

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)** was held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 virtually on zoom, with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: M. Radlein

Board Staff: S. Miller, M. Newlands, R. Di Martino

Committee Members: D. Annable, J. Araujo, H. Avni-Peleg, D. Bandekar, H. Brar, 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: D. Annable, S. Awan, A. Dabas, S. Datta, J. Lee

Guests: S. Variath, L. Weijja

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement, Co-Chair J. Araujo welcomed everyone to the meeting and offered a Territorial Acknowledgement.

Approval of Agenda,

Co-Chair J. Araujo motioned to approve the February 27, 2024 PIC Agenda, seconded by N. Hydal-Khan

Approval of Minutes from December 5, 2023,

J. Lawrie motioned to approve the December 5, 2023 minutes, seconded by L. Miller

Trustee Report- Trustee M. Radlein

Trustee Maedith Radlein shared the Trustee Report (in the Agenda Package) which provides updates on the Committee of the Whole and Board meetings.

January

- Financial Report - It's not clear how the projected budget deficit will be impacted by the rate of inflation.
- Report on Ventilation During COVID - A comprehensive report was received from Ron Dallan, Manager of Capital Projects & Lou Lima, Manager of Mechanical, Electrical and Environmental Services on the steps taken by the WRDSB to meet Ministry regulations & make upgrades where necessary

- Report on CO2 Sensor Pilot Project - Manager Dallan & Manager Lima also reported on this pilot project which was carried out in 3 elementary schools; Chicopee, Laurentian & Abraham Erb. Elementary schools were chosen because classrooms have a consistent occupancy use. The results are available on the schools' website. Results were within the acceptable limits.
- Board Improvement and Equity Plan Update (BIEP): Literacy Achievement - the Structured Literacy approach to teaching reading is showing encouraging results. The strategy is also meeting the needs of students with reading disabilities such as dyslexia. Many teachers have volunteered for training.

February

- BIEP Human Rights Report: Staff training and procedural initiatives that the WRDSB is doing in the following areas were shared; Building a Human Rights Culture, Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Anti-Indigenous Racism, Anti-Black Racism, Ableism, 2SLGBTQIA+ Hate.
- Policies continue to be reviewed with PIC's input.

WRDSB Leadership Update- Associate Director S. Miller

S. Miller shared a [presentation](#) with the committee. He shared that for the month of February we have been celebrating Black Brilliance month in the WRDSB. There was a recent conference for WRDSB Elementary Students at Wilfrid Laurier University - first time we have held this type of event for Elementary Students. There were a number of breakout groups/learning opportunities which included Wilfrid Laurier professors and students. The level of excitement was tremendous and it was wonderful for the students to see where opportunities lie for them in the future. We are approaching the end of the 2nd year of a 5 year plan regarding the implementation of Structured Literacy which includes evidence based reading . It is amazing how quickly students were able to have greater fluency in their reading which is a key component. The fluency did increase in a 5 week period. A majority of our students improved their reading by the end of Grade 2. The Secondary schools have a fulsome plan including an Administrator Learning Series. There are many community connections at the school level which includes the Equity Inclusion groups. There are a number of ways to include parents in this process. We are using a tiered support model for learning in the classroom. Students have increased confidence in mathematics. We are excited about the growth in the work we are doing.

S. Miller wanted to provide an update regarding the eclipse. We are still finalizing a few decisions. There are many things that are being considered. We do not have an option of moving a PD Day on April 8th. The board takes feedback from a variety of sources, including PIC to help inform decisions - the committee split into three groups to have a discussion and provide feedback. As a board we are prioritizing student and staff safety. Families can choose to keep their children home that day or pick up students early. This is a unique learning opportunity and we are looking at how to take advantage of this situation.

When everyone returned M. Newlands thanked everyone for sharing their thoughts and feedback around the eclipse.

Treasurer Report - Treasurer, J. Lawrie

J. Lawrie confirmed there is nothing to report at this time.

WRAPSC Update - S. Heroux

S. Heroux wanted to say thank you for a quick and efficient PRO Grant Application process this year. She wanted to provide WRAPSC feedback and council communication. The school council policy is up for review this year. S. Heroux wanted to say thank you to the speakers at the last WRAPSC meeting. She is passionate about the literacy program and how the council can support schools with this new way of teaching. April 2nd is the next meeting and we will be talking about IEPs and Special Education.

PRO Grant Discussion- Jackie Araujo

The Review committee was comprised of:

- Staff Michelle Newlands Superintendent, Student Achievement and Well-Being
- IEAC Nicole Robinson Equity and Inclusion Officer - Indigenous focus
- EIAG Scott Williams Equity & Inclusion Advisory Group (EIAG) SPECTRUM
- Trustee Joe Meisner Trustee
- PIC Tanya Gonzalez Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Parent Representative
- PIC Jackie Araujo Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Parent Representative
- PIC Laura Lovelace Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Parent Representative
- Staff Rose Di Martino Administrative Assistant, Superintendent

A number of schools applied this year : 67 elementary, middle and high schools. Some great proposals include: family STEM/Art/Math nights, community gardens, open houses (funds to purchase supplies for crafts and games), guest speaks for topics ranging from internet safety to mental health and wellness, as well as a family drumming workshop , an earth day exhibition focused on global citizenship and sustainability, and even a comicon inspired school event. Overall, the team was pleased to approve applications that encourage family involvement, and parents and caregivers playing an active role in their children's education.

Things that went well: Rose was able to send out an organized account of applications with all the required info needed to help the committee work through the data.

As a committee we were able to preview the applications and flagged any proposals that we hoped to learn more about.

As a group we discussed any proposal that we had questions about, then proceeded to go through each school and offer the opportunity for any member of our committee to approve, decline, or request additional information.

Things we might improve for next year: Finding ways to streamline approval of these applications will be passed on as a key consideration for the 2024/25 PRO Grant

Committee.

A PIC member made a suggestion to disperse the PRO Grant funds evenly. Some schools receive a larger amount. This is also dependent on the application and what the request is for.

Subcommittee Report-N. Hydal-Khan

N. Hydal-Khan shared a database of WRDSB schools which includes contact information, engagement with WRAPSC, presence/absence of school councils and SCIS teams. The committee drafted a letter to schools informing PIC and WRAPSC to try to connect with councils or caregivers and offer assistance in overcoming barriers to parent engagement.

The CSA approved the air quality report from the ADHOC Committee.

Black History Month project included social media posts. There was a post everyday in the month of February. We wanted to create a space for Black families. We are hoping to continue to highlight diverse groups. We would like to use social media as a tool to increase parent engagement, particularly in elementary schools.

Governance-J. Lawrie

Committee: J. Lawrie, L. Miller, D. Annable, S. Datta

J. Lawrie discussed revisions they are considering to the bylaws and shared a [document](#) containing an overview of these revisions. The revised draft bylaws can be found [here](#).

This information will be forwarded to Associate Director Miller, Superintendent Newlands, and Trustee Radlein for review and approval. A vote will then be scheduled for the next PIC meeting on May 14, 2024.

Policy Review-L. Miller

The WRDSB policy review process was discussed

PIC 2024/2025 Membership retention/recruitment

Discussed past practice and how to successfully recruit new PIC members for next year

Closing Remarks

J. Araujo thanked everyone for attending this evening's PIC meeting. The next meeting will be focused on recruitment and the next steps. The Parent Involvement Committee meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.