at requirements...for example one student was not doing well at Chem 30 and realized they don't even need it for the program they were applying for. One to one in a school of 1400 takes a lot of time; and the Admin need to loop parents in as well, then when they graduate they want to include the sheets they've discussed in their grad package, and how to get transcripts on MyPass

Parent Comment: Really cool to get the phone call after they met with child

Mr. Sandhu: Its go time on these conversations now that the school year is underway

f. School Ed Plan (Sunny Sandhu)

-Adding a 4th goal: Sal recognizes that student success is supported and enhanced through partnerships, including caregivers, businesses, community organizations and support services. Salisbury actively seeks and builds partnerships in the community

-Don't want to go away from achievement and engagement and we are already doing this for example with Cosmetology

-All parents in agreement. Mr. Sandhu will take it to English department for wording

g. School Council Engagement Grant (Jacquie Surgenor)

-\$500 grant from AB Ed, we can use it to engage parents or bring in professional development, talk to the 3 high schools and parent engagement...or bring in David Irvine at COSC level, pool it for guest speakers such as Tina Varughese

h. Staff Recognition Update (Jacquie Surgenor)

-Mr. Melnyk recognized

i. Student Council

Parent Comment: \$20 fee for student council...what is student council? \$28,000 (1400 x \$20/student)

-Student Council helps subsidize things such as: Welcome back BBQ, Pep Rallies, shirts, water bottles for Terry Fox Run, waiving of fees for options, Orange shirts, school spirit, etc

-Leadership teachers and SAIL students help choose some events

-Admin recognizes the fee may need a name change

5. Information Reports

a. COSC Update (Jacquie Surgenor)

-Discussed Sherwood Heights Replacement school issue, moving to a P3 project funding and will now be a K-9 school and will lose 2 huge partnerships

Parent Comment: If change in government next year, this could change again?

A: Yes

Jacquie Surgenor: This is now on Parents to engage and keep advocating

-Presentation on 3-year engagement plan

-Updated parents on resources for the new curriculum

b. Principals Report (Sunny Sandhu)

-Assurance review extended to December

-Over 85 kids wrote re-writes yesterday, most ever seen on Opportunity Wednesday

-Had a Leadership meeting where Central presented on Resources from the District to help identify students needing extra support, that helps identify them quicker and easier

c. Trustee's Report (Don Irwin)

-Replacement school for Sherwood Heights and Ecole Campbelltown

-Sal needing new storm water sewer which runs under the County building 3-4 feet

-15,360 students in EIPS this year

-Parent seminars through ASCA

-EIPS Career fair last night was excellent and well-intended (800 attended)

Parent Comment: Students struggling to get a job without experience, what if Salisbury had a mini volunteer fair? Community organizations come in and share so students could join and have something for their resume? Or for scholarships?

Trustee Irwin: The Volunteer Center was present last night

Mr. Sandhu: Could take this idea to his team

Meeting Adjourned @ 8:28PM

Next Meeting: November 24, 2022

Meeting Dates:

January 19, 2023

February 16, 2023

March 16, 2023

April 20, 2023

May 25, 2023

Parent Letter #1:

Thank you for taking the time to listen as I speak to you about the need for a gender-neutral washroom at SAL.

I would like to speak on behalf of the students who are part of the LGBTQ+ community and on behalf of all those who are not comfortable coming forward to say how they feel. I would like to personally speak to you as a parent of a student who is transgender and does not feel comfortable using a washroom at school.

Currently if queer students need to use the washroom, they ask for a key from the guidance counselor which unintentionally singles out students. They have the option to use a washroom shared with the staff, or another one that is set in a part of the school that is not used. This requires students to go through the gym, which is generally in use, up a set of stairs, away from the general student body.

This washroom should not even be an option in my view, as it is not a safe option for any student. At any time a child could be attacked verbally, physically or emotionally and no one would ever hear or see it.

Currently my son has been walking home during his lunch hour if he needs to use the washroom, which is an approx 20 minute walk, one way. I have been told that other students walk to the library, mall etc as they do not feel comfortable using a washroom in their own school.

Not using the facilities when you need to can lead to a variety of medical issues and it can cause loss of concentration in class. Studies show that approx 66% of students will limit their water intake to avoid having to use the washroom during the day.

My son feels very uncomfortable using the gender assigned washroom. As a parent hearing that your child is being bullied, being called derogatory names, barked at, and that he doesn't feel like he belongs is heartbreaking. This is not how my husband and I ever pictured our child being treated.

A gender neutral washroom can teach teens the importance of respecting people in all of their identities, how to share spaces with others, privacy and boundaries.

Not only would adding gender-neutral washrooms allow for a more comfortable school experience for our non-binary, agender, or trans students, but it would also show our community and other schools that we are inclusive and that we live up to all of our talk of being a safe school regardless of who you are.

Thank you so much for taking the time to listen to our statements. I look forward to hearing that a gender neutral washroom will be available soon.

Parent Letter #2:

As parents, we want to do everything in our power to protect our children. From the time they are born, we worry and we stress and we promise ourselves that we'll do whatever it takes to keep them safe. To some people, the issue of having gender neutral washrooms may not seem significant, or a priority, but from the perspective of a parent who has seen my child bullied and afraid, this is a huge deal, and something that is within our power to change. My child is faced with verbal abuse on a regular basis in the school and walking down the street and does not feel safe walking into a gendered washroom, because they are all too well aware of the very intense anti-LGBTQ feelings among some of the students. While I definitely acknowledge that an attempt was made to offer our LGBTQ youth safe, gender-neutral washrooms, these facilities have proven to not provide the inclusive, safe space they need. Last year, my child confided to me that they refrain from drinking anything at school just to avoid having to use the washroom, and this year told me that they will walk to the public washrooms at the arena before using the facilities at SAL. Neither of these options are acceptable alternatives, and we need to do better for our children. Please look at these kids and realize that they need to feel safe in school and consider the creation of gender-neutral washrooms to be a top priority.

Student Letter #1:

On behalf of the LGBTQIA+ students at Salisbury Composite High, we write this to provide insight into the issues surrounding the lack of gender-neutral washrooms in our school.

Many transgender and queer students feel highly uncomfortable, distressed, and dysphoric when faced with the simple task of using public washrooms, especially during school. Gender dysphoria describes the feeling of unease and distress that a person may feel due to the mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity. When a transgender person's only choice is to use gender-assigned washrooms, they are often faced with much stress and anxiety. In many cases, transgender people are harassed and assaulted in gender-assigned washrooms as well. Some may even choose not to use the restroom at all in order to avoid the out-of-place feelings and risks that using gender-assigned washrooms can cause. Of course, this can then lead to problems such as urinary tract infections or kidney problems.

To help the general public understand, here is a scenario. Imagine that you were born as a female and you identify as a woman. Generally, you have the option of using the women's washroom freely and comfortably. Now imagine that you were forced to always use the men's washroom. You would feel uncomfortable, out of place, stressed, and perhaps even scared. When you go into the men's washroom, especially a crowded one, you would be strangely looked at, remarks may be made about you, you may get yelled at and told to leave, and you may even be assaulted. Now, what are you to do? You are being forced to use the men's washroom, there isn't any other choice, but using this washroom makes you feel intensely uncomfortable. Perhaps you will avoid the washroom for as long as possible before going, maybe you will only use the washroom if no one else is in it, maybe you will sacrifice the feeling of comfort so that you can use the restroom, or maybe you will wait until you return home.

This scenario is the exact one that transgender people are forced into every day at school. Most people wouldn't think twice about using their school washroom, but trans students do not have the same luxury.

From A Non-Binary Student's Perspective

I am a non-binary student. This means that I do not identify as either a man or a woman. I do not fit into the gender binary. Because of my gender identity, I can not use either restroom comfortably. When I use gender-assigned washrooms I feel a great amount of dysphoria, I feel out of place and stressed. When I need to use the washroom, I will put it off for as long as physically possible. If I really need to go, I will wait until lunch so I can leave the school and go to a different building that either has a less-crowded gender-assigned washroom or a family washroom. When I use the restrooms at school, most people will look at me as if I do not belong. This makes me feel even worse because I am constantly reminded that I am not accepted. I have dealt with multiple UTIs and avoiding the restroom is not a viable or safe option for me, but I feel as though it is the only option that I have. LGBTQIA+ students need a safe and comfortable place to use the washroom. A place that is not secluded, and a place that

we know is safe. We need to know that the school cares about transgender and queer students just the same as everyone else.

Student Letter #2:

From A Transgender Student's Perspective

As a transgender man attending Salisbury Composite Highschool, I would like to share my experience with the gendered washrooms. Over the course of a year, I have encountered consistent harassment from my peers and a lack of awareness from the adults. The harassment often consists of derogatory names, screaming, barking, and general jokes and comments all directed toward me as a result of how I express myself. This often leaves me feeling alone and depressed, losing hope in a building that promised to provide me with a safe space. I have noticed that the place in which I feel most distressed is always within washrooms, which I often avoid due to past experiences. On the very first day of this school year, I went to use the men's washroom and was immediately screamed at by a group of boys. Since then I have not used the washrooms there, opting to walk home instead. I am tired of having panic attacks before using the restroom out of fear of being attacked so as a part of the transgender student body, I please ask you to listen to us and take note of our experiences. We no longer want to feel isolated and afraid when using something that is a necessity. Provide us with an easily accessible and safe restroom that does not require a key.