

Teacher Report for GB

Hello members of the Governing Board.

We are back to another year, about halfway though it at present, and looking forward to a return to “normal”. We as a staff in school, on council and this board, are as always happy to have this voice and remain committed to keeping the lines of communication between all stakeholders within the school community open and free of constraint, and for that purpose, this report will outline the teacher’s current reality.

This report takes into account that the teacher not only has the best interest of the students at heart, but also understands the day to day workings of the school from the perspective of one who is often most implicated in the decisions made by others.

- As a staff we are still remaining vigilant in regards to the protective measures still needing to be in place as the Corona Virus continues to come to us in waves. That said, this year we feel that our preparedness, generally, is better this year. It may be in part that we, all round; teachers, students, admin, et al, have had one year of practice with the challenges that teaching under these conditions expects. We are grateful for the support and understanding we receive from all.
- Student engagement is at the core of any teaching practice and was probably one of the biggest challenges to both student and teacher in the last year. Being back in the classroom as a daily routine for the whole school, even if masked, has been a great benefit. This benefit was seen most keenly in the students’ willingness to be in the classroom setting. The social benefit of physically interacting with peers and teachers enlivens the student learning 100%.
- That said, while willingness to learn has been a lesser problem, the hurdle of how to engage has been another issue. It is like rehabilitating a limb after it has been broken. The student has had to “retrain” themselves in seeking help, in organizing for class (especially the displacement), and comportment/social interactions in class. All noticed the eagerness at the beginning, and some spoke of “learning/teaching fatigue” setting in earlier this year than previous as we slid into November.
- The willingness of returning to the physical building, reminded us of what RWA’s school community means to all of us. Walking the halls, bustling with (masked) students is overwhelmingly better than staring at a screen with gray boxes and colorful circular avatars. The jumpstart of this school spirit is probably best seen in the enthusiasm the students had embracing our ECA programs once again. A defining example is how athletics has thrived so far this year. Students are keen and committed to their sport teams and we had a very successful fall season and beginning of the winter season. Another example would be the Musical, which, even under the threat of the impending new variant, pulled off a successful run. These are the “big ticket” items, but on most days there are any number of activities going on, and once again, as teachers, we’re seeing (in most cases positively) our students juggling the ECAs with their academic obligations.

All this to say that, from the teacher’s perspective, while there is still room for improvement, our situation seems to be better than it was the same time last year. In looking to the future, we hope this growing sense of compassion (supported by our “Moments of Pause-itivity”) develops further, incorporating what we have learned with the ongoing Covid crisis, taking some time to breathe, re-evaluate, and re-introduce to return to a better “normal”.