

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

October 19, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.

Via Teams

Present:

John Howitt, Director of Education; Derek Robertson, Trustee; Sue Fraser, Recorder; Jamie Tinney Rea, Bright's Grove; Angie Baresich, Brooke Central; Tracy Pound, Errol Village; Melinda Hazen, High Park; Melissa Hewitt, Queen Elizabeth II Sarnia; Karen Slater, Sir John Moore; Nicole Hopper, Thamesville Area; Annette Schliehauf, Zone Central; Nancy Simon, Chatham-Kent S.S.; Jacqueline Dick, John McGregor S.S.; Tracey Machan, Virtual Learn at Home Secondary School; Marian McEwan, Chatham-Kent Public Health; Martina Jackson, Lambton Public Health

Regrets: Alexandra Smith, Great Lakes S.S.; Jennifer Whiteye, Naahii Ridge; Ruth Ann Dodman, Trustee

Welcome and Introductions – Director of Education John Howitt / PIC Co-Chair Tracey Machan

- Tracey welcomed everyone to the Parent Involvement Committee meeting.

Business Arising from the Meeting of May 11, 2020

- There has been no additional follow up from the Provincial Parent Involvement Committee Chairs group. The group was working on drafting a letter to Premier Ford on what parent involvement should look like and asking for a stronger position from parents around expectations for children. This turned into a larger topic, more specific to boards in the GTA. Tracey will share the letter when finalized and provide updates as they become available. The group was also looking to individual school boards regarding having Board email addresses. This has been discussed in the past and most preferred to use their regular email account vs having to monitor another email. Board issued emails to non-employees poses a security risk and tracking school council changes can be labour intensive. It was noted that Board issued emails could be susceptible to FOI requests. There was no strong support to have LKDSB.net accounts so we will continue with current practice.

Director's Update

- Director Howitt introduced Bonnie Gotelaer who will be assuming the role of his Administrative Assistant as Sue is retiring. Bonnie currently provides support to Superintendents Lane and Sherman.

School Re-opening

- An update was shared on the work involved for boards to prepare plans to support the different learning models for schools re-opening in September. LKDSB staff worked closely with the coterminous boards. Plans shifted up until the start of school. Director Howitt spoke to the two delivery models: face to face instruction for students who returned to school and the Learn at Home model for families who opted to move to the virtual elementary and secondary schools that were established. He clarified the difference between Home Schooling and Learn at Home. When parents notify the Board of their intent to Home School their children, the students are no longer considered students of the Board. The percentage of students taking part in face to face, Learn at Home or who are home schooled are 85% 14% and 1% respectively. The key to what we are doing is flexibility to try to do what is best for kids.
- October 22 at noon is the deadline for families to let schools know if they want to change the mode of learning from face to face to virtual/Learn at Home or vice versa. The timeline for changes to be in place is November 16. There will be some staffing implications depending on numbers which will result in some classroom shifts especially in elementary due to class sizes. This may mean that some students will move to different classes both in the virtual and face to face models.

- November 16 is also the date that secondary students will begin a new set of courses in Quadmester 2. Under the quadmester model we moved to four two course semesters from two four course semesters. Course A runs for a week and Course B runs for a week for the duration of the quadmester.
- Marks will be given out after each course is completed, but the actual Ontario Report Card will be issued at the end of the traditional semesters.
- Elementary reports cards will follow the regular timeline. Progress reports will be issued midway through the two terms with report cards being issued in February and June. The first progress report will go out in November.

COVID Update

- This past week we had our first positive cases in the school community. At this time, we have had no in school transmission. There have been three different cases in Lambton schools – Colonel Cameron in Corunna, Bright’s Grove P.S. and Northern Collegiate. The individual at Northern had not been on site for two weeks. Additional information has been shared publicly but to protect personal health information, the Board will not share information as to whether cases involve staff or students. Active cases that are part of a school community are reported to the Ministry of Education.
- Today Chatham-Kent Public Health dismissed a cohort from a bus route based on a probable case. A total of 54 students from Harwich-Raleigh School and 18 students from Blenheim District High School were advised to self-isolate. (Following the contact tracing process, the total number of students from Harwich-Raleigh was 24.)
- Risk assessments are conducted for each scenario in determining actions to be taken and who is dismissed.
- A parent member shared concerns that students are not sitting in assigned seats. Parents with concerns should contact CLASS directly. It is important that accurate bus seating information is available to public health if required.
- Director Howitt emphasized the importance of the partnership with the local public health units. As soon as there is a positive case, staff at public health provide direction and the Board cooperates. Public health determines who is dismissed. The work of public health staff in contract tracing is exceptional. If a cohort of students is dismissed, Board staff ensures programming can continue by accessing the online class. Teachers have already set up online classes. Home room teachers provide instruction, some of which will be synchronous. Devices will be provided to students if needed.
- Timelines for staff or students to return is based on when the positive case was at the school during the infectious period – two weeks from that time. Public Health officials determine this for each case.
- Senior Administrators held a debrief meeting with the Dr. Ranade, Lambton’s Medical Officer of Health along with the Supervisor of Infectious Disease Prevention and Control. A similar meeting will be held with Dr. Colby, Medical Officer of Health for Chatham-Kent.
- Director Howitt shared how impressed he is with the work of students and staff in adhering to masking protocols and maintaining cohorts. He is also pleased with the support received from parents/guardians.
- Virtual classrooms are working very well. Students have had opportunities to take part in many exciting learning opportunities.
- In response to questions it was explained that Public Health conducts risk assessments for each COVID case to make decisions around the dismissal of students and/or staff. The contract tracing team is very thorough.
- It was clarified that students who are dismissed are not to be marked absent but rather a “G code” is used, similar to reporting absences related to inclement weather days. It was further clarified that attendance does not impact assessment and marks are not given based on attendance

School Climate Survey

- The LKDSB is embarking on another school climate survey.
- For the 2018-2019 a group of neighbouring school boards partnered with public health and their epidemiologist to analyze data and trends for individual boards.
- The questions will generally remain the same. Committee members would like to gather feedback around the process and on the previous survey; what went well and areas that could be improved on in terms of process. Was the survey communicated well, was it open long enough etc.
- **PIC Members were asked to think about to provide feedback at the next meeting.**
- **Sue will send out to PIC membership some specific questions and PDF of previous survey.**

Director Howitt advised that a Thoughtexchange will be going out to obtain feedback on the LKDSB's Reopening Plan; what is working well and what do we need to improve on?

Q/A

- In response to questions, Director Howitt indicated that it is unclear as to whether direction will change around allowing secondary students to leave the school for lunch; especially given the recent uptick in cases. The challenge with allowing students to leave at lunch is the mixing of cohorts, spread of cases and the ability to carry out contact tracing. Realizing that students are mixing cohorts outside of school, we need to follow the advice of provincial public health regarding cohorting.
- It is highly unlikely that field trips will be permitted to take place this year given the current environment.
- With respect to fundraising activities, people need to be made aware of what funds are being raised for and spent on. Schools can be creative around fundraising activities if gatherings do not take place. Jamie will share information on her school's online gift card fundraiser where a percentage of sales goes to the school. Martina indicated that public health staff are available to assist school councils with ensuring that fundraising activities or events work safely. Director Howitt reiterated the need to be congruent with the School Guidance Memo.
- Fall graduation ceremonies are no longer able to take place with the number permitted for indoor gatherings dropping from 50 to 10.

Zoom Webinar with Dr. Karyn Gordon – November 17

- The previously scheduled presentation with Dr. Karyn Gordon has been rescheduled to a Zoom webinar on November 17 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
- Marian will bring greetings on behalf of PIC and introduce Dr. Karyn.
- Director Howitt will thank Dr. Karyn and address attendees at the end of the webinar.
- The Board will have a facilitator to ensure that the Zoom session goes smoothly. The webinar can accommodate up to 500 guests so pre-registration will not be required.
- Sue will share the promotion flyer with PIC members once finalized. Sue will work with the Board's Public Relations Officer to promote the event via the Board and school websites and have schools promote the event through their usual means of communication. Representatives from Public Health will share information with other community partners and promote the event on Facebook and Twitter.

PIC Update

- Given these times of instability and the staggered start to the school year a decision was made to extend the current 2019-2020 PIC Membership for the 2020-2021 school year.
- The 2019-2020 PIC Budget Summary was sent out with agenda package and will be posted on the Board website.
- The 2020-2021 PIC Central Budget is \$8,056.00.

Nominations and Election of PIC Co-Chair for Two-Year Term

- Jamie completed her two-year term as PIC Co-Chair.
- Tracey is entering the second year of her two-year term to allow overlap of Co-Chairs.
- Melissa Hewitt volunteered to serve as Co-Chair. Melissa was acclaimed to the position. Congratulations were extended.

Future Meeting Dates

- November 30
- February 8
- May 10

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- Dr Karyn Event feedback. Model for other events or another session with her.
- School Climate Survey
- Thought Exchange follow up.

Next Meeting

- November 30 at 6:30 pm via Teams

Adjournment: 7:50 pm

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary