



## USS School Community Council – Minutes

Virtual Meeting May 12, 2020

Attendance: Michelle Crawford-Eade, Beth Mah, Mark Lynch, Carolyn Allen, Robert Walker, Lisa Edwards, Heidi Weitzman, Nancy Mann, Caroline Jones, Jason Cole, Julie Morrison, Karen Weisner, Natalie Wood, Sonya Kehoe, Trish Irven, Kim Kalinich, Michelle Lindsey, Gail Dee

1. Lisa Edwards call the meeting to order, 6:32 pm.

2. Approval of February Minutes; 1<sup>st</sup> – Jason Cole, 2<sup>nd</sup>- Caroline Jones

3. Student Update – Kimber and Mary. Update was provided by Michelle Crawford-Eade on behalf of Student Council. Please see attached report.

4. Teacher Update – Mr. Walker

- There has been a somewhat seamless transition to online learning. DDSB staff helped by already using Google Classroom and other tools with the students' Chromebooks.
- New collective bargaining agreement in Ontario. It is currently being ratified. There will be some staffing impact as a result.
- If parents/students need to reach a teacher. Email addresses can be found on the school website:  
<https://uxbridgess.ddsb.ca/Modules/contact/search.aspx?s=bo6nULIBPIUsrWLI48HsbkIdQeQuAleQuAl>

5. Guidance Update – Mrs. Allen

- The primary focus of the Guidance team at this time is on reaching out to at-risk and lagging students.
- Leadership camp is still happening in a virtual environment. All students may participate, not just those who had signed up earlier in the year. Follow on Instagram @USSLeadershipcamp2020
- Scholarship Info is on the Guidance Page of the website. Students can also follow on Instagram @USSGuidance
- Grad Awards are still being planned. Commencement is TBD. Please check school website for updates.

6. Principal Report – Mrs. Crawford-Eade (MCE)

The format for the meeting was for MCE to answer the following questions that were submitted in advance. Responses are in Green.

## Questions for May 12 Virtual SCC Meeting

1. From what I understand exams have been cancelled and assessment is such that each student has a grade that reflects their progress as of March 13th and work done from April 8th onward can only be used for improvement. Will there be a policy to readjust the "weighting" of the assessments? Since there is no longer exams and the period between the beginning of the second term and March 13th might have had limited assessments with significant weight, e.g., a single test, perhaps there would be more weight to assignments and projects which better reflect the student's comprehension of the material. Submitted by Jason Cole

- Staff and Admin are awaiting next announcement from the Ministry of Education (MOE) for direction on weighting.
- Teachers are being instructed to separate and record grades as pre and post April 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Student grades can only improve from the grade they had going into the March Break.
- MCE expects that there will be a re-balancing of semester marks so that there is a fair representation on the student understanding
- Specific concerns should be taken up with teacher and/ or admin

Following questions (2-9) submitted by Nancy Mann

2. Is it possible to set up better person to person communication between parents/students/teachers on a regular basis? Use the platform designed for parent/teacher interviews to book call times for those interested?

- The platform used for interviews has been vetted by the board and union and cannot be adapted at this time.
- There are privacy concerns at this time that prevent Zoom interviews.
- Please direct concerns to teachers and ask your student to look for posted office hours.
- Some students are working irregular full-time hours and "normal" times for school work hours for students and teachers is not consistent. Expect some delays in response.
- Staff emails on the website.
- Academic resource may be accessed by any student, not just those with IEPs for additional support. Minimum of 2 people on a call (parent and student) with an AR teacher.

3. Are teachers expected to be proactive in reaching out to students if they are seeing behaviour inconsistent to what they know of the student's typical behaviour? I.e. missing a quiz or assignment when all others have been submitted.

- Beth Mah – at the start of distance learning, there was a Google Form used to survey all students access and to determine irregular behaviour. If there were noticeable challenges, outreach was performed by staff or guidance. At first there was a bit too much outreach from multiple individuals and that has now been streamlined.

- Presently – staff can see how much time students are spending on work and how they are engaging. Some students are engaged across the board, some are prioritizing the work they do, some are completely disengaged.

4. Is there any oversight of the amount of work being provided by teachers in various subjects? There seems to be unequal weighting of subject work loads.

- MCE is working with her leadership team (VPs and Dept Heads) to check regularly with staff on work load and delivery of material.
- The challenge is that 3 hrs of work is not equal across the board for all students. There is a large variation in skills and ability.
- If parents are concerned about work load, please contact the teacher or admin.
- Work loads are continually being re-evaluated as work is returned and quizzes completed.

5. Why are teachers being re-deployed during this time? (i.e. Back from leave)

- Teachers return to work according to their contract. They have the right to return to work.
- Again, any concerns may be directed to the department head. There is an expectation that the new teacher will be reaching out to the students.

6. Can we leverage the volunteer community to help improve communication? Peer to peer, parent to teacher, etc.

- We wish. Not at this time. Too many confidentiality/privacy concerns.
- Teachers are trying to create more interactive work opportunities so that students can engage with peers. Not always successful, sometimes frustrating. Also, some positive experiences.
- Some interactive assignments can assist with keeping students engaged.

7. Has USS begun planning a back to school plan? How will it be communicated? (busing, cafeteria, student movements)

- No. Back to school planning will come from the DDSB/MOE down.
- A senior board Principal team was formed May 12 to start to address return to work/school concerns.
- Each Principal will be told how to return students to classrooms and information will be communicated through the school website and Messenger system.

8. How are teachers assessing the effectiveness of online learning?

- Thought Exchange provided some great inside as to what is working and what is not.
- Early feedback was that students were missing their peers, extra-curricular activities and somewhat frustrated with the balance of subjects.
- DDSB early use of Chromebooks has us ahead of the game
- Access to broadband is making distance learning more of a challenge for some.
- Areas of improvement there for sure but MCE feels staff and students have come a long way in 7 weeks.

9. If online learning continues in various capacities, due to ongoing outbreaks of Covid-19, how is the education system adapting positively when all can acknowledge that it is not a best-case scenario?

- Try our best. Adapting as quick as possible to changing situations.
- Board is providing new workshops on distance learning all the time.
- Key staff are also ahead of the curve and our filling leadership roles in distance learning
- All teachers at USS are now online and teaching.
- Practical learning is a challenge but some unique ideas are coming to the forefront (recording of language presentations, math conference calls, distance music performances)

Following questions (10-16) submitted by Michelle Lindsey

10. How are our kids supposed to succeed in online learning when a lot of times there is confusion over assignments and grades and very little contact with teachers to supply answers and help?

- There has been some confusion around Google Classroom and distance learning
- Staff is working to streamline and provide clearer guidance around work instructions.
- MCE is not hearing from parents that teachers are not available to help the students. Please contact her if there is an issue.

11. How do any of our kids advance to next year without properly completing this one?

- We do know that learning disruptions do impact students success. (nothing like this pandemic situation has never happened before but there are learnings from previous disruptions from strikes)
- Teachers are looking at curriculum and how it can be adapted in the next school year to close the gaps. Students will not be expected to just “jump into the next curriculum”.
- Teachers believe it is their professional responsibility to have students prepared for their next year.

12. Are scholarships still available for grade 12 students and if so, which ones?

- Admin has reached out to local businesses who typically provide scholarships to see where they are at financially and if they can support our scholarships this year. As you can imagine, our local businesses are also impacted by the pandemic.

13.. What contingency plans are in place for the rest of this year and next if any?

- Waiting for guidance from the MOE. A constantly changing situation and we will adapt as quickly as possible.
- For now, planning is only taking place in 2-week intervals.

14. What is the likelihood of holding graduation outside in June versus moving it to end of summer, beginning of fall?

- Directions on opening and/ or graduation commencement ceremonies are coming from DDSB through the MOE and in conjunction with direction from Durham Region Public Health.
- Fall dates do pose a challenge with venue and we do see reduced students able to attend because of distance.

15. Is there a consideration to bringing Grade 13 back to ease the backlog of students transitioning?

- Note aware of conversations happening around the return of Grade 13 at any level of government.
- We do expect more students will return for a victory lap. For any number of reasons.

16. Did the Grade 12 student's final marks get submitted to the Colleges and Universities once Mid term grades were shared?

- Yes, mid-term grades were submitted to Colleges and Universities
- If marks improve, there are possible opportunities for access to scholarship funds. Marks cannot go down after midterm.

Following Questions (17-18) Submitted by Sonya Kehoe

17. The University trip as obviously been cancelled; can we expect a refund?

- Refunds for trips and extracurricular activities not taking place should have been received or are in the processing stage. If you have any concerns please contact admin.

18. Can we get an update on the funds received for the SCC Scholarship?

- Scholarship fundraising began the week before March Break. \$130 has been received to add to the \$300 that is standard.

Following questions (19-21) submitted by Heidi Weitzman

19. Is the USS U award still available and if so, how do you want the students to hand in the forms (students need signatures)?

- Yes, it is still available however on hold for now. Scoring is being reviewed. Submit forms electronically to Carolyn Allen in Guidance

20. Volunteer forms? How are they getting handed in?

- Please submit electronically to Guidance. If you have any issues with scanning or submitting electronically please contact Carolyn Allen for a case by case solution.
- Grade 12 requirement for 40 hours has been waived for this graduating class

21. What is happening with “Grad Packages”? (Heidi has spoken with Mrs. Allen but perhaps we can share more). As the gown and cap are likely not needed now, what is happening with reimbursement?

- Grad packages included gowns, caps, photos etc. There will not be a refund since everything has been ordered and has arrived.
- Working on a plan to get gowns and caps to families for at-home celebrations, photos.

Submitted by Shannon Kakuros

22. What is the process to request refunds for items paid for but that are not used or will not occur?

- Please contact admin if you have any specific concerns.

23. Will there be different protocols for small class students and other vulnerable students that may differ from an overall plan to return to school?

- Plans are being discussed for small classes and spec ed.
- Awaiting direction from DDSB Inclusive Services Superintendent Andrea McCauley.
- When there is a plan it will be communicated directly to families involved.

24. If the rest of the school year is cancelled, will there be days where the students can come and clear out their lockers?

- Durham Region Health Department has to approve access to the school and to lockers. They have not yet given that permission.
- Only permission granted is on a case by case situation if medication is involved. (i.e. EpiPen left in a locker).

25. Do you know of any updates on the situation with the accelerated OYAP students and what is being done about the completion of their level 1 and alternatives for future completion?

- Carolyn Allen addressed this issue
- Recently heard from Durham College that they are working on a solution for OYAP that will be a combination of distance online and practical modules.
- Individuals will be contacted directly.

26. Although it may be too early to know until we have a formal announcement from the MOE, will there be a refund for the Graduation fee?

- No, as the costs that the fees covered have already been spent (caps, gowns, photos)

### Additional comments questions:

- Extracurricular activities are not happening virtually with the exception of minimal band interaction and Best Buddies have had a few sessions.
- If a student's teacher has not contacted the parents, are we to assume that all work is being submitted? – **Yes**
- How will Yearbooks be distributed? – **To be determined**
- Are there group teaching opportunities for students who are disengaging?
  - **Nothing is mandated**
  - **Some teachers are using Google Meet or Zoom**
  - **No teacher is required to provide video or group learning.**
  - **They do have office hours.**
  - **Students can get extra support through Inclusive services**
- Some parents are calling teachers/admin expressing the struggle and conflict happening at homes over doing online learning. The response is to prioritize family mental health at this time.
- Where can I find my students marks? **They should be visible in the google classroom. They are also available through the Parent Portal.**
- Some grade 11 & 12 students are experiencing stress over grades. Not all seem to be aware that grades were frozen at March 13. How was this communicated?
  - **Information was made available to Grade 12 students on the Grade 12 Google classroom**
  - **School Messenger message went out to all parents via email and robocall to homes.**
  - **Teachers have also been asked to relay info to their students.**
  - **Since this message went out, approx. 300 students have disengaged from learning for various reason. We do not want to keep promoting. Each time it is communicated, more students disengage.**