

WRAPSC Minutes May 6, 2025

Welcome: WRAPSC chair Sara Heroux

Reflection time for the murdered Indigenous women: Angie Hallman

School Planning: Lauren Agar

- Long-Term Accommodation Planning
 - Long -term Planning = Capital Planning
 - Major Capital Projects:
 - Major renovation or additions with budgets greater than \$2.5 M
 - New School Construction
 - Facilities upgrades
- Purpose of Capital Planning
 - Enrolment trends
 - Aging or underused infrastructure
 - Adding accessibility features
- Support program delivery: expanding gyms, science labs and tech rooms, libraries
- Look at site plans and zoning applications
- Updated WRDSB facilities years ago, so schools could have full-day Kindergarten
- Capital planning group
- Board of trustees approve Long-Term Accommodation Plan
<https://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/ltap/>
- The province & projects
 - Money comes from the province
 - WRDSB submits requests for funding to the province: must meet province's criteria
 - Province decides which projects to fund
 - Sometimes the province likes the proposed project, but asks facilities to find funding elsewhere
 - Sometimes, now, boards must prefund some of the money before getting approval from the province because the province doesn't want projects that sit around for too long
 - The province might be holding WRDSB project funding for several years now due to WRDSB projects still waiting to be finished
 - board doesn't always have funding though to complete project; catch 22
- Member Question: Why aren't they building more schools because our population is increasing?
Response: Region is growing but at post-secondary level, not at the elementary level
- Catholic board enrollment has increased a lot, due to having JK
- Key Challenges:
 - Limited funding & strict criteria from the Ministry
 - Nontransparent process from the Ministry
 - political aspects to decision making; some ridings benefit more
 - Aging infrastructure
- WRDSB schools are basically fully utilized
- schools aren't necessarily placed into areas that have a lot of kids, so end up bussing kids

- Would like schools to be placed in areas that are closer to kids and more walkable
- TDSB has a lot of underutilized schools; WRDSB is a lot more efficient
- WRDSB doesn't just close schools because they are too old
- Portables and Portapacks
 - Portapack is a collection of portables, but they have a common hallway and are connected in some way to the school building
 - can't build a portapack unless the school is needing 6 classrooms worth of students
 - they annually assess portable needs
 - operating costs & moving portables are the costs of having portables
 - sometimes leave portables where they are due to student growth likelihood (so it looks like they will likely need it)
- French immersion lottery
 - removing sibling priority from French immersion lottery
 - Lottery for everyone now instead of certain people
 - Grade 2 French immersion applications due Jan. 31, 2026
 - Parents can't apply to both Catholic & Public School Boards' French immersions anymore
 - They monitor attrition
 - Extension process to demit from French immersion
- Working on the mentality of what French immersion is
- Lots of issues with how French immersion is delivered
- WRDSB isn't required to offer French immersion schools because it is an English language school board; WRDSB even goes a step further and adds extra
 - English boards don't have to offer French immersion schools
- Member Question: It would be nice to have an extra closet built onto schools to hold school council items or fundraising chocolate bars, for example. Sometimes there is no extra space added to a school. Response: Sometimes capacity is in the wrong places. For example, Silverheights PS; there is no land space to add more classrooms despite its growing population
- Member Question: You have mentioned elementary school issues. What are the issues that you see for high schools? Response: Ministry sees high schools as having 120% capacity
 - Cambridge high schools have too much space; Ministry doesn't like that
 - South Kitchener desperately needs a school, but the Ministry thinks students from South Kitchener should instead be bussed to Cambridge high schools because they have the space, so it is difficult to build new schools in Kitchener
- Their goal: Want to build schools in complete communities
- Planning@wrdsb.ca for any questions
- Member Comment: Even if your child doesn't get accepted into a French immersion school, there are ways to help your child attain high levels of success in French. There are some French exams that you can do to get there eventually by just using the core French approach instead of French Immersion
- Province hasn't allocated any funding towards accessibility. Member Response: could politicize that fact
- WCI needs 5 different elevators; so too complicated and expensive

- Some schools don't have additions that are on level with the rest of the school, so it is very difficult to add elevators now; additions were built on half levels of the school, instead of on level
- If they know that a child is coming up through the system that needs an elevator, then they do work to fix that
- Do almost all schools have air conditioning? I don't think so, but not sure
- Member Question: What are the differences in what you support high schools with, compared to elementary schools? Response: Science labs is a secondary school project
 - Elementary accommodation and secondary accommodation committee: take suggestions from schools of what they need ie sound fitting a room, safety machines in wood shop rooms, tech course (make sure we have the facility capacity for a tech room)
- Member Question: How often do you check elevators for safety? Response: Unsure: email planning@wrdsb.ca

PIC: Amanda

- PIC mandatory board committee: O.Reg.612/00
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/000612>
- \$10K worth of PIC magnets 63,000 made
- Grade 9 Nights
 - all elementary schools JK-8
- Purpose of Magnets: Magnets will have a QR code that directs people to info about school council, WRAPSC, and PIC; to encourage more engagement
- PIC branded apparel for PIC members with remaining budget
- Parent Engagement PRO Grant Update: reports submitted by June 13th
- Newcomer Support Update:
 - Survey to ensure how to support the community's needs

SCIS:

- How PIC can support school level SCIS teams
- What's On Your Mind event cancelled
 - Hoping to do the event again in the Fall
- Vacancies for PIC: 6 vacancies; maybe more due to increasing membership allowances
- 5 principal vacancies
- Director of Education going forward with many of the proposals of PIC
- PIC meetings are hybrid, open to the public 6:30-9:00pm
 - Dates: Sept. 23, Nov. 25, Jan. 27, Mar. 24, May 26
- 16 members currently, and must serve 2 years
- Need more than 5 hours of available time per month to volunteer with PIC
- Issues: School chairs change and how to get that data out
- Board Meeting Round Up Email:
 - Classroom evacuations: Board is working on it.

- Member Comment: There needs to be exact definitions of expulsions.
- Member Question: Is there an exact definition of suspensions? Michelle's Response: when an action is injurious to the whole school
 - Suspensions and expulsions must be reported to the Ministry

Large Group Discussion: WRAPSC Chair Sara Heroux

- Member Idea: Host Alison Yeung to talk about cell phones & social media. Chair's response: That would be a good idea for WRAPSC to initiate as well, instead of it always being only the board inviting speakers
- Member Idea: It would be good for WRAPSC to hold a high school night. They should announce it to the schools and invite high schools to attend. Response: Yes, WRAPSC could announce a high schools' night
- Member Idea: It would be a good idea to share ideas on the finer points of how to run school council elections. For example, the member just learned of the lot idea from Blair's bylaws to deal with a tie in votes.
- Member Idea: It would be good to have a speaker from the Ministry of Education. Chair's response: I'm not sure that we would be able to bring in the big-league people.
 - Michelle's response: The field services' branch could do it remotely
- Member Comment: I had no idea until coming to a high school council that there can be more than one school council there. GCI has 2: MLL (multilingual language) councils & another school council
 - Other comment: Eastwood: has an arts' school council and other ones; sometimes chairs visit both councils at their schools
- Member Idea: I enjoy lots of time talking together and sharing what other councils do
- Member Idea: Forest education is important
- Member Idea: Home school reps would be good to have
- Member Question: Are chairs responsible for proposals brought by the school for funding? What if they don't know if they are allowed? Chair's response: The principal will be responsible for it, not the chair.
- Member Comment: It would be helpful to know as school councils what we are allowed to buy? Another member commented that we can buy home reading books but not other books. (It is confusing.)
- Member Idea: It would be helpful to get better understanding of high school principals' and secretaries' general needs and schedules. It is tricky knowing how to navigate their needs when they don't express them. For example, how much notice do they need? They seem to get pulled away to go to the board and are gone sometimes. Secretaries don't seem to be there a chunk of time. It is confusing.
- Member Idea: It would be good to know what other high school councils do with their school council fundraising money. Would like more practical ideas.
- PIC has very strong rules about what they can say in public
- PIC is high level: advocacy, reviewing things with the Board
- WRAPSC is more like in the weeds than PIC is; it is right where you are as a school council member

- PIC & WRAPSC both have voices with the Board; neither is more important to the board; both have 1 vote.
 - PIC subcommittee meetings are considering having WRAPSC members
 - Member Idea: Could we have the trustees come for every meeting? Response: They couldn't all come for each meeting, but Maedith Radlein is the community rep, so she could come to a meeting if requested.
 - Ottawa has a WRAPSC-like organization; but a WRAPSC organization is fairly unique to our board
 - WRAPSC brought important things forward; it is making a difference
 - Information was sent to Board members and trustees that we were discussing a letter; it did affect things there
 - Subcommittee for advocacy
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- Oct. 7, 2025 next WRAPSC meeting
 - WRAPSC executive team meeting coming up

Adjourned: 9:09pm

Minutes by WRAPSC secretary Amy Pharoah