

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

November 3, 2008

Chatham Regional Education Centre

Present: Gayle Stucke, Director of Education; Carmen McGregor, Vice-Chair; Steve McNamara, Colonel Cameron; Wende Badder, John McGregor S.S.; Jo-Anne Snow, John N. Given/C.K.S.S.; Lynn LeFaive, Johnston Memorial; Tracey Machan, King George (S); Tim Houle, North Lambton S.S.; Heather Simpson, Ridgetown Public School; Dave Macko, Ridgeview Moravian; Verna Ferencik, Tilbury District H.S.; Peggy Johnson, Winston Churchill

Regrets: Scott McKinlay, Chair, Judy Krall, Alexander Mackenzie S.S.; Tammy St. Louis, Kinnwood Central.

Welcome – Tracey Machon

- Tracey welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded members of the committee's goal to remain on task.

October 23 Workshop Feedback - Gayle Stucke

- Very positive feedback was received from all those who attended the October 23 workshop. The general thought that the evening was excellent and that both sessions were very interesting and interactive.
- Many schools have requested copies of the Media Violence presentation. A shortened version was provided as a resource at the recent follow up session held for parent representatives – "Understanding Media Literacy – A Guide for Parents". Tim Houle, Jo-Anne Snow and Tammy St. Louis attended the first parent session. Comments were shared on the benefit of sharing the longer or shorter version of the presentation at school council meetings or at larger feeder school workshops. It was suggested that the full length Media Violence presentation would be better suited for a larger feeder school forum.
- In response to questions raised, the Director confirmed that more than half of the teachers within the Board are Tribes trained and that Tribes training is compulsory for new teachers. Discussion took place on how best to share the Tribes philosophy with parents. It was suggested that Board staff could present at a family of schools workshop. The majority of elementary schools are Tribes schools along with Alexander Mackenzie S.S., Blenheim District H.S. and Chatham-Kent S.S. All school administrators have attended the condensed Tribes presentation. **It was suggested that PIC members contact their family of schools to determine interest in a feeder school presentation and then notify Sue. PIC members will notify School Council chairs that PIC representatives are available to present "Understanding Media Literacy" at school council meetings. Gayle will speak to Executive Council regarding offering Tribes training and the associated cost involved.** It was suggested that School Council funding could be used to cover the costs. Concern was raised that not all school councils have input on how the \$500 grant is spent. Gayle reminded the Committee that as part of their role School Council Chairs are to liaise with their Principals.
- **Sue will include the workshop evaluation summary with the minutes.**

Director's Update

- Gayle reviewed the agenda setting process for Parent Involvement Committee Meetings. She meets with the Co-Chairs to discuss and set the agenda prior to each meeting.
- It was agreed that there needs to be an opportunity at each meeting for communication and networking to discuss issues or challenges.
- An update was shared on the recent announcement from the Minister of Finance with respect to education funding. The Minister wrote to school boards on the need to re-examine budget expenditures and to advise that school renewal grants will be reduced by 20% effective this school year. The LKDSB is required to make a reduction of \$830,000. Projects such as painting, asphalt upgrades and facility changes will be postponed by one year unless they are needed to address health and safety issues.
- An update was provided on the status of labour relations. CUPE meetings were held on October 31 and November 3. An agreement has not been reached. Additional meetings will be scheduled. Boards are not permitted to negotiate locally items that have a cost attached. The deadline for boards to have signed agreements in place is November 30. OSSTF will hold a membership vote to determine if the Federation returns to the provincial discussion table. Relations with the local OSSTF are very positive. ETFO has launched a media campaign focusing on the gap in per pupil funding allocated to elementary and secondary students.
- Questions were raised regarding the odour problem at Hillcrest. There has been no odour present at the school for the last year. Golder Associates have conducted testing at the school for the past year showing no results. It was agreed to cease the daily air flushing when the temperature was still hot to try to create an odour event at the school. The odour reoccurred on Thanksgiving Monday. The Principal, Site-based Health and Safety Representative and the Board's Health and Safety Officer were present at the school. Test results sent to the lab are not back. An update will be provided at the Hillcrest School Council meeting on November 4. A community representative has indicated he has additional information and will make a brief presentation at the School Council meeting. The mayor of Petrolia and the local media will also be in attendance.

Review of PIC Goals / Binder Project – Next Steps

- Verna Ferencik and Judy Krall have not been able to meet to discuss the binder project. Judy is also unable to attend the January 19 meeting and therefore asked Verna to take the lead with the project. Verna will meet with sub-committee members Tracey Machan, Lynn LeFaive and Tammy St. Louis.

Networking / Challenges and Opportunities

- The School Council Chair of Blenheim District H.S. contacted Dave Macko about presenting at the feeder school meeting. Input was requested on the need to deliver a consistent message when PIC members are asked to present at school council meetings. PIC members reviewed the type of information they have shared at school council meetings. It was noted that the main goal of PIC is to support the mission and goals of the Lambton Kent District School Board – student achievement. These are also to be the goals of school councils.
- The Greater Essex DSB is hosting a parent workshop on Saturday. The workshop is entitled "Parents Connecting – Helping Students Succeed". PIC members are welcome.
- Gayle inquired as to whether school councils have discussed their school EQAO results. Tim Houle spoke to the positive results of NLSS. He indicated that teachers don't teach to the test but rather literacy requirements are built into the curriculum. Strategies were shared as to how school councils assisted staff and students during EQAO testing.

Johnston Memorial's volunteer breakfast committee provided fresh baked muffins, apples, juice and water for students each day during the week of EQAO testing. EQAO successes for D. A. Gordon were highlighted. Teacher buy-in to the philosophy is key.

- Communication strategies used at John McGregor S.S. were shared. In order to connect with parents, the Principal puts out a weekly web announcement to notify parents of school initiatives and upcoming events. A new sign was also purchased for the school to share information with parents and the community. An electronic bulletin was installed for students within the school. Magnets were produced for parents at the school that list key dates such as reporting dates, parents' night, and school council meeting dates. **Wende Badder will share ordering and price information with Sue to forward to PIC.**
- Lynn LeFaive spoke on behalf of Tammy St. Louis regarding school council funds and school budgets. The question was raised whether school councils have the right to view school budget information. This did not appear to be a widespread issue among the group. Gayle explained that each school has an operating and supplies budget based on student enrolment and a base amount based on Ministry funding. It was noted that there is little flexibility within school budgets necessitating the need for fundraising etc. for the purchase of items such as smart boards and playground equipment and to support field trips. It was recommended that the School Council Chair speak to the Principal to request that they share information with the School Council on how the school budget is allocated. Comments were shared. It was noted that schools operate differently as some have only School Councils while others also have Home and School Associations and Booster Clubs. It was stressed that there should definitely be discussion by the School Council on how the \$500 grant is spent each year. **Gayle will speak to the issue with Executive Council and have Superintendents raise at Area Meetings. It was recommended that the Superintendent of Business speak to school budgets at the April 16 School Council Chairs' Meeting.**
- The fundraising successes and efforts of parents/staff at Aberarder Central were noted. There is a smart board in each classroom and new playground equipment and a shed were purchased.

Best Practices / Success Stories – Dave Macko

- Dave Macko provided an overview of the School Council Carousel Event held last spring at Ridgeview Moravian.
- The vision for the session came as a result of discussion about submitting a proposal for a PRO grant that led to a brainstorming session after a school council meeting.
- Communication and geographical barriers were an issue. Surveys were sent home giving parents the opportunity to sign up for 2 of 4 possible sessions. Each session was planned to run approximately 30-40 minutes.
- Sessions were offered on "Homework Help", "Classroom Technology", "Cyber Safety" and "Special Education". The Board's Special Education partners and staff also set up static displays.
- Parents were encouraged to fill in a ballot with their contact information for a chance to win draws for free Premiere Suites software.
- As organizers were concerned with low attendance, they rented a reader-board sign for the front of the school. Attendance exceeded expectations with about 55 parents attending.
- Parent volunteers provided chili and pizza and the local Optimist Club helped serve and clean-up. Childcare was provided.
- A survey accompanied each ballot and feedback was very positive. Each member of the School Council took ownership of their responsibilities and all parents who took part seemed genuinely appreciative and more knowledgeable.

- It was suggested that perhaps workshop/presentation packages could be shared with other school councils interested in holding parent information sessions.
- **At the next meeting Peggy Johnson will share best practices around changing the culture at Winston Churchill.**
- **Members of PIC were asked to forward copies of their PRO Grant proposals to the Director's Office if they have not yet done so.**

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- As in the past two years, Program Department staff is asking the Parent Involvement Committee to donate a portion of the central funding to support the purchase of books to be included in the Early Years "new-to" packages that are distributed at EY registration. The question was raised as to what supports are being provided for students entering Gr. 9 to encourage literacy and numeracy. Members of PIC approved the use of funding (\$1,000 - \$1,500) towards the cost of books for the EY registration package. PIC also supported setting aside the same amount of funding to use towards supports for students entering secondary school. It was suggested that perhaps a flyer or notice could be included with the books to acknowledge the contribution of PIC and to encourage parent involvement. **Gayle will speak to the Student Board Liaison Committee to obtain input on how to use funds to assist Gr. 8 students transitioning to Gr. 9. Outreach to Gr. 9 parents will be discussed at the January meeting.**
- It was recommended that school councils obtain information or arrange a demonstration on Premiere Suites which is a web based program geared to assist special needs students but can be used by all students. The Board has a license to offer the program to all students. In order to access the program the User Name is: LKDSB and the Password is: enable.
- Smart Board presentations would also be an interesting topic for school council meetings. Last year schools received a program enhancement fund to be used to enhance art and physical education programs. Program enhancement funding was again included in the 2008-2009 Budget.
- **The revised 2008-2009 PIC School Contact List was approved and will be posted on the Board's website.**
- **Pupil Accommodation will be a separate agenda item for the January 19 PIC meeting.** The October 2008 Pupil Accommodation Report is posted on the Board's website. No schools were recommended for closure. A boundary study will be undertaken for Hanna Memorial, London Road, Queen Elizabeth II and High Park Schools in Sarnia. Gayle explained why these schools were selected for the boundary review. The LKDSB is working towards the removal of portables. The Board does not receive funding for school additions if there is classroom space available in nearby schools. It was noted that some students attending out-of-boundary schools may return to the new consolidated Devine/Johnston School. Community consultation meetings will be held as part of the boundary study. Many boards are looking for creative options to address program needs due to declining enrolment.
- **The role of Trustees will be added as a future agenda item.**

Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be held January 19 beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Video Conference Rooms at the Sarnia and Chatham Education Centres.

Adjournment: 8:42 p.m.

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary

October 23, 2008 Workshop Evaluation Summary

Feedback/general comments – all were positive

- Excellent
- One of best nights we've presented
- Very interactive/interesting
- Wonderful evening
- Both workshops great

Suggestions for follow-up PD Activity:

Principals / Vice-Principals

- Tribes artistry – involve, recognize media safety
- Home “proofing” your TV/computer/videogames for parents
- Computer safety
- Promoting positive image – how to promote positive image in girls
- Staff meeting – media knowledge and how it may affect students
- Media violence – how to support staff to understand ramifications of media violence
- Delivering the in-service to parents – without creating fear
- Tribes revisited
- Continued influence that Tribes has started tonight
- Mandatory media health training – how to teach each age level about media safety (anchor charts, expectations)
- Parent Council Tribes presentation – how to incorporate in schools
- More on violence for all staff
- Continued opportunity to network with other School Council reps.
- Character education – more in-depth understanding of connections to home, curriculum etc.

School Council Chairs / Reps:

- Managing diversity – the make up of our schools is changing.
- Team building – various talents to engage more parents
- How to reduce media bombardment
- Promoting cultural diversity
- Dual parent/professional workshop to explore Board direction
- How to improve parental involvement – it starts at home
- Media violence – effects on children – teach them how to filter themselves
- Teaching parents the Tribes philosophy
- Generational differences – difference between generations in our workforce and our children
- Media violence presentation at secondary school to inform and education parents, staff and community – invite feeder schools, church/community groups
- Bridges out of poverty – challenges children from poverty face navigating the school system – excellent speaker – Gail Miner from the County of Lambton
- More info. for students of all ages on media
- Tribes presentation to school councils/parent groups
- Demographics – as kids grow up and enter workforce – how it will differ from parents' experience
- Tribes education for parents – how families can support character development
- Grant applications – how to be successful in receiving funding and understanding what good options are out there