

## LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

February 9, 2015

#### Sarnia and Chatham Education Centres (Video Conference)

#### **Present:**

Jim Costello, Director of Education; Ruth Ann Dodman and Jack Fletcher, Trustees; Sue Fraser, Recorder Cherie Whitsitt, Alexander Mackenzie Secondary School; Gillian Hueniken, Chatham Kent Secondary School; Kelly-Lynn Musico, Northern Collegiate; Melissa Nix, Cathcart; Michelle Beimers, East Lambton; Sheila Rogerson, Errol Road; Karen Green Williams, Gregory Drive; Kristen Schrie, High Park; Nancy Fisher, King George VI Chatham; Alexandra Smith, P.E. McGibbon; Melissa Hewitt, Queen Elizabeth II Sarnia; Annette Schleihauf, Zone Central; Rose Atkins, Lambton Public Health; Jenelle Arnew, Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit

#### **Regrets:**

Jessica McCracken, Tilbury Area; Nicole Older, Rosedale; Khalid Saeed, John N. Given.

#### Welcome and Introductory Remarks: Karen Green Williams

- Karen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### Business Arising from the Meeting of December 8, 2014

- Jim and Sue met with Kelly-Lynn to discuss feedback from the “Let’s Talk” evening held in November. Karen was unable to attend the meeting. Discussion took place around fundraising inequities and the possibility of twinning schools in higher and lower socio-economic areas. Jim investigated and confirmed that this practice is no longer taking place within the Thames Valley DSB. Kelly-Lynn suggested that perhaps schools that raise more dollars through fundraising could share a portion of the funds with schools that are less successful in fundraising. This type of initiative would require parent support. Suggestions included development of a central fund that schools could apply to for specific purposes. It was noted that most schools only fundraise for a specific purpose (i.e. Smart boards or playground equipment). It was suggested that perhaps the PIC Co-Chairs could introduce the concept during their welcome and introductory remarks at the April School Council event. Another option would be to establish a sub-committee with parents and perhaps students. It was noted that Noelle’s Gift donates significant funding to students of the LKDSB and SCCDS. Principals work with the committee to identify students/families in need. To date items such as shoes, backpacks, wheelchairs, dental work, glasses and epi-pens have been funded. The concept of twinning or pairing schools was intended to be more of an elementary school project as secondary schools fundraise differently (i.e. sports teams, field trips). **PIC supported the concept of “sister schools”. Karen will send a message out to PIC members to determine interest in being on a sub-committee to further explore the initiative. PIC members were asked to obtain input from their own school councils on providing or accessing assistance.**
- Jim looked into concerns raised regarding removal of the computer lab at Errol Road. The space was converted to needed classroom space at the school. There is a movement in the province for collaborative learning spaces or “learning commons” which aligns with the increased emphasis on the use of mobile technology.

#### April District School Council/Parent Evening

- Speaker Sherry Campbell has tentatively been booked for Wednesday, April 15 at Lambton Kent Composite School. April 16 conflicts with the SEAC meeting. She will speak on the topic of “Raising Resilient Children”.
- **Sue will look into whether her presentation can be videotaped for the Board’s YouTube channel.**
- It was suggested that the presentation be offered on two evenings at venues in the north and south. **Sue will check availability of the speaker and venues.** If this is not an option, we will proceed with the April 15 presentation.

- The need to communicate and promote the evening was stressed. Information will be shared with outside agencies. There will be an opportunity for informal networking following the presentation.
- Feedback was shared on whether to offer bus transportation. Although numbers were not high, Sarnia parents supported providing transportation. Last year, buses were underutilized in Chatham and it was suggested that car-pooling could be an option with volunteer drivers and sign-up sheets. The issue of rural school parents travelling to either Board Office was raised. It was suggested that perhaps a bus could be available from a pick up point in Petrolia.
- Input was also provided on the possible benefit of offering child care.
- The event will be promoted through the Board website, social media, newsletter and consideration will be given to advertising. Flyers could be left at local businesses (i.e. grocery stores).

Director's Update – Jim Costello  
2015-2016 School Year Calendar

- The LKDSB in consultation with the SCCDSB is in the process of developing the 2015-2016 School Year Calendar.
- As part of the consultation process input is sought from OSSTF, ETFO, CUPE and PIC.
- The draft calendar follows Ministry recommendations. The 2015-2016 Calendar provides 194 school days between September 3, 2015 and June 30, 2016. The school year shall include a minimum of at least 194 school days of which up to 6 days may be designated by the Board as professional activity days and the remaining school days shall be instructional days.
- The draft calendar is not modified, and follows Ministry recommendations. The 2015-2016 school year is proposed to begin on Thursday, September 3 with a PA Day for school staff, and end on Thursday, June 30. The first day of class for students will be on Tuesday, September 8.
- **PIC members supported the proposed calendar but felt there could be some confusion re the start date and that the calendar needs to clearly show that the first day of school for students is September 8.**

TELP Roll Out Update

- The implementation of the Technology Enriched Learning Plan (TELP) is an ongoing topic of discussion by Senior Administration. TELP was also addressed at the February 9 Principals Council meeting.
- A FAQ document will be developed and posted on the Board's website.
- Grade 7 students will be provided iPad minis for September. Information sessions will be held this spring for the parents of Gr. 6 students. Sessions will likely be held by family of schools. After school workshops are offered as part of teacher training.
- The Student Senate has asked that administration consult with them so that they can provide input on the use of devices in the classroom. A series of assemblies may be held at secondary schools that would include students from each grade, possibly including Gr. 7 and 8 students.

ARC Regulations

- The Ministry's new Accommodation Review Guidelines have been in development for quite some time and are expected to be released mid-February.
- Each year Directors of Education are required to bring a Pupil Accommodation Report to Board, identifying school capacity and vacancy rates and naming any schools/areas for review. The LKDSB Report is presented to the Board in October.
- The new regulations will garner media attention as a number of changes are being introduced to the current accommodation review process. Under the Board's current regulation, staff, parents, students and one or two community members make up the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC). With the new regulations, there is no requirement for a community member to sit on the ARC; however Senior Administration will be required to have at least one meeting with the local governing body (i.e. mayor).
- Under the new regulation, two ARC meetings must be held within 90 days vs. 4 meetings in 90 days. This will expedite the accommodation review process which previously took almost 2 years.

- The regulations will allow for 3 types of ARCS – full ARC with 2 meetings in 60 days; an expedited ARC process; or no ARC wherein Trustees can set a cut off enrolment number for school closure. It is expected that the ‘no ARC’ option would not be recommended within LKDSB.
- In the past the Director would identify schools or family of school areas recommended for study in the October Pupil Accommodation Report. The ARC process would be followed with recommendations from the Accommodation Review Committee being brought to Administration at the end of the process that would then go to the Board of Trustees for final approval. Under the new Regulations, Administration will make recommendations at the start of the process in October.
- The Board’s Accommodation Review Policy and Regulations will be revised to align with the new Ministry Guidelines once they are released.
- The Ministry is asking school boards to look more closely at closing or consolidating schools with low enrolment and high vacancy rates in order to be more fiscally responsible. The 2014 October Pupil Accommodation Review report is posted on the Board’s website. The report shows MOE rated capacity for each school and enrolment.
- Presently the Accommodation Report is for one year only. The benefit of perhaps mapping out a 5-year plan was noted. The Board does have a 20/20 Vision Report that illustrates the enrolment forecast up to 2020. All of the Board’s secondary schools and half of the elementary schools are under 80% capacity. A few elementary schools are near or at capacity.
- Jim confirmed that there is a motion on the books recommending movement to a single track French Immersion model in Sarnia and Chatham; however neither location has an elementary school large enough to house all FI students. There is support for the concept; however a plan needs to be identified. In future consideration could be given to adding on to an elementary school or moving students into a secondary school with low capacity. Space could also be made available through the consolidation of schools.
- Once a school is named for an accommodation review, the Principal identifies staff, parent and student members to serve on the ARC.

#### Next/Future Meeting Dates

- The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 25, 2015 at the Sarnia Education Centre. (Start time to be confirmed.)

#### Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- “Let’s Talk” Evening – **Sue will share the summary documents with members of PIC.**
- Final details re the April School Council/Parent Evening will be confirmed – transportation, communication and promotion of the event.
- Information on the February 23 Paul Davis Social Media Safety Presentation at St. Clair S.S. has been shared with schools. St. Clair is hosting the evening through PRO Grant funding. All parents are welcome. **Sue will share the event flyer with PIC members.**

#### Annual PIC Symposium

- The Minister’s Sixth Annual Parent Involvement Committee Symposium will be held on April 24 and 25 in Toronto. Two members from each PIC are invited to attend. Kelly-Lynn would like to attend as well as Karen. Other interested parent representatives were asked to let Sue know.
- Student Mental Health Survey results were presented at the December meeting and a copy of the PowerPoint was sent to members.
- People for Education’s latest report was shared with PIC members. The report, Parent Involvement Committees; Supporting Links between Ontario’s schools boards and Ontario’s parents, is based on results of the first ever survey of PICs/CPPs, with 67 of 72 school boards participating. Karen responded to the survey.
- Rose shared Lambton Public Health (LPH) Update: LPH has a new email address for school health inquiries - [healthyschools@county-lambton.on.ca](mailto:healthyschools@county-lambton.on.ca) Martina Jackson, Health Promoter, is available to deliver presentations to school councils interested in learning more about programs/services offered by Lambton Public Health. Martina can be reached at 591 344-2062 ext. 2162 or at [healthyschools@county-lambton.on.ca](mailto:healthyschools@county-lambton.on.ca)

Lambton Public Health recently partnered with Chatham-Kent Public Health on their quarterly 'Health Buzz' newsletter to reach parents of elementary school children. It will be available on the same schedule as CKHU - September, December, March & June. The Lambton Public Health edition will be in electronic format only and placed on the LKDSB & LPH website. Parents can subscribe directly to the newsletter and will then receive an email notice each time a new issue is released. There is also a survey attached to the newsletter and parents completing the survey have a chance to win a prize for their child's classroom. The March prize draw will include surveys from December and March editions. This newsletter will provide current information and direct parents to the LPH website for more information.

- Chatham-Kent Public Health has started the "Farm to School" initiative. Local produce will be provided to 16 schools in Chatham Kent. Information regarding the nutrition program will be shared with school councils.
- Kelly-Lynn spoke to the benefits of the "Walking School Bus" program where students are encouraged to walk to school or part of the way to school vs. being driven. Students who walk to school get a hot chocolate when they arrive. Safety concerns were noted by some parents, especially those of primary aged students. To address safety issues, schools could implement a buddy system or walking groups. Students can also walk with caregivers. The Chatham-Kent Health Unit looked at the program as a way to reduce sedentary behaviour and it was originally introduced in an area where there was no crossing guard. The plan was communicated and there was a sign up system to have older students partner with younger students. The older students are paid a small fee of \$2 per day to come to the house and walk younger students to school. The school links the parents and students; however the fee is negotiated between the parents and students.
- A suggestion was made that when iPads are distributed to Gr. 7 students, that perhaps a pop up message or link be developed to encourage physical activity. Rose will look into health unit resources. Concern was shared that students are using iPads during nutrition breaks and that some schools have chill out rooms where students can stay indoors and play on iPads. PIC members suggested that schools be encouraged to have students turn off devices during breaks. From a public health standpoint a message could go out to teachers and students to turn off devices during break times. This could be implemented at the time of the TELP roll out as the MOE also promotes physical activity.
- The scheduling of nutrition breaks is a site-based decision. A school in Chatham flipped their schedule so students would go outside first and then come in to eat. This allows students to burn off energy and have social time first and then when they come in they are hungry and more focused on eating.

Adjournment: 8:06 pm

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary