

WRAPSC Meeting Minutes

Date: October 7, 2025

Location: Hybrid (in-person & online)

Chair: Sara Heroux

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

- The Chair opened the meeting by reiterating WRAPSC's purpose: to serve as a resource for parents, support schools without active councils, and advocate for caregivers and students at the board and government levels.
 - The **Director of Education** provided greetings and emphasized the importance of parent partnerships in supporting student success.
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2. Panel Discussion: Advocacy to Government

Guest: Aislinn Clancy, MPP Kitchener Centre

- **Key Points from Aislinn:**
 - Letters to MPPs are most effective when they are concise, clearly state the concern, and suggest a solution.
 - Follow-up is important: parents should not assume one letter is enough.
 - Coordinating messages across multiple councils increases impact.
- **Discussion Highlights:**
 - Parents asked: *"How do we make sure our letters don't get ignored?"*

- Aislinn advised being specific (naming the Education Act or current policy) and asking for a concrete action or timeline.
 - One parent asked about contacting school board trustees versus provincial officials.
 - Aislinn clarified that trustees follow the provincial Education Act, so major policy change requires advocacy at the provincial level.
 - A question was raised about how to involve students in advocacy efforts.
 - The advice was to elevate student voices in letters or joint statements, as elected officials respond to direct youth perspectives.
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3. Best Practices for School Councils

- **Presentation Topics:**

- Importance of documenting decisions and having bylaws in place for proper voting.
- Conducting elections in the first 30 days of the school year, including chair, co-chair, secretary, treasurer, and WRAPSC representative.
- Setting 1–2 focused goals with the principal at the start of the year (examples: mental health, food insecurity).
- Using hybrid meeting formats to increase participation.

- **Discussion Highlights:**

- One participant noted: *“I don’t think 95% of councils are voting correctly — most don’t elect parent members formally.”*
- Another parent asked if votes really matter without bylaws. The group agreed that bylaws create accountability and documentation is essential for credibility.
- Councils shared challenges around communication: many parents ignore school emails, but social media pages have higher engagement.

4. Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Update

Presenter: Paul, PIC Chair

- **Key Updates:**

- Funding applications to open within 2 weeks, with a longer window for submissions this year (approx. 6–8 weeks).
- Stronger emphasis on **parent engagement** in funded projects.
- Subcommittees working on Safe, Caring and Inclusive Schools, environmental sustainability, and communications.
- Outreach planned to schools that did not apply last year; WRAPSC can help make connections.

- **Discussion Highlights:**

- A participant asked: *“How many schools didn’t apply last year?”*
 - Paul shared that 69 schools applied, 55 did not apply, which sparked concern about barriers to participation.
- Parents asked how funding decisions would be communicated and whether best practices could be shared across councils. Paul suggested PIC would circulate more examples of successful projects.

5. Elections and Executive Roles

- Elections were held for WRAPSC’s **Steering Committee**. Roles reviewed: Chair, Co-chair, Secretary, Communications/Social Media, Virtual Host, Members-at-Large.
- The Chair announced intention to step down by year-end and invited someone to co-chair during the transition.
- Members discussed time commitments (approx. 1 extra hour per month beyond meetings) and responsibilities like organizing speakers, posting updates online, and

supporting meeting logistics.

6. Closing and Next Steps

- The Chair thanked everyone and reminded attendees to share information with their councils.
 - Minutes and slides will be circulated by end of week.
 - **Next Meeting:** November 4, 2025, featuring Dr. Allison Yeung on *Smartphones, Social Media, and Student Mental Health*.
 - Meetings continue the first Tuesday of each month (except December, March, June).
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Action Items

1. Circulate tonight's minutes and slides to all council representatives.
2. Share PIC grant details with local school councils once applications open.
3. Councils to review bylaws and ensure proper election/voting processes.
4. Encourage councils to set 1–2 focused annual goals with their principals.
5. Prepare for November meeting with guest speaker Dr. Alison Yeung.