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Colonel By Secondary School
School Council
Minutes of meeting held on
Tuesday, April 25th, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

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1. Welcome and introductions (Adebimpe Egbeyemi)
- o 35 persons were present at the presentation. The weather and other activities might explain the low attendance.
- o This presentation will also be shown to Grade 9 and some Grade 10 students during the week. Unfortunately, other school events prevent the presentation to be given to a larger group of students.

2. Screenager Movie
- o The following are notes taken from the presentation.
- o The use of technology releases chemicals in the brain. It has an impact on the level of satisfaction. There is an overall impact in schools regarding the use of technology. When a student uses technology, not only this student is less engaged with a risk of having a decrease in his grades, but the student sitting right besides is at risk too of having a decrease in his/her grades.
- o Technology is available and easily used; there seems to be no room anymore for daydreaming and doodling.
- o Schools tried different approaches regarding technology. One school decided to ban all electronic items. Students had to drop their device before entering the school (drop off system) and they would take it back at the end of the day. Some students found ways to still bring their device into the school, one of them being the son of the mayor. Soon after the ban was lifted.
- o Schools that allow the use of electronic devices within the school need to put in place some restrictions. Otherwise, it is not beneficial for students and teachers.
- o Currently schools tend to take a middle position on this matter, by encouraging students to use it wisely. The school environment is compared to a work environment where everyone would use electronic devices, but using good judgement. The students learn how to handle technology responsibly and this help impact the way they will use it in the future, once they reach the job market.
- o When a student has access to an electronic device, there is a decision making process on whether he/she uses it or not. When they are playing games on their devices in class they are in a "right now" moment, where satisfaction is "right now".
- o The brain is sensitive to all experiences and emotions that technology brings. In comparison, any experience in a teenager brain is heightened compared to an adult brain. The part of the brain that is affected by those experiences is their prefrontal cortex, which is less developed for a teenager. Prefrontal cortex is particularly related to self-control, and the quality of its development is critical in developing better relationship, getting better result in school and overall being happier. Teenagers need to learn about self-control.
- o Another important consequence about the use of technology is the lack of empathy that it generates to the avid users. Their sense of self is less developed.
- o Girls tend to be more interested in chatting and social media while boys tend to be more game users. And those games are often violent. There are no conclusive results about the overall effect of violent games on humans. It is good to know though that war games were originally designed by the U.S. Army to desensitize the soldiers before going to battle.
- o For some technology becomes a substitute parent. Children imitate what they see on the screen. The use of educational games and material allow to stimulate good qualities like strategy, cooperation and conception. The problem is always to know when to stop; technology is captivating.
- o Technology is also a replacement media for students who don't have activities after school. Research shows that students who have after school activities do a lot better in school. The goal is to find the right activity that is in line with the interests of the child. With the increased use of technology, children have lost interest in hobbies. Encouraging them to rediscover activities in which they have interest like piano, nature or a sport will be beneficial.

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- o Games are usually the favorite for boys. You may want to put down some rules, like keep violent games out of the house. Also, make sure they find time to do what they like to do (ex. hobbies).
- o Girls tend to prefer phones and social media. It actually brings to them a world filled with competition. The number of likes on your posts makes you feel good, and it also tells on how popular you are. This environment makes girls to be more self-conscious, they pay more attention to their hair, face, and they like to pose. Social media makes girls want to create an identity, it's all about how you look. It is then important to keep with them an open and positive communication on looks.
- o There has been studies on multitasking, which is oscillating to one task to another. Teen brains can easily and quickly do that, but at a cost. Overstimulation tires the brain and the kids end up performing overall more poorly. In some studies, mice had been given screen time. They had then put them into a maze and it took them 3 times to find the exit compared to mice without screen time. With mice they have found that once they stopped the screen time, the effect on the brain were permanent, for life. Right now there have been no evaluation of the actual effects of all the screen time and the rapid pace found on media. But social media usage does play a part on decreasing grades.
- o Computers have been part of our lives more and more since the last 30 years. Accessibility was made a priority to help students achieve better academically. But studies have shown that it actually caused a decrease in results in math and reading. Having a computer at home was thought to be helping the kids achieve better. It actually had a negative effect on kids from the poorest household. Computers actually takes away time for homework. There had always been a gap between the level of achievement between richer and poorer kids. And at the opposite of what was expected, with technology, the gap is even bigger. The main reason is that there is no control on how it is used.
- o Technology can create addiction, because it intensifies the pleasure. And teenagers are particularly at risk because a good thing feels even "better" in a teenager brain. There is a rehabilitation center called "Restart" that takes care of problems with addiction. The stays are between 45 to 90 days, with no right to technology at all. They have counselors and provide both group and individual therapies. It sometimes take a few weeks to "detox". The pattern of detox is similar to that of ingesting chemicals and the effects on the brain is similar as well.
- o Technology brings new challenges into parenting. The main challenge is for the parents themselves as they are users of technology too. They sometimes have trouble setting limits to themselves as well. Before the 60s, parents were raising their children with strict limits. Then the 60s changed everything on how parenting is done. Children nowadays question everything, which is a good thing, but parents need to adapt their parenting to this new reality.
- o Technology affects sleep and one simple rule is to keep it out of the bedroom. It is important to set clear and consistent boundaries. If parents decide to make a contract about the use of technology, it is best to involve the kids; so instead of imposing rules that don't seem to make sense to them, they are the ones choosing and taking responsibility on the use of their device.
- o Many ideas are easy to use to help cut down on technology. If you carpool, make the rides tech free. Plan more outdoor activities. Plan moments to talk about technology. Make this moment an open discussion on how technology affect us and our lives. Kids also know how it affects their lives. They know how being disconnected generates frustrations. Some kids have also made their own rules, like when they go to a restaurant together, they put all phones at the center of the table. The one that picks up their phone will pay the bill of the whole table.
- o Studies have shown that kids who spent five consecutive days without technology have a greater capacity of empathy. Technology is not a problem or responsibility for the school and the parents only, it has to be addressed as a community. It involves both the kids and the society.

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3.   Discussion and Information

- CB has a program for digital citizenship. Each student must sign a form on the use of technology, which is layered to their level of responsibility, from Grade 9 to 12.
- For students having issues with the use of technology, there are services available to them at the school, for example with their guidance counselor. There are also other resources in the community.
- One parent commented on how frightening it is to see young girls posting pictures of themselves. This issue was not addressed in the video. It is so easy nowadays to have an account hacked and have pictures shared with a close group of persons now shared with the world.
- In the past years, CB has held meeting with the students to talk about texting and sexting.
- One key element to prioritize is to keep an open line of communication between the kids and adults (parents and school).

4.   Closing (Lise Baillot-Kutukian)

- There is room for parents to be part of the SC if they wish.
- Next SC Meeting: Tuesday May 16th, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.