

**St. Rita Advisory Council  
Minutes of 1st Meeting  
Thursday October 3, 2023**

**Attendees:** Michelle Assenza, Jennifer Vieira, Steven Quartarone, Joanne Pereira, Lucy Ferreira, Maria Castrucci, Sophie Tyrrel, Jenn Geerts, Charlene Smith, Mario Magnone, Inez Bertao, Jessica Watt, Norma Flynn, Victoria Miele, Gracie Ricciardi, Daniella Gigliotti Rivas, LeeAnn Chng, Eileen Terry, Candice Cardoz, Steve Gardiman (virtual)

**Regrets:** Jessica Lourenco-Pruitt

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**Welcome**

- Mrs. Vieira opens meeting at 6:04pm
- As this is the first meeting of the year and council has not been established, Mrs. Vieira chairs tonight's meeting.
- This year, parent council meetings are in hybrid format. Members/parents can attend in person or virtually. Voting members can vote virtually as well as in person.

**Approval of October 3, 2024 Agenda**

- Mrs. Vieira proposes two amendments to the agenda: the addition of acclamation of School Council voting members AND addition of a review of School Council bylaws.
  - Lucy Ferreira- motion to approve
  - Mario Magnone- seconded
- Call for agenda items for upcoming meetings will be sent to parents two weeks before the meeting dates. A zoom link will be shared for those who wish to attend virtually.

**Opening Prayer**

- Mr. Quartarone led us in prayer

**Land Acknowledgment**

- Mr Quartarone led the land acknowledgment.

**Approval of May 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

- Michelle Assenza- motion to approve
- Joanne Pereira- seconded

**Business Arising from the May 23, 2024 Minutes**

- Parents requested more information about school sports. A 'year-at-a-glance' calendar will be sent to parents this week. The calendar will provide a timeline for individual sports and will include start dates and tournament dates. Information about practices and tryouts will also be included.
- Parents expressed a concern with a lack of sports teams and tournaments for primary students. Administrators brought this forward to staff. Staff will now offer more primary intramurals for the younger students throughout the year.

Question: Will the 'year-at-a-glance' calendar include a list of coaches for each sport?

Response: Because not all coaching staff has been confirmed for individual sports, coach names will not be included.

Question: Can parents and students request sports teams to be added?

Response: Elementary sports and their season schedules are set by the school board. While it will not be possible to add sports seasons during the school year, if there is enough student interest there may be opportunities to run these new sports as intramurals (if there is a staff member to run them).

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### **Acclimation of Parent Council for the 2024/2025 School Year**

- 9 nominations received. All nine nominees were acclaimed.
- Executive council positions discussed. Mrs. Vieira reviewed the responsibilities of each position. The following positions and members were acclaimed:
  - Co-Chairs: Jessica Watt and Sophie Tyrell
  - Treasurer: LeeAnn Chng
  - Secretary: Joanne Pereira
  - Parish Rep: Mario Magnone
  - Community Rep: Jessica Watt
  - OAPCE Rep: Michelle Assenza
- Voting Members at Large include: Jessica Lourenco, Inez Bertao, and Charlene Smith

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### **Trustee's Update**

No update for this meeting

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### **Standing Items**

#### **2023/4 Chair Report (Michelle Assenza)**

- Volunteer committee sign up sheets distributed to those in attendance. 2024/5 committees include: Christmas tree set up, Halloween dance volunteers, budget committee, fundraising committee, and hot lunch/pizza day volunteers.
- This year's Open House BBQ was held on September 19, 2024. Approximate cost for BBQ items was \$400. Profit for the event was approx \$700. Hot dogs for the events were generously donated by Maple Leaf. Costco donated a \$50 gift card which was used to purchase hot dog buns for the event.

#### **School Lunch Update (Michelle Assenza)**

- Lunches for this school year include:
  - Monday: A&W (school)
  - Tuesday: Venezia Pizza (council)
  - Wednesday Subway (council)
  - Thursday: Harvey's and Lunch Lady (school)
  - Friday: Pita Pit (school)

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### **Review of Catholic School Council Bylaws (Mrs. Vieira)**

- All voting members on parent council must have their criminal reference check (vulnerable sector screening).
  - A list of the members of the school council executive will be distributed to parents.
  - Duties of parent council members: to attend and participate in council meetings regularly and keep the focus of all discussion on schoolwide issues.
  - Voting particulars:
    - All parents in the community are welcome to attend the meetings; however, only voting members vote.
    - Quorum for all meetings is 50% of voting members.
    - When voting, members must declare any conflicts of interest in advance.
    - Sub-committees make recommendations and bring items to council. These items are put to a vote at meetings.
    - All members of the parent council are to abide by Dufferin-Peel's Catholic Code of Conduct. Respect and integrity are the foundation for all discussions during the meeting.
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### **Treasurer's Report (Mrs. Vieira)**

- Report prepared by last year's treasurer, Shelly Neves and read by Mrs. Vieira.
  - \$7800 has been carried over from 2023/2024. Cheques for Open House items and this month's Pizza are pending.
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### **Principal's Report (Mrs. Vieira and Mr. Quartarone)**

#### **Reorganization**

- Student enrollment has declined, resulting in the loss of 1.3 teachers. Mrs. Rebello and Ms. Kent were surplus to other schools in the board.
- As a result of reorganization, 29 students moved classes.
- Using the school's enrollment numbers, the board sends a staff plan to schools (i.e. how many teachers can be staffed and in what grades). School administration implements the changes based on the board's staff plan and in consideration of the needs of the school and its students staying within the board's parameters.

#### **School Updates**

- Community updates are now distributed monthly using the Smore platform.
- Christmas Gingerbread with Santa event: December 12, 2024.
- Spirit wear fundraiser will run in October or November.
- St. Rita is proud to announce it will put on a school-wide production to run during Catholic Education Week next May.
- The school yard re-pavement was completed in the summer. There is a plan to paint the pavement with games and other decorations for the students to enjoy.

Question: Can we request the portables be removed?

Answer: We cannot. Dufferin-Peel stores these portables on school property. The portables will remain until the board finds an alternate place for them.

- Guest speakers are being booked for the school year. So far, we have secured the Sewing Studio and African Drumming for our students.

### **Catholic School Improvement Learning Plan Update**

- Mrs. Vieira gives an overview of the goals of the Catholic School Improvement Learning Plan team. The work done by the team supports all divisions in the school. This work is done collaboratively with members of the Wellness Team and Equity Committee. The team will continue to focus on the following 5 pillars:
  - **Believe:** Focus is on faith formation activities, Catholic Graduate Expectations, and sacredness.
  - **Excel:** Focus on curriculum including literacy and numeracy.
  - **Respect:** Focus on cultural equity and belonging so students see themselves in their school.
  - **Thrive:** Focus on well-being, the school environment, and eco-work.
  - **Trust:** A continued focus on community well-being and parent engagement. This year teachers will strengthen the school-home relationship by providing “Windows into Learning” using a variety of tools and social media platforms (e.g. Twitter/X account, newsletters, etc.).

### **Other**

- Upcoming P.D. day on October 11, 2024. The focus for the day will be math, literacy, and school goals.
- Individualized EQAO results are being collated and will be shared in the coming weeks.
- This year’s school Pastoral Plan will be updated in October and will be shared with parents through our website.
- Budget priorities: In light of the increasing costs of items needed for our school, there will be a review of priority items. This will be a collaborative process with input from school staff. This information will be collected and shared with the parent council so that the council can consider these priorities when determining budget and fundraising items.

Question: Can parents find out about the clubs that are run at St. Rita?

Answer: Mrs. Vieira will share this information with parents.

- Division level assemblies were held to share important information and reminders with students. Topics discussed:
  - Our school namesake St. Rita, the patron saint of impossible challenges.
  - Review of Catholic Graduate Expectations.
  - Routines and expectations around outdoor recess, inclement recess, buses, etc.
  - Celebrating and honoring diversity in our school and respect for all. Students were reminded that racial slurs are unacceptable.
  - Updated Dress Code (from the school board): no part of the torso should be shown. Cultural headwear (for example: durags) can be worn.

- Updated P.E.D. policy: cellphones should be off and out of sight during the school day. It is suggested that they stay in students' backpacks unless the classroom teacher has given permission for them to be used in class for educational activities. Cell phones are not to be used in common areas like in the school yard at recess, in hallways and in the bus lines.

Question: How will the P.E.D. policy be enforced?

Answer: Generally, first offenses are a conversation between the student and teacher to review expectations. The second offense is a conversation with the principal. Parents will be informed.

Question: Are uniforms a possibility for our school?

Answer: Uniforms would need to be approved through a school-wide vote by 60% of parents.

- Mr. Quartarone gives an update on 'soft entry' for the morning. This action item was brought up by a parent at the May 23, 2024 parent council meeting. The option of soft entry was discussed with staff and their feedback was provided. Teachers indicated that the time before the first bell is important for teachers to prepare for the upcoming school day. Having students in the yard before the bell allows them time to socialize with their peers, opportunities for movement, and gives them fresh air before heading inside for the day. The routine of structured entry will remain status quo.

## **Teacher's Report – Mrs. Castrucci**

### **Catholicity**

- Follow St. Rita of Twitter/X. Our handle is @stritarock1
- The virtue for the month of September is faith; faith is the belief in God. The virtue for October is Empathy. Each class is assigned a virtue of the month and they prepare an assembly for the school. Parents are always welcome to join.
- The opening and Thanksgiving Mass will be on October 16 at 9:45am, with Father Nosan. All are welcome.
- Thanksgiving Food Drive for the Knights of Columbus runs from October 9-18th.
- Rosary club: The month of October each year is dedicated to the Holy Rosary. The feast of Our Lady of the Rosary is celebrated on October 7th. Mrs. Castrucci, Mrs. Selvaggi, and Tedesco invite all students to pray a decade of the Rosary at recess on Fridays this month and all year long.
- Catholic Education Week is May 4-9, 2025. This year's theme is 'Pilgrims of Hope'. Catholic Schools across Ontario take part in the celebrations every year, and it is organized by the Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees Association. It is also Mental Health Week across Ontario.

### **Sports**

- Cross Country (Coaches Mehta, Pappas and Tedesco): tryouts were the week of September 16 for grades 4 and up. The family meet is Friday October 18 at Sesquicentennial Park. The Board finals are Tuesday October 22, 2024 at Centennial Park.
- Junior boys and girls volleyball teams have been practicing for their upcoming tournaments. St.

Rita will host the boys tournament on October 8th and the girls tournament is on October 10 at St. Jean Marie Vianney.

- Flag Football tryouts started today for Intermediate students.

### **Other News**

- Truth and Reconciliation Week was September 25-September 29. Ms. McGougan's class provided information every day on announcements.
- Friday September 30 was Orange Shirt Day. Orange Shirt Day remembers the Indigenous children who were sent away to residential schools.
- Choir is run by Mrs. Bowles, Mrs. Oliveira and retired teacher Mrs. Palmer. The choir is open to everyone. The choir will sing at our school masses.
- The Terry Fox Marathon of Hope was today. As a school we have raised \$1840, surpassing our goal of \$1500. Thank you to Mrs. Gabrielse and Mr. Caronzo for organizing this.
- Wellness Team: Ms. Oliveira brought our Wellness Team to St. Jacinta Marto to participate in a full-day workshop facilitated by the DP Wellness Department. The day's purpose was to teach our Wellness leaders about the importance of mental health and wellness in the schools. Ideas will be brought back to the school community.
- Eco Schools: St. Rita is starting a Battery Blitz with Earth Rangers to collect old batteries. We are also participating in a park and school yard cleanup on October 24th.
- There will be an upcoming field trip for grades 2 and 2/3 classes to Peel safety village on October 22nd.
- Upcoming events: Pumpkin Contest at the end of October and the Christmas Gingerbread with Santa event on December 12.
- Looking Forward: Our Youth Faith and Wellness Ambassadors with Mrs. Selvaggi, Ms. McGougan and Mrs. Oliveira have created an outline for the year and are looking for some support with some items. They will ask council to consider these at the upcoming budget meeting.

Question: Picture day is coming up on October 21. Will there be a new vendor this year?

Answer: Yes, it will be LifeTouch providing photos this year

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### **Parish Update**

No updates for this meeting.

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### **Community Information/Updates- Jessica Watt**

#### **City of Brampton Update**

- October 17: Movie Night at the SaveMax Center from 6:15 pm- 9:00 pm
- October 18: Brampton Fright Night at various community center locations.
- October 26: Community Tree Planting event at Crawley Park from 10:00am-1:00pm

#### **Town of Caledon Update**

- October 25: Caledon Culture Fest events at Humberview Community Center
  - October 25: Movie Night at the Caledon Fairgrounds.
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## **Other Business**

### **Council Subcommittees**

- Subcommittee sign up sheets were circulated around the room for parents to join. Committees include: fundraising, budget, halloween dance (October 31), Christmas tree decorating (November 28 after school), hot lunch/pizza, volunteer.

### **Fundraising Update**

- Michelle Assenza provides an update of this year's fundraising initiatives:
  - Farm to Table Popcorn sold at the Open House BBQ profited \$200 for council initiatives
  - Terra Cotta Frozen Cookie Dough fundraiser will run from October 15-31. Delivery to the school and parent pick up will be November 14.
  - Krispy Kreme fundraiser will be May 14, 2025
  - 5 Frozen Fridays will run May 23, 30 June 6, 13, 20, 2025

**Budget Committee Meeting Date-** October 28 @6:00pm

### **2024/2025 Parent Council Meeting Dates**

- Wednesday November 20 @ 6:00pm
- Thursday January 30 @ 6:00pm (potluck)
- Thursday March 6 @ 6:00pm
- Thursday May 15 @ 6:00pm

Motion brought forward by council member Jessica Watt to support a family in need in the St. Rita community. Parent council to support family in need with a \$250 gift card from council funds.

- Motion passed and carried.

Question: When can meeting minutes be distributed? Would it be beneficial to send out minutes soon after the meeting so that parents are aware of upcoming events?

Answer: Minutes need to be voted on by council at upcoming meetings. We can distribute minutes as a draft to the executive as soon as they are reviewed by the council secretary and administration.

Question: Do we have dates for the Sacraments?

Answer: Confirmation May 29 @ 6:15pm or 8:00pm; Reconciliation February 21 time TBD; Holy Communion May 24 time TBD.

Question: Do we have dates for the vaccine clinics?

Answer: Dates are still to be determined. They will be sent out when the school is made aware.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56pm- motion passed and carried

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