

Parent Involvement Committee

Minutes - May 16, 2023

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)** was held on Tuesday, May 16 at 6:30 pm, virtually on Google Meet, with the following members in attendance:

Present:

Trustees: M. Radlein

Board Staff: D. Ballantyne, R. Di Martino, S. Miller, M. Newlands, E.Dougan-McKenzie, G. Shantz,

PIC/WRAPSC Members: J. Araujo, H. Brar, A. S. Goel, S. Heroux, J. Lawrie, L. Lovelace, A. Misra, C. Needler, S. Rehan, A. Schuitema, P. Shaw

Regrets: G. Idemudia, A. deVries, M. Hoare, S. Shadaan, A. Russell, j. chanicka

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

Approval of Agenda

L. Lovelace motioned to approve the May 16, 2023 PIC Agenda, seconded by J. Araujo

Approval of Minutes -February 28, 2023

J. Araujo motioned to approve the February 28, 2023 minutes, seconded by P.Shaw

Staff Update- Leadership Team - Scott Miller

S. Miller explained how the board is able to follow through with initiatives and will be providing the committee with a timeline of our budget

S. Miller shared a [presentation](#) including slides with the committee. He informed the committee to ask any questions related to the presentation. The Ministry priorities didn't change over the last few years. The destreaming work is a ministry requirement. The structure for literacy is in Kindergarten to Grade 2. The board is looking at additional staff to support this. Specific funding will likely be around mathematics and push for apprenticeships. There will be a continued focus on mental health, wellbeing & resilience which aligns with Human Rights and Inclusion. The GSN is made up of 4 areas- Classroom, Schools, Local Management & Special Education funding. The big basis is student enrolment. We are predicting an increase in enrolment for the next school year. The board receives approximately \$12,000 per pupil. There are also grants each year given to the board. The one year



grants we often use for staffing. We are also expecting some money for the literacy, numeracy and apprenticeship program. June 7, 2023 is the first budget Board Meeting. We will provide financial reports and updates. June 14 is when the Trustee can provide a response. The budget will be ratified on June 26, 2023. We are getting ready for teacher interviews including EAs and CYWs for the next school year. S. Miller is happy to answer and provide clarification for you if you have any questions.

J. Lawrie is curious about what happens to the PIC funds if the schools don't use the money. Will the money roll over to the next year if it isn't used. S. Miller did inform the committee that if the schools don't use the money then it will not roll over and will be given back to the Ministry.

Trustee Report, M. Radlein, Trustee

Trustee Maedith Radlein shared the Trustee Report (in the Agenda package) which provides updates on the Committee of the Whole and Board Meetings since March 20, 2023.

Committees of the Whole

March

- The School Year calendar which is aligned with that of the Catholic board was approved.
- A job fair was held for Indigenous, Black & People of Colour.

April

- A.R. Kaufman P.S. was renamed Hillside P.S. and Ryerson P.S. was renamed Blue Heron P.S.

May (these motions need to be ratified at May's Board Meeting)

- There'll be a slight (\$0.50) decrease in the extended day fee for the 2023-24 year. This reflects an increased number of new staff.
- The CO2 Monitoring pilot project will begin September with 3 schools. Each classroom will have a monitor. The pilot will run for three months.

Board Meetings

March

- Staffing challenges continue
- The cancellation of the Intensive Support Program was reversed. It will continue.
- The new student trustees are Casper Dong (Laurel Heights) & Abdullah Awan (Southwood)
- A budget deficit of c. \$8 million is forecast for this school year. It mainly reflects the increased cost of sick days.

April

- The Tim Walker Environmental Award was given to 4 schools; Lincoln Heights P.S. (vegetable & butterfly garden), Rockway P.S. (Edible Food Forest Initiative), Trillium P.S. (Learning Gardens Project) & Eastwood C.I. (Closed Loop Hot Compost).
- Board Improvement & Equity Plan Update - Math intervention teachers gave an update on the program in the destreamed Grade 9 classes. The model which includes small group instruction and intensive intervention by itinerant teachers is proving very successful. Intervention was

initially for 6 X 30 min sessions, but trials at 6, 8 & 12 sessions showed that 12 gives the optimum results. The percent of students who improved in the first tier was 22%, the second 48% & the third 70%. Students preferred to be withdrawn rather than supported in class.

Trustee Radlein did get a chance to visit a few Grade 9 classrooms to observe some of the changes to the classroom. She was impressed to see no cell phones being used and the students were working in groups and problem solving together. This way of teaching is proven to be very effective. Teachers are committed to making this work for students. It doesn't matter what ability level the students are as everyone is able to participate. It was quite an uplifting experience.

Trustee Radlein mentioned the Grade 9 Destreaming was concerning to people initially as they thought the standard would decrease, however we are noticing the opposite effect. There is success with this new model. There is improvement in the well being of our students.

A. Misra wondered if there is a report that can be shared with parents. Anxiety from the parents and community is the lack of communication to our families regarding the board's plans. The school board is trying to be more transparent and do a lot on the equity and social side of learning however the older generations value academics and how the learning has changed. If something can be shared with our parents on the board's approach, this will help enforce strategies at home as well.

Trustee Radlein likes that suggestion and will follow up and see what can be done. When things change it is helpful to see what the changes look like.

J. Lawrie thought this is something helpful that would come out of this committee is to help parents engage

Treasurer Report, J. Lawrie, PIC Treasurer

J. Lawrie explained the accounting hasn't changed and we will be giving the money back
The numbers have stayed the same

L. Lovelace asked if there is anything we can do now to spend the money

J. Lawrie suggested to have a conversation with the PIC members on their own in the evenings and moving forward with PIC

S. Heroux mentioned that in the past years PIC put on events like keynote speakers. In addition money was given for PIC committee members to attend events. Money would be given for the PIC committee to attend events

P. Shaw thinks it might be useful to organize a PIC event in the future, however is it possible to disperse the money to schools who haven't applied for PRO Grant



Future of PIC

E. Dougan-McKenzie commented that we need to engage parents on a better level and shared this [presentation](#). Research and decisions were made when we created the strategic plan. We need to lead with compassion and collaboration. The internal piece for us is to ensure we work together to transform the structure and embrace success for all students. It really is about how we create a village for all of our students. We will be focusing on a broader community strategy and making sure we have meaningful parent engagement. We need to change how we are connecting and building relationships with families and communities. Our key strategy is to increase public consultations and to potentially create 3 in person consultations which includes one with PIC. We need to make it possible for all parents to participate in the public consultations. With PIC being a consultation arm for WRDSB, putting procedures into place and working with PIC as a whole to identify the gaps and working together.

M. Newlands thinking is that of a steering committee where we are able to listen to the ideas of PIC. Euis gave us a nice foundation piece which is what we want to achieve moving forward in September. We need to look at our strategy to recruit more people for PIC and have meaningful and purposeful themes so each time we come together we can look at items objectively. M. Newlands suggested breakout groups and each breakout group has a different topic. Then we can come back together brainstorming ideas and possibilities.

J. Lawrie is also hoping for meaningful and engaging conversations with PIC meetings. Her concern is that less than half of PIC members are not even here in tonight's meeting. She would like PIC to be more inclusive.

M. Newlands responded with themes give us an idea on how to organize the work

J. Araujo likes the idea of breakout rooms. The smaller groups will make people feel at ease and stimulates conversation and then we can come back to talk about it

P. Shaw suggests parents be in the same group

M. Newlands commented we need to discuss how to grow PIC and our partnerships

The PIC committee went into Break out groups for 15 minutes. There were 2 groups, parents and staff
The PIC committee came together after the breakout group to share their thoughts

J. Lawrie spoke on behalf of the parent group. They are looking forward to solving challenges in September. She is hoping PIC members will have access to google drive and the social media account. How can PIC access the funds allocated to PIC? She would like an easier way to share information with the community and parents.

D. Ballantyne shared the ideas from the Board breakout group. We have engagement challenges on who are the families we are not reaching. We need to understand what the barriers are for some families which are different for each community. We need to share strategies to promote parent engagement. Each parent sees what is in their community and the Board can ask PIC for their input. PIC could become a resource for which schools. We need to differentiate in various geographic



locations : KW, Cambridge, Townships. We need to work towards recruiting parents to PIC. Could the school council or WRPSC assist with recruiting parents. It could be a good idea for PIC to visit various schools councils and explain what PIC does and how they can support and be a resource for schools. Part of the Board's strategic plan is community engagement. A goal for next year is to identify strategies that are working in various schools.

M. Newlands commented she would like to add a learning series including student achievement and mental well-being. This is her area of passion and looks forward to next year.

J. Lawrie suggested the PIC committee meet again this year on their own to discuss recruitment

S. Miller suggested moving the September meeting to October and he is happy to be a part of this process. Michelle Newlands will continue to facilitate the future PIC meetings. S. Miller mentioned we are trying to move to in person PIC meetings however the hybrid model is more accessible for families. The future PIC meetings will take place October 24, December 5, February 27 & May 14.

The Parent Involvement Committee meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.

