

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

May 25, 2015

Sarnia Education Centres (Video Conference)

Present:

Jim Costello, Director of Education; Ruth Ann Dodman, Trustee; Sue Fraser, Recorder
Cherie Whitsitt, Alexander Mackenzie Secondary School; Gillian Hueniken, Chatham Kent Secondary School;
Kelly-Lynn Musico, Northern Collegiate; Melissa Nix, Cathcart; Sheila Rogerson, Errol Road; Karen Green
Williams, Gregory Drive; Nancy Fisher, King George VI Chatham; Alexandra Smith,
P.E. McGibbon; Melissa Hewitt, Queen Elizabeth II Sarnia; Nicole Older, Rosedale; Jessica McCracken,
Tilbury Area; Annette Schleihauf, Zone Central; Rose Atkins, County of Lambton Health Unit;
Jenelle Arnew, Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit

Regrets:

Trustee Jack Fletcher, Michelle Beimers, East Lambton; Kristen Schrie, High Park;
Khalid Saeed, John N. Given; Nicole Older, Rosedale

Welcome and Introductions – Jim Costello / Kelly-Lynn Musico

- Kelly-Lynn welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- She introduced Superintendent of Business, Ron Andruchow.
- Jim shared that Ron is retiring at the end of July. Brian McKay will be the new Superintendent of Business and Treasurer of the LKDSB. Brian is currently the Director of Finance and City Treasurer for the City of Sarnia. Members of PIC wished Superintendent Andruchow all the best in his retirement.

Budget Information Session – Ron Andruchow, Superintendent of Business

- Superintendent Andruchow provided an overview of the 2015/16 Grants for Student Needs (GSNs). (A copy of the presentation will be included with the minutes.)
- The GSN funding in 2015-16 is projected to be stable at \$22.46B which is an average of \$11,451 per pupil funding amount.
- The largest operating grants are the Pupil Foundation Grant, School Foundation Grant and Special Education Grants. The Pupil Foundation Grant is based entirely on enrolment and it funds the number of teachers; classroom supplies; computers in the classroom etc.
The School Foundation Grant is also based on enrolment and funds principals, vice-principals and office administration staff. There are also 13 special purpose grants that include the Special Education Grant that funds EAs, special education equipment; the Language Grant, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Supplement; the Learning Opportunities Grant and the Safe & Accepting Schools Supplement.
- The Ministry has developed 2015-2016 Education Funding - A Guide for the Grants for Student Needs which is available on their website. (A copy will be shared with the minutes.)
- It was clarified that it is up to each school board to enter data onto the MOE template to maximize the use of grants.
- The LKDSB budget will be approximately \$261M.
- Allocations of the GSNs that are under transition were noted. Enrolment is a key driver as two thirds of the grants are based on enrolment.
- Student enrolment data from 2009-10 to 2014-15 was provided along with projections for 2015-16. Ministry enrolment count dates are October 31 and March 31 each year. The elementary projection is 14,527 a decline of 170 students. The secondary enrolment projection is 7,595 students, a decline of 183 students. The total projected decline is 353, approximately the size of a small school.
- It was clarified that the Board previously received full funding for Grade 12 students returning for a fifth year; however this year extra credits are funded at the continuing education rate of approximately \$3,000 (vs. \$11,000). Student success teachers, student support and attendance counselors are working to re-engage students.

- Key grant changes in 2015-16 were highlighted. The impact of School Board Efficiencies and Modernization (SBEM) include changes to Top-Up Funding for School Operations and Renewal (first year of phase in); School Foundation Grant (first year of phase in); Geographic Circumstances Grant (first year of phase in); and the Declining Enrolment Adjustment. Changes in the Base Top-Up Grants to school will result in significant funding reductions for the Board. If the schools were full, the Board would not receive Top-Up Funding. Schools that are not at capacity receive funding to address costs associated with heating, lighting and cleaning. Beginning in 2015/2016 the base Top-Up Funding is being phased out over the next three years. Enhanced Top-Up Funding was provided for remote and rural schools and was provided to schools with a postal code where the second character was a 0. This is being changed. In 2015/2016 elementary schools that are more than 10 km away from any other school and secondary schools that are more than 20 km away from a secondary school will receive Enhanced Top-Up Funding. This will result in about a \$4M reduction to the Board's funding by 2017/2018. The Ministry is moving towards removal of incentives to keep small schools open as they can no longer afford to fund schools that are half full.
- Investments to keep up with costs include a 2% increase to the Student Transportation Grant; a 2% increase to Non-Staff School Operations Benchmarks; 7.3% increase to School Operations Electricity Benchmark; and Funding to Support Employer Bargaining Agent Fees at the local level.
- The Revenue Forecast Summary by Grant Category was reviewed and changes were noted. The Board will see an increase of about \$4.3M dollars next year through the School Condition and Improvement Grant.
- Reserve funds are being used for the Board's 3-year IT infrastructure upgrade.
- The Board allocation is \$2.25M for upgrades at Wallaceburg District S.S. to include library renovations, track upgrades and a fitness centre. This funding is the result of the closure of D.A. Gordon School in Wallaceburg and consolidation from 3 to 2 elementary schools.
- The 2015-16 Budget will be presented to the Board for approval on June 9.
- Karen thanked Ron for presenting the budget information.

Business Arising from the Meeting of February 9, 2015

- PIC members shared feedback via email on the concept of sister schools and there were mixed feelings. It was felt that this could perhaps be a good pilot project between two interested schools. An idea from the PIC Symposium was to send PIC ambassadors to School Council meetings to share successes or to send information to School Councils. Equity could be a discussion topic at the networking session at an upcoming District School Council evening.
- Jim can mention the pilot project to principals at the GOAL meeting. Ideally the project would involve two schools in the same area where one or more fundraising events could be held together as well as the sharing of resources.
- Members of PIC supported proceeding with a pilot project.

Feedback from the April 15 District School Council/Parent Evening –Raising Resilient Children

- Feedback was positive however some parents felt the presentation was rushed and were looking for more take away strategies.
- It was felt that resiliency is not always taught in schools. Examples included some school awards; a team not keeping score to ensure no one loses; playground equipment is not always available because of potential injury and liability issues.
- It was noted that individual school awards are site based depending on the school community. Concerns should be taken to the school council for discussion. The topic of resiliency could be discussed by school councils at the start of the year.
- It was recommended that in future, where possible, presentations should be offered at both ends of the district, over two evenings.
- Bus transportation is very under-utilized. In future car-pooling will be promoted.
- It was suggested that perhaps a resiliency check-list tool could be developed or a guide for school councils. The local Health Units have a number of resources related to resilience that can be shared with PIC.

Report on the Regional PIC Symposium – Karen Green Williams

- Karen attended the Minister's Sixth Annual PIC Symposium in Toronto on April 24 and 25.
- She attended sessions on: How Parent Involvement Committees operate; Dr. Lynda Colgan presentation focusing on Math; facilitated group discussions on Student Success, Re-engaging Students, and Mary Gordon – Roots of Empathy.
- David Bouchard was the day two speaker. He is a Canadian Métis author and literacy advocate who has produced more than fifty books for readers of all ages. He is a highly sought after speaker. Speaker fee is \$4,500 plus travel from Victoria. Karen was of the understanding that he was possibly booked for a presentation at the SCCDSB. **Jim will speak to the Director of the St. Clair Catholic Board regarding a shared presentation opportunity.**
- The revised Health and Physical Education was also addressed. The issue was contentious for some attendees as they felt parents were not consulted. The curriculum was reviewed and it was put into perspective that the sex education component is only part of the much larger curriculum.
- Karen extended her appreciation for the opportunity to attend the PIC Symposium.

Director's Update – Jim Costello

Status of Provincial Negotiations – ETFO Work to Rule

- An update was provided on the status of provincial negotiations. Directors have been involved in regular teleconferences on provincial bargaining.
- Work to rule is not a legal term but rather a partial withdrawal of service. He explained the two tiered bargaining process; provincial and local. Larger items are bargained provincially such as salary and class size while smaller items are bargained locally. The two levels of bargaining can occur concurrently. Locally the bargaining process is going well.
- Provincially ETFO has implemented phase one of strike action or work to rule across all 31 public school boards. It was noted that ETFO is taking action against the government, not school boards. ETFO members will not administer EQAO assessments, attend any Ministry in-service, or complete provincial report cards. Field trips and extra-curricular activities are still going on. Phase 1 may be escalated. The biggest issue now is the completion of report cards. Teachers will provide a copy of student marks but will not complete the provincial report card. Boards are developing a plan around data entry of student marks for report cards. Some boards may not be able to issue report cards but will provide a letter to parents re September placement of students.
- OSSTF is currently on strike in three boards; Durham, Peel and Rainbow. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities has directed post-secondary schools to accept mid-term marks for students of the boards on strike.
- The Board will continue to communicate with parents around the implications of ETFO work to rule.

Revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum

- The revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum has garnered a lot of media attention as some parents groups are opposing its implementation; specifically the sexuality component.
- A number of protests have taken place, some of which have been by faith based groups. A parent delegation was made to the Board and a group picketed outside of the Sarnia Education Centre. Despite the media attention the Board has received very few emails of concern.
- WHO (The World Health Organization) advises that the best way to improve decision making around sex education is through education in schools. The Ministry of Education is releasing data to support this.
- Accommodations will be made for portions of the curriculum. Accommodations will be included in the Board's Equity and Inclusion policy. The Board is respectful to both sides of the debate; however as a publicly funded system may not be able to meet all requests. Parents wishing accommodations will need to write a letter to the principal stating that a certain component of the new curriculum goes against their religious beliefs or values. Schools will do their best to accommodate; however topics could come up in sporadic classroom discussion or in assemblies or presentations.
- Parent inquiries should be directed to the school principal. The entire curriculum document can be viewed on the Ministry website along with other resource documents.

Revised Pupil Accommodation Guidelines

- Jim explained the changes to top-up funding which is being phased in. School boards with declining enrolment have been receiving top-up funding for schools that aren't at full capacity to continue operating as if they were full. Previously all schools were funded for a full time principal and secretary, however funding will now be pro-rated for schools with enrolment of under 150 students. The Ministry is removing the incentive to fully staff smaller schools as they can no longer continue to fund schools with high vacancy rates. The Board will need to consider future school needs when allocating capital improvement dollars.
- Revised Pupil Accommodation Policy and Regulations will go to the Board of Trustees for approval at the end of June. Under the new legislation, boards are required to hold an annual meeting with community partners and tier one and two municipal officials to consult with them regarding major capital planning and accommodation reviews.
- Under the new regulations, the accommodation review process will start with the Director and Senior Administration making a recommendation(s) for accommodation changes/consolidation. Recommendations will go to the Board and if approved an Accommodation Review Committee will be formed.
- Under the Capital Planning Capacity Program, the Ministry is providing funding to school boards to build school board planning capacity, particularly in areas where there is need to address underutilized schools. Through this funding, the Board was able to hire an Acting Superintendent of Education. Gary Girardi, Principal of Northern Collegiate will be the new Superintendent of Education – Capital Planning and Accommodation.
- Senior Administration will be looking at areas for accommodation review over the summer in preparation for the fall Pupil Accommodation Report.

PIC Planning for 2014-15

Membership

- PIC members confirmed their intention to remain on the Committee for the 2015-2016 school year. Nancy Fisher will be stepping down due to other commitments.
- Some members whose terms are up would like to stay on for another term should there be openings for parent members in their area. Principals will be asked in the fall to submit names of interested parents from their school council for those areas with openings.
- Representatives from the local Health Units will continue to represent the community.

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- Mary Mayfeather – discussion in the fall re possible presentation to PIC on re-engaging First Nation parents.

Future Meeting Dates

- Monday, October 5 at the Chatham Regional Education Centre at 6:30 p.m.
- Jim thanked PIC members for their work throughout the year and a special thank you was extended to Nancy and Gillian for their service on PIC.

Adjournment: 8:06 pm

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary