

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

September 11, 2006

Chatham Regional Education Centre

Present: Gayle Stucke, Director of Education; Jane Bryce, Chair of the Board; Peggy Johnson, Winston Churchill; Judy Krall, Alexander Mackenzie S.S.; Ron MacDougall, Lambton Central Collegiate and Vocational Institute; Tracey Machan, King George (S); Dave Macko, Ridgeview Moravian, Tracy Perron, Northern Collegiate Institute & Vocational School; Helene Puchnatyj, Tilbury District High School; Joanne Snow, John N. Given

Regrets: Marie Marcy Smids, Rosedale; Scott McKinlay, Vice-Chair; Steve McNamara, Colonel Cameron;

Welcome

- Joanne Snow chaired the meeting and welcomed members of the Parent Involvement Committee to the first meeting of the 2006-2007 school year. Members reintroduced themselves to the group.

Review of Record of Action of Meeting of June 12, 2006

- The Record of Action of the meeting of June 12 was reviewed.
- Copies of the Summer 2006 edition of OPSBA's publication Education Today were distributed for information.
- Gayle, Judy and Joanne met to develop the agenda for the September 11 meeting. Members were asked to forward suggestions for future agenda topics to the Chairs.

Parent Involvement Funding 2005-2006

Central Report

- Last March, in support of the new Ontario Parent Involvement Policy released in December 2005, schools boards and school authorities received over \$4.6M in new investments to support enhanced parent involvement. The deadline for expenses on this allocation was set at August 31, 2006. The final date for reporting on the initiative is September 30, 2006. Sue reviewed items that will be included in the financial summary. All funds were not spent by August 31, 2006.
- The Board received 3 grants totaling \$61,235.23. \$33,000 was allocated for the base mobilization and outreach budget which is based on \$500 per school. These funds were distributed to schools and were to be spent prior to August 31, 2006. A total of \$9,255.02 was allocated to support the work of the parent involvement committee to be established at the Board level (\$5,000 per Board + \$0.17 per student)
- \$18,980.21 for the new application-based grant program for school based initiatives to reach parents who may find involvement more challenging. The Committee discussed possible future applications for this funding. Suggestions included coverage of expenses to travel to parent meetings, daycare to attend school meetings/function. Confirmation will be obtained as to whether application for funding is to come from the school or the central office.

Expense Reports

- Expense reports were provided.
- Members were urged to submit expense claims by month or by term.

Possible Uses for 2006-2007 Funding

- Tracy Perron brought two videos that could be used to increase raise awareness around diversity and assist with parent involvement. The first video “War is not a Game” focuses on immigrant and refugee families. The second video “Beyond the Shadow” is a documentary film on the effect of residential schools on First Nations students and the intergenerational grief. Videos can be purchased for the approximate cost of \$30-\$35. Contact information for both videos was included on the reference sheet provided. Clips from both videos will be shown at the November meeting.
- Other suggestions included system wide initiatives, operational costs of the central committee and school council chair’s meetings, resources to improve student achievement, the development of a parent newsletter, Board promotional items such as mouse pads displaying the Board’s website address or providing each school with a funding amount to assist parents who may have difficulty attending school meetings and events.
- Request for funding proposals could be sent to schools for consideration by the Parent Involvement Committee. Funding criteria and parameters would be established.
- **Gayle and Sue will investigate the level of funding and whether the proposed use of dollars would meet the funding requirements. Parent involvement funding will be further discussed at the November 6 meeting.** A memo could then possibly be issued to schools in time for parent interviews. **Sue will also inquire what other boards are doing to utilize funds and investigate the costs of promotional items (i.e. fridge magnets).**

Current Board Initiatives

Trustee Honoraria – Citizens’ Committee

- The Ministry of Education has released new Regulations for Trustee Honoraria. Currently trustees receive \$5,000 per year. The new Regulations outline the model for new Honoraria that will apply to the incoming board of trustee to be elected in November 2006. In respect to the period from September 1, 2005 to November 30, 2006, the Regulations provide a formula that schools boards may use to pay a trustee an honorarium in addition to the current amount of \$5,000.
- Each school board is required to create a “Citizens’ Advisory Committee on Honoraria”. The Regulations set out the membership of the Citizens’ Advisory Committee on Honoraria to include three parent members of schools councils and three community members of school councils. The Committee must make recommendations to the Board on all four components of the honoraria and make recommendations on the retroactive honoraria. Boards are required to set a policy on Trustee Honoraria before October 31, 2006.
- The Board’s Citizens’ Advisory Committee on Honoraria met on September 11 prior to the Parent Involvement Committee meeting. Judy Krall highlighted discussions from the meeting. Discussions focused on trustee honoraria from 1998 to present and that the current level is not realistic. Recommendations of the committee will go to Board for approval on September 26.

International Education

- The Director provided background information on the number of international students who have studied in schools of the Lambton Kent District School Board. The number of international students studying in schools within the Board expanded significantly in 2005-2006. We hosted 109 students in 21 schools. The Chatham Kent area accommodated 86 Korean students for stays ranging from one month to one full school year. The elementary program is unique to the area. The tuition fees were outlined. An administrative fee is also collected for each student. Home stays are currently not arranged by the Board but by the sponsoring group. Asia places a high priority on obtaining an education in Ontario. International students are only placed in classes where space is available. An international student bullet has been added to the Board website.
- Lambton College actively recruits international students and offers Ontario college programs at seven campuses in large cities in China. 700 students graduated this month with a Lambton College diploma in China. The President of the College has approached senior administration of the Lambton Kent District School Board to partner with them in offering an Ontario secondary school program in conjunction with their college campus in Shenyeng, China.
- After much investigation Senior Administration and the Board of Trustees recommended that the Director of Education and Chair of the Board visit both Korea and China in September 2006 for the purpose of building and cementing relationships, future recruitment of international students and the investigation of a potential partnership in China with Lambton College. The Director and Chair will travel to Korea and China from September 14 to 24.
- Photos from the trip will be posted on the Board site under the international student link.
- The Director and Chair will report back to the Committee following their trip.

Aboriginal Education

- Gayle indicated that Aboriginal education has been a passion since she began her teaching career.
- When the Ministry of Education drafted a new policy on Aboriginal education they invited school boards to provide input. Representatives from the Lambton Kent District School Board attended a regional forum in August.
- The Board has established a Planning Committee to find methods of meeting the needs of our First Nations Students more adequately. The Planning Committee met on August 22 to investigate a self identification program. The Director explained the components of a voluntary self identification program at the August 28 Board meeting. The Director and Native Trustee Susie Jones are in the process of meeting with the Chiefs of the four First Nations to discuss the program and to identify gaps.
- The Board's total focus is on student success but additional supports are needed to assist specific groups such as Boys' in Literacy and Aboriginal Students. Total focus on Student Success but the Board needs to provide additional supports to assist specific groups. Programs are in place in other parts of Ontario, mostly in Northern Ontario. Many school boards have Native Advisory Committees in place. The Board could re-establish a Native Advisory Committee following the November elections.
- Gayle shared highlights of the meetings with the First Nations Chiefs. In meetings held to date the Chiefs have welcomed the idea of self identification and feel that education is key for the First Nations to survive. It was suggested that during the meetings that input be obtained from the Chiefs on how to engage First Nations parents.

- Culture or diversity training could be provided to school office staff as the front line contact at the school.
- Questions or comments on Board initiatives should be sent to the Director.

Lambton Kent D.S.B. Website / Link to Parent Involvement Committee and School Websites

- There is currently a School Council link on the main page of the Board's website. The School Council link includes agendas and minutes of the Meetings of the Director of Education and Trustees with School Council Chairs. Also posted are the Lambton Kent District School Board's School Council policy, regulations and administrative procedures, a list of Superintendent school responsibilities, a link to the Ministry of Education website and a direct link to the Ministry's site providing Tips for School Councils.
- Members of the Parent Involvement Committee consented to having their names posted on the School Council website along with their areas of representation. Members of the central committee did not wish their phone numbers or e-mail addresses to be posted on the web but can be reached through their schools.
- It was suggested that a letter of introduction could be considered for the School Council Chairs' meeting.

Best Practices for Successful School Councils

- Committee members moved into breakaway sessions by elementary and secondary school groups to discuss best practices for operating successful school councils. (i.e. methods of engaging community representatives)
- A summary of the best practices and barriers identified were reviewed. Co-Chairs Judy Krall and Joanne Snow were asked to summarize notes for inclusion in the record of action.

Next Meeting:

- The next meeting of the Parent Involvement Committee will be held on November 6 at the Sarnia Education Centre.
- Gayle reviewed the draft agenda for the School Council Chairs' meeting scheduled on October 17 at L.C.C.V.I.

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- Research material on immigrant and refugee families was shared for information.
- Chair Jane Bryce spoke to the budget development process and the negative comments made by local media. Board funds are directed to student learning.

Adjournment: 9:02 p.m.

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary

Discussion - Best Practices for Successful School Councils

Secondary Schools – Getting More Parents Involved in School Councils

1. Make things accessible to immigrants, Mennonites and Native students by including all parts of the families or blended families, for example, including them in graduation by using a larger facility to accommodate them.
2. With a new principal comes new ideas and enthusiasm to get parents involved.
3. Use Grade 9 Parents Night to promote School Council and encourage parent involvement.
4. Encourage parents that are involved in behind the scene activities at the school to be part of School Council.
5. Social events to develop rapport with school staff.

Elementary Schools – Common Barriers

1. Getting parents involved in School Council – lack of new members.
2. Getting community representatives for the School Council.
3. Getting non-teaching staff members for the School Council.
4. Suggestion to have a sign up sheet at “Meet the Teacher” night to encourage parents to become involved in the School Council.