

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

December 5, 2016

Sarnia and Chatham Education Centre (Video Conference Rooms)

Present:

Jim Costello, Director of Education; Shannon Sasseville, Trustee; Kelly-Lynn Musico, Northern Collegiate; Angie Baresich, Brooke Central; Karen Green Williams, Gregory Drive; Kristen Schrie, High Park; Sharon Chapman, King George VI Sarnia; Heidi Cincelli, McNaughton Avenue; Melissa Hewitt, Queen Elizabeth II Sarnia; Annette Schleihauf, Zone Central; Martina Jackson, Lambton Public Health.

Regrets:

Ruth Ann Dodman, Trustee; Alexandra Smith, Great Lakes S.S. / P.E. McGibbon; Karen Phipps, Alexander Mackenzie S.S. / Hanna Memorial; Carina Best, Errol Road; Jessica McCracken, Tilbury Area; and Chatham-Kent Public Health Representative.

Welcome and Introductions – Jim Costello

- Jim Costello welcomed everyone to the meeting. PIC Co-Chair Carina Best was unable to attend the meeting. Dan Chauvin resigned from his position as PIC Co-Chair and from the Committee. Director Costello chaired the meeting in the absence of the PIC Co-Chairs. He noted that Carina is willing to carry on as Co-Chair for the remaining two meetings of the year. Options are to elect a second Co-Chair for the remainder of the school year or to hold off until September to allow the terms of Co-Chair to be staggered.

PIC Facebook Account – Public Relations Officer, Heather Hughes

- Director Costello introduced Heather Hughes, the Board's new Public Relations Officer.
- A list of questions related to setting up a PIC Facebook account was sent out to members of PIC in advance of the meeting and input was provided. Heather spoke to the items for consideration with respect to setting up a "closed group" or an "open group" – Who will set up the account? Who will be given administrative rights to the group? How will membership on the Facebook page be encouraged? Who will maintain the membership list? What is the expectation of school councils in joining a closed group? Who will monitor Facebook posts? What will the guidelines include for membership and content posted to the group page?
- It was noted that Facebook groups need to be tied to a personal profile. One option would be to set up a generic email account to set up a Facebook profile that would be used to maintain the group page.
- PIC members supported setting up a closed group for school council chairs and possibly other school council members. The intent of the Facebook group is to provide a supportive environment for school councils to gather and share information and best practices – such as fundraising activities, parent engagement opportunities, the PRO Grant application process and to promote district wide school council/parent events hosted by PIC.
To start functionality will be limited to PIC members pushing out information.
- Martina, Karen and Sharon offered to help set up the account. Alexandra offered her assistance at the previous meeting. Martina noted that she is a Community Member and that Parent Members need to have responsibility for managing the account.
- Two to three PIC members will monitor the account and this could rotate each year. Heather and/or Sue will be given access to the Facebook group in the event that inappropriate content was posted and needed to be removed.
- **Next steps** – Sue will work with Heather to set up a Gmail account (i.e. lkdsb.pic@gmail.com) which would be used to create a Facebook profile and then set up a Facebook Closed Group. Administrative access to this email account (including passwords for email and FB account) would only be shared with designated PIC members and Sue Fraser (or LKDSB designate).

- Sue would be the LKDSB staff member who would have access to the FB account and offer support if needed. The Board will have an arms-length connection to the account and only intervene in emergencies (i.e. if an urgent message needed to be added/removed).
- Need to set up a list of potential school council members (ideally two per school) who are invited to join the group to use as a “master list” to determine who is approved to join.
- Karen, Alexandra and Sharon volunteered to manage and police the account.
- PIC to establish guidelines on how the FB account would be used and appropriate content for the Closed Group Page.
- PIC representatives will speak to membership of the group about personal privacy and appropriate use and sharing of information.
- The Board’s Responsible use of Technology Policy and Administrative Procedures are to be adhered to. The documents are posted on the LKDSB website and can be viewed at:
Policy:
<http://www.lkdsb.net/BoardInfo/Policies/Responsible%20Use%20of%20Technology%20Policy.pdf>
Administrative Procedure:
<http://www.lkdsb.net/BoardInfo/AdminProc/Responsible%20Use%20of%20Technology%20AP.pdf>
- Heather will draft a disclaimer statement to be included on its Facebook page.

Circles Program – Guest Presenter, Terry-Lynn Sullivan

- Martina Jackson introduced guest presenter, Terry-Lynn Sullivan.
- Terry-Lynn thanked the Parent Involvement Committee on behalf of the Lambton County Circle’s Program for the system work that they are doing. She shared background information on the program and outlined suggestions that program organizers would like schools to consider that might align with other engagement strategies in place.
- Lambton County’s Circle Program uses a community based approach to support and befriend those who want to leave poverty behind. The program was the first of its kind in Canada. Volunteers are known as “Allies” and are matched with low income families called “Leaders”. There are currently 60 families involved in the program, including 111 children. Nearly 90 individuals are acting as “Allies” along with others known as “Ad Hoc Allies” who help with sponsoring meals and childcare at the group’s weekly meetings. Fifty-one adults are involved with the Circles Program. Of those 31% increased their earnings, 63% enhanced their education, 45% attended post-secondary school, and 49% exited the social assistance program. Jobs that adequately support families are a key component in reducing poverty. According to the 2011 National Household Survey almost 23% of Lambton Households (12000) were low income in 2010. Circles representatives hope to help bridge and close the gap in some of these problem areas that schools in Lambton County may face. They would like to assist with communication strategies to assist students in need as often conversations with parents can be delicate. Research shows that there is a direct relationship between student success and attendance.

The Leaders in Circles were asked the following 5 questions to identify systemic issues in elementary schools as seen by low income families:

1. In what manner could the schools better assist elementary students who live in poverty?
2. What is needed from elementary schools so parents can prepare their children for a better education at home?
3. What are your thoughts on how the school board can assist with better interactions between teachers, parents and students so everyone is on the same page?
4. What is your biggest concern that seems to go unnoticed or unaddressed by schools and how would you hope they are addressed?
5. Do you feel that your child’s education is delivered in a way that you are able to help them get the best education possible and if so, what are the schools doing that works well for you?

Responses were shared (20)

1. Basic childcare at PTA meetings so parents can attend.
2. Respect for restricted, single or young parents with an understanding of situations that take extra effort for them to have their children in school.

3. Leniency on the district rules, if a child requires a transfer look at the reasons for the request, consider the less serious reasons as they (the child) might just not be suited to that school and that the district rules may limit a child's chance to flourish in a different school environment.
4. Utilize teacher's suggestions to help the student, show the parent some of the activities used to teach students so parents can duplicate them at home.
5. Recognize D2L (Desire 2 Learn) for grades 7-12 is wonderful, however if a child loses their confidence in learning before then it may be extremely difficult, almost impossible to regain their interests in school.
6. Homework - can outlines and examples be sent home so parents are able to help their children because the school methods parents learned have changed.
7. Suggest to parents that are able, to donate extra school supplies to be gifted to teachers so the teachers can help students who are struggling to get what they need to learn.
8. Technology involvement is a great idea that needs to grow since it's the way of the future.
9. Option for teacher to open a Facebook page between students and parents to join in open communication if possible.
10. Recognizing not all students have access to computers or internet so keeping communication books between parents and teachers as a possibility.
11. Pay more attention to bullying, hands-on interactions and mood swings of students, to help correct these behaviors early and identify or assist with mental health needs and prevent suicide.
12. Basic dress code or uniforms having graduating students donate their uniforms to the schools as extras to build on equity for students as well as to reduce or eliminate some bullying issues.
13. Reduce the number of book fairs, book orders, field trips, food days per month.
14. Bring back head lice checks at the school so everyone can be checked and not just the child scratching their head, taking in to consideration that lice may have been passed through classmates at school.
15. Address internet access issues, allotting students in schools times that they may access extra computer times, having teachers recognize the concerns about school work done on the internet since not all students have access to the internet at home.
16. More breakfast or lunch snack programs, transportation eligibility or before and after school programs, workshops, sports or childcare options knowing parents usually work between 7 am – 5 pm.
17. Trip expenses, asking that children whose parents can't afford to pay, be able to either do work to earn their way such as cleaning the class/yard or have the school board cover their costs. With the work plan being a discussion between parents and teachers then relay what has been decided through the parents to the students so children are not bullied or out casted.
18. Food days to be scheduled around government and municipal assistance payment issued dates so all parents can afford to budget them in their finances.
19. School house colours/spirit days, possibly having buttons or pinned paper badges so that children who forget or don't have specific clothing at home can still participate.
20. Understanding Poverty and C.A.P.S. (Community Action Poverty Simulation) that is mandatory training for school staff so that they are aware of the challenges of our students in poverty. And teachers and principals listen to parents.

- The CAPS simulation is a role reversal exercise that helps people better understand what it is like for people living in poverty.
- Terry Lynn spoke to strategies that she and the Principal of London Road School have implemented. The S.E.T. model is being used (Support, Empathy and Truth). They have worked together to help bridge the gap between the school and students residing in low income homes.
- Director Costello noted that schools do subsidize field trips for students/parents who cannot afford the cost and that this is done in a confidential manner.
- Members of the Parent Involvement Committee thanked Terry-Lynn for her very informative presentation. They noted recommendations that can easily be implemented such as scheduling food days around government assistance payment dates.

- Contact information will be shared for schools wishing to obtain additional information on the Circles Program.

Business Arising from the Meeting of October 3, 2016

- Since the last meeting further clarification was shared with school principals regarding Police Vulnerable Sector Checks. Parents/guardians can notify the school in advance that someone other than themselves will pick up their child for an appointment or event; however this individual cannot transport additional children.

Director's Update – Jim Costello

LKDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP)

- A copy of the draft LKDB Multi-Year Strategic Plan was sent out with the agenda package.
- Director Costello commented on the original development of the six Belief Statements. He advised that Trustees agreed that the Vision, Mission and Belief Statements would be reviewed and revised in 2018, after the next election. Trustees need at least a year in the role to learn about the LKDSB and its initiatives so they are best informed before reviewing the guiding principles of the LKDSB. He explained that Senior Administration drafted the LKDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) based on the six LKDSB Belief Statements. Strategic Priorities and Strategic Actions have been assigned to each Belief Statement to guide decision-making. The Strategic Priorities are broadly stated in order to incorporate all stakeholders in their implementation and achievement. The Strategic Actions are designed to mobilize the Strategic Priorities to ensure that the Belief Statements are supported. In this model the Belief Statements, teacher priorities and Strategic Actions are aligned in the common direction of improving student achievement. The draft LKDSB MYSP is designed to guide the Board until 2018/2019. Schools are required to develop School Improvement Plans for Student Achievement (SIPsAs) that align with the Board's plan.
- Under Strategic Actions, PIC members questioned use of the word “ensure” with respect to learning environments and hiring practices and to how this is measured.
- It was noted that both good citizenship and graduation rates are key to measuring student success.
- It was recommended that information on succession planning be posted on the website; not individual names but rather strategies and professional development opportunities to attract qualified school administrators.

Pupil Accommodation

- The Ministry of Education announced a \$14 million capital investment for the Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) to support renovations and improvements to the Great Lakes Secondary School permanent site and the Wyoming Public School site. The MOE allocated \$10.3 million for Great Lakes Secondary School's permanent site for the construction of an auditorium, First Nations community room and accessibility improvements. The Ministry has earmarked \$3.7 million for Wyoming Public School to support the creation of new pupil spaces, a daycare and gymnasium at the consolidated school.
The LKDSB will provide School Condition Improvement Funds for further improvements to both schools, including \$5.7 million for the Great Lakes Secondary School permanent site and \$2 million for the Wyoming Public School site. These investments will support mechanical (heating and cooling) upgrades and classroom enhancements. The total amount of funding for the Great Lakes Secondary School permanent site will be \$16 million. The total amount of funding for the Wyoming Public School site will be \$5.7 million.
- Transition Committee meetings are taking place for both Great Lakes Secondary School and the Consolidated South Plympton and Wyoming Public School.
- The Ad-Hoc Naming Committee for the Consolidated South Plympton and Wyoming Public School met on November 14, 2016 and shortlisted four possible names. The Ad-Hoc Committee is to meet again on January 19, 2017 and will bring a recommendation to the Board on January 31, 2017.
- The first Public Meeting of the Forest Area Pupil Accommodation Review took place at Bosanquet Central School on November 16.

- The first Accommodation Review Public meeting for the Chatham area was held on December 1, 2016.
- As previously noted future consolidations will include an online consultation exercise to gather input from stakeholder groups. Online consultation for South Kent schools will likely begin in the spring.
- Director Costello reiterated that the Multi Year Accommodation Plan is not set in stone and schools can be added or removed based on the Board's vision.

Planning for April District School Council Event

- Discussion took place on possible topics for the April District School Council/Parent Event. David Bouchard has been recommended as a possible keynote speaker.
- The St. Clair DSB will be hosting their own event this year but are interested in partnering on future collaborative parent events.
- PIC members brainstormed on event topics – social media and on-line safety, mental health and wellness.
- In support of Ontario's Well-Being Strategy, committee members supported hosting an event that will focus on overall wellness/well-being. The four key areas of Ontario's Well-Being Strategy include safe and accepting schools; equity and inclusive education; healthy schools and positive mental health.
- A sub-committee was set up to begin planning a district event on "Wellness" in April. Volunteers for the sub-committee – Kelly-Lynn Musico, Karen Green Williams, Kristin Schrie and Melissa Hewitt. Proposed format will be to have a panel session and perhaps an expo or store front opportunity with in-house and local experts/service providers. It was recommended that Mental Health Lead, Ellie Fraser be involved in planning. **Sue will contact Ellie and send out potential dates for a meeting in January.**

Report on People for Education's – "Making Connections Conference"

- Kelly-Lynn, Kristin, Jessica and Karen attended the Making Connections Conference held in Toronto on November 21. Feedback was very positive.
- Annie Kidder opened the conference outlining where public education has been, where it is going and how we are measuring what matters.
- Keynote speaker, Stuart Shanker spoke on the topic of Self-Regulation – The New Basics.
- Other sessions included a Plenary Panel Discussion: Beyond the 3R's – International perspectives on broader areas of learning; Ontario's Well-Being Strategy; For the Love of Reading; Moving on Up – Meeting the Needs of Students and Employers; and the Role and Function of the Ontario Ombudsman.
- Information was shared on Parents Engaged in Education. They are conducting a research project on the state of parent engagement in Ontario in 2016-17. The PEIE link is <http://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca/>
- Additional information on Ontario's Well-Being Strategy can be found at www.ontario.ca/studentwellbeing

Next Meeting

- February 6, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. via video conference.
- The final meeting of the school year will be held on May 15, 2017 in the Board Room of the Sarnia Education Centre beginning at 5:45 p.m.

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- Alexandra sent an email to PIC members inquiring about the possibility of students bringing their own iPads to school, with parental permission, and the Board installing educational apps on the devices. This would expand the use of classroom issued iPads. Sue will investigate with the Superintendent.

Adjournment: 9:01 pm

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary