

Northern School Council Meeting

February 23, 2022, 6:30 - 7:55 pm (Via Zoom)

Principal's Report

Covid Case Update. Currently 220-330 students are away each day, out of the total student body of 1700 students. There are up to 8 total staff (including support) absent on a daily basis. According to the collective agreement, there is a maximum number of on calls a teacher can do during a year and currently on calls are running high. It may impact the availability of supply teachers in June. This is a board-wide issue. There is some impact to some classes.

Staff Update. Northern is fortunate to have a pool of supply teachers and they have been amazing at supporting us. As with many families with Northern, the staff are feeling the impact of two years of Covid on their families as they balance work and personal stress.

Extracurriculars Update. Some things are moving ahead. Hockey has the go ahead to practice. Volleyball has had games. There is a ski trip on Thursday Feb 24. Basketball tryouts and practice are permitted. Badminton and curling still TBD. Indoor soccer isn't likely but perhaps outdoor soccer in the spring. Vaccination is required to participate in competitive sports. Music is up and running. Announcements are made daily. Other options to learn about activities are by using the QR codes posted in the school and following @nss.air on Instagram. Things are changing/expanding weekly.

Community Use of School. Northern is open for 'light 'business and the stipulations for permits are the same as sports. Adult Education is not running in person; it is still online.

Bell Let's Talk Day. The Wellness group created a video, which was linked to in the weekly bulletin.

Field/ Parking Garage Update. September is still the target date for completion which will mean that soccer and football will go ahead. Working with our Trustee to keep this as a top agenda item at the board.

Graduation Plans. Have submitted a request to U of T to secure Convocation Hall for June 29th. Waiting to hear back once U of T has set their dates. Been in conversation with SAC and have a tentative booking at Acadian Court for prom. Hoping that will be able to be held. Plan B idea is to do an event at the school, and we are working hard to ensure a solution is found. Photo retakes are lined up before March break. Watch the weekly bulletin for more information.

OSSLT. Semester 2 testing is harder to arrange as the class duration is shorter now that we are on a day 1/day 2 schedule. We have been brainstorming ideas while awaiting on official announcement from associate directors. A solution could be two days that are mandated to have longer periods to allow for the test to be written.

Fashion Show. As it is such a tradition at Northern, will do as much as possible to ensure that this happens. Currently in touch with student leaders and assessing the number of participants. Have to figure out a safe practice setup as well as manage expectations with students. Students are not as interested in a recorded option so working towards a live option.

Homework. For all the comments received that there is too much homework, the same number of people are asking when will academic rigour return and when are exams coming back. If you are finding a real lack of empathy from teachers then please reach out to appropriate VP to address. A note that when deadlines are delayed, teachers are then being asked to mark in perpetuity which is a difficult ask.

Racism & Anti-Semitism. Lots of coverage in TDSB and at Northern, we have engaged with a group called Abraham Global Peace Initiative. We decided to work with them because of Power of One program which is about all types of hate. The idea is to teach and educate about anti-hate and how to recognize hate in any form. We are working on developing lesson plans and figuring out how to roll out in school. A large assembly is not possible at this time and the current presentation is 78 slides which makes it hard to digest online. Working with SAC who are very interested in bringing this to the student body. A parent suggested reaching out to the Simon Wiesenthal Institute.

Update on rooms 137 & 143. One is being redesigned to become a fitness studio and the other is going to become a 2-story tech space. For example, Robotics is currently using the gym space because they need two stories. Funding is secured, but there is a lot of bureaucracy to work through.

Assessments. Assessments will be consistent with semester 1, so that there is fairness between the two semesters.

Optional Attendance. The application was deadline yesterday (Feb 22) and Northern made 80 offers under priority 7. The target is to have approx. 421 grade 9 students next year.

3D printer theft. Police have investigated but no other update on the 4 stolen printers. The deductible is so high that we won't be going through insurance. We have support from tech dept centrally and have purchased 1 printer and looking to get second one.