

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)** was held on Tuesday, December 3, 2024 virtually on zoom, with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: M. Radlein

Board Staff: J, Amaral, E. Dogan-McKenzie, M Newlands

Committee Members: D. Bankedar, C. Bowman, L. Farlow, C. Fernandes, A. Hallman, A. Hebert, G. Horsman, S. Mishra, A. Mohammed, S Variath

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - A. Mohammad

Affirmation of Returning Members, and Appointment of Chair - A. Mohammad

Approval of Agenda - December 3, 2024

- A motion to approve the agenda A. Hebert and seconded by C. Fernandes

Approval of Minutes from May 14, 2024

- C. Bowman motioned to approve the May 14, 2024 minutes.
- A. Hebert seconded the motion.

Updates from Leadership Groups

- M. Radlein discussed the [Trustee Report](#) with the PIC committee
- A. Mohammed congratulated M. Radlein on her appointment to chair
- G. Horsman asked if there was any report about the numbers in the Trustee Report and M. Radlein responded that data is available in the Board Reports
- M. Radlein also reported that because covid caused a lot of problems all boards are struggling with behaviour and that this is why work is being done in schools to improve conditions for learning. She also mentioned that it is harder to hire the number of staff required
- A. Hebert asked about sharing next steps with the increase of behaviour issues
- M. Radlein explained the new structure in teaching and support students based on need so there are different approaches at different schools with more of a holistic approach. The goal is to keep students in school with a good sense of self worth.
- S. Mishra asked why students living in HHSS area are being made to go to Forest Heights
- M Radlein answered that the board was not approved for a new secondary school but will be

adding 20 classrooms to HHSS

- L. Farlow asked if research has been done to why parents are not choosing active transportation
- M. Radlein responded that parents don't feel comfortable having their children walk and school bell time can cause issues. It is always a matter of choice.
- Several committee members expressed concerns about elementary school and the need for more resources.
- M. Radlein commented that there is not one cause and that the board is working on these issues.
- M. Newlands suggested that this would be a good thing to explore with a subcommittee.

WRDSB Staff and Leadership Team Update - A. Gaymes-SanVicente

- A. Gaymes-San Vicente introduced herself and gave a little background on her career.
- Board Improvement and Equity Plan four key areas achievement (belief all students can achieve) sovereignty Human rights and equity (all students belong) mental health well being and engagement and finally Pathways and transitions
- Conditions for learning (an environment where students feel they can belong)
- SLIP as Core to our Business (a board improvement plan)
- Structured Literacy multi year plan (large focus on this plan and focused on structured literacy)
- Numeracy program (small groups in math is a new idea)
- S. Mishra asked what we should do.
- A. Gaymes-SanVicente said go to interviews and ask questions

Treasurer Update - A. Mohammad

- A. Mohammed commented that PIC has a vacancy for a treasure and that PIC has not spent any money.

WRAPSC Update- S. Heroux

- S. Heroux stated that the next WRAPSC meeting will be Tuesday January 7 at Forest Height SS and can be joined virtually. She mentioned that WRAPSC is here to help with anything school council related as well as looking at behaviour issues and how they can help by approaching the Ministry. She stated that we really need the PRO Grant program.
- E. Dogan-McKenzie suggested it is added to the next meeting agenda.
- M. Newlands mentioned we had a PRO Grant program committee.

PIC Update

- The September event was called a Rise Up/
- M. Newlands gave an update that it was a great event but was not well attended. There were two great guest speakers as well as a board employee who spoke on how to bring up our children not to be racist.
- A. Mohammed mentioned the application process for new members 4 vacancies
- A. Mohammed attended an event by the ministry and will share the information with PIC

WRDSB Speaker - E. Dougan-McKenzie

Discuss the important role of parent engagement. Overview of WRDSB Strategic plan, BIEP, highlighting the Transforming Education initiative and PPM 170.

- A big focus is to centre students and seek a student voice.
- Strategic Direction centring students while support for student and staff wellbeing, equitable opportunities, and strengthen connections.
- Last year we published a community engagement charter and is quite high on our radar.
- Started community round tables with different ethnic groups as well as a group for poverty.
- E. Dougan-McKenzie explained some of the initiatives that have been taken.
- Family engagement is key and try to have various PIC members join committees within the board e.g. school year calendar.
- Having PIC involved in consultation will continue and will be launching a new engagement platform looking to increase participation.
- Launch a family of schools for a host at a school with a speaker and have families share input to suggest changes.
- A. Mohammad asked there isn't any policy for PIC only from the ministry
- E. Dougan-McKenzie believes that the policy from the ministry is what we use at the board and we look to have parent involvement.

Old Business and Special Orders

Follow-up on Communication Tools: Google Workspace Proposal

- Background: Review of suggestions from the May 2024 meeting regarding communication challenges. Google Workspace has been identified as a potential solution.
- Proposal: Approve the purchase and implementation of Google Workspace to enhance communication for school councils and WRAPSC.
- Action Required: Review [Google Workspace Report](#) and Vote to approve the proposal to purchase Google Workspace.
- E. Dougan-McKenzie suggested that IT would set up a workspace and hope that can be accessed with your private email.
- M. Newlands commented that what they are looking for already exists.
- E. Dougan-McKenzie said we have check with the legislation to see if we are allowed to have a separate space
- A. Hallman agreed with E. Dougan-McKenzie that a workspace need to be run by a board member.
- Hallman moved to vote and A. Hebert seconded the motion
- Vote was to move forward with the amendments

Follow-up on Future Initial PIC Meeting of the Year

- Background: Review of May 2024 member feedback regarding lack of clarity on PIC role, guidelines, goal setting, meeting dates, and active school councils.
- Proposal: Add an additional PIC meeting within 2 weeks of the start of the school year to provide member orientation, set meeting dates, and ensure Principals are reminded of school council election requirements from the Education Act, and to gather a list of active school councils for board follow-up and WRAPSC records.
- Action Required: Vote to approve the proposal to add an additional meeting date for PIC and use the current Member Orientation presentation as a template for future member orientations.
- Vote was to go ahead with a meeting by majority.
- A. Hebert moved the motion and S. Nanda Mishra seconded to approve.

Follow-up on Bylaw Amendment

- Background: Bylaw amendment was presented at the May 2024 meeting, but the vote did not take place.
- Proposal: Provide new and returning members with the amendments and take them offline for review.
- Action Required: Vote to review amendments offline, submit changes, and schedule approval vote for next meeting.
- Moved by S. Nanda Mishra seconded by C. Bowman.
- Vote was a majority.

New Business - Working Sessions

- All PIC committee members introduced themselves and gave some facts about themselves and their children
- Amanda explained that PIC is an Ontario Regulated and went over our mission which aligns with the boards.
- Goals are to support and build relationships, raise awareness and strategic alignment.
- The action plan is to outreach, board collaboration, parent info night event, ongoing communication.
- Subcommittee changes from year to year and we had too many last year.
- This year's committees are Governance and Board Collaboration, Membership and Recruitment, Outreach Engagement and Communication, Newcomer Support and SCIS and Parent Info Night Event.
- M. Radlein mentioned that regarding Newcomer Support and SCIS she has heard from parents that our education systems are different and would like to understand how our system works (e.g. what is a SO). Understanding the system and what to do when you have a question.
- M. Newlands responded that Newcomer Support and SCIS overlap but they are not similar and maybe should not be grouped together. Also there is a need for a PRO Grant committee since PIC looks at the proposals and how the money is distributed.
- A. Mohammed is concerned that there is not enough interest to chair the committees but will add PRO Grant committee to the list.
- S. Nanda Mishra agrees that the Newcomer Support and SCIS needs a strong person.

- D. Bandekar suggested putting the Newcomer Support and Parent info into an event.
- A. Mohammed does not know if we have enough time for the parent info night and it will be a lot of work in a short time frame.
- A. Mohammed shared the subcommittee responsibilities and then shared who has volunteered to chair some of the committees and asked if anyone would like to volunteer.

Motion to extend the meeting by five minutes since we did not cover all the topics on the agenda. C Fernandes moved the motion and S. Nanda Mishra seconded. All in favour.

A. Mohammed explained the responsibilities committee chairs

A. Mohammed will share a date for the missed meeting.

9:05 pm Closing and Adjournment

