

January 31, 2017
PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee** was held on Tuesday, January 31, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. in the Cambridge Room at the Education Centre, 51 Ardelt Avenue, Kitchener, with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: K. Smith

Board Staff: J. Bryant

Committee Members: G. Anderson, R. Barnett-Cowan, M. Cameron, A. Christiansen, S. Cranston, B. Hutzal (Co-Chair), A. Keep, J. Magazine, J. Ortiz, H. Shalan, L. Tremble (Co-Chair), C. Waterfall

Absent: K. Gettliffe, K. Graham, C. Penner Worden

Regrets: J. Crits, B. Davidson, J. Windsor

Other Staff in Attendance: E. Burns, M. Gerard, N. Manning, G. Shantz

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Co-Chair B. Hutzal called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by H. Shalan, seconded by M. Cameron:

That the agenda of the January 31, 2017, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Moved by J. Ortiz, seconded by J. Magazine:

That the minutes of the December 6, 2016, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

J. Bryant invited G. Shantz, Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being, to provide an update on the Newcomer Resettlement. Graham continues to sit on a committee with representation from many social and service organizations across the region. This latest resettlement group is smaller but more diverse; some of the families are from Syria, others are from Somalia, Ethiopia, Congo, Burma and Afghanistan.

Reception House is the organization that first receives the refugees when they arrive in Waterloo Region. They have rented property in Cambridge, close to Jacob Hespeler Secondary School, to help with the relocation of the newest arrivals. Board staff has been working with the new families to help orient parents to the education system as well as to conduct assessments with the children so when they arrive at school, appropriate programming is in place.

The Region hoped that Cambridge would be selected as the final settlement area, but due to housing costs and proximity to the 401, this is not the case. The emerging trend is to see families moving to the

Kitchener core area, where there is already an established community of refugees and housing is more affordable. We are also seeing signs of a secondary migration; families who previously found housing in the Toronto area, and even in Manitoba, are returning to the region once government assistance ends.

Graham expressed his thanks to Parent Involvement Committee members and congratulated them on the success of the Newcomer Workshops held at Franklin Public School. He has received many positive reviews. These sessions help engage the parents in the school in a very positive way. They give parents an opportunity to establish connections to the staff and administration who directly support their children.

The next steps for the program are currently under review. The plan would be to replicate the workshops and continue the good work in other locations. Graham plans to sit down with staff in the near future to determine what schools are well-positioned to receive this support.

Budget Discussion – M. Gerard

Matthew Gerard, Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services & Treasurer, presented an overview of grant funds received from the Ministry and the main pillars of the budget process:

- Enrolment
 - Grants for Student Needs (GSN) - 2/3 of GSN funding is enrolment based
 - Count dates are October 31 and March 31
 - Approximately \$11,500 per student
- Grant revenues
- Expenditures
- Status of prior year
- Balanced budget

In January, an interim financial report was provided to Trustees using the most recent enrolment numbers available. Forecasting enrolment is not an exact science and can fluctuate extensively. For example, last year the elementary forecast was short about 500 students and in secondary, a deeper drop was anticipated than was actually experienced. This can be attributed to the exodus down the 401 with more people moving into the region. We are one of the few boards in the province experiencing stability and some growth in our enrolment.

There are five types of grant revenues. Grants received are tightly regulated and there are limitations on what the board can do with funding. There are two pupil grants and 12 Special Purpose Grants. Pupil Grants encompass teachers, ECEs and EAs, specialty teachers, textbooks and learning materials etc., and funding for building needs such as Principals, Vice-Principals, school secretaries and school office supplies. Special Purpose Grant Revenues target specific areas such as Special Education, Language, First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education. Capital funding is site specific and driven in part by enrollment to help build and establish sites. Education Program Other grants fund specific endeavours or initiatives. They are shorter term and their success determines future funding.

The highlights of the budget feedback received last year, following broad consultation:

- Waterloo Education Foundation Incorporated (WEFI) – need to increase its prominence; promote the website to increase donations over the next year;
- Continue to right-size schools through reduction in portables and portapaks as they are more expensive to operate than permanent capacity;
- Continue to explore walking school buses to promote healthy living and to reduce traffic congestion at schools

- Continue to invest in staff wellness – reduced absenteeism saves money
- Continue to reduce the number of printers and paper used

The 2017-18 budget process kicks-off February 1, 2017, with the release of a system memo. Budget templates are to be completed by stakeholders (departments, schools) and are due at the end of the month. A number of public engagement sessions are planned in February and March. A budget survey will be posted online after Family Day and be available until March Break. All this information will be summarized and integrated with the GSNs announced by the Ministry at the end of March/mid-April. A trustee workshop will be held at the beginning of May, followed by a Senior Team review and Board budget discussions in June, all culminating in a recommendation to trustees. Once ratified by the Board, the final budget will be submitted to the Ministry on June 30, 2017.

The three main budget pressures for 2017-18:

- transportation costs;
- utility costs (expecting increased cost across the system, approximately \$1M)
- balanced provincial budget 2017-18 and the resulting implications

Question: A concern has been raised regarding the move to School Day. There are families without internet access or credit cards, and it is rumored that the board will no longer accept cheques.

M. Gerard confirmed School Day is a new way of doing things but it does not eliminate options. He has also heard this feedback and will look at providing some clarifying language/guidelines around the use of School Day.

A question was raised as to how schools communicate with families who cannot afford computers.

G. Shantz advised that schools canvas families at registration and create a list of those that require paper communication. English as a Second Language (ESL) staff and settlement workers also assist with translation as required.

The Annual Report is a requirement of the Education Act. It is an opportunity to reflect on the past academic year. This year, it is available online, exclusively, although paper copies will be provided upon request. N. Manning demonstrated how to access the report online.

The Annual Report is part of the package with the new strategic plan, the purpose statement and story-telling in each area that helps to bring the plan to life. At the January 30, 2017, Board Meeting, the Annual Report was presented and the new purpose statement – the result of the public vote – was unveiled. A new Instagram channel to share images to try and engage students has also been launched.

A Strategic Plan Information Session is scheduled for February 21. This will be another opportunity for those interested to hear about the process, see the presentation shared with trustees at the January 30, 2017, Board meeting and to hear plans for implementation. An invitation to the meeting will be released shortly.

CO-CHAIR REPORT

L. Tremble advised the Ministry Well-being Feedback Session has been rescheduled to February 16, 2017, at 7:00 p.m., in the Cambridge Room. Feedback is due to the Ministry on March 19, 2017. [Registration](#) is through Eventbrite. Those unable to attend can either provide input to L. Tremble or submit it directly to the Ministry via the [engagement portal](#).

L. Tremble advised she has been attending the 2017-18 Calendar Committee meetings. The purpose of the committee is to set the professional development days while working within the limitations imposed by the Ministry. It is a complicated process involving many stakeholders. Parent feedback is

solicited and considered in the decision-making process.

B. Hutzal advised there is a need for more promotional materials for PIC and WRAPSC, i.e., brochures, business cards, note pads, pens, especially for the April Parent Event. Discussion ensued regarding what items would be most useful.

3. Moved by J. Magazine, seconded by S. Cranston:

That the Parent Involvement Committee members allocate \$1,000 to purchase promotional materials, such as pens, notepads and business cards.

-Carried-

B. Hutzal will work with the Communications Department re pricing and to ensure Board-approved vendors are used.

Superintendents Elaine Ranney and Scott Lomax proved a Math: Tips for Parents sheet following their presentation at the December 6, 2017 meeting (included as part of the agenda package). There was concern raised about the suitability of concepts highlighted in one of the videos on the website; the video has since been removed.

L. Tremble announced the following upcoming events:

- 1) Well-being parent engagement session is scheduled for February 16, 2017. L. Tremble has flyers to hand out
- 2) KW Counselling Services is hosting a seminar: Raising Your Gender Independent Child, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. on March 23rd
- 3) The Business and Education Partnership of Waterloo Region is hosting a seminar called Explore Your Future for students in Grades 7-12 and their parents on April 12th
- 4) Sherri Freund, President of the OSSTF Union has invited the co-chairs to speak to members on February 28, 2017, regarding WRAPSC and PIC, their purpose and the events they run

In December, the co-chairs had a very productive meeting with N. Manning regarding working to resolve CASL issues; establishing a process for raising concerns/questions for staff in order to reduce the number of people inundating staff with questions, producing new brochures, ways to make the School Council Annual Report more useful, website enhancements, etc. N. Manning will also be invited to attend PIC and WRAPSC meetings going forward. N. Manning assured members that he has heard their concerns and requests and asked that they be patient and realistic with what can be achieved in the short term, given many competing priorities.

On January 16, 2017, a PIC meeting occurred with parents only in attendance. As Parent Involvement Committee is a committee of the Board, and thus required to follow Board process, this is not allowed. Parent-only sessions regarding training and orientation would be permissible, but not to discuss the business of PIC.

B. Hutzal would like to develop a three-to-five year plan for PIC. There is a huge operational component to PIC but a strategy is needed. Brent will continue to engage the group going forward.

TREASURER REPORT

G. Anderson provided a PIC Financial Report, for the period ending January 31, 2017, as attached.

CONSENT AGENDA

Prior to approving the Consent Agenda, L. Tremble advised that C. Penner Worden, Parent Event Chair, is looking for volunteers to help with the promotion of the event and to help out on the day of. She will be sending out an email shortly.

K. Smith provided additional information regarding the Rotary Club of Kitchener Grand River School Grants. Donations are made to schools in need through the Waterloo Education Foundation (WEFI). The [application](#) is easy to complete and due by the end of February. The club will accept applications from Cambridge but preference will be given to schools in Kitchener. The goal of the grant is to provide schools with things not covered by the school budget.

The Consent Agenda includes the following: WRAPSC, SCIS, Membership, PRO Parent Grant Event and Trustee Reports.

4. Moved by J. Ortiz, seconded by H. Shalan:

That the Consent Agenda of the January 31, 2017, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Immigrant Engagement Subcommittee

H. Shalan began by thanking members for their work and effort as it was critical to the success of the IES Newcomer Workshop sessions. The fifth and last workshop took place at Franklin Public School on January 26, 2017, and concluded with a celebratory dinner. Survey results indicate the sessions were very useful and appreciated by the families. The sessions provided a very positive way for parents to engage with the school and to establish connections with other parents and with school staff.

While there is no doubt this is a worthwhile initiative, unless more volunteers join the subcommittee, it will not be possible to run another session. Also, a school would need to commit to host the workshops.

The budget allocated for the 5 workshops was \$3000. Actual total expenses were approximately \$2,000. For planning purposes, H. Shalan requested an additional \$1,000 be added to the remaining balance and set aside to run another session, if required.

5. Moved by G. Anderson, seconded by S. Cranston:

That an additional amount of \$1,000 be allocated to run another session of IES Newcomer Workshops, if requested by a host school.

-Carried-

It was also noted that the budget amount of \$2,000 for the next session is an estimate; the number of participants and translators required will have the biggest impact on the budget.

Governance Report

A. Keep advised that she, M. Cameron and L. Tremble had met and discussed providing a standardized report template for use by the various subcommittees. This change coincides with the Board's intention to produce AODA compliant paperwork effective February 13, 2017.

The group also looked at establishing a review schedule and terms of reference for each subcommittee as per PIC by-laws. A. Keep then deferred to L. Tremble to lead the discussion concerning the idea of

revising the current WRAPSC model and membership process.

L. Tremble highlighted the challenges with the current structure – the imbalanced membership process to become a WRAPSC versus PIC-only member, the time commitment for being a PIC-WRAPSC member and the timing of the membership appointments with the PIC year starting in October. The proposal is to have PIC absorb WRAPSC as a subcommittee. WRAPSC would continue to run in a similar manner, with a steering committee, and holding six meetings per year. The bulk of the work is done by the co-chairs, the budget is minimal and perhaps a smaller steering committee would help to ensure it keeps going. In order to have changes in place for September, the timing is tight. By-law changes will need to be ready for the March 7, 2017 meeting and WRAPSC will need to suspend their terms of reference as of a certain date in order to become a subcommittee of PIC. The Governance and Membership sections of the bylaws will require the most changes. The current WRAPSC charter can be used for establishing WRAPSC as a PIC subcommittee.

An informal show of hands indicated the majority of members want to proceed with this change. In order for the changes to take effect in September, all recommended changes will need to be ready for a vote on March 7, 2017. L. Tremble will consult with WRAPSC at their next meeting on February 7, 2017. If she does not obtain their agreement, she will send an email to PIC members to advise they won't be proceeding.

6. Moved by A. Keep, seconded by A. Christiansen:

That the meeting be extended an additional 15 minutes in order to complete the remaining items of business on the agenda.

-Carried-

POLICY REVIEW

7. Moved by J. Magazine, seconded by A. Keep:

That the recommended changes to the following Board Policies: 2007 – Board Advertising Expense, 4013 – Secondary Schools, 1007 – Education Development Charges, 1013 – First Nation, Metis and Voluntary Self-Identification Policy, 2000 – Environmental Values, 2003 – Early Learning and Care, 3006 – Student Trustees, 3001 – Travel, Meals, Hospitality-Trustees, 2004 – Character Education and Social-Emotional Skills Development, 2005 – Parent Support, 2006 - Consultation, 5000 – Staffing and 5001 – Appointment of Principals and Vice Principals-Elementary and Secondary, as summarized by L. Tremble, be provided to Trustee Smith to bring forward for discussion at the Board table.

-Carried-

CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Canadian Safe Schools Network – Toronto - February 24, 2017

20/20 Conference: A Clear Look at the Past, Present & Future of Safety in Education. Cost is \$350 per person. The session is directed to educators – primarily administrators and superintendents attend.

J. Magazine has attended the last four years and she could not say that the money spent had made a difference to PIC. L. Tremble asked for volunteers interested in attending; there were none.

Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition – Toronto – April 4-5, 2017

The conference theme is *Towards Well-being for All*. It will focus on Ontario's new Well-Being Strategy for Education and what that means to schools in the province. L. Tremble suggested members check out the [conference program](#). This item will be brought forward at the March 7, 2017, meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. R. DeBoer: Digital Symposium (March)
2. A. Mercier: Grad Rates; Assessment & EQAO (May)
3. Food4Kids
4. Student Trustees & Student Senate
5. French Immersion – challenges re the application process, relocation of students
6. Courses offered at Summer School – no French Immersion courses?

Members were asked to submit any other agenda suggestions they may have to the co-chairs.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: March 7, 2017, 6:30 p.m., Cambridge Room

QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD

The Committee congratulated Doctor Hend Shalan on being awarded her PhD!

ADJOURNMENT

8. Moved by J. Ortiz, seconded by M. Cameron:

That the Parent Involvement Committee Meeting be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.