

REPORT OF THE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

2021 February 10
4:00-6:01 p.m.

Student Trustees: M. Dhaliwal, N. Keller, T. Rahman

Students Senators: A.B. Lucas SS: K. Ding, B. Maudsley, H Cator; London Central SS: A. Haq, H. Satheeskumar; Central Elgin CI: Clarke Road SS: K. Doxtator, W. Slade; College Ave SS: J. Cote, J. Jawad; East Elgin SS: S. Shelly; Glencoe SS: C. Metivier, L. McFadden, J. Nicholls; Glendale HS: E. Mitchell; H. B. Beal SS: E. Deagle, J. Classen, L. Huston; Huron Park SS: P. Patel, M. Stuart, M. Panchel; Ingersoll DCI: J. Underwood; London South CI: Lord Dorchester SS: C. Zavitz; Montcalm SS: E. Shadbolt; Oakridge SS: D. Fosterdelmundo, J. Fan; Parkside CI: A. Master, C. Golding, M. Moore; Saunders SS: D. Antone, K. Burke, K. Ellis; B. Saidam; Sir Frederick Banting SS: R. Sharma, R. Hossian, H. Carr; Sir Wilfrid Laurier SS: J. Andre, K. Karout, A Morales; Strathroy DCI: West Elgin SS: D. Fletcher; Westminster SS: N. Fayadh; Woodstock CI: M. LeConte, R. Gilbert.

Administration and Others: B. McKinnon (Chair), L. Pizzolato (Trustee), S. Builder (Superintendent), S. Hines (Executive Assistant to the Trustees).

1. INTRODUCTIONS, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Student Trustee Rahman called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and Student Trustee Dhaliwal acknowledged the traditional territory on which the Student Advisory Council meeting was held. The current agenda and previous minutes were approved.

2. WELCOMING QUESTION: What is the one hobby, daily habit or skill you picked up over the course of the last year in quarantine?

Discussion was held and Student Senators shared their thoughts on new hobbies or habits acquired ranging from yoga, video making, leaving cell phones for at least one hour before viewing when they woke up in the morning, practiced organization skills, listened to new music, sewing, baking, as well as painting.

3. STUDENT TRUSTEES ON THE BOARD POLICY AND PROCEDURE - INPUT

Student Trustees Dhaliwal and Rahman shared with the group that the *Student Trustees on the Board* policy and procedure are currently under review. A request has made for the Student Senators on the Student Advisory Council to provide feedback. The Senators viewed a slide presentation, reviewing the information requested for feedback. A google form will be emailed to the Senators for feedback.

4. WHAT SOLUTIONS AS SENATORS CAN WE PROVIDE TO THE BOARD TO HELP WITH THE RECENT CHANGES MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO OUR LEARNING?

Indigenous Student Trustee Keller facilitated the conversation regarding possible solutions Senators could provide to Senior Administration surrounding recent changes made by the Ministry of Education around student learning. Indigenous Student Trustee Keller noted that there are some mandates that cannot be changed as the Ministry of Education implements them. The following feedback was taken from the Senators.

- Student 1 - Lunch later in the day – some students are provided snacks in their rooms to keep them nourished while others are not. Providing a healthy snack bucket in each classroom would be helpful.
- Student 2 - Durham District School Board has twice the amount of time to learn at school. The students have classes every other day. Students start class at 10:00 a.m., students go home after this class and have a second class on google meets. Both classes are held on the day they would normally go to school, the next day they would have a homework day. At Thames Valley the students attend school every other week.
Student 2 – The concern was raised that students learning at home are in toxic households. One suggestion was that perhaps the Ministry could give permission for libraries within schools to stay open for those students in need to do their work there instead of at home. Student 1 mentioned that teachers need to be aware and be able to recognize when a student enrolled in online learning is suffering from abuse at home.
- Student 3 – Some students have indicated that they wish there were more spots open for them to switch to full remote learning. Some students did not feel safe going back to school this time when the Minister of Education said that it was safe for them to do so, but the opportunity for them to make the switch to full remote learning was not available. Student Trustee Rahman noted that initially the board had scenario in their plan where there were two check points where students could switch back

and forth between the two models, but removed it because the switching would jeopardize the teaching models for other students. The structures would have to be reorganized to accommodate the switches. She also let the group know that there is no wait list, but that each request is assessed on a case by case basis.

- Student 4 – Since returning to school this quadmester, the break time for the students is to be spent in their classrooms at their desks. This has been problematic because the students are not able to get up and move around, as they should be able to. Students are only allowed to leave their seats to go to the washrooms.
- Student 5 – Raised a concern regarding equitable assessments among students. Perhaps the teachers could look at general assessments for common courses across the board. This might help with a more fair assessment of students.

CHAPTER 3: IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS VOICE AND PERSPECTIVE IN SOCIETY-Mental Health within Education System and Society, Knowledge of Indigenous People

Indigenous Student Trustee Keller shared a video of called 'What I Wish My Teachers Knew About Me'. M. Cywink, program coordinator of the First Nations Métis Inuit Student Leadership Council at Western University narrates the video and explains how society affects an individual's mental health on a daily basis. Indigenous Student Trustee Keller explained that he has been in situations where he has needed to be away from school to attend Indigenous ceremonies. When he has returned to school, some teachers are supportive while others are not as supportive.

5. ACCESSIBILITY TALK AND JAMBOARD ACTIVITY

Student Trustee Rahman opened the discussion on accessibility, explaining that accessibility pertains to the tools, measures and guidelines in place for all students to learn at their full potential no matter what barriers they face. The Senators completed a JamBoard activity answering questions regarding accessibility at their schools. Some of the comments posted to the board were read aloud and discussed. (attachment)

6. VOLUME OF OUR VOICES

Student Trustee Dhaliwal let the group know that OSTA-AECO have released their latest advocacy project entitled *Volume of Our Voice*. The newest advocacy project, serves to amplify student voice in their stories as students in Ontario's education system. The group is looking to publish student stories in three volumes this year, each addressing one of the following themes: the impact of COVID-19, cultural diversity, and diversity in gender identities and sexual orientation. Student Trustee Dhaliwal asked the Senators to go back to their school communities and if they hear of stories that they would like heard and addressed they can go to <https://osta-aeco.org/our-work/the-volume-of-our-voices/> and click on *Share your story* to submit it.

7. CLOSING STATEMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

Student Trustee Dhaliwal closed the Student Advisory Committee meeting asking the Senators to keep an eye on the SLACK groups. The group was reminded that if they had any immediate questions or concerns to reach out to any of the Student Trustees. The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m. The next meeting will be held on 2021 March 10 at 4:00 p.m.

M. Dhaliwal
Student Trustee
Co-Chair

N. Keller
Indigenous Student Trustee
Co-Chair

T. Rahman
Student Trustee
Co-Chair

DATES TO REMEMBER

2021 April 21, Indigenous Student Trustee Election
2021 April 22, Student Trustees Election

UPCOMING STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS

2021 April 7
2021 May 12

What are some accessibility issues you have identified at your school?

two female bathrooms as opposed to three male

Free tampons and pads either are not refilled or are not supplied, the dispensers are always empty

All gender washrooms need to be more accessible to students, one per school makes it so they cannot be used practically and sometimes are locked away during events.

We need all gender change rooms, even if it is a single person at a time. Not being able to change for activities is dangerous physically and mentally to gender diverse students.

Washrooms are not all gender change rooms

Not everyone has access to good internet, or special resources in order to properly participate in class when we switch in and out of online and in person classes

Guidance needs better intervention, many students fall through the cracks even though they show warning signs such as missing too much school/falling grades

LACK OF OPPORTUNITY. compared to other schools there is virtually no clubs/opportunities and the ones there are, are barely advertised until its too late for us to get involved.

Learning disability awareness for students, many students do not realize they have one and blame themselves for not being able to work/keep up

i believe a lot of people feel there is too big a difference between the way academically proficient and challenged students are treated and supported (ie the latter is left behind)

There should be trained LGBTQ support personnel in schools. There should also be LGBTQ sensitivity training for teachers.

my school only has stairs to the one classroom we have upstairs.

on that note i believe there should be some sort of material to explain pronouns to teachers and how to respect them

This can't really be helped but the size of classrooms at my school are extremely small because the building is so old and we're squished in like sardines :/

We only have stairs, nothing in our school is really wheelchair accessible

More connection between schools and community resources.

Some classrooms are stuck with desks that have chairs physically attached to them and I could see that being a drag for someone who is physically disabled.

Classes are usually full of students, leaving no room for walking, etc. Before COVID, we weren't allowed to bring our backpacks in classrooms because of tripping hazards.

I feel you here

The desks are REALLY small and as a taller/bigger person my legs are too big and the desk doesn't touch the ground sometimes-

More deaf and hearing impaired awareness

how the heck do you take phys.ed at home

I'm taking Phys Ed right now and it's no joy at home workouts and health

I think that information relating to leadership positions should be more available to students.

portables aren't very accessible :/

You have to bring your own water bottle as the fountains are turned off. If you are a bused student and cannot afford this, what are you supposed to do?

No promotion of any clubs or team, unless it's the rare announcement. I think it would be a good idea to have a list given out at the start of the year with the starting dates of each team/club so you never miss any tryouts, etc

I agree this should be resolved. The school board could probably enable Linux apps on student chromebooks so that they can execute a JRE / C compiler locally. Nerdy explanation but IT would understand lol

Something that's interesting is that in my Computer Science course, you NEED a laptop at home that isn't a Chromebook to be able to code. This isn't an option for many students

gym areas should have specific codes to be met, such as areas that are designed for privacy, it can be really difficult to change if you know someone can see you

My school really lacks promoting awareness with mental health and giving the students ways to show how they feel and make them comfortable talking about it.

It's almost impossible to switch courses. All the classes are full.

Our main entrance is just stairs to go to the bottom floor or top floor. No ramps or anything.

some sport teams cost money like hotels etc...

Invisible disability awareness, not everyone who needs the elevator "looks" like they do to others.

programs like excel and Photoshop are not free at home.

oof photoshop is really expensive too

entrance, but it's from the back of the school, so that's not really effective for students

especially for kids who live far away from school or do not have city busses

Some schools do not have the best internet connection in general, from what I have heard it is more of a rural school issue, but I am not totally sure.

Some schools still utilize the one piece desks that leave arm room for right-handed people, but none for left handed people, though less common to see today, they are still in circulation.

In about 2018 most schools in my area switched providers and that help but many schools have awful wi-fi coverage IT needs to buy Ubiquiti lol

Which practices have you seen implemented in your learning environment?

**Snack
Program**

What are some areas which you think have good accessibility measures and what are some that you think needs improvement?

High schools tend to be more accessible, than elementary schools from my experiences.

We have all gender inclusive washrooms

For online learning, if you have bad wifi or aren't able to join the Google meet, teachers don't really try to help you catch up and expect you to do the work even if you don't know material.

Good accessibility- we have a ramp in the foyer. Students have access to Chromebooks if needed. Improvement- only one way to go upstairs and equal number of male, female bathrooms..

There should be ramps for accessibility to any building / class

We need better internet speeds in some areas and better functioning computers (that aren't Chromebooks)

We have a wheelchair accessible elevator, and also a mini ramp on our top floor and there's like a slight level change

Our school provides students with chromebooks and ipads who dont have them at home for virtual learning

which sucks if you have math or some heavy course and I think teachers should try to help more for the students that can't come to the meets

Safety check-ups should be done regularly on classes. Certain classes can become extremely hot or extremely cold which can trigger certain illnesses/disorders

We could get a larger variety within our snack program. You never know what peoples home lives are, the snacks that students take at school could be the only thing they are eating that day.

Where ever there's a female washroom there will be a men's one close by. But (to my knowledge) we only have one gender-inclusive washroom which is on the first floor out of 3.

Air conditioning and heating are a big issue within every school I have gone too, but the rooms that have proper access to it are typically temperate.

The school got rid of pads and tampons in bathrooms, but we can go to the office for them.

I was lucky enough to be provided a cell phone with data to use as a hotspot for my school needs. While not everyone has access to LTE, 3G seems to be sufficient.

Same with any irregular noises, I had someone in my class almost have a seizure due to their epilepsy being triggered by an on-going buzzing noise in class

Teachers can constantly remind students of mental health resources, everyday