

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

February 5, 2007

Sarnia Education Centre and Chatham Regional Education Centre

Present: Gayle Stucke, Director of Education; Judy Krall, Alexander Mackenzie S.S.; Ron MacDougall, Lambton Central Collegiate and Vocational Institute; Tracy Perron, Northern Collegiate Institute & Vocational School; Steve McNamara, Colonel Cameron; Jo-Anne Snow, John N. Given; Dave Macko, Ridgeview Moravian; Peggy Johnson, Winston Churchill

Regrets: Jane Bryce, Chair of the Board; Scott McKinlay, Vice-Chair; Tracey Machan, King George (S); Marie Marcy Smids, Rosedale; Helene Puchnatyj, Tilbury District High School

Welcome

- Jo-Anne Snow chaired the meeting and welcomed members of the Parent Involvement Committee.
- The meeting was held by video conference from the Sarnia and Chatham Education Centres.

Business Arising from the Meeting of November 20, 2006

- Gayle ordered 20 copies of the DVD "A Day at Indian Residential Schools in Canada" for Parent Involvement Committee Members to share with their schools. Copies will also be made available to other schools in the district to promote awareness.

Parent Involvement Funding

- A summary was provided on how schools spent their 2005-2006 School Council allocations. Funds were used to purchase school planners; website development and enhancements; guest speakers at the school; and to assist with expenses related to Parent's Night and Meet the Teacher events.
- Remaining central funds were used to cover costs associated with Parent Involvement Committee meetings and to purchase resources for the "Book in a Bag" program and information pamphlets for parents. A revised report was submitted to the Ministry of Education prior to the deadline of January 31, 2007.
- This year the Ministry introduced an application-based grant program for school initiatives to assist parents who may find involvement more challenging. The deadline for school council project submissions was November 20, 2006. A summary was provided identifying the schools approved for funding. Developing project proposals established dialogue among School Council members. Options for future projects were discussed.

Update from the Director – Gayle Stucke

- The Director shared information on the current mould situation at Queen Elizabeth II School in Petrolia and the testing being conducted. Background information was shared regarding the mould problem at Queen Elizabeth II School. A portable at the school was previously removed, and additional testing was carried out. The testing showed no evidence of mould amplifications to support mould growth. ETFO is not happy with the Board's plan and have requested that the plan be modified to include a further inspection by their independent contractor.

The Board has scheduled a further inspection of the school on February 6 with another consulting company hired by the Board. A communication was issued to parents of students at Queen Elizabeth II. Older portables are susceptible to mould. Water leakage creates the potential for mould. The Board's goal is to remove aging portables from school sites. A proactive plan is in place where walk through inspections are carried out at each school site to look for any visible signs of mould. In the past mould was abated from portables at Brooke Central and Lansdowne Schools.

- Recently Senior Administration has received complaints from one school council on how an administrative transfer was handled. Gayle responded to the individuals and explained the process in place. School Councils have input into the development of the Principal Profile for the school. The School Council Chair has inquired as to what parents can do if they disagree with a Board policy or practice. The Chair was advised that she could request to be a delegation at the Board or raise the concerns with the Parent Involvement Committee. The Co-Chairs will give a Parent Involvement Committee update at the April School Council Chairs' meeting. School Council Chairs will be reminded that the purpose of the PIC is to link with the Director, Trustees and School Council Chairs. **There is a Parent Involvement section under the School Council link on the Board's website. PIC minutes are forwarded to Principals to share with their School Councils. The Parent Involvement Committee Member List will be re-issued with the minutes of the February 5 meeting.**
- Information was shared on the 4th Annual School Council Symposium. The Thames Valley District School Council is once again planning and hosting the Symposium which will take place Friday, April 27, 2007 and will be held at the Ministry of Education office in Toronto. The symposium will provide opportunity for school councils from across Ontario to network and share information. Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynne will be in attendance to be the keynote speaker. Each school board is invited to send five participants (3 school council parents, 1 principal and 1 superintendent or delegate). Funding would be available through the central parent involvement fund. Gayle will attend and recruit a Principal Representative to accompany the Board team. Attendance of PIC members will be confirmed.

Terms of Reference/Constitution for the Parent Involvement Committee

- The draft Terms of Reference document was reviewed and changes were noted. The Thames Valley D.S.B. model was used as an example.
- Discussion took place on the term of membership and the selection process. PIC members agreed that there should be at least three new members for next year. It was recommended that the number of School Council Representatives increase from 10 to 12 members which would create 2 vacancies for the 2007-2008 Committee. Tracy Perron and Ron MacDougall indicated that they would likely not be returning next year. **Gayle will contact those committee members not in attendance to confirm their plans for the coming school year.**
- **Information on Parent Involvement Committee membership will be shared at the April 11 School Council Chairs meeting.**
- **Sue will incorporate the proposed revisions to the document and forward a revised copy to members for review.**
- Jo-Anne thanked Judy for her efforts in developing the draft document.

Development of a Formal Dispute Resolution Policy

- The current process for informal dispute resolution was outlined. If a parent has a problem or concern the order of contact should be the teacher, then the Principal or Vice-Principal, the Superintendent and finally the Director of Education if the situation has not been resolved.
- This is a grey area and many parents are unsure who they should contact.
- It was suggested that contact numbers and the protocol for handling complaints could be included in school newsletters and posted on the web. Superintendent school responsibilities and contact information should also be posted on the website.
- Any policy document would include wording to ensure open, collaborative communication between parents and school board staff.
- **Gayle will bring back a draft document for the next meeting.**

Input for the April School Council Chairs' Meeting

- Input was requested on having Don Cook of Rebound present at the April School Council Chairs meeting. As the Rebound program is not presently offered in Chatham Kent, it was suggested that perhaps a presentation could be offered prior to the meeting for those interested or that Don Cook could be asked to give the presentation "How to Drug Proof Your Kids" at two or three locations in the district or at individual School Council meetings. Sue will contact Don Cook to discuss options.
- Gayle will engage parents in an interactive activity to obtain input on the Board Growth Plan. This exercise would take approximately one hour.
- The Co-Chairs of the Parent Involvement Committee will provide an update that will include information on the Committee's Terms of Reference and the selection process for next year. Judy and Jo-Anne will discuss.
- It was suggested that information be shared on approved Parent Reaching Out proposals and that perhaps a resource document could be developed. It was noted that School Councils can be encouraged to offer events such as literacy or theme nights without Ministry funding. Further discussion will take place on the Parent Involvement Committee possibly sponsoring workshops to share best practices, or hiring a keynote speaker to address educational issues such as literacy or behaviour models.

Other Business

- Tracy Perron donated a copy of the manual and video "Celebrating the Diversity of Mother Earth: The Bkejwanong Children's Centre Journey". The project, funded by Child Care Visions, was carried out on Walpole Island. The project focuses on areas of diversity, anti-bias approach, community, families and inclusion.
- "Employer in the Hall" is a program undertaken at Lambton College. Community members from business and industry volunteer to set up displays at the college about their professions/workplaces. This provides an opportunity for students to gain information and ask questions at their leisure. Schools may want to consider inviting parents (via a school newsletter) to set up displays in the halls (perhaps over the lunch hour once a month or bi-weekly) so students can learn about career choices/paths. This would get parents involved in the school and at the same time, broaden student knowledge of career opportunities.
- Concern was raised that provincial report cards are not parent-friendly. If parents do not understand the assessment, it poses a barrier to parent involvement. **The provincial report card will be included on the agenda of the May PIC meeting.**

- Parents need to know that a code of ethics for teachers regarding confidentiality is adhered to. They need assurance that issues regarding their child will be handled in a professional manner and not discussed outside of a professional realm. **Further discussion will take place at the May PIC meeting.**

Open Discussion/Questions

- The question was raised as to whether a policy is in place on the use of cell phones in schools and how this is being enforced. The Director indicated that information on the use of electronic devices is included in student handbooks. Cell phones and other PDA's are not permitted to be used in class. Teachers are vigilant when supervising tests or exams.

The next meeting will be held on May 14 at the Chatham Regional Office beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Jo-Anne Snow thanked members for attending.

Adjournment: 9:08 p.m.

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary