

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

November 27, 2017

Chatham Regional Education Centre

Present:

Jim Costello, Director of Education; Ruth Ann Dodman, Trustee;
Nancy Simon, Chatham Kent S.S.; Alexandra Smith, Great Lakes S.S.;
Tracey Travis; John McGregor S.S.; Kelly-Lynn Musico, Northern Collegiate;
Angie Baresich, Brooke Central; Kristen Schrie, High Park;
Sharon Chapman, King George VI S; Melissa Hewitt, Queen Elizabeth II Sarnia;
Jennifer Whiteye, Naahii Ridge; Anne Patterson, Thamesville Area;
Annette Schleihauf, Zone Central; Lisa Tetrault, Chatham-Kent Public Health;
Martina Jackson, Lambton Public Health; Sue Fraser

Regrets:

Karen Phipps, Alexander Mackenzie S.S. / Hanna Memorial; Lisa Russell, Tilbury Area;
Shannon Sasseville, Trustee

Welcome and Introductory Remarks – Melissa Hewitt

- Melissa welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Business Arising from the Meeting of October 2, 2017

- Jim spoke to the Manager of IT re Synrevoice. School Messenger recently purchased Synrevoice. There are issues around US Patriot Act and the storage of student data on servers outside of Canada. Synrevoice data is stored in Burlington. Messenger had to move servers from US to Canada which could delay functionality of email. The IT Manager believes the email function exists within the package purchased. We are waiting to hear from Messenger regarding costs. **Jim will provide a further update in the new year re the new contract/price and services offered.** Many parents prefer online tools/social media as moving away from use of land lines.
- KEV School Cash Online - The 20 schools in the initial installation have been selected and notified. Each school's banking information has been collected and linked to the program. The school principals and secretaries have participated in a training webinar. A School Cash Simplified/KEV Group link has been provided to Accounting and testing is in progress. Still hopeful in meeting a December roll out to these schools. The list of pilot schools was shared. Schools were based on first come principal volunteers and represent a mix of elementary and secondary schools in the north and south. A big part of success will be the ability of parent buy in. In order to be successful schools will need about 80-85% of parents to participate.
- The Dean Kriellaars sessions were collaborative events and webinar was not an option.
- **Jim will investigate timelines for the bussing schedule to the new GLSS site in September.**

Feedback from Parent Evenings – October 24 & 26 – Dr. Dean Kriellaars

- Feedback was shared from the Dr. Dean Kriellaars presentations.
- Statistics on the twenty basic skills children should have by Grade 4 were of concern as skills were often lacking.
- Information was shared on opportunities to provide strategies on general physical activities that can be done in the classroom.
- Under the Daily Quality Physical Activity Program, students are provided 20 minutes of activity per day in addition to physical education.
- It was noted that some physical activity can be out of the comfort zone of regular classroom teachers and students.

- Students do not have gym class every day with the increased focus on math and literacy.
- Funds left over from the Regional PRO Grant on Physical Literacy will be used to expand opportunities with staff.

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

- Alexandra Smith, Melissa Hewitt and Jennifer Whiteye attended the Making Connections Conference held on November 11 in Toronto.
- Jennifer expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to attend the conference. Keynote speaker Dr. Jean Clinton spoke on the power of relationships and promoting well-being of entire self. Jennifer shared highlights from the sessions she attended; Ontario Renewed Vision promoting transferrable skills for students and changes to the report card; Beyond Native Studies; and Fundraising and Equity. She noted People for Education.ca as a good resource for parents and members of the school community.
- Alexandra and Melissa spoke about the session Academic or Applied. The Toronto DSB conducted a pilot where they got rid of Applied English and Math courses and had all Grade 9 students take Academic classes. Supports were put in place to help students succeed.
- Jim shared information regarding the pilot where twelve schools had Gr. 9 students take Academic level courses only. TDSB took part in a demographic drill down where they looked at 72,000 students, economic and race and the link to access and success. Data will be shared at the end of Semester 1 to see if the pilot will impact student achievement. There is often a correlation to the high expectation of teachers. Students will rise to the challenge.
- It was felt that often Gr. 8 teachers impact the pathway that students take in secondary school. The preparedness of Gr. 8 students entering Gr. 9 can vary. Jim noted that in addition to teacher recommendations, principals and resource teachers play a role in Gr. 9 placements but the parents/guardians sign off on the placement. They can say no.
- School administrators have been advised to avoid labelling students and putting limits on Gr. 9 placements. Placements and achievement results are reviewed in October. The placement of a student at age 13 should not impact their path going forward. Students need to be told that they can do better and be pushed to meet higher expectations. Sometimes there is a gray area and parents often know best what their child is capable of.
- Melissa shared information on a breakout session she attended on the positive outcomes of integrating math into daily curriculum.

Director's Update – Jim Costello

TELP

- Background information was shared on the Board's Technology Enriched Learning Plan (TELP). The initial phases of the plan began 5 years ago with students in Dresden and Wallaceburg as pilot projects. TELP was then expanded to all Grade 7 students. Training was provided to staff on the use of iPads as a tool in the classroom. Grade 7 students were then issued iPads. Students are permitted to take the devices home. iPads will stay with the students to Gr. 10 to help bridge the gap. By Grade 10 students should know which pathway they are on and parents can purchase a device of choice to meet their child's needs. The Grade 7 students who were issued iPads moved into Grade 9 this past September. Training was provided to Grade 9 teachers prior to the students moving into secondary school. iPads have been introduced to all Grade 7 students across the district since the expansion of TELP.
- The use of iPads has increased engagement with students; however, no major increases in EQAO results have been realized.
- The cost of issuing iPads annually is approximately \$600,000 to \$700,000 depending on the number of Grade 7 students. The current TELP model is in jeopardy due to the increased costs of iPads. The Ministry has also reduced Technology Enriched Learning Funding (TELF) to school boards. Options to consider going forward are moving to a 2:1 iPad model where an iPad is shared between two students; providing a class allocation of iPads for students to share; or a BYOi model where students would bring in their own iPads as the Board has committed to iOS apps for Math and Literacy. The BYOi option could pose an equity issue. A survey would need to be conducted to determine the number of parents/students interested in providing their own device if the Board installs the apps.

- **PIC members were asked to consider the TELP options outlined and to obtain feedback from their School Councils and other councils if possible and then email Jim and/or Sue.**
- Principals on the Board's IT Advisory Committee will also be seeking input from parents and students. **Parent feedback will be on the next PIC agenda.**
- Other options discussed included providing a complete class set of iPads to sign out or rotate for class use and the possibility of school councils fundraising for additional devices.
- It was suggested that input be obtained from Gr. 9 teachers on how much the iPads are actually being used in the secondary setting.
- Questions were raised regarding the use of eBooks within the board.
- It was noted that schools have a 6-year replacement cycle for technology equipment. Each school principal also has an IT allocation that they can use to purchase additional devices.
- Information was shared on how Board issued iPads are protected and the process to repair or replace broken devices. As part of the TELP, students/parents are required to sign a contract prior to iPads being issued for student use. If the Board moves to BYOi, this will be a gray area that will need to be addressed.
- **Jim will investigate the status of iPads for Year 4 and 5 students who were issued iPads as part of the initial pilot project.**

Independent Review of Assessment and Reporting

- The Ministry of Education is conducting an Independent Review of Assessment and Reporting in the province. This could result in changes to the current reporting format.
- All boards were asked to send teams to regional workshops to provide input. Melissa Hewitt will be attending the December 4 session in Windsor as a parent representative.
- Discussion took place on the merit of summative evaluations vs. assigning marks or grades.
- Jim spoke to the rationale for higher order, critical thinking vs. knowledge based assessment as students can access information on devices. Students demonstrate what they can do with what they know.
- Concerns were shared that often students are not prepared to enter college or university.
- **Parents and community members can access the Independent Review of Assessment and Reporting online survey at <http://ontariolearningprovince.ca/>.**

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- Alexandra shared frustration around the process and timelines for school councils to order spirit wear under the new procedures. Jim noted that all school boards are required to adhere to the government's Broader Public Sector Guidelines. Some PIC members agreed that the process is not clear at the school level. Jim advised that School Council representatives should work with their principals to order merchandise. The principal can contact the Purchasing Supervisor to assist with ordering spirit wear through approved vendors. Some councils are going around the process so money is not going through the school bank account. Presently orders over \$1500 must go through the purchase order process; however, the Board is considering raising this amount. **Alexandra will message Jim to articulate the issue at P.E. McGibbon and he will investigate with Purchasing.**
- In response to a question regarding posting permissions for the Closed PIC Facebook group, it was clarified that at this only the three designated administrators can post on the site and approve members. The question was asked whether there is an option to allow any PIC member to post information and have the administrator approve. Presently administrators log into the main contact account, under Heather's name. Only the main contact can grant access rights and change settings. The initial pilot was to be a closed group to push out information vs. two-way communication. It was suggested that in future, PIC could set up a Facebook page to push information out to the broader school community to allow PIC to share information and communicate with school council members.

Next Meeting - February 5, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. via video conference.

Adjournment: 8:34 pm

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary