

December 8, 2015
PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee** was held on Tuesday, December 8, 2015, at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Clements Room at the Education Centre, 51 Ardel Avenue, Kitchener, with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: K. Smith

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

Committee Members: G. Anderson, K. Au Coin, K. Gettliffe, J. Jackson, J. Magazine, K. Singh Rana, C. Rose (Co-Chair), H. Shalan, L. Tremble (Co-Chair)

Community Member: A. Hynes

Other Staff in Attendance: E. Burns, J. Woolley

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Co-Chair C. Rose called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by H. Shalan, seconded by K. Au Coin:

That the agenda of the December 8, 2015, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

That the minutes of the October 27, 2015, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

J. Woolley provided an overview of the Expulsion Process and Alternative Programming. The Waterloo Region District School Board has developed policy, procedure and process based on the requirements set out in the Education Act. A handout from the Ministry of Education: *Suspension and Expulsion: What Parents Need to Know* was provided.

At the school level, there is a specific process that staff needs to follow to determine whether a suspension or expulsion should occur. Suspensions can last from 1 to 20 days. A suspension of greater than 5 days can be referred to the Alternative Suspension Program where the student can work in an individual setting at the school or a different location, depending on the incident. A recommendation for expulsion results in an automatic 20-day suspension to allow for an extensive investigation. Following the investigation, if the school believes that it is not safe for the student, staff, or other students for that student to be in the building, an Expulsion Hearing is conducted. The final decision rests with the Discipline Committee, which is comprised of three Trustees. At the hearing, Trustees hear from the school and from the student/parents and have an opportunity to ask

questions. There can be three outcomes to the hearing: full expulsion, where the student is no longer able to attend any school in our Board; a school expulsion only, requiring the Superintendent to place the student at a different school or program, and the third option is to rule that the actions do not warrant an expulsion.

As part of the investigation process, the school prepares an expulsion package. Although not required by the Education Act, the school administration also conducts a pre-expulsion hearing with the superintendent, the student and parents. This is an opportunity for all to meet and talk about what is in the package – a full sharing of the facts – prior to the Expulsion Hearing. If the facts are not agreed upon, either party can write their objections or clarifications in the package for the Trustees to see and consider in their decision-making process.

Students who are fully expelled from our Board have the opportunity to attend an alternative program called Choices, in either Cambridge or Kitchener. The Choices program provides the student with the supports needed to get back on track – academic, social and emotional. The success rate of the program is high and students are able to re-integrate into the school system once they have completed the program. Students are able to remain in the program for as long as they need to ensure they will be successful upon re-entry.

The number of expulsions and suspensions has steadily decreased over the past few years with the introduction of alternative programs and an increase in social workers and CYWs focused on student success. The majority of expulsions and suspensions are for students in Grades 7-10. This is a critical time for students - statistics show that if a student can earn 16 credits by the end of Grade 10, the chance of them graduating increases to 98%.

CODE Math Kit

Math Kits, provided by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), were distributed to members. Each school will receive a box of 6 sets, with one set to be given to the School Council Chair. J. Bryant advised that parent engagement is a key area of focus for CODE, recognizing the importance of parents working with their children. To that end, CODE is committed to providing resources for parents that are in line with the curriculum. There are 5 modules in the kit and a webkey has also been provided to locate the resources on the Internet.

Principals will share the kits with staff and Parent Council and inform the parent community about this resource via school newsletter, website, school day, etc. Teachers can also connect with parents to advise and provide support and tips for parents to become engaged. In addition, there are links available on the website to support parents – under the Learning tab, Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) and by clicking on *Mathematics* on the graphic.

Ensuring parents are aware of this resource is critical. A suggestion was made to invite Ed Enns to present at a PIC and/or WRAPSC meeting in the spring, or to speak with your school principal about offering a parent information night to engage parents. J. Jackson advised that Mathematics/Math Kits is one of the proposed break-out sessions at the parent event in April.

PIC CHAIRS' REPORT

Director Town Hall Debrief

Both sessions went well with approximately 46 schools represented. Almost half of the schools attending were not regular WRAPSC attendees or had never attended a WRAPSC meeting. Feedback to consider going forward: given the focus of the session, a suggestion would be to change the name to School Council 101; change the format to shorten the presentations; extend the panel discussion

and Q&A; and move the networking time to the end of the meeting. Also, depending on the number of attendees, consider making the panel smaller and have one dedicated to elementary and another to secondary.

The question now is whether to run the sessions again next year and build on the momentum or wait a year or so as people who attended this year may not feel the need to attend again. If the sessions will be offered next year, a subcommittee will need to be formed and start working on this in January. Discussion ensued whether to change the focus to best practices for parent engagement, or to do the same type of session again to continue to build more solid school councils and solid relationships between school councils and administrators. This will be discussed further at the January 26, 2016, meeting.

People for Education Conference – November 7, 2015 – C. Rose

Four people from both WRAPSC and PIC attended this conference. C. Rose is compiling a synopsis of the notes taken by the attendees at the various workshops and hopes to share that information with members before the holidays.

SafeTALK PRO Grant – L. Tremble

WRAPSC continues to work on this project and five parents are set to take the training in the spring. B. Ward will work with the superintendents to spread the word with principals at the high school level; parents at the 16 high schools and their Grade 7/8 feeder schools will be trained first.

Communications Update – C. Rose

Following the Town Hall Session at Eastwood, a meeting was held with M. Deacon, L. Slupeiks, S. Carter, C. Rose and J. Ortiz to better understand and communicate issues, decisions and improvements made or in process. The Communications Steering Team continues to work on and enhance the website, the ongoing implementation of School Day, and sourcing a system that can integrate communication tools (i.e. synvoice, twitter, news feeds, etc). They are also pursuing the consolidation of the signup subscription system and are looking at proposing a content strategy role to work on website development and consistency of content amongst schools.

M. Deacon has requested feedback on a few items and C. Rose will forward this request to members, gather feedback and then share this information with M. Deacon and L. Slupeiks. In the meantime, if anyone has or receives any questions about the website, please refer them to M. Deacon or L. Slupeiks directly. M. Deacon will also provide an update in the Communications & Engagement section of the website (located under the About tab) outlining the work being done on the corporate and school websites.

The updated School Council Handbook is now on the website. L. Slupeiks is putting together a communique to send to principals and staff to let them know it is there.

The 19th Annual Safe Schools Conference – Toronto – Friday, February 26, 2016 (7:45-3:30)

The focus of this year's conference is student wellness. Last year, two members attended and found the conference very worthwhile. Tickets are \$299.00 per person (early bird special until January 11, 2016). For a list of workshops, click [here](#).

3. Moved by J. Jackson, seconded by J. Ortiz:

That the Parent Involvement Committee members direct a maximum of \$800 to cover the expenses associated with sending two members to the 19th Annual Safe Schools Conference on February 26, 2016.

-Carried-

Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health – Toronto - April 7-8, 2016

The summit is hosted by the Ontario Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health and the focus is “From Policy to Practice Through Collaboration”. Session runs April 7 - 5:00-8:30 PM and April 8 - 8:00AM to 4:30 PM. Special early bird price: \$295. K. Smith will provide more information to members and this item will be added for discussion at the January 26, 2016, meeting.

2014-15 PRO Grant Unused Funds - \$1700

On behalf of staff, J. Bryant proposed that the unused funds be re-directed to help off-set the cost of materials being developed to increase parent engagement of families of Kindergarten students entering the system.

4. Moved by J. Jackson, seconded by A. Hynes:

That the Parent Involvement Committee members direct the remaining funds from the 2013-14 Parents Reaching Out Grant to cover the cost of developing a postcard for parents to help them prepare their child for school. This postcard will be distributed, along with a book mark and the *I'm Going to School!* book, to all new Kindergarten students and their families.

-Carried-

L. Tremble will advise R. Menzies at the Ministry how the funds will be used. E. Burns to work with the Kindergarten Registration Planning Team to ensure the funds are re-directed for this purpose.

A question was raised as to whether the books were available in different languages. J. Bryant will find out the answer and advise the group. Going forward, this might be something the group could look at as part of the translation initiative.

TRUSTEE'S REPORT

Trustee Smith advised that at the December 7, 2015 Inaugural Meeting, K. Woodcock and J. Hendry were both re-elected as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively. The Strategic Planning process is moving ahead and a facilitator, Marilyn Gouthro, has been booked for the January 8 and 9, 2016 planning session where Trustees and staff will work on the multi-year plan. There will be an opportunity for the various parent groups to provide input. The strategic plan will over-arch the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and will contain two or three priorities that the Board stands for and reflect our community and parent values.

The final report from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee will be released on December 15, 2015. Justice Murray Sinclair has recommended that aboriginal education, from a historical perspective, be provided for all students. At the provincial level, there is a Trustee Council made up of First Nation, Metis and Inuit trustees who are working on age-appropriate materials to be included in the curriculum.

In January, the Board will receive a report from M. Carbone with regard to internet filtering and the measures that are being taken to ensure proper filters are in place.

TREASURER'S REPORT

G. Anderson advised that the cost associated with the People for Education Conference was much lower than expected - \$170 versus the \$800 the group agreed to set aside to cover expenses. The only

other expenses incurred were related to the Town Hall sessions, totalling approximately \$500. Trustee Smith mentioned she still has an expense to submit.

J. Jackson advised a deposit is needed to secure the key note speaker booked for the parent event in April. E. Burns will process the expenses related to the parent event and will send C. Rose and J. Jackson information on how the various expenses will be handled.

WRAPSC REPORT

L. Tremble provided highlights from the November 3, 2015 WRAPSC meeting that included the following guest speakers: J. Magazine – SCIS, B. Bourgault and N. Landry – Safe Hand-off Procedures for our Youngest Riders and J. Jamieson from the Ontario College of Teachers.

K. Gettliffe reported that the WRAPSC Steering Committee is working on providing the following topics at upcoming meetings: January – report cards and evaluations with a focus on how teachers grade and what the grades mean; EQAO with a focus on what happens during testing periods, implications for the students, etc.; M. Gerard will attend the February meeting regarding the budget preparation process as well as a representative from the Volunteer Action Centre; they are considering hosting a Human Library event in April; and in May, they will invite guest speakers regarding Full-Day Kindergarten and the transition from Grade 8 to 9.

PIC SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Immigrant Engagement – H. Shalan

Their next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2015. At the event in the spring, there will be two discussion topics: School Settlement services available to immigrant families, with guest speakers Faduma Musse and Faryal Anwar/Chander Gosain, and representatives from the Mother's Group at Sunnyside PS, with a panel consisting of Debbie Samson, ELL teacher at Sunnyside, an immigrant parent, student, administrator and/or VP.

Safe, Caring, Inclusive Schools – J. Magazine

This subcommittee had their first meeting on November 30, 2015. The group will focus on creating an orientation package for SCIS teams and will work collaboratively with the Board. Once the scope of the package has been determined, they may need to come to committee for funds for printing.

D. Ahulwalia has approached the subcommittee to provide feedback and the SCIS/Equity and Inclusion content in the elementary planners. J. Magazine will provide these pages to PIC members for their information and feedback.

PIC-WRAPSC Parent Event – J. Jackson

The date for the 2016 Parent Event is Saturday, April 16, 2016. It will be held at Bluevale Collegiate. The theme is "Achieving Excellence and Well-Being for All Students".

The key note speaker has been booked – Monique Howat: How to Raise Confident and Motivated Kids. The subcommittee is made up of 15 people – co-chairs J. Jackson and K. Pearson, PIC and WRAPSC members and parent volunteers. They have established priorities to focus on initially: promotions, booking speakers and childcare. Possible breakout session topics: Welcoming Newcomers, Nutrition and the Related Impact on Learning, SEAC education, a tutorial on the new math kits, self-esteem support (secondary school focus) and internet safety.

POLICY REVIEW

P4000 – Pupil Accommodation

There were no additions or changes to the suggested revisions that were shared via email.

5. Moved by J. Ortiz, seconded by K. Gettliffe:

That the recommended changes to the Board Policy 4000, as recorded by C. Rose, be provided to K. Smith to bring forward for consideration by staff and for discussion at the Board table.

-Carried-

NEW/ONGOING INITIATIVES

The following five initiatives all require a subcommittee. L. Tremble gave a brief description of each initiative and discussion ensued. Members were asked to consider whether they would be willing to chair one of the subcommittees. A decision on what initiatives to pursue was deferred to the January 26, 2016 meeting.

Outreach Engagement Plan (WRAPSC/PIC)

The purpose of this subcommittee would be to attend school council meetings of schools who have not attended WRAPSC meetings in over five years and who did not attend a town hall session – approximately 28 schools. Upon further discussion, it was decided that this subcommittee could be a WRAPSC initiative.

Parent Engagement Tool Kit Update

This initiative would involve the collection of on-line resources that parents could access to help support their child's learning at home. Considerable groundwork would be required to determine what is required. Upon discussion, it was agreed this would be a longer-term project that could take considerable time to complete.

Review of PIC By-Laws

It has been two years since the new set of bylaws and terms of reference were created. The purpose of this subcommittee would be to review but not necessarily re-write them. Some tweaks may be required to the membership process, and if this is the case, then work would need to commence in January and any changes approved in May. Discussion ensued about including WRAPSC members on the subcommittee, as well as the need to expand this subcommittee to incorporate all aspects of governance and also to look at changing it to a standing versus ad hoc subcommittee.

6. Moved by K. Au Coin, seconded by J. Ortiz:

That the Parent Involvement Committee members strike a standing committee to focus on governance issues, including but not limited to a review of Committee by-laws and terms of reference.

-Carried-

K. Smith offered to send the PIC bylaws and terms of reference to all members.

School Council Funding for Parent Engagement Initiatives

The purpose of this subcommittee would be to explore ways in which PIC could re-direct any unused funds to schools that may need financial assistance with a parent engagement initiative/activity. Transparency and equity would be required in terms of determining project guidelines and dollar

amounts etc. It was agreed that the group would take a look at this again at the March meeting and perhaps do some work over the summer.

PIC Town Hall Sessions

If the Town Hall sessions are to continue and be held in November, work would need to start in the new year. Should the group pursue another initiative or is the target once again going to be parent councils? A decision will be made in January.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. B. Adams, Principal, "Hand in Hand" Parent Engagement Project (January)
2. M. Deacon, Communications Update (March)
3. M. Gerard, Budget Process Consultation (March)
4. S. Small, OK2BME (May)
5. H. Shalan, Immigrant Engagement in Education Thesis (May)
6. ESL or ELL Worker, Pathways to Education (Fall)
7. G. Shantz, Refugee Resettlement Task Force (January)

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, January 26, 2015 at 6:30 p.m., Cambridge Room, Education Centre

QUESTION & ANSWER:

A question regarding the remaining sanctions was raised and the confusion that has resulted with the status of negotiations at the provincial and local levels. This new tri-partied process was used for the first time and the process is being called into question. K. Smith requested feedback from members on the process and how it impacted them. Comments are to be submitted to L. Tremble/C. Rose and K. Smith will take them forward for discussion at a labour relations session, hosted by the Ontario Public School Board Association, in January.

J. Magazine referenced an article quoting M. Deacon saying things were back to normal but this is not the case as most agreements have not been ratified at the local level. J. Bryant asked J. Magazine for a copy of the article for further investigation.

The topic of Syrian refugee resettlement was raised in the context of what role PIC could play to support them. J. Bryant advised he felt there was definitely a role for PIC. We are expecting approximately 850 federally-sponsored and 300 privately-funded refugees with the first group arriving as early as December 10, 2015. This could translate to between 400 and 600 new students in our system. A report to the Board is being presented on December 14, 2015. J. Bryant will invite G. Shantz and D. Ahluwalia to the January 26, 2016 meeting to provide an update on the work of the Refugee Resettlement Task Force.

ADJOURNMENT

6. Moved by J. Ortiz, seconded by K. Au Coin

That the Parent Involvement Committee Meeting be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.