

March 7, 2017
PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee** was held on Tuesday, March 7, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. in the Cambridge Room at the Education Centre, 51 Ardel Avenue, Kitchener, with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: K. Smith

Board Staff: J. Bryant, J. Crits, K. Graham, J. Windsor

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

Community Member: B. Davidson

Regrets: M. Cameron

Absent: A. Keep, C. Penner Worden

Other Staff in Attendance: E. Burns, R. DeBoer, H. Jamal, N. Manning

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Prior to the approval of the agenda, L. Tremble requested that the Treasurer's Report precede the Co-Chairs' Report.

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

That the agenda of the March 7, 2017, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved as amended.

-Carried-

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

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

-Carried-

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

J. Bryant introduced R. DeBoer, Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being. Superintendent DeBoer was invited to provide an update on the upcoming Digital Learning Symposium in April. He began by providing a brief overview of the progression of technology in the classroom.

The Digital Learning Symposium has taken place in May for the last five years. It is an opportunity for teachers to come together to share practice and how they are using digital tools and technology in the classroom. It is also an opportunity for schools to plan and build their digital strategy as part of

their School Improvement Plan (SIP) and to build capacity. The event has grown year over year and now every school in the system takes part in the workshops. This year, in order to accommodate growth and the abundance of practices to share, a decision was made to run two symposia, one in November and the other in April. The symposium in April will provide another opportunity to assess and reflect on the learning that has happened in the last six months and how to use that learning going forward.

The symposium consists of many amazing workshops with both teachers and students presenting. It supports our culture of innovation and helps build student confidence and success as they face the future. It is important that our teachers collaborate, share good practice and provide learning opportunities outside of the traditional classroom. The event will continue to run twice a year going forward and potentially expand beyond digital learning to include other innovative learning.

Due to space issues and the number of participants, the symposium is not open to parents, however, interested PIC members were invited to come and observe. A question was raised as to whether translators would be provided at the April event. Superintendent DeBoer appreciated the suggestion and will look into it.

J. Bryant provided a brief overview of the final steps of the reorganization which started three years ago. The latest structure change is a re-alignment, with a focus on service, and is more flat-lined in terms of support to schools. There are now additional superintendents in charge of schools resulting in fewer schools within families. Portfolio responsibilities have also been reorganized to be in line with strategic plan priorities and to meet the needs of the system. G. Shantz now has responsibility for IT Services. Two new superintendents will join the team in positions recently vacated by retirements. E. Giannopoulos and B. Lemon will assume their new positions on March 20, 2017. The same number of senior staff remain within the admin allocation. A list of superintendent roles and responsibilities will be available on the website effective March 20, 2017.

J. Bryant thanked J. Magazine for the letter she sent to him and the Chairperson requesting more discussion about the engagement of parents across the school board in student achievement and well-being, specifically requesting a plan and support from the board as to how schools are to engage parents in student achievement and well-being.

In an effort to provide context, J. Bryant advised that as part of the development of the strategic plan, three priorities were identified:

- 1) Our students are first – each and every one
- 2) Our staff, families and caregivers are partners in every student’s learning journey
- 3) Our culture of innovation builds students’ confidence and success as they face the future.

These priorities are the foundation of our work and staff has developed goals, outcomes and targets related to the three operational priorities. The Strategic Plan is a multi-faceted plan, and as a result, collectively, trustees and senior administration committed to focus primarily on three operational goals: Mathematics, Graduation Rates and Student and Staff Well-Being.

In July, the senior team will assess work to date and look at the evidence and data collected to inform decisions and strategies going forward. This request will be reviewed at that time and considered within the operational goals.

In the letter, a meeting was suggested, which is a good idea and J. Bryant advised he had shared the letter with a number of staff.

GUEST SPEAKER

Student Trustee H. Jamal, a Grade 12 IB student at Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute, was invited to speak about the role of a student trustee and student senate. Student trustees are governed by the Education Act and are to represent the interests of all students. They are elected by students and serve a one-year term. They attend Committee of the Whole and Board Meetings and are allowed to vote on matters of the Board, but their vote is not binding. The most important role of a student trustee is to provide student voice.

The 2016-17 student trustees have had the unique opportunity to contribute that voice while participating in the strategic plan process and the school and board improvement work in progress. For example, before the vote for the new purpose statement went public, the members of student senate went through a process to narrow down 110 possible options to the final four ideas the public could vote on. The eventual winner: *Innovating Tomorrow by Educating Today*.

The student trustees help co-chair student senate, which meets once a month. They discuss and provide input to policies, other aspects of student life and share information and events happening at each school. The student trustees debrief the Board following each meeting. Student senate meetings are open and all students are welcome to attend. There is a proposal, currently with Coordinating Council, to allow for participation of Grade 7&8 students.

TREASURER REPORT

G. Anderson advised there is approximately \$5,000 of funds remaining and encouraged members to bring forward initiatives for discussion at the May meeting – keeping in mind the funds need to be spent (goods invoiced and received) by July 31, 2017.

CO-CHAIR REPORT

L. Tremble brought forward a proposal on behalf of B. Ward, Mental Health Lead. Two years ago, WRAPSC submitted a request for a PRO Grant to provide SafeTALK training for parents. The parents who were trained made a three-year commitment to continue to train parents. They are almost out of the training kits.

3. Moved by R. Barnett-Cowan, seconded by G. Anderson:

That a maximum of \$1,000 to purchase SafeTALK training kits be approved.

-Carried-

A suggestion was made to include a PIC and/or WRAPSC flyer in the kits in order to receive some recognition for supporting the program.

The Ministry of Education's Regional PIC Symposium is scheduled for Saturday, April 1, 2017, in London. In addition to the co-chairs, boards are able to send five parents representing WRAPSC, Special Education students, immigrants or refugees, or geographical areas of interest. L. Tremble and B. Hutzal will issue specific invitations through PIC and WRAPSC.

The 2017 Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant Application process is now open. The application deadline is May 25, 2017. Grant information has been shared with WRAPSC for school councils to also apply. Historically, PIC has applied for money for the parent conference (this is the sixth year). B. Hutzal will complete and submit the application on behalf of PIC.

After discussing various options, it was decided that PIC would apply for funds to host another

parent conference in 2018. The sessions offered will tie into the Board's Strategic Plan.

4. Moved by G. Anderson, seconded by A. Christiansen:

That the Parent Involvement Committee complete and submit an application for the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant to support a full-day parent conference focused on the Board's Strategic Plan be approved.

-Carried-

B. Hutzal and L. Tremble were invited to an OSSTF meeting with a group of teachers who are also reps on secondary school councils. They spoke about PIC and WRAPSC, promoted the parent conference and discussed the challenges faced by secondary councils, specifically, how to share information from the council with the broader community. L. Tremble passed around a book they received at the meeting – *Parent Engagement* – published by Ontario's Teacher Federation. The book was written by teachers to promote parent-teacher relationships. More information can be found on the Ontario Teacher's Foundation website: <https://www.otffeo.on.ca/en/learning/parent-engagement/> Members wondered how they could share this information with teachers. This item will be brought back for discussion at the May 23, 2017, meeting.

B. Hutzal provided an update on the purchase of promotional materials. The pen purchased a couple of years ago is no longer available, however, he found a similar one and it is now on order. Note pads have been ordered and he is working with Communications to order more business cards. Total spending will be approximately \$600, well below the \$1000 threshold.

With regard to a 3-5 year strategic plan for PIC, B. Hutzal advised work will begin in earnest once the conference is over; however, he is looking for a volunteer or two to conduct an extensive review of other PIC organizations and their initiatives. B. Hutzal will send an email with a form and a list of PICs to check out online. Ideally, this work should be done by the April 1 Symposium, where they will meet up with their counterparts in southwestern Ontario.

Finally, a reminder regarding email communication: members were asked to reply as soon as possible or to acknowledge receipt and request more time to respond if needed.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

L. Tremble advised members that volunteers are needed at the Parent Event on April 8, 2017 as follows:

- Registration – day of – from 8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.
- Coordination of Food Services – day of – to liaise with the organizations providing food for the event: Morning Glory and Aramark lunches, to ensure they have what they need, direction on where to set up, etc.

Members were asked to contact L. Tremble, via email, if they were available to do either.

J. Magazine provided an update to her SCIS Report (part of the Consent Agenda) in terms of the push of the new SCIS pamphlet to all school sites. Rather than posting a PDF on each site, the Communications Department has suggested a different approach. They will push out stories – one per week – linking to the SCIS material as a buildup to the upcoming survey. A variety of methods will be used: Twitter, Facebook, school/board website subscriptions.

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

That the Consent Agenda of the March 7, 2017, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

IES – H. Shalan

Two schools have come forward indicating interest in running the newcomer program, however, a decision was made to delay the start the workshops until the fall for the following reasons:

- timing would be better for parents if the workshops occurred at the beginning of the school year rather than the end. Parents would have the remainder of the school year to build relationships and establish communication with school personnel
- there is not enough time to prepare for and host the workshops between now and June

This now frees up the funds (approximately \$1800) that had been allocated for another set of workshops this school year. H. Shalan requested that \$200 continue to be held to cover the cost of translation of the promotional flyers. She also advised she had been approached by a settlement worker asking if PIC would be willing to donate funds to help support Mothers' Groups in our schools (to provide for snacks and/or bus tickets). After discussion, it was decided that if settlement workers feel funds are lacking to do work in our schools, this needs to be addressed as the number of newcomers will only increase. A suggestion was made that J. Bryant have a conversation with the CEO of the Regional Y, Peter Sweeney, to see if there something we should be doing as a Board.

J. Bryant will also consult with staff with respect to compliance with accounting principles. We need to be careful we are using the funds provided by the Ministry for their intended purpose – to support parent engagement initiatives within our Board – rather than supporting the initiatives of other organizations. J. Bryant will report back on this at the May 23, 2017, meeting.

Governance Report – L. Tremble (on behalf of A. Keep & M. Cameron)

L. Tremble pointed out the new format used for this subcommittee report. This template will be provided to other subcommittees to use going forward, with one change – the logo will clearly indicate the communication is from the Parent Involvement Committee.

L. Tremble confirmed there will be no change to the PIC/WRAPSC structure for 2017-18. Three possible options have been proposed regarding the new structure. Next steps: the three options will be provided to WRAPSC for discussion at their April meeting and will be shared with school councils for their input. Results from WRAPSC discussions will be shared at the May 23, 2017 PIC meeting. If both WRAPSC and PIC are able to agree on one option, work can commence over the summer to change bylaws and terms of reference and brought forward for further discussion in the fall.

POLICY REVIEW

6. Moved by R. Barnett-Cowan, seconded by J. Ortiz:

That the recommended changes to the following Board Policies: 3005 – Expressions of Sympathy, 4003 – Trespassing, 4004 – Emerging Needs–Expenditures, 4006 – Parking on School Property, 4012 – School Attendance Areas, 4013 – Secondary Schools, 3002 – Elementary School Size and Configuration, 1007 – Education Development Charges, 2001 – Communications, 1010 – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, 5010 – Employment and Placement of Relatives, 3006 – Student Trustees, 4016 – Business Complaint, 4011 – School Parking Lot Safety, 6009 – Student Bullying Prevention and Intervention, 5002 – Leave of

Absence-Federal and Provincial Candidates, 5009 – Travel, Meals and Hospitality Expenditures-Staff, 6003 – Scholarships, Prizes and Awards, 2005 – Parent Support, 6011 – Fees for Learning Materials and Activities and 2006 – Consultation, as summarized by L. Tremble, be provided to Trustee Smith to bring forward for discussion at the Board table.

-Carried-

CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

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

A conference brochure was circulated. The theme for the conference is Ontario's new Well-Being Strategy for Education and what it will mean for the province's schools. If there is no interest from PIC parents, there is a non-PIC member of the SCIS Subcommittee willing to attend and to provide a report on the day.

7. Moved by A. Christiansen, seconded by J. Ortiz:

That an amount of \$2000 be allocated to cover the cost of registration, accommodation, meals and travel, for up to two people, to attend this 2-day conference.

-Carried-

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. A. Mercier: Grad Rates; Assessment & EQAO (May)
2. Food4Kids

By way of background, the Food4Kids program is new to this community. There are two schools in our region piloting their services. The purpose of the presentation would be to provide information and create awareness that some of our schools require this kind of support. B. Davidson, from Langs in Cambridge, suggested he could also co-present that evening regarding their Healthy Beginnings program.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: May 23, 2017, 6:30 p.m., Cambridge Room

QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD

A concern was raised about lack of awareness of the board's financial processes, the resulting confusion and delay in reimbursement. Bottom-line, the board requires an invoice or receipt for all expenditures. Reimbursement with a receipt is fairly straightforward. If, however, you have arranged for someone to provide a service, such as babysitting, and they are not providing an invoice, an Honourarium form must be completed, signed and submitted. The PIC Handbook will be updated to provide this information. In the meantime – or at any time – please ask E. Burns for clarification before proceeding.

The state of staff lists on school websites was raised: they are not in good shape or consistent between schools. N. Manning advised he is acutely aware of this and that is on the list of items to be addressed. School websites need to convey bell times, who is in the school and how to get in touch.

ADJOURNMENT

8. Moved by K. Gettliffe, seconded by J. Magazine:

That the Parent Involvement Committee Meeting be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.