

WRAPSC Minutes Nov. 5, 2024

Welcome and Territorial Acknowledgment

Review of the Agenda by Chair Sara Heroux

2024-2025 WRAPSC Executive Team: by Chair Sara Heroux

- Chair: Sara Heroux
- Secretary: Amy Pharoah
- Virtual Meeting Host: Kelly Deml with backup from Angie Hallman
- Social Media & Gmail account: Sara Heroux with help from Angie Hallman
- Members at Large: Rachel McQuail, Laura Lovelace, John Galbraith, and Angie Hallman

Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights Department (IEHR):

By Pauline Janke (system principal), Crissa Hill (superintendent), Deepa Ahluwalia (Human Rights & Equity Advisor)

- Indigenous education
- Human rights
- Equity: teaching and learning
- Equity & Inclusion branch: teaching and learning
- School board is in the years of fiscal restraint; have always been, but more so now under the current provincial government.
- New equity & inclusion itinerant and equity & inclusion consultant in the board
- In pursuit of the Ministry of Education goals, the board affirms identity, including the way kids learn
- WRDSB North Star: ensure that identity & social location of students no longer predicts outcomes
- Conditions for learning:
- In support of the WRDSB Strategic Plan
- Student outcomes: achievement, mental health, well-being, and engagement
- What IEHR (Indigenous, Equity & Human Rights Department) does:
 - Have docs that guide practice like: Right to Read Report; 1st Nation, Metis, & Inuit Education Policy framework; Truth & Reconciliation Act, etc.
- IEHR supports students:
 - Student affinity groups, unions, and associations
 - Example: BSA, 2SLGBTQI+, Christian Alliance, Muslim Association, etc.
 - Students have their identities affirmed in affinity groups
 - Events: identity-affirming events held
- Impact for students totaled affinity groups in the board:
 - 20 Indigenous Student Associations
 - 22 Asian Student Associations
 - 77 Muslim Student Associations
 - 41 Gay/Straight Alliances

- o More than 50 Black Brilliance Assemblies
 - o There are 16 high schools in the board
 - o Most of these alliances are in high schools, but some are in elementary
- System Navigators
 - o Assist students and their families/caregivers
- IEHR supports teaching and learning
 - o Professional learning for school staff, teachers and admin
 - o Grade 11 NBE course is a new course; teachers have been trained to teach the material
 - o Supports high expectations for all students:
 - o Curriculum & resources are accessible to all students (content/representation)
 - o ie: Universal Design for Learning
 - o Student achievement
 - o Plan for students
 - Embed human rights
 - o Teaching & Learning: Ministry of Education requirements:
 - Holocaust Education
 - Anti-Black racism strategy
 - o Dealing directly with discrimination in our schools:
 - Word harm
 - Tools and materials
 - o Goal: to imbed Indigenous education without appropriating
 - o Try to diversify staff based on student population within the board:
 - Use the student census to gather that data
 - Qualitative data: ask students how they feel after events
- How do families engage system navigators:
 - o Cause of needing a system navigator: usually a breakdown in relationships or misunderstandings
 - o Referral from schools or social worker
 - o If parents want this support, parents can go to the teacher, then appeal to VP, principal, superintendent etc.
- Member question: Why was the WRDSB Indigenous Navigator removed the day that the Equity Report went out? Answer: We repurposed the position; redesigned for the needs that were coming to us; have 2 Indigenous supervisors still; students that were under the System Navigator got supports after the Indigenous Navigator left.
- Indigenous & equity rights page on the board's website <https://www.wrdsb.ca/about-the-wrdsb/indigenous-equity-and-human-rights-department/>
- Administrators can guide you to where you need to go
- System navigators sometimes will come to the Welcome to Kindie Night or the Meet the Teacher Night
 - o Member question: How can the school request the system navigators to come? Answer: The principal needs to request this for the system navigators to come.
- Ask principals what groups are in the school

Interpretation & Translation Services: by Meenu Bakhru

- Multilanguage: don't use the term ESL anymore because English is one of the languages that is added to a child's languages
- Does our learning really represent who is here?
- Board's policies: try to be fair
- Newcomer families have language barrier
- Employees can use interpretation services
- Translation services can be used with caregiver and teacher interviews:
 - Can connect or schedule a call to talk to a family virtually or in person
 - Admin approval is needed for video calls & in person interpretation except sign language
 - On demand phone calls
- Central document translation for a large audience on staff intranet:
 - School Day messaging forms translated (how to use School Day)
 - IEP translations
- Very little funding for translation services in schools, so admins would have to pull from their "resources fund"
- Written translations may take 4-6 weeks to complete
- Translation-request@wrdsb.ca
- School Day has translation options
- New families are taught about the translation tool on School Day
- PIC has its own funds
- Member question: How does school admin make decisions on spending for translations?
Answer: Principals have limited funds for teacher's resources.
- PRO grant event can have translators and flyers translated for councils
- Member suggestion: There are a variety of ways for school councils to get funds for translations: PRO grant, \$500 Ministry grant (on the principal's budget line), People for Education

The Role of Trustee by Maedith Radlein

- Vice chair of the board: Maedith
- Trustee has actually very little power
- Can't change funding
- Trustees must abide by the rules of the Ministry of Education, human rights, etc.
- Ministry of Education provides funding & has become quite strict; their funding is now enveloped; funding doesn't match expenditure
- For the cost of supply staff, the government spends around half of what is needed.
- Trustees have no power over masks and COVID vaccine rules; public health controls this
- Trustees can add to policies and put forward motions
 - I.e. motion to subsidize Grand River transit bussing for students
 - I.e. motion on air quality
 - Once policy is passed, then that policy goes to staff, the director, associate director and the superintendents to ensure policy's use
- Trustees can't tell teachers what to teach or what not to teach
- Trustees can help facilitate the conversation between parents and the board

- o I.e. HR department
- Trustees can write letters to the government about concerns that families are expressing like bussing concerns.
- Trustees choose the director of education
- Member concern: the board puts up barriers against parents; parents want to be partners
- Member concern: Enrollment down; school shopping
- Member concern: How can parents support trustees to deal with the director? Answer: Trustees hire the director of education; once hired, then the director oversees operations; trustees can only hold director accountable.
- Trustees role: student achievement and well-being
- Member concern: The board promised resources and didn't deliver.
- Trustee says, parents can form a delegation to speak to the board
<https://www.wrdsb.ca/trustees/become-a-delegate/>
- If school councils are struggling with their principal, then they can speak to the superintendent (the superintendent is the principal's supervisor)
- Member follow-up concern: Can the director be fired? Answer: Trustees have to abide by the HR rules of firing. Can't fire unless they commit an offense worthy of firing. Follow-up question: How long is the director's contract? Answer: 5 year contract; our current director is in his 4th year.
 - o Chair will send policies

PIC (Parent Involvement Committee) by Chair Sara Heroux

- There is only an interim chair of PIC
- What is it: a voice for parents/caregivers; fosters civic engagement and parental involvement; platform for sharing of ideas
- PIC has no power over board decisions
- PIC addresses equity and well being
- PIC is still looking for members from Cambridge
- Google Workspace account for PIC
- Working on a 2-way communication between councils
- Chair asks for suggestions to send to PIC:
 - o Member suggestion: WRAPSC minutes should go to all chairs in the board because principals don't always forward the minutes to the chairs.
- PIC is meeting about bullying and cybersecurity
- Various board policies are being revised; parents can provide input; board policies like accessibility, bullying, etc.

Letter to the Trustees: by Chair Sara Heroux, open WRAPSC group discussion, Trustee Maedith Radlein, and Michelle Newlands

- Letter about: when child witnesses bullying or an incident
- Consequences to witnessing: kids being afraid to go to school, seeing violence or words
- Unions discussing violence towards teachers

- Reasons for letter going to the trustees instead of the ministry: Trustees can make changes quicker in our board than a ministry policy change
- Con for letter: Normalization of evacuation concern
- MPP Aislinn Clancy
- Pro for letter: No policy currently that says staff need to notify parents of an evacuation
- Report an incident that happens at school, a school related activity or could have a negative impact on the school climate: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/report-incident-happens-school>
- Michelle's suggestion: Instead of the letter, parents need to push for more resources for the schools
- Con for letter: It will stigmatize students that are involved with incidents
- Vote with a QR code
- Pro for letter: Consider how their kid disrupts the progress of other families.
- Suggestion by trustee or Michelle: Parent group could submit letter to the government for resources and funding
- Suggestion: Write letter to MPs from each school council
- Need more education around classroom evacuations
- What has brought about the changing of classrooms? The changing of students.
- Michelle: Less specialized programs exist today in schools. There are less EAs. There are also larger classroom sizes. Need more teachers, EAs, and we need special needs assistants (have none in our board); need more resource support
- Chair suggestion: Pay EAs year-round.
- Michelle: EAs don't make an appropriate wage so we don't have enough EAs; increase in wage needed
- Michelle: Letter not needed because the board already has things in place like certain events in a classroom trigger a trauma team; also sends a letter on School Day and will provide questions to ask kids
- Pro for Letter: Parents don't know how to advocate and won't always tell you what happened.
- Pro for Letter: Parents have the right to know.
- Pro for Letter: Parents should be able to discuss these things with their child and to understand the frequency of these events.
- Con for Letter: Too much extra paperwork.
- Con for Letter: Will scare parents and cause them to do school shopping.
 - Response: Parents have the right to know what their child witnesses.
- No parent will go to the ministry if they don't know about it
- Email in suggestions of what we should do? Letter?
- Michelle: Focus on the problem you are working on trying to solve when deciding about whether to do this letter or not.
- Result of letter discussion: No letter will be sent yet and no vote.

Adjourned 9:20pm.

Minutes recorded by Amy Pharoah