

January 26, 2021
PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee** was held on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 6:30 pm virtually on zoom, with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: L. Tremble, J. Weston

Board Staff: D. Ballantyne, J. Bryant, D. Liebermann, S. McCrae, H. McKinna, L. Read, T. Sargeant, S. Shadaan, L. Slupeiks

Committee Members: M. Bond, E. Campbell, B. Daniel, Z. Gent, H. Holmes, C. Laughren, R. Shaheen, N. Sheen, C. Ugwuogo, T. Webster, J. Wright

Regrets: M. Jenkins, C. Smith

Call to Order

Committee Co-Chair M. Bond called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

Introduction of New Members

M. Bond welcomed new PIC members and invited them to introduce themselves, including:

L. Tremble, Trustee Representative, J. Weston, Chairperson of the Board and alternate Trustee Representative, T. Sargeant - Student Success Teacher, GRCl, S. Shadaan - Special Ed and Early Literacy Resource Teacher, Lincoln Heights PS, D. Ballantyne - Vice Principal, GRCl, S. McCrae - Principal, Edna Staebler PS, R. Shaheen, Parent Representative

Approval of Agenda

1. Moved by Z. Gent, seconded by R. Shaheen:

That the agenda of the January 26, 2021, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

Approval of Minutes

2. Moved by C. Laughren, seconded by J. Wright:

That the minutes of the December 1, 2020, Parent Involvement Committee meeting be approved.

-Carried-

Director's Update: Director J. Bryant, Associate Director L. Read, Senior Manager of

Research, D. Liebermann

Director Bryant began by welcoming everyone to the PIC meeting. Dr. Dana Liebermann will be presenting the results of the Let's Connect Survey conducted in November 2020 and explained how this information is used to inform important decisions.

Associate Director Read, thanked PIC for inviting them to the meeting to share the research results. She shared the importance of WRDSB guiding principles and how ongoing, clear and transparent communication is one of our most important guiding principles. It is important that communication is a two way format and we must continue to reach out to staff, students and parents/guardians and provide opportunities for them to give feedback and input on what we can do better. We are committed to evidence based decision making, continuous learning, and improvement

The Let's Connect Survey in November was another opportunity for us to gain valuable input and feedback from staff, students and families on how things were going from September to November, 2020.

Dr. D. Liebermann, Senior Manager of Research presented the ***Let's Connect Survey - Fall 2020 Results*** and discussed what we have already begun to do and are planning as we move forward, based on this information.

Let's Connect - Fall 2020 Results

- The Board sought feedback on experiences both from learning and work and also included questions about well being
- Surveys conducted and participants: Families - 5900, Students Grade 4-12 - 2200, Staff - 1300 (68% teaching staff)
- Research Department analyzed results in Dec/Jan through the lens of learning and working in a pandemic
- Mindful that engagement is voluntary during Covid-19 times and may represent those that are more connected and not necessarily those who are struggling during these times
- Began to use some of this feedback immediately in December
- Asked Students' and Families' Levels of Engagement - over 50% of respondents indicated they were either Extremely engaged and/or Very engaged
- Looked at engagement depending on mode of learning student is in
 - In Person - 70% extremely engaged/very engaged, more than in DL program
 - Engagement drops significantly in Grades 8 - 12. This led to planning for additional supports for Grade 8 students for their transition to grade 9
 - Also focused on re-engaging students in the DLP
- Satisfaction with Support Received
 - Majority of students and parents/guardians satisfied with the support they've received
 - Similar across all modes of learning, except for Cohort D (paper based) is less satisfied
- Asked who Students & Families were receiving support from
 - Teacher was overwhelmingly top response

- Also - EA, P/V/P, Guidance, Spec Ed Resource Teacher, CYW
- Distance Learning Likes
 - Staff - developing relationships with students, learning more tech as teaching tool
 - Students & Families - ability to work at their own pace, work independently
- Distance Learning Challenges
 - Staff - increased workload, lack of interaction with colleagues, differentiating for diverse students, limitations due to technology
 - Students - amount of time spent using device, distractions in home, having to wait to get feedback on work and questions answered
 - Families - lack of face to face teacher help, amount of time spent using technology, distractions at home, having to wait to get questions answered
- Quadmester Model - Likes
 - Staff - fewer courses to teach, increased focus/deeper learning, good health and safety measures, in-person teaching/learning, smaller class size
 - Students - ability to focus in classes, fewer courses at one time, well-being, easier to manage workload, shorter courses
- Quadmester Model - Challenges
 - Staff - lack of prep time, impact on well-being, fast pace, workload, time and focus on one course
 - Students - fast pace, workload, focus on one class, impact on learning / success, schedule
- This data was used to make decisions within constraints of staffing and ministry requirements for Quads 2, 3 and 4
- Staff Supports - Topic Areas for Professional Development
 - Seeing lessons created by other educators
 - Working with Brightspace
 - Supporting students with ESL/ELD or Spec Ed needs
 - Engaging in synchronous learning
 - Supporting staff well-being
 - Using HRE lens
 - Incorporating a trauma informed approach
- Student Well-Being - used Middle Years Development Index (MDI) Well-Being Index
 - Happiness, Health, Optimism, Self-esteem, Low sadness
 - Classified: Low Well-Being, Medium to High Well-Being, High Well-Being (Thriving)
 - Trend increase in percentage of student with low well-being, starting in grade 8 and increases through secondary school (remember this represents a sub-set of students)
 - Context in which data was collected very different compared to 2018
- Staff Well-Being - Guarding Minds at Work
 - Clear Leadership and Expectations - relative strength
 - Majority of other categorizations in the minimal concerns area
 - Response level lower than 2019, circumstances very different from 2019
- Content of slides will be posted on the WRDSB.ca website
- Future surveys this year: end of February, April and June

Questions on Let's Connect Survey

- Q. Was any translation or interpretation provided to families? A. Survey was available in 20 different languages, as a drop down menu on the home screen of the survey. Paper surveys were shared as a translated version if aware of language needed.
- Q. How do you plan to engage parents/families to support Distance Learning at home? A. IT department has been offering learning sessions on different topics including: how to navigate google classroom/google meet and brightspace program, WRDSB@Home provides many supports for families/parents/guardians, please reach out to the classroom teacher if you have any concerns.
- Q. Are you planning to ask any questions related to Distance Learning in the next surveys, since it is a big challenge for parents and students? A. We will be shifting questions in future surveys depending on the current mode of learning circumstance.
- Q. How do you plan to reach more people in future surveys? A. We collaborate with our Communications Department in terms of reach, previously tried to send direct messages to students and parents via School-Day and are considering this again. It is important for us to share information back and inform people that their participation is appreciated and explain how information is utilized.
- Q. What meaningful support for secondary students is being put in place considering the low well-being of students in Grades 8 - 12? This is an alarming trend - how will the board use this information? A. cannot alter MDI, but we are interested in administering the full MDI to students in grades 4 - 12, to obtain additional detailed information.
- Q. What is the trend for a particular cohort, for example grade 4? A. We didn't find a difference between modes of learning. MDI is a population based measure, we can look at survey results by grade level, gender identity, etc... ensuring acceptable sample size to protect privacy.
- Q. What are the solutions, recommendations, you plan to implement by the end of the year for our grade 12 students? Answers see below:
 - One strategy is our focus on in-risk learners and ensure 100% of our learners are supported and engaged. For example, reviewing attendance, student belonging, relationships with students and staff, parent/caregiver support, where there are gaps we actively engage the school-based team to support that student.
 - Barb Ward - Mental Health Lead - emphasis on social, emotional learning with staff and the social emotional learning skills for students, improved student well being when they have social emotional learning competencies in place.
 - Trauma informed practices, Psychology and Social Work Staff and School Mental Health Ontario has released a new tool kit and we'll be introducing that in our schools next week.
 - Supports have been put in place to support and engage students and we continue to provide tools for teachers to support this in the classroom.

If PIC members have any additional questions, M Bond indicated they can email questions to her and she will connect with board staff.

Trustee Report, Trustee L. Tremble

Trustee Tremble shared the Trustee Report was included in the agenda package. She confirmed

the Ministry of Education announced students will not be returning to in-person school before February 11, 2021. Congratulations to Direction Bryant, thank you for your guidance through the pandemic and best wishes in your retirement. There were no questions.

Treasurer's Report

B. Daniel confirmed the Financial report is the same as December. There were no questions.

Co-Chair Report

Co-Chair M. Bond shared the Co-Chair Report was included in the agenda package. There were no questions.

Consent Agenda

3. Moved by Z. Gent and seconded by R. Shaheen

That the Consent Agenda be approved.

-Carried-

Subcommittee Reports

Governance Report

J. Wright Governance Report included in the Agenda Package.

Discussion:

Committee committed to look at the relationship between PIC and WRAPSC and review PIC bylaws. Trying to determine is there a way PIC can better support WRAPSC, advocacy, liaison with board staff, etc... ? Trying to understand what each committee does and how we can optimize the relationship between PIC and WRAPSC.

M. Bond, H. Holmes, E. Campbell, C. Laughren are members of WRAPSC.

Currently eight Parent Members on the WRAPSC Steering Committee, including two PIC members. M. Bond is the main cross over person from WRAPSC, as she is also the Co-Chair of WRAPSC.

PIC is a Ministry mandated committee, WRAPSC is unique to the WRDSB, WRAPSC has reach to all the schools in our community. PIC has legitimate status to make recommendations to senior staff. PIC can optimize WRAPSC to get feedback from parents and convey this back to staff. PIC is an official voice and WRAPSC should give PIC their voice. If official answers are needed about policy etc.. that should be going to the board through PIC.

New subcommittee considerations:

- School Council Committee
 - WRAPSC is not representative of all School Councils, for many different reasons, some schools do not have a School Council or parent available to

- participate in WRAPSC.
 - Important to remember School Council does not represent all parents.
 - Do not limit ourselves to WRAPSC reaching out to School Councils and engaging with parents.
 - How do we get PIC information to the community, how do we bridge the gap between PIC and the grassroots at school councils? There is an opportunity for PIC to reach out through other avenues while maintaining a good relationship with WRAPSC.
 - If PIC is to go directly to school councils they may be out of their lane, how can we help WRAPSC to reach those schools, they know the challenges and have been involved at the grassroots level.
- PIC subcommittee to address WRAPSC concerns
 - WRAPSC is not representative of all School Councils, for many different reasons, some schools do not have a School Council or parent available to participate in WRAPSC. Important to remember School Council does not represent all parents. Do not limit ourselves to WRAPSC reaching out to School Councils and engaging with parents. How do we get PIC information to the community, how do we bridge the gap between PIC and the grassroots at school councils? There is an opportunity for PIC to reach out through other avenues while maintaining a good relationship with WRAPSC.
- New subcommittee to engage with parents not in school council or support WRAPSC to reach those schools that are not involved in WRAPSC - which path poses the least challenge to us?

Visioning forward - WRAPSC is very valuable but let's not limit ourselves. We need to think of our Elementary and Secondary Students and School Councils differently. We need to look at how to engage our parents/guardians differently in Elementary and Secondary and consider engaging each in different ways.

Propose the PIC Governance Subcommittee develops a visual of current state and proposed state, role mapping for each component and the flow (potentially using swim diagram).

Ensure clarity in the language in the mandate and role and responsibilities, consider having a Family of Schools model.

Action - Given there is lots more conversation to be had, J. Wright will take this feedback back to the Governance Subcommittee and will discuss with M. Bond and B. Daniel to figure out next steps.

Regional PRO Grant Event Report

B. Daniel, provided an update on the Regional PRO Grant Event. Planning is underway, consensus is minimum of one event, currently looking at guest speaker options. Need for Communication, PIC would like to promote the event and ensure it information is communicated to all parents and currently the support is not there from Communications.

Based on last year, the Communications Department needed information in December for

the April event. Difficulty establishing a relationship with someone in Communications. Reached out in September and December and did not hear back.

It is key that PIC has a good working relationship with the Communications Department to ensure success of the event. M. Bond will facilitate a meeting.

Director Bryant indicated that supporting PIC is important to the board and the Communications Department is here to support PIC. This past December, during the holiday time frame, Communications was focused on working on COVID-19 case communications with ROW Public Health and it was extremely busy. Caroline Newton, Interim Chief Communications Officer sends her regrets and Lynsey Slupeiks, Communications Officer is here at the PIC meeting tonight and will take the information shared back to the Communications Team and they are certainly available to talk and meet with you to help with your needs.

PIC PRO Grant Theme is Energizing parents. Looking into a guest speaker, including comedian, motivational speaker, fitness/nutrition/wellness expert, etc... The event is planned for the week of April 5th and the hope is to partner with community organizations to reach more parents.

School Councils are in the process of submitting applications for School Council PRO Grant funding, applications are due February 5, 2021. There may be an opportunity for PIC to help promote these events if they are not limited to a specific number of guests.

Director Bryant offered that Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard would be glad to come to the next PIC meeting to provide an update and determine what you need in order to run the Regional PRO Grant Event. Please reach out prior to the meeting if there's any specific questions or information that is needed in advance of the March 2, 2021 PIC meeting.

There were no questions on the Regional PRO Grant Event. Please reach out to B. Daniel with any ideas or questions.

Policy Review

- P5000 Staffing - Director Bryant confirmed this policy is not currently under review as the board is awaiting guidance from the Ministry of Education on parameters around staffing
- P3001 Travel, Meals, Hospitality - Trustees
- P3008 Use of Board Resources During an Election Campaign

Group Discussion Questions

M.Bond asked PIC Committee members to please think about one or two things that have gone well for you with respect to engagement and one or two things where there is room for improvement. These can be shared in a document on the PIC google drive.

Questions / New Business / Future Agenda Items

Questions / New Business

There were no questions or new business.

Future Agenda Items

- Invite Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights Department to a PIC meeting to discuss initiatives the board has taken and is planning
- Equity should be a standing item on the PIC agenda.
- Invite - Equity and Inclusion Officer - Indigenous Focus, to come to PIC meeting to talk about territorial acknowledgement
- Distance Learning Program - challenge for families in terms of feeling connected and staying engaged with School and School Councils
- Would like regular updates from ROW Public Health and information on planning moving forward and for September 2021
- Direction
- School Mental Health Ontario has released a new toolkit for Mental Health, discuss this at our next meeting, invite Barb Ward, Mental Health Lead. Parents need to know how to reach out if they feel their children are in danger.
- Understanding the role of Principals in the schools with regards to managing School Council. Information to explain the parameters of a Principals role vs when a Superintendent is engaged.

Director Bryant suggested to pick one area to focus on per meeting. ROW Public Health is very open to coming to meetings. PIC would like ROW Public Health to attend a PIC meeting, they will provide a couple of date options and prepare a list of questions in advance, Director Bryant will ask Board staff to reach out to ROW Public Health to coordinate the meeting.

M. Bond indicated PIC is still looking for Community Member

Next PIC Meeting

To be held virtually, Tuesday March 2, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

Future PIC meeting date: May 18, 2021

Sub Committee Dates - February 11, March 11, April 8, May 13, 2021

Adjournment

4. Moved by Heidi Holmes, seconded by Beth Daniel.

That the Parent Involvement Committee meeting be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.