

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee** was held on Tuesday, May 26, 2015, at 6:30 p.m. in the Cambridge Room at the Education Centre, 51 Ardelt Avenue, Kitchener, with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: J. Hendry, N. Waddell, K. Woodcock

Board Staff: J. Bryant, K. Graham, R. Noonan, K. O'Reilly

Committee Members: G. Anderson, K. AuCoin, J. Magazine, J. Ortiz, C. Rose (Co-Chair),
H. Shalan, J. Stevens, A. Sumner, L. Tremble (Co-Chair)

Community Member: A. Hynes

Other Staff in Attendance: E. Burns, M. Deacon, N. Landry

Regrets: K. Smith

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Co-Chair C. Rose called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by A. Hynes, seconded by J. Ortiz:

That the agenda of the May 26, 2015, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Moved by A. Sumner, seconded by J. Stephens:

That the minutes of the March 31, 2015, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved with the following amendment:

The Membership Subcommittee volunteers, listed on Page 2, should read: K. AuCoin, J. Stephens, C. Rose and K. Smith.

-Carried-

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY, CASL & SCHOOL DAY UPDATE

N. Landry, Business Services Manager, provided an update on the School Day initiative. There are currently 36 schools and 12 000 parents registered and using the system. Effective September 2015, the plan is to add up to 35 additional elementary schools and to add pilot four secondary schools. School Day is CASL compliant and will minimize the cash being handled at the school. It is also an effective communication tool, contains consent forms and has an announcement email feature with push notification. In those schools actively using School Day, participation is between 80 – 90%. Parents with connectivity challenges can either print or receive the forms. There is a software licensing fee of \$1.50 per student/per year. This cost is covered centrally. There is a 4% transaction fee (credit card and debit fees) that is charged to the parent, which goes directly to the credit card or debit companies.

M. Deacon advised the Board's focus on CASL compliance continues. Effective April 1, 2015, the CRTC began fining companies who have not complied. Board staff continues to monitor to see if there will be a softening of the rules and regulations.

Some school councils have expressed the desire to develop a Facebook or twitter account. At this point in time, there are six elementary and one secondary school with accounts. The Board is monitoring how they are being used and looking at expanding usage. This is an evolving process and guidelines are being established in order to make usage consistent. Facebook and twitter accounts must be supervised by the school administration as the school council is an entity of the Board.

M. Deacon advised there is recognition that the naming convention for staff emails is not particularly intuitive and the number of bounce backs can be frustrating. The Board is aware of the request for a central depository of employee email addresses and/or phone extensions, and is working towards a solution in the near future.

The website continues to evolve and the quality of information is improving. For the last three months, staff have been working on a website management and social media procedure which addresses website content. IT staff have developed an exemplar of both a secondary and elementary standard school website, which will provide step-by-step instructions on website content and consistency. This procedure will be fully implemented starting in September.

A central communications steering group has been established with representation from many departments across the board. The focus of this group is to determine how to communicate better with families. A communication survey has been developed and each school will be asked to complete. The purpose of the survey is to find out how schools are communicating with parents and what tools they are using. Schools will be asked to rank those tools in terms of effectiveness. This group will also focus on how to best communicate with parents who do not have access to an electronic device.

In terms of engagement, work continues on marketing, promoting and championing the Board. We are looking at reaching our young learners, expanding the mental health work underway, and new relationships are being established in the IT sector and at the children's health table.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT & ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY

N. Voll, District Facilitator, Community Programs and Services, Williamsburg Community Centre, spoke to the group regarding the important role community plays in parent engagement. N. Voll also talked the importance of knowing who lives within the community, understanding literacy rates in our area and the importance of finding the right communication tool(s) taking into account the needs of the client.

She encouraged schools to reach out to the nearest community centre and connect with the outreach workers, funded by the Region of Waterloo. By linking schools with outreach workers who support families with children in fixed or low-income households, they can offset costs so parents and children can partake in leisure activities.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

J. Bryant spoke briefly on the activities schools are working on during the extremely busy month of June. Work on the 2015-16 budget will be the focus of Trustees as the Grants for Students' Needs are now available. He also provided a very high-level update overview of the current labour negotiations.

PIC CHAIRS' REPORT

L. Tremble referred to the report provided prior to the meeting which contained information on the speakers, workshops and resources presented at the PIC Co-Chair symposium on April 24 & 25, 2015. L.Tremble and C. Rose established contact with their PIC counterpart from the Waterloo Catholic District School Board to discuss the possibility of co-hosting a PIC Event in future.

The CODE Building Healthy Relationships workshops that were conducted at Lackner Woods are now complete. Consensus is it is a valuable tool and anyone interested in running an event at their school can contact L. Tremble.

The PIC Twitter account is presently monitored, on a monthly basis, by three members. Other volunteers are welcome to take a turn.

TREASURER'S REPORT

A. Sumner provided a wrap-up of the PIC Event. With regard to the budget, a total of \$13 500 was received from the Ministry. Some event-related expenses are still outstanding. To date, approximately \$10 500 worth of expenses have been processed through the Board's Accounting System. A summary of all expense incurred will be provided to A. Sumner, who will in turn, share it with the membership.

A summary of the activity in each of the regular accounts:

1. Director's Account: previous balance = \$5,808.18. Proceeds from the sale of bag lunches at the PIC Event on April 18, 2015 (\$536.00) were deposited: Remaining balance = \$6 344.18.
2. PIC Central Account: a balance of \$6,858.51 remains. Further deductions pending for Welcome Centre translations.
3. PIC/PRO Grant Update: Some event-related expenses are still outstanding. To date, approximately \$10 500 worth of expenses have been processed. A summary of all expenses incurred will be provided to A. Sumner, who will, in turn, share it with members.

H. Shalan provided a summary of the results of the survey conducted following the PIC Event (attached).

TRUSTEE'S REPORT

Trustee J. Hendry shared a verbal report prepared by K. Smith. Trustees will be focussing on the budget for the month of June. On June 10, 2015, delegations are invited to present any recommendations or concerns regarding the budget. Work on the strategic plan will commence in November. Input from PIC will be sought once the process begins. K. Smith extended her gratitude to the members of PIC and WRAPSC for their time and effort to ensure a successful Parent Event this year. Special thanks were also extended to A. Sumner for chairing the event.

SAFE, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS (SCIS) UPDATE

J. Magazine provided a written report for members to review prior to the meeting (attached). She has been developing a PIC SCIS Collaboration website that would be available, by invitation only, to members of SCIS teams as well as Board staff working in the SCIS area. The website will serve as a depository of information: success stories from schools, a listing of SCIS events as well as a large number of resources. It will also have a question and answer forum for members that J. Magazine would moderate.

3. Moved by J. Magazine, seconded by H. Shalan:

That the PIC SCIS Collaboration website be launched.

-Carried-

On the subject of Digital Citizenship, P. Rubenschuh and the Crime Prevention Council have been discussing the possibility of running a parent event next year. Members indicated willingness to support this type of event. J. Magazine will dialogue with P. Rubenschuh.

A sample Safe Schools pamphlet, distributed by the Thames Valley District School Board, was suggested as a potential resource to provide to all parents/guardians in the Board, to replace the one-page document that is distributed in the September Home Package. Next step: J. Magazine will share the pamphlet and consult with P. Rubenschuh and other Board staff.

WRAPSC UPDATE

J. Stephens gave a brief overview of items discussed at the last WRAPSC meeting on May 5, 2015. There was also an opportunity for Parent Councils to share input on successful events run, so that others Councils could learn from and perhaps use in future. The next WRAPSC meeting will be held in October.

A Parents' Reaching Out (PRO) Grant application has been submitted by WRAPSC requesting funds for safeTALK training. The objective of the proposal is to train 10 parents as trainers; each trainer, in turn, would commit to providing three 3-hour training sessions to train other parents in safeTALK.

NEW/ONGOING INITIATIVES

PIC Town Hall Subcommittee Report

J. Ortiz advised the dates and the locations of the three Town Hall sessions have been finalized. The subcommittee is working on a list of topics that they would like Director Bryant to cover. They are also looking at the possibility of providing a memory stick with the updated Parent Council Handbook and resources from the Town Hall sessions.

Newcomer/Immigrant Assistance Subcommittee Update

This subcommittee is co-chaired by K. Graham and H. Shalan. The name of the subcommittee has been changed to the *Immigrant Engagement Subcommittee*. Members of this subcommittee are in the process of writing a formal request to principals of schools with high immigrant populations. They will provide assistance in the form of workshops or guest speakers. Once results of the survey are known, and a preliminary plan is in place, a formal request for funding will follow.

Membership Subcommittee Update

C. Rose advised the subcommittee met on May 13, 2015, and revised the PIC application form. It will be available in PDF and as a web form via the PIC website. There is one PIC-only parent position open. The 13 parents who expressed an interest in the PIC and WRAPSC committees, via the PIC Event follow-up survey, will be contacted regarding the opportunity. The application process will be advertised via the PIC and Board websites commencing the week of June 1, 2015. The deadline for application submission is October 16, 2015. More information regarding the selection process will be shared at the September meeting.

K. AuCoin announced she was stepping down from the Membership Subcommittee.

PRO Grant Subcommittee Update

C. Rose and H. Shalan completed the Parents Reaching Out Grant application for next year's Parent Event, tentatively called: "Strengthening Family-School Relationships: Achieving Excellence and Well-Being for All Students". Grant recipients will be notified in September.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Other PIC Organizations and How They Operate (Sept.)
2. People for Education PIC Report Review (Sept.)
3. Betti Adams, Principal, re Ken Leithwood's Research Re Parent Engagement Project (Oct.)
4. J. Woolley, System Administrator re Alternative Programs/Expulsion Process (Oct.)
5. Settlement Worker – Understanding the Needs of Newcomers
6. How effective has PIC been? How well are we helping the board? How to measure success?
7. Ontario Health & Phys. Ed Curriculum – perhaps better suited to WRAPSC?

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, September 29, 2015 at 6:30 p.m., Cambridge Room, Education Centre

ADJOURNMENT

6. Moved by J. Oritz, seconded by J. Magazine:

That the Parent Involvement Committee Meeting be adjourned.

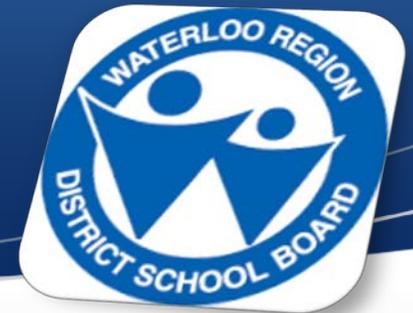
-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Building Skills to Navigate the School Years Survey Results

Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)
Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB)

The purpose of PIC is to support, encourage and enhance the engagement of parents/guardians of the WRDSB in their children's education, to improve



Parent Involvement Committee family event is funded by Ontario Ministry of Education under Parents Reaching Out Grants for Regional / Provincial Projects.

Contents

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The Building Skills to Navigate the School Years Feedback Survey sought to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the attendees' experiences of the Building Skills to Navigate the School Years event?
- 2- What are their recommendations for specific changes regarding the future PIC events?

The survey also asked attendees about their willingness to be involved in PIC in an attempt to reach more parents from diverse background.



"Parents play a vital role in the development and education of their children and in the success of schools. They are the most important influence in a child's life outside of school. Long after direct learning from parents in a child's early years gives way to formal education, parents continue to play a key role in student success through the attitudes they help to share and the direct supports



Overview of the Results

The quantitative and qualitative survey results from 118 attendees (51.98%) out of 227 total attendees indicate that the Building Skills to Navigate the School Years event was a great success. The event offered a keynote speaker session at 9:00 a.m. that was opened to all participants and a total of twenty-two workshops offered within three time slots throughout the day. The following is a summary of the major findings:

- 1- The WRDSB PIC event provided a wide range of sessions to promote parental engagement in their children's education.
- 2- The respondents felt that the provided sessions helped them to understand how to navigate the school years
- 3- All of the topics were of interest to parents.
- 4- Respondents felt that there was a noticeable improvement in this year's event; particularly, with the registration process.
- 5- The keynote speaker, Lesley Andrew, session was attended by 85.47% of total valid responses. The second highest attendance was for the Emotional Intelligence session with a percentage of 34.19% of total valid responses. This was followed by Money Smart Kids and Anxiety in Children with the same percentage of 27.35% of total valid responses.
- 6- Specific recommendations were proposed related to different aspects that include lunch, the number of sessions, the time allocated for each session, childcare, volunteering opportunities, and home-school partnerships.



Lesley Andrew captivated the audience with her stories, singing and lessons

"I thought the entire event was fantastic and really enjoyed it. The keynote speaker was incredible to listen to and very inspirational and a great way to kick off the day"

"This was a fantastic event! I am so glad that I was able to participate! Thank you for the opportunity!"

"I appreciated the opportunities for interpreters for ESL parents"

"The day was well organized and very informative. The keynote speaker was fabulous and I think every teacher, parent and most children should hear her speak! Loved the math morning speaker. Learned a lot and makes more sense"



Great group discussion and

attendee turnout

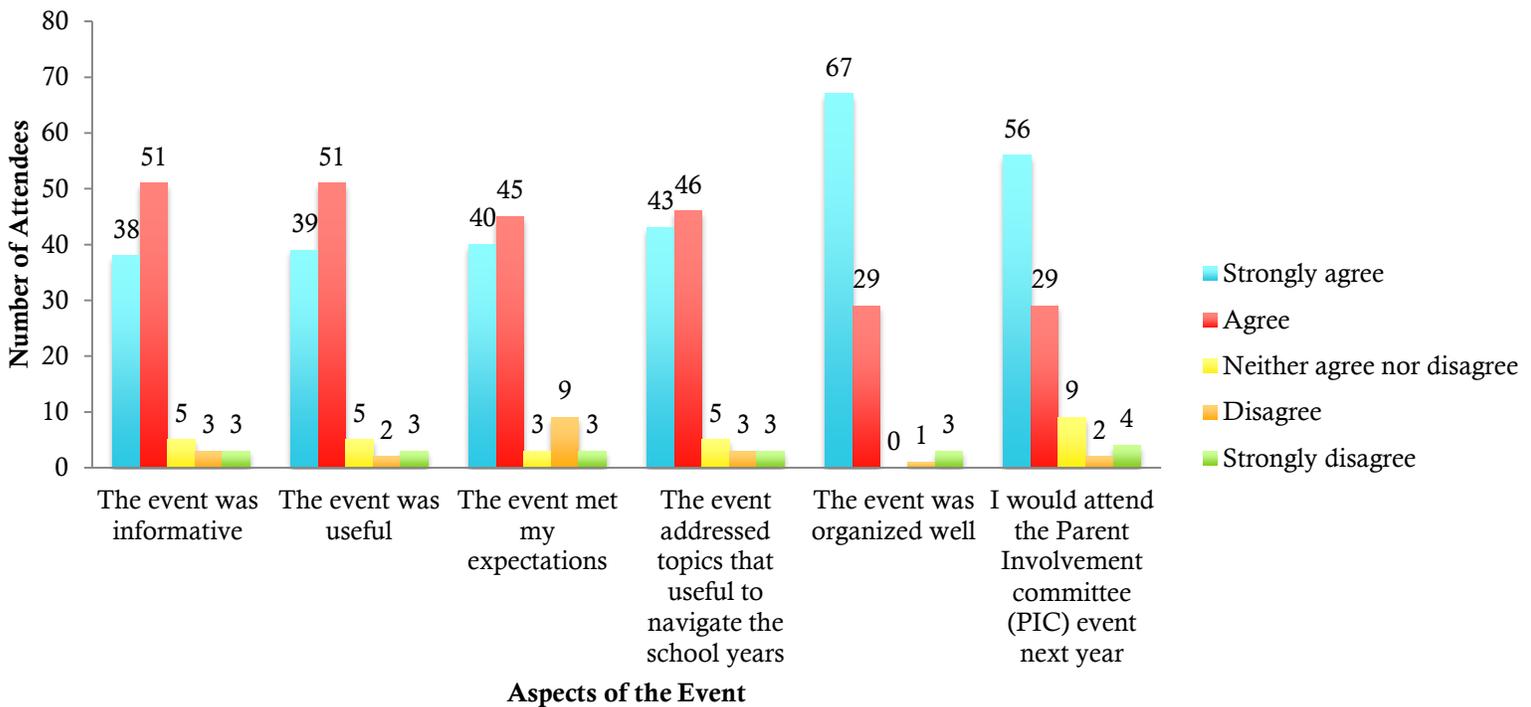


Findings

Attendees' experiences of the Building Skills to Navigate the School Years Event

The data below indicates that the attendees who had completed the survey had positive experiences at the event.

Attendees' Ratings of their Experiences on Different Aspects of the Event (n =100 valid responses)



of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the event was useful. With a percentage of 85% of total responses, respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the event met their expectations and they would attend the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) event next year. The results also indicate that 89% of respondents believe that the event addressed topics that are useful to navigate the school years. While the majority with 96% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the event was organized well.

This was my second year and I found it to be excellent

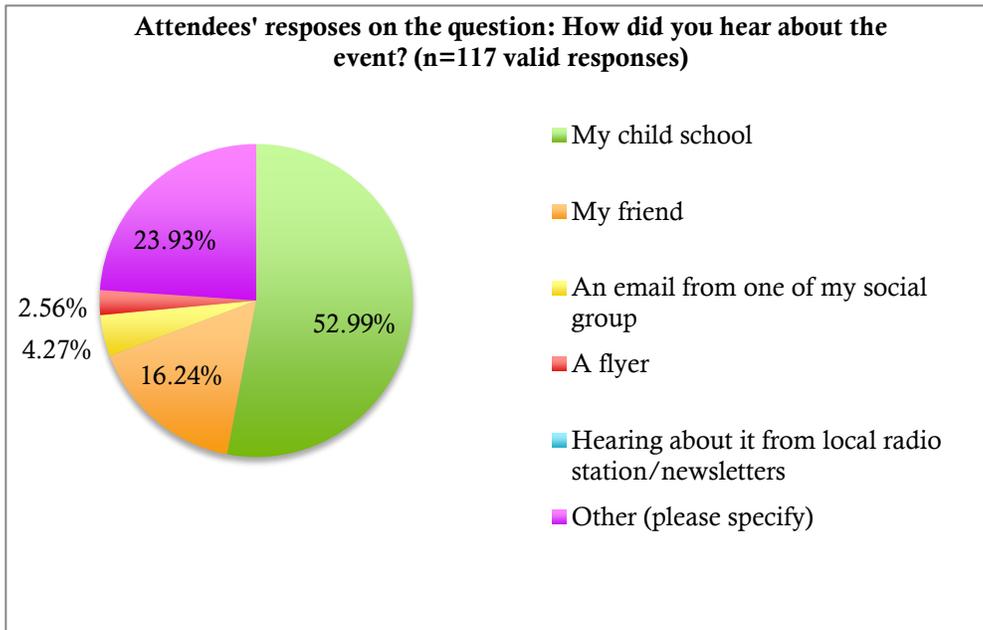
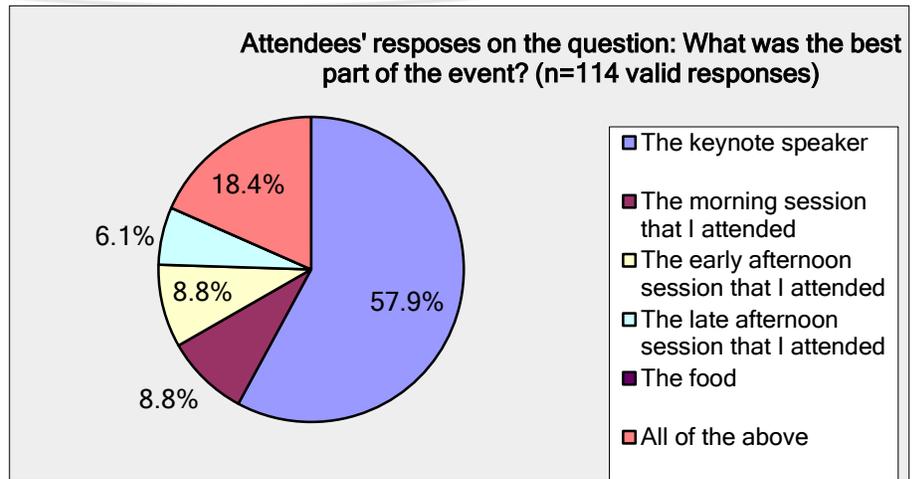
I enjoyed the two sessions I attended and recommended to parents to attend next year.

The entire day was VERY good. I was not disappointed with any of the speakers/presentations



Attendees' experiences continued

In response to the multiple-question “what was the best part of the event?” the attendees’ responses divided between six options. However, The findings indicate that slightly above half of total respondents (57%) believe that the keynote speaker was the best part of the event, while 18.4% of total respondents believe that the entire day was good.



In response to the multiple-choice question “how did you hear about the event?” approximately half of respondents (52.99%) heard about the event from their children’s school. The other methods of knowing about the event were: knowing from “my friend” with 16.24% of total respondents, “an email from one of my social groups” with 4.27% of total respondents, “a flyer” with 2.56% of total respondents, under the option “other” attendees had the chance to tell us the any other way of knowing about the event.

23.93% of total respondents heard about the event from other ways of communication. The most repeated ways include the following:

- Ten respondents heard about the event from Waterloo Regional Assembly of Public School Councils (WRAPSC).
- Five respondents heard about the event from WRDSB website.
- Two respondents heard about the event from Our Place, Family Resource and Early Years Centre.
- Two respondents heard about the event from an email from WRDSB.



Recommendations

Respondents made the following recommendations based on their experiences at the “Building Skills to Navigate the School Years” Event

Workshop sessions:

- 1- Increasing the number of sessions/topics, so parents have variety of topics to choose from.
- 2- Repeating the popular sessions in different time slots.
- 3- Increasing the time allocated for each session to allow more questions/answers time.
- 4- Distributing sessions to cover different stages/grades in each time slot.
- 5- Allowing more time in between sessions for interaction with speakers.

Provided Childcare:

- 1- Continuing providing free childcare.
- 2- Providing some activities suitable for older children.
- 3- Providing professional childcare providers for the safety of children
- 4- Ensuring healthier conditions in the childcare area.

Lunch and refreshments:

- 1- Providing description of what will be included in the lunch.
- 2- Providing healthier lunch (Pizza may be an option).
- 3- Decreasing the lunch break.

General comments:

- 1- Providing practical tools for parents to use with their children.
- 2- Providing parents with information about their children’s username and password for different resources that schools provide.
- 3- Providing parents with the event’s materials/handout.

Future Direction

Considerations for Planning for next year event:

- 1- Increasing home-school partnerships by:
 - a. Inviting teachers to be speakers on the event
 - b. Having more discussions about current issues such as Math and the new Health and Physical Education Curriculum.
- 2- Providing parents with flash memory that includes the event’s handout and other materials.
- 3- Contacting more professional childcare providers such as the YMCA and/or YWCA.

Reaching out more parents/Guardians:

In response to three Contact Information questions to reach more parents and promote parental engagement in children’s education, the following results have been obtained:

- 1- **Nineteen** respondents are willing to help/volunteer next year at the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) event.
- 2- **Thirteen** respondents are interested in applying for a volunteering position on the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).
- 3- **Fifty-seven** respondents would like to receive regular updates from the Waterloo Regional Assembly of Public School Councils (WRAPSC).

The Goals of PIC are to:

- Develop and recommend strategies that the Board can use to effectively communicate with, and engage, parents/guardians in their children’s education
- Organize presentations and resources to help parents/guardians support their children’s learning
- Embrace diversity and inclusion, and address barriers to engagement
- Foster wellness and well-being in our students and families
- Communicate information from the Ministry of Education to parents/guardians.



PIC supports learning by hosting presentations and workshops on topics of interest to all parents/guardians. These events also provide an opportunity to network with peers, Board members and community groups.

Resources	Contact Information
Waterloo Region District School Board	51 Ardelt Avenue Kitchener ON N2C 2R5 Web: http://www.wrdsb.ca/ Email: info@wrdsb.on.ca Switchboard: 519-570-0003 Fax: 519-742-1364
Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)	Web: http://www.wrdsb.ca/pic/ Email: pic@wrdsb.on.ca Twitter: @PicWRDSB
Waterloo Regional Assembly of Public School Councils (WRAPSC)	Web: http://www.wrdsb.ca/our-schools/get-involved/wrapsc/ Email: wrapsc@gmail.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/WRAPSC/