



School Advisory Council Annual Report – June 2022

School	St. Agnes Junior High
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Please list SAC members including names, membership type (i.e., parent, community member, staff), and role (i.e., Chair, Vice Chair).

Chair: Joanna Mills-Flemming
Secretary: Wesaam Alwi
Parent: Susan MacKay
Parent: Natasha Fletcher
Staff member: Jarrett Feeney
Staff member: Greg Brophy
Staff Member: Jill Maclean
Staff Member: Rhonda McLean
Community Member: Natalia Diaz-Insense
Community Member: Ian Shaw Cross
Community Member: Kara Hayes

Please describe a summary of work undertaken by the SAC to improve student achievement and school performance.

During the 2021-22 school year, the School Advisory Council identified student well-being as the foundation for our school improvement plan. Members shared in the belief that well-being must be supported through equity and respect for the diverse identities and strengths within our student population and that the school environment plays an integral role in supporting both learning and inclusion. As part of our shared work, members agreed that in every space and every situation, students needed to feel that they belong and supported staff in the development of several initiatives.

The Reclaiming the Walls project was born from a desire to better reflect the lived experiences of our students. With the help of local artist Saad Othman, we have developed a mural to reflect our Arabic speaking students in Canada with another in production to reflect our ANS population communities.

The St. Agnes SAC was also involved in the Flags in the Foyer initiative where the school identified, purchased, and proudly displayed 60 flags to celebrate the fantastic diversity within our school population.

As part of our effort to improve student well-being, an important goal for our SAC has been to improve conflict resolution and to develop greater empathy amongst our student population. This focus has resulted in the development of the Shared We initiative that projects the bodies, brains and lived experiences of our students into the community via Art. Through collaboration between diverse student populations and opportunities to capture and showcase their culture and lived experiences through photography, we hope to move our students from individuals and toward a collective 'we'.

As the mental health of our school has been an ongoing focus for since the beginning of the pandemic, SAC members invited opportunities to equip students with tools to develop the skills for the management of stress and anxiety. From this focus, the council supported the involvement of Estelle Thompson, a Counselling Psychologist, leading Yoga teacher and educator, as well as a Visual Artist to introduce our students to some simple Yoga movement and meditation/mindfulness practices, with supporting art experiences.

One of the lessons learned from COVID-19 has been the advantage of outdoor learning and the positive mental, physical, and academic benefits that come from teaching and learning in nature. While restrictions have eased, the School Advisory Council continues to believe that learning occurs everywhere, at all times and are invested in creating an outdoor learning space for our school. Beginning with St. Agnes a small grant in 2020-21, our plan for an outdoor classroom has evolved to include the installation of stadium seating and an outdoor whiteboard on the South side of the building. Our members have been instrumental in fundraising for this project with plans to complete before the end of the 2022 school year. We look forward to providing our students with diverse places and spaces for learning to occur.

With student safety as an ongoing priority, our SAC tabled a community concern about motor vehicle speed and its impact on crosswalk safety. Member discussions resulted in the creation of a sub-committee to share concerns and to explore strategies for improvement. Following meetings with local businesses and political figures, commitments have been made by the city to increase signage on Mumford Road, partner with HRP to monitor speeding, and to use data from speed boxes to determine future strategies to support student safety.

The school breakfast program provides equitable access to healthy, nutritious food and supports attendance, engagement and learning for our students. Our School Advisory Council was instrumental in fundraising and partnering with our local businesses to purchase food, equipment, and supplies for the breakfast program. As a result of the efforts of the SAC, our school breakfast program has grown significantly, ensure that all students have access to healthy a diverse food options each day.

Please list any significant milestones and success stories that the SAC would like to highlight.

Success for every student is a top priority and community members play a meaningful role in student achievement and school performance. While School Advisory Councils are an important way to bring together stakeholders who share an interest in promoting student success, membership does not always reflect the diversity of the community it serves. At St. Agnes, administration embraces the belief that education is a shared responsibility and that membership in our school advisory council required growth to better align with our student population. As such, we committed to doubling our membership, increasing the number of students, community representatives and parents. While we strive to further diversify our membership, increased membership has invited unique perspectives from varied communities to influence decision making and has increased opportunities to manage change effectively.

As a result of School Advisory Council fundraising, we recently reached an important goal with respect to school-based technology, providing each student with the opportunity to access a school issued Chromebook. In meeting our target to provide equitable learning opportunities for our students via technology, administration and SAC members agreed that a consistent school-wide policy to reduce cell phone usage during instructional time would help students to stay present and engaged in their learning. Together, we aimed to support students in their academic success by removing a significant distraction and facilitating a learning environment that promoted collaboration and connection. Since March, all Saint Agnes classrooms have become cell phone free zones. While students are allowed to bring cellular devices to school and access them before and after classes, phones are no longer permitted during instructional time

Feedback for this new policy has been predominantly positive from both staff and students:

"I feel that our cell phone policy has been one of the most crucial changes that we have made this year. It has supported student awareness, self-regulation, academics, and social-emotional well-being. Since implementing the plan, I have more time with students one-to-one and in small groups, as I am not as busy managing cell phone behavior. Students are able to be kids again and interact with each other, rather than going immediately to their phone to occupy those few minutes while class is getting started, between work, etc. This has majorly influenced self-awareness and reliance on one another, building interpersonal awareness and skills, all formative and necessary for the developing teenage brain. Students are not rushing through work, so that they can have free time on their phones and are thus producing better quality work with more engagement" (Grade 9 teacher).

"I think the phone hotel is a good idea and it definitely does the job of keeping students off their phones. Personally, it keeps me on task and with no distractions, so I get more work done. I think it's a bit excessive when we are being told we must hand over the phone for the day whenever our phone is being seen". (Grade 7 student)

Please describe any related sub-committee work undertaken by SAC members (e.g., School Options Committee).

N/A

Statements of Revenues and Expenditures:

Expenditures supporting the school improvement plan (e.g., providing resources to support math and literacy instruction).

Dec 16, 2021 New Balance = \$5586.38

March 24, 2022 Withdrawal for Security Camera System \$3500.00

June 30, 2022 Pending withdrawal for 5 refurbished Chromebooks= 2,000 (approx.)

Expenditures supporting policy development and implementation (e.g., supporting and promoting new policies).

Expenditures covering operational expenses; up to 20 per cent of provincial SAC funding may be used as operational expenses, if necessary, to encourage and support member participation).

N/A

Please return to School Supervisor by Monday, June 20, 2022. Thank you.

