



"Accepting the Challenge"

Divisional Futures & Community Relations Committee Minutes

Friday, January 7, 2011 – 12:00 noon
Library – Vincent Massey High School

Present: M. Snelling (Chairperson), P. Bowslaugh, K. Sumner, G. Kruck (alternate).

Regrets: Dr. D. Michaels.

Invited Guests: Approximately 30 students, staff and graduates of the Vincent Massey High School Advanced Placement Program.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Divisional Futures and Community Relations Committee Meeting was called to order at 12:18 p.m. by Chairperson, Mr. Snelling.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Divisional Futures and Community Relations Committee Agenda was approved.

3. COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE GOAL ITEMS

NIL

4. OTHER COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

- A) **Equity and Sustainability in Education (Meeting with representatives of the Vincent Massey High School Advanced Placement Program, including current students, graduates and teaching staff.**

Chairperson, Mr. Snelling, thanked all in attendance for their participation and reviewed the role of the Brandon School Division Board of Trustees' Divisional Futures and Community Relations Committee. Due to the large number of participants, the Chairperson asked those in attendance to divide into two groups for discussion purposes. One group was facilitated by Trustees Snelling and Bowslaugh while the other group was facilitated by Trustees Sumner and Kruck. Students and staff were asked to identify themselves. Discussions were held regarding the Advanced Placement Program currently located at Vincent Massey High School. A summary of these discussions is attached to the Minutes as Appendix "A".

At the conclusion of the meeting Mr. Snelling expressed his appreciation to all present noting that student feedback was vital.

5. OPERATIONS INFORMATION

NIL

The meeting adjourned at 1:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Snelling, Chair

P. Bowslaugh

K. Sumner

G. Kruck (Alternate)

Meeting with Advanced Placement Students

Vincent Massey High School

Friday, January 7, 2011

GROUP I (Facilitated by Trustees Sumner and Kruk)

Questions:

1) What do you like about the Vincent Massey High School Advanced Placement Program?

- "I have learned time management skills."
- "AP is free and you have access to teachers for the whole year vs. paying for courses at university and competing for access to teachers."
- "AP calculus is spread over an entire year making it easier to post a high GPA in University."
- "It prepares you for university."
- "By taking AP courses I can take less courses in University and my time at University will be shorter."
- "AP eases the shock of University."
- "AP gives you more responsibility and teaches self-motivation."
- "Everyone is there to learn and very disciplined not like our regular classes."
- "I can take courses based on what I am heading into at University."
- "I have learned how to study."
- "We have really good teachers and it is much different from regular classes."
- "Students respect teachers and they respect us."
- "Teachers treat us differently because they know we are there to learn. No one is slacking off."
- "I transferred from Crocus to Massey to take AP courses and it has been comforting. We are more of a unit and that helped to build friendships."
- "Can ask anyone else in class for help."
- "AP keeps us segregated from regular students and keeps us interested. We are bored in other classes."
- "IB program seems more competitive. In AP we help each other out and push each other to do better."

2) How can we improve school and/or the AP program?

- "Most problems that come from school are self-inflicted."
- "Set-up an AP Scholar program that starts earlier. Students need to know what they want to do earlier – like in Grade 8."
- "Scheduling issues – 'I had to drop band to accommodate my AP courses.'"
- "It can be challenging to have all your AP courses in one year."
- "Talk to the Grade 9's about AP and why they should take it and how they should plan it out."
- "Counsellors didn't really know about the courses."
- "Middle years students need to be more aware of accelerated courses."
- "Physical Education conflicts with AP Scheduling – why not have an AP gym class. Skilled people take skilled courses like in math, why not do the same for gym. Have gym classes to meet the levels of people's competency."

GROUP II (Facilitated by Trustees Snelling and Bowslaugh)

Questions:

3) How has the AP program helped to prepare you for University?

- "It pushes me further".
- "It has been very useful, almost a repeat in first year. Very helpful in the lab and provided a good understanding." (GRAD)
- "Prepares you for the workload and changes in expectations".
- "Half my class in calculus are AP math students from Vincent Massey and are able to handle the class." (GRAD)
- "You learn more advanced study skills and the other students in the class are dedicated."
- "Students can choose to enrol at the Grade 11 level – but Grade 12, there are certain standards to succeed in the courses." (STAFF)
- "It helps me to get used to the course workload".
- "It allowed me to skip first year courses at University". (GRAD)
- "Gave me an A+ in Calculus". (GRAD)
- "I took it at BU and got an A+". (GRAD)
- "Some students will try it and quit because the work load is too hard. But it tells them that they realize that they are not ready for university. It does the student a service and helps them to come to the realization that they are not ready for university." (STAFF)

4) What activities are AP students involved in?

- All students in this group were involved in several activities either school related (band, choir, student leadership, youth in philanthropy, school sports teams); community related (community volunteering such as hospital, Westman Immigration, lab assistant, Special Olympics, gymnastics, dance, art classes); or working part-time on weekend. Students also noted they still had a social life and they weren't always studying.

5) Are there things that the Division can do to improve the program?

- "More contact with the University – especial Brandon University." (GRAD)
- "As a teacher it reinvigorated me and made me look broader and make connection across the curriculum. The professional development gave me energy to bring back ideas from other AP classes and teachers from around the world. It helped in the classroom to work with the student as a team." (STAFF)
- "Class size must be kept small especially for lab and hands on work."
- "AP students are engaged and it allows for success to carry over at the post secondary level. First year University has large classes and will shave drop out rates that are very high. AP students do not drop out as they have been engaged in a class of smaller numbers." (GRAD)

6) Why did you choose AP courses?

- "I had siblings that completed the courses."
- "The challenge and instant change in the class rooms."
- "The intelligent conversations."

- "It allows for exchange of ideas and the depth of the discussions."
- "It gave me a head start in University".
- "It gave me a huge leg up".
- "At BU lab assistants come from Vincent Massey AP program."
- "AP has allowed students to try national exams."

Open Comments:

"There is a trickle down effect in the school. The innovation and enthusiasm enhances an AP culture which transfers over to other classes. There is an enhanced level of academic respect." (STAFF).

"I moved from another town and it helped to fit in and make friends."

"It is our enrichment program and creates a place where students can flourish. It needs to be expanded to other areas." (STAFF)