

PCHS Special School Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025

Speakers: Kelly Goulding – Chair, Braden Coles – Vice-Principal, Angela McClary – Principal and Fred Louws, Associate Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being

Parents/Guardians, students and staff in Attendance (who signed in): Tracey Jennings, Candice Morvan, Bill Kadwell, Chris Yalowich, Chriss S., Lisa R., Erin Lee, Jen Laur, Steve Montgomery, S. Agan, Nathan S., Wayde Smith, Kim Fredrich, Amy Hobbs, Sara Masotti, Sarah Montgomery, Christine S., Scott and Tracy Davies

Welcome and Introduction

Kelly Goulding – Chair

- Thank you for joining us
- Introduced speakers
- Noted purpose of meeting – addressing recent concerns circulating on social media

Braden Coles – Vice-Principal

- Spoke about responsibility to ensure entire school community has access to timely and accurate information related to programs and events
- Misinformation can spread quickly and cause unnecessary confusion/concern
- Importance of relying on direct communication from the school

Fred Louws, Associate Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being

- Welcome and thank you for being here
- Shared meeting norms for the evening
 - All here with good intentions
 - Listen attentively – no interruptions or side conversations
 - Treat all participants with respect
- Compiled and reviewed questions and comments circulating on social media as outlined below in the minutes
- Agenda designed to address key themes and concerns that have emerged so accurate information could be shared to dispel any misinformation that has circulated
- Questions of clarity were welcome
- Feedback forms were made available around the room to submit questions that remain after the presentations

Prom and Graduation

Angela McClary – Principal

- Prom was always going to run but announcing details (date/venue) was delayed to allow the student-led Prom Committee to find a venue that better suited their criteria
- **Prom – June 12 at Club Roma** in the Starlight Room, tickets \$60 per person
- This venue matches Prom Committee's theme and vision – identified as being important to students

- **Grad – June 26 at the Italian Hall in Port Colborne** from 5-7pm, which was confirmed based on a student poll (80% in favour of this venue)
- Grad fee waived and shuttle from PCHS will be provided
- Follow process of student voice year to year
- Emails about prom and graduation went out to families and is available on PCHS website

Supplies

Fred Louws, Associate Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being

- Proper supplies and materials are key to student learning and success
- Process for classroom supply acquisition
 - Principal and program leaders (PL) meet to discuss budget
 - Department teachers request supplies from program leads
 - Teacher is responsible for providing specific materials/quantities required for their classes
 - Teacher and PL determine if request reflects curriculum, and costs are within reason balancing needs throughout school and current inventory
 - Once teacher and PL come to agreement, PL approves purchase
 - Reviewed by Principal and Administrative Assistant for final approval and purchase (including connection to curriculum and health and safety standards)
- Finances tracked at school and Board level
- Purchases are ordered by main office after approval
- Process is transparent to all PLs and office staff
- School Council is informed of planning and major purchases
- School Principal rarely has to deny a purchase request – where requests are denied, request has not meet curriculum or health and safety criteria
- Processes and protocols are important – help to ensure students’ needs and Ministry of Education requirements are met

Donations

Angela McClary – Principal

- Support from the school community and the larger community is plentiful in Port Colborne
- Includes support for Broken Spoke, coaching, mentoring, scholarships and donations
- Value of hands-on learning in tech recognized by businesses – donations
- Principal is accountable for all donations - student safety and inventory (donations through main office)
- Donations that meet criteria are accepted
- Supportive and grateful for donations

Staff Conflict

Fred Louws, Associate Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being

- DSBN takes allegations of conflict seriously and has internal mechanisms to address
- School cannot discuss personnel matters (privacy, confidentiality)

- Board's Employee Services department is navigating concerns
- Staff compliance – it is important that staff not speak to students about staff/personnel matters

CWB Testing

Fred Louws, Associate Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being

- Common practice at Board to offer one test site (Thorold Secondary School)
 - Standardized equipment ensures level playing field for students from all schools
 - Thorold SS selected because of central geographic location
 - Costs and transportation to complete at Thorold SS are covered by PCHS
- In response to concerns raised about testing at PCHS, staff have worked with CWB to establish an additional testing site this year
- **Thursday, May 8 – CWB testing at PCHS** (honours student voice)
- Looking at CWB testing next year will continue and may include one at Thorold and one at PCHS (one site / semester)

Future of Tech Programs at PCHS

Angela McClary – Principal

- Board and PCHS recognize and celebrate role of trades and tech programs
- Understand importance and pride of trades/tech in this community
- Take misinformation suggesting these programs are at risk very seriously as it is not true
- In 2024-25, PCHS has 28 technology classes
- In 2025-26, PCHS has 35 technology classes offered, which is an increase of 25%
- The number and variety of classes offered each year is based on the Course Selection Sheets student complete each year (student voice and choice)
- Students begin course selection process for next year (Dec) – completed in February
- Classes fluctuate according to student interest and course selection
- New for 2025-26 - includes an expanded general introduction to tech course offered to Grade 9s (based on a 59% increase in incoming Grade 9 student requests – from 91 tech course requests to 145)
- PCHS is committed to providing well-rounded education, which includes tech, arts, athletics and academics
- PCHS staff have maintained academic focus, and the results have been strong
 - EQAO math results increased 28%
 - Literacy test results increased 10-12%
- Post-secondary/apprenticeship application – 75+ grads have been accepted (up from 13 students 2 years ago)
- Goal is to ensure every student can explore their interests (academics, arts, athletics, trades/tech) – something for everyone at PCHS

Closing

Kelly Goulding – Chair

- Called meeting to a close

- Thank you for attending
- Feedback form reminder

Questions

- In response to questions from students, staff confirmed that the process to approve the budget to acquire appropriate supplies for the curriculum was followed and supplies were delivered for classroom use.
- It was also confirmed that the process accounts for the purchase of consumable supplies, too. Staff are required to work within the Ministry of Education curriculum requirements and funding and put forward their needs to program leaders/admin.
- In response to a question from a parent, staff confirmed that they would review whether there are expired rods in the classroom inventory and take appropriate steps, if any are found.
- In response to questions from parents, staff confirmed that they are listening. Supplies for tech were purchased and received, and delivered to the class in the fall and throughout the school year but a disconnect exists as to why they have not been available to students, and this will be explored further.

The meeting closed and staff remained available for 20 minutes and responded to some individual questions. Staff also received the written questions that were submitted.

Further questions may be directed to Principal Angela McClary and will be managed individually or at a future school council meeting.