

Northern School Council Meeting

November 24, 2021, 6:30 - 8:30 pm (Via Zoom)

Principal's Report

- **Fall season sports.** It was wonderful to have these going on and lots of students involved. There was strong pride of place that returned with sports being played again.
- **Hybrid teaching.** Technology classes and PE are not hybrid at Northern. This was a decision made at the start of the school year. By taking this approach, it allowed PE teachers to be more involved in the sports teams.
- **United Way Fashion Show.** This is a very important tradition for the students and school. The date has been moved to the spring in hopes that things are more open then. The backup plan is to present a spring outdoor fashion show. Many students participate in this event in various ways.
- **Staffing changes.** There is a shortage of teachers and contracts are posted weekly. This is a board wide challenge. Schools will have LTO positions that are filled, but then the teacher receives a contract somewhere else. The school is working hard to keep consistency at the front of class for students.
- **PD Day.** It was really good for staff wellness. Some of our best teachers have been coming to the office to talk about going part-time because they feel they are letting kids down under the current system. There is a lot of stress as they don't feel as effective in their role. Time was spent on the PD Day talking about and addressing this.
- **Pathways to Math.** Feedback from department heads (Jen Malloy, Stephanie Kendall) is that excitement is building and the content is worthwhile for everyone in the course.

- **Locker update:** Students received locker numbers during period 1 class last week. If a student has a lock available, staff will cut the zip tie on their locker so they can use it. Having unassigned lockers tied shut avoids extra workload for the janitorial staff.

- **Extracurriculars:** There is currently a limit of 2 in-person activities (clubs and sports). Trying to see if this can be adjusted.

Arts & clubs are up and running. Music and drama present some challenges but working through it. A complete list of clubs is available here.

For sports, the Athletic Association coaches are meeting on December 1 to finalize plans. Looking at Volleyball, basketball, ice hockey, curling, badminton, indoor soccer, swimming and skiing/snowboard. Gym space will be tricky but will get it figured out. OFSAA opportunities are planned for spring.

- **Assemblies:** It is really important to bring these back to build culture and community, key priorities for the school. It was noted that school gyms are opening up to external bookings Jan 17 which might mean more flexibility for the school.

- **Indoor spaces for lunch/masking.** Students have to be masked when inside and not stationary. They are allowed to take their mask off when eating lunch inside. School has stepped up enforcement of masking. No additional indoor spaces are available to offer for lunch time.

- **Vaccine Disclosure:** 885 students (52%) have voluntarily disclosed their status. Any help parents can offer to encourage their child to complete this would be appreciated. This reduces the frantic emails received by the school when a Covid case is discovered.

- **Next semester roll out:** The schedule still needs to be established. Options include the same schedule every day or a rotating order to reduce the impact of extra curricular activities late in the day. This decision will be made with staff and parent input. Establishing a longer lunch period is also a priority. There is a chance that the new

schedule could start before the end of this semester. But the goal is to get it done with proper planning to reduce confusion and impacts (not disrupt EQAO testing plans for Jan).

- **Taking a fifth year at Northern - who is eligible and how is it done?** This is handled on a case-by-case basis. Priority is given to students who haven't completed the required courses for graduation. Students who are upgrading have many other avenues to take a course again which include night school/summer school/e-learning and adult learning. In the past, once there were accurate numbers for the student body in September, the school would make whatever space available to students who want to come back for a 5th year. As a full year school, traditionally, the requirement was that the student had to take 6 courses each year (no part-time load). However, if the school continues with semesters, options will change.

- **Parking garage.** Rachel Chernos Lin has stepped in to help and has a meeting on Friday with the key stakeholders. Adam will provide an update as soon as there is one available.

- **Elevator.** This is approved as a project and is in progress. Hoping to have it operational for Sept 2022. Hall monitors are available to support students who need help on the freight elevator.