

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)** was held on Tuesday, October 24, 2023 virtually on zoom, with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: M. Radlein

Board Staff: E. Dogan-McKenzie, S. Miller, R. Di Martino

Committee Members: D. Annable, J. Araujo, H. Avni-Peleg, D. Bandekar, S. Datta, S. Goel, T. Gonzalez, S. Heroux, N. Hydal-Khan, J. Lawrie, J. Lee, W. Lin, L. Lovelace, L. Miller, A. Mohammad, L. Munroe-Onsen, S. Variath

Regrets: M. Newlands, V. Sangeetha, G. Shantz, H. Brar, S. Awan, A. Dabas

Guests: J. Albrecht, E. Wainaina

Approval of Agenda - Scott Miller

- A motion to approve the agenda. J. Araujo and L. Lovelace approved the Agenda

Approval of Minutes from May 16, 2023 -Scott Miller

- S. Miller motioned to approve the May 16, 2023 minutes.
- J. Araujo & S. Heroux approved the Agenda
- A. Mohammad would like an amendment to the October 24, 2023 minutes. Amendment : **More details are needed for the Ad Hoc committee. In addition, the ad-hoc committee has been formed to establish and implement an Indoor Air Quality policy.** October 24, 2023 minutes have been revised.

Trustee Report - Trustee M. Radlein, Trustee Estoesta (Alternate)

- M. Radlein discussed the [Trustee Report](#) with the PIC committee
- M. Radlein explained the goal is to make learning accessible to all students, however also shared that resources are limited. M. Radlein spoke to the Math Achievement Action Plan in the classroom has different approaches with focus groups, intervention in the classroom and various methods to try and suit student needs. Evidence shows that the interventions are making a difference. We have faced many challenges with covid and mental health issues. It has been great to see the success and we continue to strive in making our schools positive, welcoming and inclusive.

- Q-Sounds like we have enough bus drivers. It sounds like they are all getting sick at the same time. Are Trustees or Bus Company able to add guidelines to keep windows open in the buses to decrease sickness. Is this question for the Trustee or the Bus company.
- M. Radlein would discuss this with the ad-hoc committee and look into air quality on the buses. Student transportation would be the one to look into these issues.
- S. Miller stated any transportation feedback will be sent on to STSWR. Feedback from the community is also welcomed and we can certainly provide feedback through staff as well.

WRDSB Leadership Update- Associate Director S. Miller

- S. Miller shared there have been large increases in the number of MLL students achieving provincial standard on both the Primary and Junior EQAO Assessments
- Grade 3: Reading (13%), Writing (14%) and Math (17%) and Junior
- Grade 6: Reading (20%), Writing (15%) and Math (31%)
- For Grade 9 Math comparing the 21-22 to the 22-23 results, there was a 21% increase
- For OSSLT there was a 35% increase
- S. Miller indicated for a board who has traditionally been below the province in meeting the provincial standard for MLL we are now above in 6 areas.
- The focus of WRDSB suspension and expulsion work continues to be through a focus of anti-racism, anti-oppression, anti-discriminatory and anti-carceral practices
- As a result of various learning modes over the past few school years the best comparator to the 2022-2023 school year suspension and expulsion data is 2018-2019
- The WRDSB has experienced drastic reductions across suspension/expulsion categories both in length (# of days) and numbers (# of suspensions and expulsions)
- Staff have been exploring "suspension days" as a macro measure of the effect of suspension
- We have seen a significant decrease in this measure from over 10,000 suspension days in 2018-2019 to 7,000 for 2022-2023
- Staff and school leaders continue to pursue alternatives to out of school suspension and this work continues to be embedded in the Board improvement and Equity Plan
- Safe Schools Staff and Superintendents continue to work with School Administrators to support individual cases and capacity building
- All administrators took part in Safe Schools training this year where staff shared learning from EDU initiatives, updates to guidance regarding early intervention
- Staff have expanded the offering of Training Active Bystanders (TAB) courses - with a focus on Sr Elementary Schools (Middle school Grade 7 and 8)
- Safe Schools staff are also engaged in a learning network that includes multiple boards with similar profiles
- The focus is to keep kids in school and keeping schools safe
- Scott shared the board's [Math Achievement Action Plan](#) with the committee

Treasurer Report - Treasurer, J. Lawrie

- J. Lawrie has nothing to report this month

WRAPSC Update- S. Heroux

- S. Heroux discussed the January meeting will be focused on ProGrants. The goal is to get more schools to fill out the ProGrant application accurately and to share this information. A [letter](#) has been sent to Trustees
- M. Radlein expressed appreciation for receiving the letter
- S. Heroux expressed WRAPSC is able to help with subcommittees
- S. Heroux has been working with Superintendent M. Newlands to see if there can be a WRDSB lottery license that would be used for all schools and consistent volunteer requirements/expectations for all WRDSB Schools.
- Q- How many schools are attending WRAPSC meetings on a regular basis.
- S. Heroux replied that some people come and represent more than one school. We have 500 people on our mailing list and during our meeting around 40 people attend.
- Q- Are there any efforts to increase schools participation in these meetings
- S. Heroux will be talking to principals. We are always trying to grow and find ways to make that happen. L. Lovelace commented that PIC would like to help with this.
- Q- Are people contacting WRAPSC via phone or email.
- S. Heroux responded 50/50 in terms of phone calls and emails.

Proposal: New “Communications Subcommittee” + Discussion - J. Araujo

- J. Araujo wanted to introduce a potential subcommittee to focus on communication. We wanted to propose a communication subcommittee to enhance communication transparency. We could have feedback collections from parents, caregivers and work closely with WRAPSC. We are looking for our messaging to be clear and consistent, including a social media account. We could work with the WRDSB staff members to streamline communication. We are looking for ways to connect with families where parents have an alternative way of connecting with the school council and sharing our voices at WRAPSC. We are looking at ways of advancing cultural diversity.

WRDSB Speakers: Accessibility Plan -Superintendent J. Albrecht & Human Rights Officer E. Wainaina

- J. Albrecht wanted to share the accessibility plan and gather feedback. We are gathering stakeholder feedback every two year cycle. The purpose of this presentation is to share the overview and welcome feedback
- E. Wainaina shared the [WRDSB Accessibility plan](#) and shared the mandated areas; Communication, Employment, Physical Environment, Transportation, Systemic & Customer Service. We are currently working on our website which includes improving our website design & building support to staff.

- Q-Wondering if there is a plan to proactively go to schools and assist students, parents & staff with disabilities
- A-When we gather feedback from stakeholders we will share the information. Suggesting and encouraging the completion of the survey. It is anonymous as we appreciate the feedback.

Subcommittee Report:

- SCIS- L. Lovelace
 - Governance- J. Lawrie
 - PRO Grants- H. Avni Peleg
 - Newcomer Engagement*- S. Datta & H. Avni Peleg
- L. Lovelace will be sitting on the Adhoc committee and will collect people's feedback. I will be focusing on how to connect with each school on developing a SCIS group including new families to Canada.
 - J. Lawrie is very excited to address the work that wasn't done last year and has shared this information with the committee. Our goal is to work in the documents and make revisions for our next PIC meeting.
 - [PIC Bylaws WRDSB](#)
 - [Provincial Handbook](#)
 - H. Avni Peleg will be establishing a clear ProGrant application process and making this information available to schools. We would like to encourage more schools to participate and we will be reaching out to schools who had not applied for the grant in previous years. We are also looking to create ready-made activities which align with the WRDSB strategic goals. M. Newlands confirmed the allocation of ProGrant is \$62,500 this year. Our next step is creating, reviewing and sending both Elementary & Secondary school applications.
 - S. Datta & H. Avni Peleg will be working on supporting new families in the communities. We would like to streamline the information so people have easy access to this information. We would like to target non speaking communities. Some families do not have access to technology and in order to accommodate these families we will look at a flyer and simple instructions to assist families.

8:00 pm Question Period

A question period has been opened for any additional information.

- Q. How can we access the presentations from tonight's meeting? A. An email will be sent to the committee.
- Q. Will all work and board plans be available for parents? A. Yes we will be sharing the math plan with the Trustees at the next Board meeting.
- Q. Is ProGrant something PIC created or is it based on an application process? A. ProGrant is an application process and is directed by the Ministry of Education. Our goal this year is to assist schools and encourage them to utilize these funds.

- Q. What is the difference between PIC and ProGrant? A. PIC is to enhance the function of this committee and invest these funds in the school communities and to support student engagement. ProGrant is professional learning in which we will try to communicate and be clear about how to give something to each project to each school. There is a total of \$62,500 for ProGrant this year. There are very few applications that were not approved last year. Moving forward this year we are making it a goal to reach all schools and reach out to the schools who are not submitting applications.
- Q. Was the new immigrant sub committee running last year? A. When looking at this type of committee we are looking at partnering with settlement workers and getting an understanding of what newcomers really need. Who are our community leaders and how they can assist families who are not being served.
- Q. What are the Board's plans for a job fair in the future. A. Our last job fair was well attended. A number of connections were made and people were interested in IT, Educational Assistant, Human Resources and Teacher positions. This is something we would look at doing again.
- S. Heroux, WRAPSC mentioned the January 9 WRAPSC meeting will be centered around ProGrant. If your subcommittee is ready to go please let me know as you are able to present at our January 9th meeting. In addition if anyone is interested in participating in WRAPSC please let me know and I can add you to our WRAPSC mailing list.

8:30 pm Closing Remarks

- J. Araujo thanked everyone for attending this evening's PIC meeting. A special thank you to M. Newlands for her incredible leadership and patience. Thank you to J. Lawrie and L. Lovelace for getting this committee up and running.
- L. Lovelace stated it is great to see enthusiasm in this group. It will be great to get our subcommittees going by our next PIC meeting on February 27, 2024.

The Parent Involvement Committee meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.