

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

June 18, 2007

Sarnia Education Centre

Present: Gayle Stucke, Director of Education; Judy Krall, Alexander Mackenzie S.S.; Steve McNamara, Colonel Cameron; Joanne Snow, John N. Given; Lynn LeFaive, Johnston Memorial; Tracey Machon, King George (S); Tammy St. Louis, Kinnwood Central; Tim Houle, North Lambton S.S.; Dave Macko, Ridgeview Moravian; Peggy Johnson, Winston Churchill; Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary.

Regrets: Jane Bryce, Chair; Scott McKinlay, Vice-Chair; Vicki Cofell, Harwich Raleigh; Deb DeBok, Thamesville Area.

Welcome and Introductory Remarks – Gayle Stucke

- Regrets were sent by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board as well as Vicky Cofell who were unable to attend the meeting. Members of the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) introduced themselves and shared why they were interested in serving on the committee. Permission was obtained to share e-mail contact information among the Parent Involvement Committee. **Sue will e-mail the distribution list to members. Minutes will be posted on Board's website.**

Review of 2006-2007 Activities

- Last year the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) was formed.
- Co-Chairs Judy Krall and Jo-Anne Snow provided an overview of 2006-2007 activities and discussion topics. Activities included development of the Terms of Reference for the PIC. **A copy of the Terms of Reference will be shared with members of the committee.** An overview of the Terms and Conditions was provided and the purpose of the committee was outlined as set out in the document. The committee developed the Parent Communication Guidelines – Conflict Resolution that sets out the steps parents should take to resolve issues or conflicts at the school. **The Guidelines will be placed in September newsletters and will be posted on the Board's website.**
- The October School Council Chair's meeting was very positive. Information was presented on the Pathways to Student Success program. School Council representatives shared best practices in getting parents involved. The benefit of having co-chairs representing the north and south part of the district was noted. Don Cook attended the November meeting to share information on the many programs offered through Rebound; specifically the "How to Drug Proof Your Kids" workshop. The Parent Involvement Committee later sponsored "Drug Proofing" workshops on May 9 and 16 in Sarnia and Chatham. PIC representatives along with the Director and a Principal Representative attended the 4th Annual School Council Chairs' Symposium held on April 27 in Toronto. Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynne spoke at the symposium. PIC members also provided input on a number of Board/Ministry initiatives such as the School Valuation Committee, the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Trustee Honoraria, the Character Development Symposium, and the Board's Strategic Planning – Focus Group meeting.

- It was noted that a School Council representative from Bosanquet rethought their participation on the 2007-2008 PIC Committee.

Lambton Kent District School Board's Parent Involvement Committee

- The mandate of the committee is to open communication and provide a direct link between school board staff, trustees and parents, to focus on student achievement and to identify strategies to strengthen school councils and engage other parents in the school community.
- Members are selected to provide representation for rural and urban, elementary and secondary school councils in Sarnia Lambton and Chatham-Kent. Members are also sought to represent specialized program areas such as Special Education, French, and Native Second Language.
- An overview was provided on the meeting format and the outline of the agenda. Agendas are set with the Director, and Co-Chairs with input from the committee. Personnel issues are not addressed at meetings.

School Council/Principal Professional Development

- **School Council and Principal professional development will be included as an agenda item at the September meeting.** Communication gaps have been identified at some schools. The need for Principals and School Councils to work collaboratively and effectively was noted.
- Principal Representatives suggested organizing the workshop as part of the October District School Council Chairs' meeting. Input was requested on the workshop and presenters. **Gayle and Sue will investigate organizing a fall workshop with Dr. Betty Bolt.** PIC members as well as Principals and School Council Chairs would be invited to attend. The benefit of involving teachers was noted. Central Parent Involvement funding would cover the cost of the workshop.
- This year funding was used to provide each school with a DVD "A Day in the Life at Indian Residential Schools in Canada", to cover the cost of the "Drug Proofing Your Kids" workshops and to purchase the book "176 Ways to Involve Parents". Copies of the book were distributed to PIC members.

District Update

- The Board's main focus continues to be on improving student achievement. School leaver rates have dropped significantly from last year. Student Success programs have been instrumental in reducing leaver rates and re-engaging students. During school visits, the Director challenged Secondary Principals to reduce their leaver rates as the Board has both a moral and economic obligation to educate these students.
- An update was provided on EQAO Gr. 3, 6, 9 and 10 assessment results. The Board showed slight improvement with the exception of Grade 3 writing. OSSLT success rates were sustained. Board staff will continue to work with students to improve results. It was stressed that EQAO assessments are only one measure of success. It was noted that 97% of the Board's student population writes the EQAO tests while the provincial average is at 94%. Student exemptions within the Board are few.
- The Board will also increase supports for First Nations students. Programs are in place at many secondary schools to engage students. The Native Advisory Committee was re-established as it had not been in place since amalgamation. The Committee held five meetings since January. Representatives from the four First Nations sit on the Native Advisory Committee along with the Native Trustee, Board staff and school administrators. Next year's focus will be on providing professional development to raise cultural awareness.

The Board's plan to introduce a voluntary Aboriginal Self-Identification process is moving ahead. Consultation is taking place with the four First Nations. Parent/students with Aboriginal background will be given the opportunity to self-identify in order to receive additional supports to improve achievement levels.

- An update was provided on the International Student project. For the past several years elementary aged students have attended Chatham-Kent schools for short-term stays. This year the program expanded to Sarnia Lambton. Next year it is expected that there will be an increase in the number of both elementary and secondary tuition paying students attending schools in our district for both short-term and full year placements. Twenty eight elementary students from Chatham-Kent along with three Principals will travel to Korea for two weeks in July. The Chair and the Director travelled to China and Korea in September 2006 to investigate opportunities to bring students to the district and to build on existing relationships. It was noted that international students are only accepted if the Principal and teaching staff are willing to participate in the project, if there is space at the school and where placements do not impact class size caps.
- Health and Safety, and Plant and Maintenance staff have been extremely busy addressing health and safety issues in schools. The latest focus from the Ministry of the Environment has been on lead in water pipes. The Health and Safety Officer is working with the Ontario Clean Water Agency to carry out testing in schools. The Ministry has directed that water systems in schools must be flushed on a daily basis at the start of each day. Facilities are exempt from this legislation if they were built since 1990. Mould issues in schools will be addressed over the summer.

Selection of Chair

- Peggy Johnston was nominated as Chair. Peggy accepted the nomination.
- It was suggested that perhaps the existing co-chairs could continue in their role for another year as 2006-2007 was the inaugural year for the Parent Involvement Committee.
- Judy Krall was nominated to continue as co-chair.
- **It was moved that Peggy Johnston and Judy Krall be co-chairs of the 2007-2008 Parent Involvement Committee. The motion was carried.**
- It was noted that an additional member or two could be added to the committee to represent areas/programs presently without representation. The addition of members would be approved by the Committee.

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- Future agenda items put forth included investigation of a standalone website for the Parent Involvement Committee, a professional development workshop for the October School Council Chairs' meeting; strategic planning; and communications within the school community where PIC members could speak to School Council regarding parent engagement.
- Report cards were discussed at the May meeting. **Program staff will be asked to attend a future meeting to explain the report process.**

Future Meeting Dates

- **The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 10 at the Chatham Regional Education Centre. Future meeting dates will be confirmed at the September meeting.**
- Committee members thanked Judy Krall and Jo-Anne Snow for their work as Co-Chairs of the 2006-2007 Parent Involvement Committee.

- The Director urged PIC members to contact her with questions or issues.
- Information was distributed on parent resources available on the Ministry of Education's website.
- Members were reminded to forward their expense claims to Sue Fraser.
- The Director thanked members for attending the meeting.

Adjournment: 8:45 p.m.

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary