

**Questions for Debbie Donsky**  
**Runnymede School Council**  
**January 24, 2024**  
**7:45-9:00 pm**

**ARTS (25 MINUTES)**

1. It has come to our attention that a satisfactory solution for the senior rehearsal space is yet to be established. Since the prohibition of hallway work in September, the students' enthusiasm for collaborative efforts has not waned. However, the current situation has led to them being confined inside the drama room, with some even braving the cold outdoors to practice. The students and teachers are trying to make up lost dance and drama time by coming in before and after school and during lunch, but now they don't have enough space. Where can they practice during these times? When will this be communicated to the teachers and students?
2. The relocation of senior visual arts classes to the portable this school year has presented considerable challenges. The absence of running water limits fundamental art forms like painting and clay work, there is insufficient storage for art supplies, and there isn't reliable wifi access for research, all of which creates obstacles for student learning. Additionally, the inadequate space, particularly for the largest class sizes and the oldest students who require more physical space, is impacting the ability to engage in creative activities. What is the long-term plan and viability of the portable as a solution for the art room? If it is intended as a permanent arrangement, we request a discussion to create a plan for immediate improvements to address these shortcomings. If the portable is a short term measure, what is the plan for the art studio's return to a more suitable space within the school?
3. Future Arts Programming Changes: We have observed various changes implemented this year, such as the cancellation of traditional performances and competitions, as well as the relocation and reduction of rehearsal and studio spaces. Additionally, there have been reductions in time allocated on the timetable and concerns have been raised about the administration's communication and relationship with both students and teachers regarding these matters. The impact of these changes to our beloved arts programs- band, strings, drama and visual arts, is palpable, and it appears that the current administration may not prioritize and support the program to the extent that previous administration have. In light of these observations, what is the administration's plans for the senior arts department (band, strings, drama, dance, visual arts) for next year? Is there a longer term plan for any changes; the next 3-5 years?
4. Is there direction from the TDSB Board to reduce arts curriculum time and/or staff at Runnymede? Why are we as a parent community and school council not being informed and consulted about program changes at our school by our admin.?
5. What is the protocol for programs, for example ListenUp or Green Teacher, whereby the program is approved by Administration, however not all teachers/classes participate? How do we ensure equity of access to all programming for all students?

## **PROTOCOLS, POLICIES & COMMUNICATION (30 MINUTES)**

6. Teacher leave protocol and transparency: There seems to be a lack of communication regarding teacher leaves, leaving many student and parents anxious about changes and future plans. What is the protocol for informing students and caregivers when a teacher goes on leave? Can teachers communicate to their classes, in particular when/why they are leaving? Additionally, what is the percentage of teachers currently on leave at RPS? The current situation is causing confusion and frustration among parents, and we believe proactive communication would alleviate these concerns.
7. There seems to be a culture of fear at the school around any sort of questioning new rule changes by students? That is not the type of culture our community is used to or wants modeled to our children. How can we all work together to change this?
8. What is the protocol for students voicing their concerns and needs? Many students, especially senior students, are feeling that their voices are not being heard. What can be done to ensure student voices are respected and their concerns are addressed?
9. There seems to be an overall issue at Runnymede with a lack of communication and follow-up from the administrators. The Runnymede Reminders are not communicating significant things like program changes and playground rules (before and after school). Kids are not always made aware that changes have been made and then are being punished for doing something wrong. How can the parent community be involved in solution oriented discussions with the appropriate teachers and administrators regarding current concerns involving our students going forward? Can we create a task group or groups to discuss and put forward solutions in the best interest of the students needs?
10. Budget: Can you please provide council with the school budget priorities and explain the process by which school budget funds are spent each year? Is it the Principal who solely decides on school budget spends or is it a committee within the school? If it is a committee, who is on the committee?
11. We understand the current Runnymede policy is that students can't play on the playground until 3:30pm. What can be done such that students can use the equipment from 3:15pm dismissal and on?
12. Why are the students no longer allowed to decorate each other's lockers for their birthdays?
13. Why are students not allowed to take tote bags into their classes? They are only allowed to go to their lockers before school, at lunch and after school, so some need an extra bag to bring necessary materials for the morning or afternoon period. And now they may also need to bring their coats with them. What are they allowed to carry things in between locker access times?
14. How and by whom is the decision made to have an indoor recess? And how does indoor recess work? Do they have access to the gyms to be active?
15. Are there any plans to re-visit the Runnymede cell phone policy given the events at HCI on Jan 19, 2024? (students must keep phones in their lockers)

16. Can you clarify the specific steps the school board's policy entails once physical bullying is reported and how this policy ensures the immediate and long-term safety of the student involved?
17. Is there a Board commitment that the Board funding of our school will remain constant, despite school fundraising?
18. What does the Board consider as appropriate for parents to post or discuss regarding the school in open forums, including Council meetings or social media (e.g., School Community Facebook Group)?

### **FACILITIES/BUILDING (15 MINUTES)**

19. When it comes to facility improvements at the school, there seems to be a lack of transparency regarding the overall improvement plan for Runnymede and the timeframe for requested work to be implemented. What is the protocol for communicating facility improvements to the school community?
20. We have two that are amazing spaces. English in the main floor. Another English is in basement is a very large space with lots of storage- it's fine. Those are English classes. The other rooms used to just be SK (as French used to be just SK). One room- 123, is not an acceptable kindergarten space- yes it has a sink and bathroom. There are cubbies running in the almost middle... making for no sight lines to the bathroom and door. It doesn't allow for great play based learning centres and there is almost no storage. Now that French is JK/SK can we look at making some improvements? This cubby block has to be moved- why can there not be cubbies added to the hallway (the other French classes have their cubbies in the hallway. Right now it is a class of 31- and the teachers are amazing- but it's an awful space.
21. Understanding that budget constraints can impact the school's ability to enhance accessibility, could you share how the allocation of funds for accessibility improvements is currently prioritized and what steps might be taken to secure additional resources or funding to ensure that the school environment is fully accessible to all students?
22. Given the notable age of our school building and the visible maintenance issues, such as the peeling ceilings, can you share how maintenance and repair needs are currently assessed?