

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

December 8, 2014

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; Sheila Rogerson, Errol Road; Karen Green Williams, Gregory Drive; Kristen Schrie, High Park; Nancy Fisher, King George VI Chatham; Melissa Hewitt, Queen Elizabeth II Sarnia; Jessica McCracken, Tilbury Area; Annette Schleihauf, Zone Central; Rose Atkins, County of Lambton Health Unit; Jenelle Arnew, Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit

Regrets:

Michelle Beimers, East Lambton; Khalid Saeed, John N. Given; Alexandra Smith, P.E. McGibbon; Nicole Older, Rosedale

Welcome and Introductions – Kelly-Lynn Musico, Co-Chair

- Kelly-Lynn welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Ruth Ann Dodman as the new Trustee representative on PIC. Members introduced themselves.
- Kelly-Lynn introduced Lori Brush, Mental Health Lead for the Lambton Kent District School Board.

Mental Health and Addictions Initiative – Lori Brush

- Lori provided background information on the province's mental health initiative and implementation of the LKDSB Mental Health & Addictions Strategy.
- Data from the LKDSB Student "SpeakUp" Survey 2013 was shared (Grades 7-12).
- Five key findings were identified from the survey:
 - Kids are under a lot of stress and pressure: Academics – pressure to do well; Relationships family and friends; Bullying/Harassment – feelings of judgment and lack of acceptance (social media)
 - Students need a "place to go" – quiet, safe space for direct support from a trusted adult and to engage in common interests with like-minded peers
 - Students access to mental health professionals – students need to be aware of where they can get help if they were feeling mentally unwell
 - More awareness and education about mental health for students and staff is needed to reduce stigma and to allow for more open discussion
 - Schools need to be more open and inclusive places.
- Statistics related to bullied and disconnected students were reviewed. Student connectedness is key in making students feel close to people at school and to feel part of the school. This is the # 1 protective factor against suicidal behavior in youth.
- Next steps were shared. The report will be shared with school staff and students, parents and communities. School results will be shared with individual sites. District and School teams that include students will be engaged to map out next steps to address identified needs. The LKDSB Mental Health & Addictions Strategy will continue to focus on identified goals. It is hoped that mental health curriculum will be introduced next year (Gr. 9 Physical Education). Curriculum and training initiative in partnership with CMHA; can go to website: www.teenmentalhealth.org for more information about the curriculum, developed by Dr. Stan Kutcher)
- Continuing Strategy Work will include:
 - Suicide Prevention, Risk Assessment and Postvention Protocol completion (October 2014)
 - Suicide Prevention Training/Education:
 - SafeTALK*
 - ASIST*
 - Mental Health First Aid*
 - Staff Professional Learning Calendar 2014-15
 - Expanding community networks
 - Developing a "Pathways to Care" document

- Role of Mental Health & Addictions Nurses
- Purchase of a “*Be Safe*” app for students (that will be adopted for each community to assist students in recognizing that are in need of support and how to access resources)
- Recommended reading resources included: “The Worried Child” by Dr. Paul Foxman and “Extreme Mean” by Paula Todd.
- LKDSB Mental Health updates are posted on the Board website and via Twitter and Facebook.
- Research has proven that there is a direct correlation between mental health and student achievement.
- Members of PIC thanked Lori for her very informative presentation.
(A copy of the full presentation will be sent out with the minutes.)

Business Arising from the Meeting of October 6, 2014

- There was no business arising.

Feedback from November 12 “Let’s Talk” Evening

- PIC Co-Chairs thanked members for assisting with and attending the “Let’s Talk” Evening.
- The format was quite successful and feedback was very positive. The evening began with a presentation on the Technology Enriched Learning Plan (TELP) followed by roundtable discussions focusing on parent engagement, fundraising and school issues. Parents appreciated the opportunity to network and share.
- The evening was inspired from the CODE Parent Engagement Toolkit that was presented at the Minister’s Annual PIC Symposium in April. A summary of the “Let’s Talk” Evening was sent to CODE for their website.
- In future a similar opportunity would be organized for parents only. The option of providing daycare would be investigated.
- It is hoped that resources can be developed by the committee to assist school councils in resolving issues.
- **Jim and Sue will arrange a meeting with PIC Co-Chairs to discuss findings prior to the roll out of TELP to students.**

Report on Regional Conferences

OCT – Inspiring Public Confidence

- Jessica McCracken and Michelle Beimers attended the Inspiring Public Confidence workshop hosted by the Ontario College of Teachers.
- Minister of Education Liz Sandals spoke about new initiatives.
- Information was shared on the workshops attended. Workshops on Child and Youth Mental Health provided good information and ideas that can be looked at locally, as well as online resources.
- There was a lot of discussion on the use of technology which aligns with the direction of the Board.

People for Education – Making Connections

- Karen Green Williams, Melissa Hewitt, Michelle Beimers and Jessica McCracken attended People for Education’s Making Connections conference held in November. Melissa emailed a summary of her notes to PIC members.
- Jackie Strang spoke at the school council session on the People for Education resource that provides tips to improve parent connection and engagement.
- Dr. Bruce Ferguson spoke on the topic of mental health in children and resilience
- Chris D’Souza addressed the group on equity and inclusion. It was recommended that he be considered for future school council events.
- A session was held on the use of digital communication and social media to engage parents/school councils. It was noted that school councils need to be aware of the Board’s policies related to the use of social media.

- A session was offered on the new Health curriculum. PIC Chairs and one member from each school council were invited to take part in the MOE survey on the revised curriculum. The survey is being conducted in two parts – elementary and secondary. It was noted that the elementary survey was very generic. Directors have not been formally consulted as yet.

Director's Update – Jim Costello

TELP / Classroom Technology

- Director Costello thanked PIC members for organizing and hosting the “Let’s Talk” Evening.
- Information was shared on the structure and mandate of the Board’s Student Senate which is comprised of two students from each secondary school. It is important to have a student voice regarding decisions related to teaching and learning. The two priorities identified by the Senate this year are student engagement in the classroom and mental health
- Lori Brush will be meeting with each school improvement team to discuss Student Mental Health Survey results. Principals will be asked to include student representatives in the conversation on mental health data.
- Jim is looking at visiting schools to meet with student focus groups. Gr. 7 and 8 students may be included in the group discussions on learning and engagement, where we are going with technology and what they would like their classrooms to look like. More information on the Student Focus groups will follow once meetings are held with Senior Administration and Student Senate on how best to proceed. PIC members were invited to share feedback with Jim.
- Senior Administration is planning on getting information out to Gr. 6 parents and students prior to the roll out of TELP to Gr. 7 students next year. Staff training is being provided this year to prepare.
- Every Kindergarten class has 5 iPad minis. We now have a total of 5,000 iPads/minis across the system.
- Engagement Lambton Kent (ELK) funding was made available last year for teachers to submit innovative project proposals that linked to School Improvement and Board Improvement Plans. ELK project funding is being allocated again this year.
- In response to questions re TELP, Director Costello explained that LKDSB is one of three boards in the province that provides one to one iPads and that LKDSB is the only board that allows the students to take devices home. Research has shown that students are more likely to embrace the device if they are allowed to personalize it. Research has also shown the success of flipped curriculum where students do some work outside of school hours on their device. Comments were shared related to the benefit and amount of homework and the feeling that large amounts of homework can create additional stress for some students.
- The Board can fund the cost of the roll out of iPad minis in Grade 7 through the annual computer replacement plan. The Ministry of Education has also indicated that they would be providing \$150M in funding for technology in schools; however a formal announcement has not been released. The LKDSB is anticipating approximately \$1.5M over 3 years. The funding would be used for hardware, software and staff development. iPads have an average 4 year life span. Students having devices from Gr. 7 to 10 will allow parents to make a decision on the type of device best for their student. Decisions will be made whether students will be permitted to acquire the devices after 4 years or whether they would be taken back and refurbished.
- Grade 7 was chosen as an entry point to impact instructional change between the elementary and secondary panel.
- iPads/minis have an MDM system installed to deploy apps and use of equipment is governed by Board policy. Consent forms are signed. Students cannot access inappropriate sites while at school.
- The issue of equity was raised re the allocation of iPads. It was noted that not all schools have computer labs and in some cases students only have access to computers every 2-3 weeks. **Jim will look into the computer lab/space issue at Errol Road.** He noted that the Board is moving away from computer labs and moving towards learning any time anywhere or learning commons areas (i.e. libraries). Many schools have mobile iPad carts for classroom use.

- In the past technology replacement in schools was decided by IT staff. Principals now have a choice regarding the annual replacement such as laptops and tablets. Desktop machines are still required for some secondary programs.
- Previously a panel of PIC members attended a Principals' Council meeting to speak to parent/school council issues. Arrangements will be made for a student panel to attend an upcoming Principals' meeting to speak to what they would like classrooms to look like.

Smoking Diversion Program

- Local school boards are partnering with Lambton Public Health for the Smoking Diversion Program.
- Students caught smoking on school grounds will have the option of paying a fine or attending a program in the future with the site to be determined. The program or workshop would include a pizza lunch where students would be educated on the dangers of smoking. Information has been shared with Principals and Vice-Principals who support the program.
- Ecigarettes are a new concern. Chewing tobacco is also on the rise in some secondary schools.

Next/Future Meeting Dates

- The next meeting will be held on Monday, Feb. 9 via video conference, beginning at 6:30 p.m.
- The April District School Council evening will be held in April (15 or 16).
Sue will contact speakers Sherry Campbell and Dr. Tracey Vaillancourt re availability in April and will follow up with PIC.
- The final PIC meeting of the school year will be held on Monday, May 25. Superintendent of Business Ron Andruchow will attend to present information on the development of the 2015-16 Budget.

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- Karen and Trustee Dodman attended the EQAO Planning Session held in Windsor. The session involved administrators, teachers, trustees, parents and students from southwest Ontario. EQAO is gathering information from all districts regarding challenges, successes and policy changes. Positive feedback was shared. The reporting structure was discussed. There is a need to communicate more about EQAO to parents, particularly parents whose students will be taking part in assessments. Students and parents are often fearful or anxious regarding EQAO testing. The focus of the meeting was on the need for consistent, core messaging for all stakeholders. Karen suggested putting together a PIC sub-committee to look at resources for parents. Information would be vetted through the Director/PIC.

Adjournment: 8:55 pm

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary