

MAY 27, 2014
PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee** was held on Tuesday, May 27, 2014, at 6:30 p.m. in the Cambridge Room at the Education Centre, 51 Ardelet Avenue, Kitchener, with the following members in attendance:

Trustee: K. Smith

Board Staff: J. Bryant, D. Duncan-Peacock, J. Fairhall and K. O'Reilly

Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School Councils (WRAPSC) Parent Representatives: A. Allen, G. Anderson, C. Gillis Bilton (Co-Chair), J. Magazine, J. Ortiz, C. Rose, L. Tremble (Co-Chair) and J. Wilson

Community Representative: A. Hynes

Other Staff in Attendance: D. Elliott and E. Burns

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the May 27, 2014, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Moved by C. Rose, seconded by G. Anderson:

That the minutes of the March 4, 2014, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS (OCT)

Francine Dutrisac, Director of Investigations and Hearings, and Gabriel Johnston, External Relations Coordinator of the Ontario College of Teachers, gave a presentation on the purpose/mandate of the Ontario College of Teachers (the College). The presentation centered around information on their website.

The College is responsible for licensing, governing and regulating the Ontario teaching profession to protect the interests of the public. It is comprised of 237 000 members. In order to work in publicly funded schools in Ontario, teachers must be certified to teach in the province of Ontario and be a member of the College.

The College:

- Sets ethical standards and standards of practice and ongoing professional development
- Issues teaching certificates – with the ability to suspend or revoke
- Accredits teacher education programs and courses
- Investigates and hears complaints about members

The Ontario College of Teachers website is a public register, transparent to the public so as to inspire confidence. It contains a search function to find a teacher by name and ascertain they are a member in good standing. Disciplinary decisions are also available on the website. It is also used by Human Resources to check the standing of a teacher before hiring.

F. Dutrasic advised that an Enhanced Teacher Education Program will come into effect in Ontario in 2015. It will be a four-semester program, doubling the practicum (to 80 days in front of students) with the same curriculum taught across the country, i.e., a teacher receiving their degree in British Columbia would be qualified to teach in any other province in Canada.

A number of handouts were provided. The College is working to get material into the hands of parents so they can be confident in the teaching profession and asked for any upcoming venues where they would have an opportunity to distribute the information. Trustee K. Smith offered to provide the date of the Multicultural Festival being held at Victoria Park in June and to funnel further resources/ideas through C. Gillis Bilton.

PIC CHAIRS' REPORT

C. Gillis Bilton advised this was the last meeting before the summer break. The last meeting of this term will be in September, and she asked that members whose term was coming to an end consider if they wish to continue and advise the co-chairs of their decision.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION/REPORTS

Reports/notes by conference participants were sent out in advance for members to review before the meeting.

Healthy Schools Conference

C. Rose attended the Healthy Schools Conference. There were no further comments or questions from the group.

2013-14 Family Event Update

A. Allen gave an update on the 2014 Family Event “Rise to Success” and thanked everyone for their help. Overall the event was very well received. The committee gained valuable information which will assist with next year’s planning in terms of which events filled up quickly, i.e., elementary math.

An application has been submitted for a grant for next year. The event committee requested that next year’s event be held at Bluevale again, rather than rotating locations. The location and venue were excellent.

A. Allen also advised she will investigate the possibility of securing the services of an “Event Management” student from Conestoga College to help with the planning.

Ministry of Education PIC Conference

In addition to the conference notes provided with the meeting agenda, L. Tremble advised they had received numerous resources/materials which are available to anyone interested in borrowing.

A suggestion was made regarding future conference attendance, that attendees would share the top three recommendations from the session and, if there was sufficient interest, look at forming a working group to address items of interest.

SAFE, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS UPDATE

J. Magazine's report was included with the meeting agenda. In addition, she reported that Education Council will not be pursuing an anonymous reporting system due to the significant amount of time involved and due to recent revisions to the policy on bullying.

Criminal Youth Justice Meeting - May 22, 2014

The session was a great opportunity to meet inspiring staff and students and graduates of the U-Turn program. J. Magazine suggested that as parents, PIC and WRAPSC should learn more about alternative programs and the wonderful things that staff are doing.

Parent Communication Survey

J. Magazine requested that any feedback regarding the survey be directed to her. P. Rubenschuh advised the number of respondents was up. Further discussion will occur regarding how often the survey will be issued and how suggested changes could be incorporated for next year.

TRUSTEE'S REPORT

Trustee K. Smith provided the committee with a verbal report on the following:

Translation Needs

Trustee Smith advised that translation is quite expensive and recommended that a list of documents requiring translation be created, i.e.,

- Parent Communication Survey - translated into different languages and also available on paper, not just electronically
- Faith and Religious Accommodations for Students
- Code of Conduct for Students

These forms would be helpful to new Canadians and especially to their parents whose English may not be as strong. In the case of expulsion hearings, students are aware of proper code of conduct, but parents are not always.

Sharon Newmaster, Coordinator, Special Education, could suggest languages which would be considered most appropriate for translation. The cost of translation is approximately \$150 per page. Trustee K. Smith will send out a recommendation list. It will be important to work with schools to coordinate translation needs to ensure consistency, avoid duplication and save money. It will also be necessary to clarify who is coordinating the translation and who will be paying, i.e., the Board or PIC using PRO grant money.

In the interest of equity, every effort should be made to try and communicate with parents in the language they speak. It is not always advantageous to rely on students to translate for parents. More research is required to determine which services are already available for new immigrants. Trustee K. Smith will coordinate a meeting with S. Newmaster, D. Ahluwalia, Equity and Inclusion Officer, and the settlement workers to determine what supports are already available or if a survey is needed.

It was suggested that a vote be taken in September regarding the use of PIC funds to address translation needs.

Budget – Committee of the Whole Ad Hoc Committee

Trustee K. Smith provided an update on the status of the cross-board expenditure review involving cuts and changes to be made in an effort to address the budget shortfall. A Special Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 11, 2014, for parents, community members and students to present suggestions/concerns regarding proposed cuts. This is an opportunity for community input on the budget and Trustee Smith asked PIC committee members to share information and promote the meeting.

Trustee Smith has presented a Notice of Motion with regard to forming an Expenditure Review Ad Hoc Committee that would propose ideas for budget cuts and changes. The proposed composition of the committee would be: Director of Education, Executive Superintendent of Business and Financial Services, Controller, Trustees, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resource Services, 3 parents from PIC/WRAPSC, and secondary and elementary administrator representation. The Notice of Motion has been deferred to September for trustee consideration.

There have been changes to negotiations. The new tri-partied model includes government, school boards and teachers' unions with decisions that include all three parties.

Choices and U-turn are programs offered by the Board for students who have been expelled. An expulsion hearing (quasi-judicial) is held with three trustees, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student, and sometimes lawyers for the family and for the Board. There are three possible outcomes at an expulsion hearing: trustees can overturn the recommendation for expulsion, the student can be expelled from all Board schools or the student can be expelled to Choices. At Choices, students work with behaviour psychologists and other professionals and have an opportunity to deal with behaviour, circumstances, etc. A student will remain at Choices until they are successful, be that 2 months or three years. To be accepted back into a school within our Board, a student must complete the Choices program. Parents may choose to put children in private school with the understanding there will be no re-entry into one of our schools until the Choices program has been completed.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

J. Bryant shared an update regarding two significant recent events.

- Students at King Edward P.S. hosted a visit from Gilmore Junio on May 14, 2014. He was presented with a new medal for his selfless act at the Sochi Olympics.
- The WRDSB Collaborative Carousel and Leading Change Symposium (Futures Forum) was held at Bingeman's on May 27, 2014. Students and staff from 70 schools across the system participated in this event, demonstrating and sharing their uses of digital technology and showcasing that students and teachers engaged and working together to improve learning and achievement across the Board.

In closing, J. Bryant advised it is a very busy time of year with the focus on budget, staffing, year-end reports, planning events for next year, etc. He noted his appreciation for the work schools are doing and their focus on engagement strategies.

J. Ortiz shared with the group a question that was raised at the last WRAPSC meeting. Looking at enrolment from a business point of view, what are we doing to attract more students to our Board? J.

Bryant explained that enrolment is down because there are fewer children in the region. It is a matter of demographics, not a case of losing students to the Catholic system or to private schools.

The best way to draw students to our schools is to do all we can to send our students home happy, create students who love their school and who want to share the good work that the schools are doing. In addition, having our parents engaged and involved in our schools and making them feel welcome goes a long way in attracting students to our Board.

PIC/WRAPSC TERMS OF REFERENCE/STRUCTURE

Following the Board's committee structure review in December 2013, terms of reference for all board committees are required to be updated. A template for completion has been provided. A. Allen, C. Gillis Bilton, L. Tremble, J. Wilson and Trustee K. Smith volunteered to review the terms over the summer and to prepare a draft for review and approval at the September 2014 PIC meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the merit and benefit of parent representatives on both PIC and WRAPC, changing the number of parent representatives, the fact that sitting on both committees may be too much work, and the difficulty committing the time to two committees.

Trustee Smith encouraged the group to take a look at the big picture: PIC and WRAPSC are different. What we call WRAPSC, other boards call PIC. PIC should be the steering committee for WRAPSC and there should be no duplication. The roles of PIC and WRAPSC need to be clearly defined and communicated. Communicating the clear purpose of PIC will result in greater awareness among parents and increased parent engagement.

Director Bryant was concerned about the suggestion to add the Executive Officer to the PIC membership because of her current workload and suggested inviting her to meetings when appropriate. He indicated she is also easily accessible through the day.

PIC TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer J. Wilson will provide a written report at a later date via email. J. Wilson also recommended that decisions should be made to spend carry-over money on the brochure or on translation services.

PIC WEBSITE

J. Ortiz provided a document describing the scope of the project regarding the PIC website as part of the agenda package.

J. Ortiz also continues his work with WRAPSC, defining guidelines to help parents at home with technical issues.

NEW/ONGOING INITIATIVES

PRO Grant 2014-15

A generic application has been submitted requesting \$17 500 for next year's Family Event: "Building Skills to Navigate the School Years".

Director's Forum

J. Bryant, M. Deacon, L. Tremble and C. Gillis Bilton will meet to plan and finalize Director's Forums to take place early in the school year in Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo locations.

WATERLOO REGION ASSEMBLY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL COUNCILS UPDATE

C. Rose provided a report on topics discussed at recent WRAPSC meetings which was included in the agenda package.

Discussion ensued regarding the inconsistency of communication across the system. The “when”, “if” and “how” parents are informed varies from school to school. A variety of strategies is needed to meet the needs of most people. Some find the website(s) too intimidating. Demographics differ between schools and what works at one school won’t necessarily work at others.

WRAPSC members would know the best method of communication for their own school. “Youngest and Only” lists often work best. This may be a topic for future communication surveys. A possible opportunity for parent engagement may be to ask a parent volunteer to help translate materials.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No future agenda items.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business items.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, September 23, 2014
Cambridge Room, Education Centre
6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

3. Moved by A. Allen, and seconded by J. Wilson:

That the Parent Involvement Committee Meeting be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.