

Student Voice Committee

January 11, 2022

Wayne Annis – Director of Schools, FEC

Wallace Car – DEC Member

Rukeme Akalusi – FHS

Emma Andrews – FHS

Sylvia Irakoze – FHS

Victoria-Sandra Dow – OHS (Absent)

Hubert Nzoudjou Wassou – SMA (Absent)

Hayden Sparks – Student DEC Representative – FHS (Absent)

Hayden Sparks is the student representative on the District Education Council. This is a one year appointment. This is a full-time position and allows Hayden full voting permission as any DEC member.

District Education Council meets twice a month, one private session and one public session. There are approximately 14 policies that the Superintendent abides by and reports back to the DEC. Some areas of responsibility on the DEC are: studying school closures, recommendations for expenses to be made or any improvements to our education system, capital budget (school repairs and improvements), Capital Improvement list which carries a budget of 3 million dollars. Major Capital projects which include new schools and currently we have two projects, Hanwell School and a new K – 5 school to be built on the Northside.

How is the school year going so far?

- Consistency has been a big struggle. Some students may be struggling with the at-home learning.
- Lack of face-to-face instruction
- Uncertainty of being in class or at-home, no set schedule
- Students seem to just get adjusted to change and changes take place again
- Students struggling to keep up with their work. They do work at-home, then when they return to in person learning, they have to review everything over again.
- Some courses are very difficult to do at-home learning. For example, Fashion Tech., projects need to be completed in person for validation of completion. This can set students back in their achievements
- Students are lacking hands on experience. There is a challenge to be involved in volunteering, councils, etc. with all the restrictions. Students feel this can negatively impact their future goals. They are not able to build up their portfolios as in past years

- Looking forward, there is some concern for grade 9 & 10 students. The lack of consistency, lighter workloads. Look at ways to support these students in preparing for furthering their education
- The general consensus is that students would rather be in-person learning. Face to face instruction, peer support and connection
- Students want to return to in-person learning. They are not fearful of Covid, they are feeling more comfortable being vaccinated and feel at this point, with case counts rising, it's inevitable they will get it, so why not just return to in-person learning
- Are there good supports systems in place for students who are struggling mentally, Covid, life etc.?
 - Yes, there are supports in place, however, some students feel that due to confidentiality (lack of confidentiality agreements) they don't want to talk to someone in the event that information has to be shared
- What is the availability to see guidance?
 - Generally the availability is good. Once concern is, if students go to see Guidance, make sure you know what you are going for or Guidance won't know how to help
 - Due to the high demand for Guidance, mainly course changes, students are less likely to reach out to Guidance if they are having a crisis moment. It was suggested they are more likely to seek out a teacher that they have built a relationship with. Guidance typically is not able to meet students the same day in the event of a crisis
 - Students struggle with trusting Guidance counselors.
 - Students feel that their problems aren't big enough to take to Guidance, they are better off to figure it out on their own so not to be an inconvenience. Students know they can go to Guidance, but don't
- If a change could be made to better this year for students, what would that look like?
 - No homeroom, students went a whole year without it figuring out how and where to find information. Seems pointless to check in for 20 minutes. When students didn't attend homeroom, there seemed to be more attention and productivity on their part
 - If homeroom had a purpose, students would feel it as useful time, where there is nothing accomplished in homeroom, it feels like a waste of time
- Certain courses like Art, Fashion Tech, students lack resources at home. They are finding it difficult to be creative, access to materials and support. Courses like these make it much more difficult to do from at-home learning
- Some concern from students going into exam week. So much of the information has been communicated virtually, students are feeling lack of information and communication with their teachers. Going from virtual learning to physically writing an exam
- What does assessment week look like for students?
 - Some courses have fallen behind. Due to at-home learning, some course content hasn't been taught. Some teachers have chosen to do mini assessments and project based. Teachers encouraging students to know the material even if they may not be tested

- Students do like the idea of project-based assessments. They feel this gives them opportunity to showcase their understanding and it doesn't put as much pressure on them like a formal exam
- Not having formal exams does raise some concern for furthering education. Without formal exams, students don't get the practice of remembering and may feel less prepared for post-secondary education
- How prepared are students for entering post-secondary education?
 - Students feel they may be at a disadvantage. Some high school course content won't be taught in order to get the majority of necessary content instructed
- Future topics for discussion:
 - Discrimination against sex, race, religion or the way students dress. This is being addressed in the schools, but at a minimum. There could be more education about this that students will relate to. More conversation about "typical" stereotypes
 - Increasing support for newcomer students – students enrolled in EAL are finding it difficult to connect with teachers. Language barriers, being able to read instruction. If a newcomer student needs help, where do they go, who can they talk to?
 - Suggested to have mini teams or a representative from the Newcomer Support Centre based in each school so students feel that support
 - Having student ambassadors helping newcomer students
 - Raising more awareness for students who may be struggling at home with no food, internet, computer or who may not feel safe. There are programs in place for in-person learning, but for at-home learning, where can these students turn to for help?
 - Extra-curricular activities, sports. The lack of involvement.