

**Earl of March School Council**  
Monday, January 11, 2021 7:00pm, Online

**Meeting Minutes**

Attendees: Zakaria Ashour, Marwan Bakr, Sheila Ball, David Barron (Chair), Wendy Barron, Dinu Chande, Louise Foley, Kai Greenwood, Thomas Holloway, Litao Ju, Coco Li, Lisa Merritt, MC, Melissa and Gavrill, Kamuran Sadar, Ian Urbach, Jeff Wirtanen, Alexandra Wright.

Staff Attendees: Shelley Burnside, Steve Collins, Faye Hughson, Rebecca Montemurro, Krista Norton, Michelle Walter, Nancy Watzenboeck

Meeting Called to Order: 7:03 PM

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**1. Welcome & Introductions**

David Barron welcomed all to the meeting.

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**2. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as circulated. (T. Holloway/C. Li)

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**3. Review of Previous Minutes**

A motion was made to accept the minutes of November 11, 2020. (T. Holloway / C. Li)

A question was asked whether the minutes are posted. Steve responded that they are posted under the school banner on the web site.

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**4. Student Council Report – Student Senator Marwan Bakr**

Marwan explained that he sits on the Senate that considers student issues and is also part of student council. He reported the student council has run successful events:

- Oh, Canada! and using video announcements.
- Two spirit weeks: Halloween and holidays (trivia night, coffee house, Instagram filter)
- Working on hosting a town hall for students to voice concerns and a wellness week to help with student stress.

Student council has approximately 20 people with about half being general council. They are planning on doing elections in February or May as they are considering switching to a February model as opposed to May-June.

## 5. Presentation : Krista Norton Music Programme

Music is having a successful year.

Model of students playing from home is working well.

- Typical day: Students arrive and do attendance together.
- Meet at 9, performance at 11.
- Synchronous learning in which students and the teacher work together at the same time
- Asynchronous in music for students at home does not exist.
- Scale, technical, pieces being prepared.
- Come back at 1:25 as rehearsing begins.
- Krista plays, students play together.
- Expectation is that students are active at home for example with theory, history of music.
- Students are very busy at home and at school.
- Virtual band: Activities include recordings, dividing the band into sections to ensure personal development on the instruments, individual coaching.

Two performances were shared at the meeting:

1. Class performance: Duet with Toronto Symphony Orchestra player, then students play by themselves to a recording.
  2. A student playing by herself and dubbed the other part of the duet with herself.
- The students are enjoying the class and having a good year within the context of the pandemic.
  - The students are really stepping up and making the learning positive.
  - She acknowledged the support of the administration.
  - Potential for band rehearsals in a synchronous fashion in the next few months with new software development.
  - A question was raised about whether there is a plan for band electives in the second half of the year for students in intermediate.
    - The response was that there will not be any performance-based options for grade 7s and 8s.
    - Sense of confidence that students will be able to catch up when instrumental is back in the classroom.
  - Comment about the positive changes that students and teachers have learnt.
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## 6. Administration Report Secondary – Steve Collins

Introductions – 3 VPs, Chair David Barron, Intermediate Teacher Representative Rebecca Montemurro, Secondary Teacher Representative Nancy Watzenboeck, Krista Norton - Music Department, Student Senator Marwan Bakr

January Remote Learning:

- All Students (Cohorts A & B) Combined & Taught Daily
- Class 1 + Class 2 In Same Time Slot Daily
- Direct synchronous instruction will begin for all classes.

- 112.5 min per class per day
- Synchronous learning = learning in real time via video conferencing, text, voice
- Teachers are available to connect with students in real time.
- Additional time and support for students ...
  - Lions' Learning Dens (see website) available each day for 75 minutes.
  - Class 1 and Class 2 ... teachers twinned with another teacher ... small group help for students.
- We see a focus exclusively on Zoom style meetings when describing the new school schedule.
- Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered (Google Meet or Zoom).
- What is most important is ensuring that the elements of effective teaching are present –
- clear explanations, explanations that build clearly on pupils' prior learning, how pupils' understanding is subsequently assessed, breaking down concepts into smaller chunks and feedback – is more important than how or when they are provided.
- Like an in-person class ... a variety of activities possible and are recommended ... direct instruction, large and small breakout groups, working on shared documents, Google chat rooms, feedback, discussions, not necessarily lecture style, students working independently ... but the teacher is available during this time for Q and A, feedback, check-ins.
- Different approaches to remote learning suit different tasks, types of content, the age of their pupils ... approaches to remote learning vary widely and have different strengths and weaknesses.
- The start of the new schedule will require a transition period for many classes.
- Most classes ... Cohorts A and B were 3 in-person classes apart and will need to fall in line over 3 or 4 school days ... curriculum mapping adjusted to bring everyone together at the same point in the course.
- The schedule for Jan. 25 - 29 is to be determined.

### EOM Town Hall in February

A town hall for the students will be organized via Google Meet.

### EOM 2021/22 Course Offerings:

- Many criteria are considered when offering a new course, a focus on equity/diversity/choice - looking for our course(s) "to provide more diverse viewpoints and perspectives; allow for a broader range of students (including Black, Indigenous and minoritized students) to make personal and authentic connections with the curriculum."
- Course to add: Gr. 9 all gendered phys. ed, Gr. 10 boys' fitness, Gr. 11/12 all gendered individual and small group activities, Gr. 12 college physics.

Course Change: Gr. 9 Math De-streamed.

- Research shows students from racialized communities, low-income households and other marginalized groups are more likely to be steered away from academic courses, which in

turn affects everything from graduation rates to employment prospects later in life. (Carlos Caetano/Shutterstock) The Progressive Conservative government acknowledged as much in announcing the plan to tackle streaming, saying the move is meant to create a more equitable education system.

### Welcome to High School Virtual Information Session: (formerly Grade 8 Night)

We're ready to help your child explore options and discover pathways as they begin High School in September 2021. Join our virtual information session on January 28, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.!

1. Survey to parents ahead of time ... pose questions to address.
2. Parents to receive a link to a YouTube channel ... all information on EOM website.
3. Slideshow presentation on Jan. 28 at 7 PM via live YouTube channel. Admin and the Heads will speak to the slides.
4. Also, parents can post questions in the moment using the survey on Jan. 28.
5. Our presentation will be recorded and posted on our website.

### Class of 2021

Grad Photos will be taken. The Commencement format and timing still to be determined. EOM students currently at the virtual high school can attend EOM Commencement.

Steve spoke about the current secondary timetable:

- Synchronous instruction is now being used, learning in real time with the educator being present.
- Lion's learning dens are still available for students who want extra help (scheduled in the afternoon).
- Teachers can have students learn from twinned teacher.
- Steve emphasized that the teaching remains of high quality.
- Learning continues even though it is remote: a wide variety of activities take place in the 112 minutes (i.e., discussions, chat, instruction, independent learning)
- Cohorts are not necessarily synched, and it can take a couple of days to bring the students to the same learning point;
- Some classes are not at the same point (i.e., drama)
- It mirrors live instruction but there are differences and many challenges. Staff have been doing a great job.

A question was raised about the evaluation of student learning.

- Response from Steve: Do not lose sight that this is occurring within the context of a pandemic. Educators see kids 9-12 times. Education is a people business and it is challenging with Covid-19.
- Higher stakes assessment given the number of times the teacher sees the students. All are making sacrifices.
- Nancy added that assessments as a whole have been modified. For example, tests at home. Requires changes to questions (more application based).

- Quality of assessment has not changed they are modified to suit the present circumstances.
- Steve added that prioritization of learning has had to occur too. Higher priority learning and expectations in courses.
- Class of 2021 will have graduate photos. The commencement ceremony is to be determined.
- Virtual school students will join the Earl of March Commencement.

Other items:

- Tentative plans for a student town hall in February. This is a continuation of what was done before, in person town halls.
- Determined courses for next year. Hard to plan with the uncertainty. Some additions (i.e. all gender physed. in grade nine, fitness in grade 10); de-streaming grade nine math curriculum for next year. Lots of factors are at play in determining what course will be offered: required for graduation, teacher expertise, tradition, student support, equity and diversity, interest. Incorporating more diversity in curriculum.
- Grade 8 parents: “Grade 8 night” or “Welcome to High School”. January 28<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Parents will be asked to submit questions ahead of time. There will be a slide show and the ability for parents to ask further questions. More information will be sent out and posted on the EOM homepage.
- A question was raised for Steve about whether grade 7 parents can attend the grade 8 night and the answer is yes.

### **7. Treasurer’s Report - Ian Urbach**

Ian reported that the council has approximately \$1,202.94 available in its account. \$202.94 is from last year with a \$1,000.00 grant from the board. The funds have to be used parent engagement. David thanked Ian for his report.

### **8. Staff Update Intermediate – Rebecca Montemurro**

Earl of March Intermediate School Council Teacher Report - January 2021

Activities before the winter break:

- The week of December 7th, all of the students participated in a Minecraft Coding Activity during the Week of Code.
- On December 11th, all of the students participated in a Virtual Presentation by the Organization Get REAL entitled Transgender 101
- On Thursday, December 17th in the afternoon and during the whole day on Friday, December 18th, students had special curriculum-related fun days organized by staff where they participated in various activities. For example, they played Kahoot, participated in physical activities games, completed an art activity and completed logic puzzles. The last activity was a school wide Bingo event, possible through Google Meet. The students and staff all had a great time.
- We had Green Day on December 4th. The second was a Virtual Green Day on January 8th.

- Student Council continued to meet virtually after school on Thursdays via Google Meet. They organized a school-wide Kahoot activity on December 4th. The council members wrote the questions and all the students in Grade 7 and 8 played the same game during a Google Meet Session. The students had a fun time. As well, the week before the winter break, the Student Council organized 3 spirit days: Hat Day, Crazy Hair day and Comfy Clothes day. It was a Battle of the Grades Competition based on Student Participation and the Grade 7 classes won.
- For students who participated in synchronous learning at home in November and December, they continued to be able to interact with the teachers in class as well as their peers via Google Meet sessions and using Google Docs and Google Classroom during the day. During our current remote learning period:
  - Educators have been using different features of Google Meet, including the breakout rooms. In these breakout rooms, students are participating in small group discussions, or are joining for extra help with their classroom teacher and our resource teachers.
  - Other features which are used during live teaching sessions include Jamboard, which is like a virtual white board. Educators can share the documents with the students as they write, and students also have the opportunity to write on the document.
  - As well, teachers are promoting engagement levels and creating a safe environment for the students where they feel comfortable sharing ideas. This can be done via Check-in Community Circles, sharing something positive going on around the world, and looking for something awesome to share.
  - Keeping students engaged through this period also include using Google Documents. Students can be working on their documents while receiving immediate feedback from their teachers, via comments and asking questions during live work periods.
  - In Math, some classes are using online manipulatives and working collaboratively to find ways to show their understanding to their teachers, including through Google Drawings.
  - Some students have also been working with different interactive sites, such as Info-Ados. With the resource, they read or listen to articles about current events and respond to them with comprehension and inferencing questions and can write about their opinions about the ideas presented.
  - Some Google classrooms now have mental health resources posted for the students. They include Guided Meditation and Way to Cope with Remote Learning. As well, there is a new EOM classroom which all of the Intermediate students have been invited to join. There, students can find announcements and tips and strategies for studying and mental health. It is a platform to keep students informed.

### **Discussion:**

A question was raised about trying to help new kids interact in the classroom context.

- Rebecca responded that the students are welcomed in the same way as they would normally would with introductions, peer introduction and continued support of the individual students.
- Can make a difference as to where they are coming from i.e., virtual school.
- Faye added that intake meetings are done with newcomer families to ensure they are welcomed.
- There is a video and presentation for all new families coming into the school.

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## 9. Staff Update Secondary – Nancy Watzenboeck

Nancy provided the following report:

On the secondary side we are all beginning our second week of remote learning and re-adjusting to the shift from in-person to at home. There are not a lot of typical updates so instead I will share with you some insight into how, as teachers, we are working to adapt our teaching practices to provide a meaningful remote learning experience for our students. In order to gather information to share I had asked teachers to provide comments on the following question:

- What they feel is the greatest challenge with remote teaching and what creative strategies they were implementing to improve this.

### Engagement:

Students by far prefer to join the remote class without their camera on so as the teachers we are literally teaching to a screen of icons. The challenge with this is the engagement piece, without the face-to-face interaction-participation and feedback tend to drop off. There is a raise the hand function that some use, but chat is by far the preferred method of communication. Many great ideas have been implemented to encourage better participation.

- Many teachers are using small group discussions within break out rooms that are being increasingly used,
- Some teachers are providing students with in-advance questions they are to answer the next day to facilitate discussion. Students come prepared instead of feeling like they are on the spot
- Utilizing collaborative resources in class such a JamBoard (and interactive post-it note way to share ideas)
- Many are learning more into more interactive methods of teaching such as;
  - **History** - Grade 10 history students participated in a Virtual UN Meeting circa WW2 where they all took the positions of various countries and attempted to create diplomacy and make agreements with other nation leaders
  - **Geo** - Outside rock cycle corrosive factors
  - **Foods**- Interactive Food Labs
  - **Gym**- Strava
  - Other news:
  - Art Gallery on EOM website
  - **Library Open**

**Virtual Library Drop-Ins** are every Monday and Wednesday from 1:30-2:30. Intermediate and Secondary students are invited to come and get help with research, documentation, essays, and study skills; chat about books; or just drop by and say hello!

Others comments include:

- The majority of students choose not to turn their cameras on. They participate by chat.
- Google breakouts has been helpful.
- Gym class: go outside and do exercise.
- A lot more of experiential parts of learning.

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## 10. Administration Report Intermediate – Faye Hughson

Faye is the Vice-principal for intermediate students. Faye reported on the following:

- Students are in remote learning mode for the next 4 weeks.
- The transition went well with good adaption to the current model.
- The school will remain vigilant to Ottawa Public Health guidelines.
- Elizabeth Zuiani is retiring.
- Friday January 22<sup>nd</sup>, PA day and educators will focus on completing Term 1 report cards.
- Survey data to be examined and identify areas for improvement in equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Need to continue to push teaching practices forward.
- As a school, supporting staff and students with mental health.
- Learning about new digital tools.

David thanked the educators for all of their work particularly in the context of not having the personal connection and the creativity they are demonstrating.

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## **12. Other Business**

David reported that he was approached by Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services and for the next meeting, Joy Wilson will give a 10-minute presentation on their programs. The topic is related to substance abuse. The intention is to hold an hour-long session in February during the week of the 22nd. It is topical in current times as well as normal times. More information to follow.

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### **Adjournment:** 8:37 PM

The motion to move the adjourn the meeting was made. (T. Holloway).

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**Next Meeting:** Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 19:00.

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Minutes prepared by: A. Wright