WRAPSC Assembly Meeting Minutes
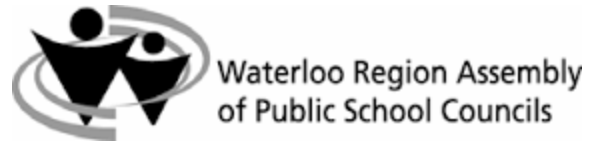**Tuesday May 3, 2016**
Forest Heights Collegiate Library
Attendance
26 School Council Representatives
2 Guests

- Welcome and approval of agenda and minutes from February 2016

Jessica Rodriguez, WRAPSC cochair

- PIC/WRAPSC cochairs report

Laurie Tremble, PIC/WRAPSC cochair

- This meeting was done in small group discussions. The discussions have been compiled by topic below for the purpose of these minutes.

1. Has your council applied for the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grant? If so, what have you used it for? Were your plans successful? What other grants has your council applied for and for what project?

   - Some schools have partnered up for events, speakers.
   - Popular events include: Family games night, mental health speakers, math night, social networking safety, math resources and math kits, multicultural festival with speakers and including school and community families.
   - Grants have been used to help with translation of materials.
   - Greening grants have been applied for and used as well.

2. What community events does/has your council run (e.g., fun fairs, curriculum nights, movie nights, sports events, etc.)? Which are most popular with your school community? What are your best tips for organizing this type of event? What challenges does your council face organizing these events? Are these events you'd like to plan, but need help with?

   Challenges:

   - Finding volunteers
   - Effective support/communication from the school administrator/staff
   - Demographic challenges (language or cultural barriers)
   - Parents dropping off kids

- Fun Fair in June (the scope for a particular school has been so large that it's every other year)
- Math Night
- Kindergarten Night (with supplying welcome kits)
- Dance Night
- Family Reading Night (includes giveaways and a book exchange)
- Movie Night
- Family Picnic
- TV Free Week (activities every night)
- Art Night
- Electronic Donation/Collection
- Clothing Swaps
- Skate exchange
- Talent show

These events can be free or used as fundraisers. Some fundraisers also include:

- Pizza (seems to be a great and popular fundraiser)
- Subs
- Treasures books
- QSP magazine subscriptions

3. How does your council communicate with the broader school community? Has CASL (Canadian Anti Spam Legislation) affected your council? If so, how have you gotten around that? Does your school use social media? If so, how? And is it effective?

There are definite struggles to communicate effectively. It's very dependent per school, based on demographic (language/cultures), and school admin/staff support.

Suggestions:

- Email teachers
- Teacher blogs
- School mailboxes
- School Days (At one school, the principal did a very hands on approach to get a school to get their school 100% CASL compliant. Even did a contest for the first class to be CASL compliant wins a field trip!)
- Paper newsletters are still being sent home. Most have a reminder to subscribe to the website.
- Twitter
- Minutes from council meetings are posted on the school website, as well as a binder in the foyer with a copy of up to date minutes.
- School planner books that students carry

4. What is the purpose of school council beyond fundraising/grants and planning community events? Does your council try to reach out to marginalized parents (e.g. refugees, single parents, people in poverty, parents of children with special needs, etc)? Do you consult with the principal on the school Code of Conduct, Dress Code, and Principal Profile? Do you connect with other committees within your school such as SCIS, or committees outside of your school such as WRAPSC, PIC, SEAC? What other ways could councils support their parent community? What help would you need to do that?

Lots of schools are using their councils in a really positive way. Some stick to the basics, whereas others are using their resources to help out teachers and families in the school community when they have suffered a loss, or are experiencing moments of joy, with cards and meals. Some schools have very small actual councils, but many parents willing to volunteer their time.

Reaching out to marginalized communities could include using multiple forms of communication, having translators available, etc. Regarding translation, you could approach members of your school community who speak more than one language to see if they would volunteer to act as translators for new immigrants or others with language barriers. Your school admin would know what languages are needed.

Your local Community Centre can provide you with lots of information on the makeup of your community and can direct you to resources that can help parents become more engaged in their child's learning. A representative from a Community Centre, Neighbourhood Association, etc, may be a great resource to have as a community representative on your council.

Did you know that WRDSB policy says that principals should consult annually with school council on the School Code of Conduct, the School Dress Code, and the Principal Profile? The principal is also supposed to update the council annually on EQAO scores and advise and consult with council about all initiatives relating to improvement of student achievement and accountability to parents. (See AP 1570 on the board website: http://www.wrdsb.ca/wp-content/uploads/AP1570-School-Councils.pdf)

Your school should have a Safe Caring Inclusive Schools Team that should include a parent member. This team works to ensure a safe learning environment for all students, staff, volunteers, etc. The parent member of this team doesn't have to be a council member, but it is helpful if a report on the activities of the SCIS team comes to the school council regularly.

In addition, there are committees at the board level that can provide information, resources, assistance, etc. to your council. You can usually find their minutes and agendas on the Board website. Committees include WRAPSC (https://www.wrdsb.ca/our-schools/get-involved/wrapsc), PIC (https://www.wrdsb.ca/pic/), SEAC(https://www.wrdsb.ca/learning/programs/special-education/seac/), Equity and Inclusion Advisory Planning Group, Early Years Advisory Group, Mental Health Advisory Group, Accessibility Planning Committee, and Student Senate. Joing the WRAPSC Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/groups/WRAPSC) and follow the PIC Twitter account (https://twitter.com/picwrdsb)!

There are groups such as People for Education that do work regarding education and provide resources to parents. Check them out at http://www.peopleforeducation.ca