

Oyster Pond Academy SAC Meeting
March 24, 2021 | 6:02 p.m.

In attendance: John Verlinden (Chair), Barb Gromick (Principal), Kelly Hale (Vice Principal), Margo Humphrey, Ryan Richards, Aaron Zinck, Matt Coolen, and Sam Holmes

New Business

New School – Consultation

Observer: Richard Bell from the Eastern Shore Cooperator

SAC was approached by parents to ask if we could help ensure the OPA voice is heard as decisions are made about the new high school site selection and composition. It was felt that as a school that feeds into the new school, the OPA community voice should be heard. It was also noted that during the period leading up to the decision to create a 7-12 school (i.e. merge Gaetz Brook and ESDH) that the other two SACs were invited to consult, but not OPA. As part of the discussion, we also questioned what influence the school merge had on the decision of the site location.

Action:

John/Sam: Draft a letter to Minister of Education from SAC requesting OPA be part of the consultation. The letter will also seek to understand what impact assessment has been done on how a 7-12 school could impact OPA's junior high students feeding into the high school.

Old Business

Cell Phone Policy

The new cell phone policy has been implemented with a smooth transition. Any student hesitation with the policy quickly evolved to a new routine and the impact has been positive in the classroom. Parents have been largely supportive. Early experiences are showing students are more engaged in learning and more face-to-face socialization with classmates. There is some thought to expanding the policy school wide at the beginning of the next school year to create a consistent policy school wide.

Technology

Recently purchased Chromebook carts (used as charging stations) are no longer usable due to an identified electrical safety risk. Temporary charging solutions have been set up while a long-term solution is explored.

School Curtain

The motor on the curtain was broken and has been fixed for approximately \$3,500. There are still more repairs needed for it to be fully functional, but it will only be a short-term fix. We should plan to replace the entire curtain within the next few years. Potential fundraiser may be needed.

School Surveillance Cameras

The current cameras are not operational, and a new system will cost about \$15,000. The school's operating budget will not cover the costs to replace them. The field was recently vandalized by vehicles driving on the field making it unsafe for students. Functioning cameras are important for enforcement and to serve as a deterrent. School administration is currently exploring putting in place barriers. However, a fundraising campaign will likely need to be organized to cover the costs of putting in place a new surveillance system.

Actions: Kelly to explore barriers. Barb to follow up with HRCE with funding rules/policies for school-based fundraisers. John to follow up with MLA for funding options.

Education Session – Parents Cyber Safety

SAC is exploring hosting a virtual panel discussion for parents on cyber safety. The goal is to provide practice advice and a space for parents to ask questions about the role they can play in keeping their children safe and in helping them foster healthy habits with technology and social media. Panelists will likely include a cyber safety expert, law enforcement and a child psychologist.

Action: Kelly and Sam meet to plan the first session by May.

Meeting adjourned: 7:07 p.m.