

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

May 11, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.

Via Teleconference

Present:

John Howitt, Director of Education; Ruth Ann Dodman, Trustee; Sue Fraser, Recorder; Jamie Tinney Rea, Bright's Grove; Angie Baresich, Brooke Central; Tracy Pound, Errol Village; Melinda Hazen, High Park; Sharon Chapman, King George VI Sarnia; Jennifer Whiteye, Naahii Ridge; Melissa Hewitt, Queen Elizabeth II Sarnia; Karen Slater, Sir John Moore; Annette Schliehauf, Zone Central; Nancy Simon, Chatham-Kent S.S.; Alexandra Smith, Great Lakes S.S.; Jacqueline Dick, John McGregor S.S.; Tracey Machan, Northern Collegiate; Marian McEwan, Chatham-Kent Public Health; Martina Jackson, Lambton Public Health

Guests: Superintendent of Business, Brian McKay, Superintendents of Education Ben Hazzard and Mary Mancini

Regrets: Nicole Hopper, Thamesville Area

Welcome and Introductions – Director of Education John Howitt / PIC Co-Chair Jamie Tinney Rea

- Jaime welcomed everyone to the Parent Involvement Committee meeting and introduced Superintendent McKay.

2020-2021 Budget – Brian McKay, Superintendent of Business

- Superintendent of Business McKay indicated that school boards have not received budget information from the Ministry of Education and are not expecting any information until at least mid-May. He is not anticipating any significant changes to the 2020-2021 Budget.
- Superintendent McKay spoke to the budget slide presentation that was shared with members of the Parent Involvement Committee.
- He explained the two count dates used by the Ministry of Education for funding purposes that reflect enrolment estimates as of October 31 and revised estimates as of March 31 each year. Funding is based on the ADE or average daily enrolment for the year. Projected enrolment for the 2020-2021 school year back to 2013-2014 was provided for both elementary and secondary students. Board staff is projecting a total of 14,416 elementary students for next year, a decline of approximately 75 students. A total of 6,868 secondary students, based on the ADE, is projected for the 2020-2021, an increase of approximately 70 students. This is the first time we have anticipated an increase in secondary enrolment in several years. Based on projected enrolment, the Board is anticipating a slight reduction in the overall number of students for next year.
- Superintendent McKay reviewed the anticipated Board's Revenue Forecast Summary by Grant Category. Funding is broken down into four main areas: funding for classrooms; funding for schools; funding for locally managed systems; and funding for specific education priorities. Similar funding of approximately \$245M is expected for 2020-2021.
- Director Howitt and Superintendent McKay responded to questions asked by PIC members.
 - The enrolment for international students is down by almost half for next year. This year over 100 FTE students were enrolled and as of now projections for next year are around 60 FTE. This is an area of concern because of the uncertainty of travel due to COVID-19. Options are being investigated to provide virtual or eLearning opportunities to support international students in obtaining an Ontario diploma. The Board is confident that a robust International Education program can be provided. Some students are still here and able to take part next year. This continues to be an area of focus that the Board is watching closely.
 - Under the current plan if boards have a surplus and grant funding left over, historically boards have been permitted to keep funding. Transfer income from reserves of \$2.5M is shown on the last page of the budget slides. Boards can maintain surplus and bring in funding to use in future years. Surplus funding in reserves is not used for salaries but for one-time capital projects to enhance the education system.
 - Current funding formulas are all enrolment driven so if there is a decline in enrolment, the Board will see a reduction in funding.

- Director Howitt thanked Superintendent McKay for attending and acknowledged his work for the LKDSB and across the province. He understands the student programming aspect to ensure students get the dollars they need.
- Jamie thanked Superintendent McKay for his presentation on behalf of PIC.

Business Arising from the Meeting of February 10, 2020

- PRO Grants that did not take place have been postponed until next year. Boards are still waiting on direction from the Ministry as to whether funding will be carried over.
- Information regarding the \$25 childcare supplement paid by the government during labour disruption was posted on both the LKDSB and CLASS websites.
- Google Classrooms is not an option for external email addresses. The PIC Facebook group will be revisited in the fall once new members are confirmed.
- Fundraising will be discussed in the fall.

Director's Update

- Director Howitt introduced Superintendent Ben Hazzard who oversees Early Years/Elementary Program and Superintendent Mary Mancini who oversees Student Success/Secondary Program. They joined the meeting to obtain input from parents/guardians on the delivery of education being provided during remote learning.
- Based on the Thoughtexchange survey that was conducted, there has been contradiction in responses as some parents/families are finding the current situation challenging and are asking for less work to be assigned while some families would like to see more interaction with classroom educators.
- As a follow up to the Ministry of Education announcement, the Board is seeking input around the need for enhanced live teacher led instruction. Superintendent Hazzard outlined the options for consideration:
 - Option 1 - Learning on demand and live teacher support (students complete work at their own pace with live teacher support at least twice per week via Google Meet or phone calls).
 - Option 2 - Learning on demand (students complete work at own pace and submit for teacher to provide written feedback via email, messages via SeeSaw, or Google Classroom).
 - Option 3 - Not at this time (students remain registered at the school, but parents are opting not to participate in remote learning at this time).
- Under Options 1 and 2 assigned work to students would continue to be approximately 5 hours per week for Kindergarten to Grade 6 and 10 hours per week for Grades 7 and 8.
- Guidelines for secondary students are to spend 3 hours per course per week. Superintendent Mancini noted that the frequency of contacts for secondary teachers is different based on the number of students.
- Comments shared included: some students do better with live instruction; some families prefer flexibility for teacher supports as many parents/guardians work during the day; option for more pre-recorded concepts taught; preference for work to be sent out at the start of the week for students to work at own pace and provide flexibility for families; parents frustrated that teachers are using different platforms – trying to help children with multiple platforms; some teachers need IT support to ensure students can access and open documents; some families and teachers have issues with connectivity; concerns with equity – lots of families struggling with no support at home for remote learning, mental health for students and parents; some parents of students with special needs feel lost; on demand learning can be problematic for teachers with children at home; some teachers and parents having a hard time engaging with students when told marks can't go down after March 13 – work they do can only improve mark.
- **The majority of PIC members supported Option 1 with on demand learning with the option for live support twice per week. Parents like the flexibility to submit work but want opportunity to have live interaction.**
- Principals will be sending a letter to parents/guardians seeking input on their family's preference to support their child(ren) remote learning.
- Director Howitt thanked PIC members for the valuable feedback and examples to help administration gain a better understanding of needs from a JK to Grade 12 perspective.
- Should the closure extend to the end of June the Board will shift to Phase 3 of remote learning. Educators will be looking to tailor needs to best meet the needs of families without impacting staff mental health.

- Superintendent Mancini thanked members for their frank and honest feedback. She clarified that March 13 is the base-line mark set by the Ministry; however, it is the expectation for students to continue to engage and for teachers to continue to reach out to students to encourage them to participate. Some parents are trying to encourage students without success. Teachers continue to reach out to all students regardless of mark. If teachers are not successful, the Principal and Student Success staff are also reaching out to students. Student Success Teams meet virtually to review the names of students forwarded by teachers who are struggling to engage and not active in the learning process. Social Workers and Psychologists are also reaching out to students on their caseload. Some who struggle in school setting are thriving and some who thrive in a social setting are struggling.
- Parents/guardians who have concerns can contact the school principal who will trigger the regular processes in place to provide support to students. Staff are also doing this during the reach out process. Parents can leave a message at the school as the voicemailbox is checked regularly.
- Comments were shared as to what next year will look like in the classroom with the wide range of work being done by students and whether some will be behind. Director Howitt stressed that educators are adept at addressing the needs of students who are not on the same page and that it is essential as educators to meet the differentiated needs of students. This will be more relevant as we come out of the pandemic.

COVID-19 Q/A

- Will there be access to tools over the summer to assist students?
Superintendent Hazzard is responsible for the elementary Summer Learning Program and Superintendent Sherman oversees the secondary Summer School Program. Credit based courses will run pretty much as normal. Boards are waiting on details from the Ministry of Education for the elementary Summer Learning Program. Depending on the timelines for school closures summer school programs may run face to face or remotely. Superintendent Hazzard shared that they have offered summer programs in the past that focus on math skills. Program staff are looking at being flexible around what it may look like online, or in August vs. July, and where programs can be hosted in smaller communities vs. just Saria and Chatham.
- What will happen if there is a second wave of COVID19 if children go back to school?
At this time there are no concrete answers, but we can expect that schools will not return to normal practice until there is a vaccine. School boards continue to take direction from the Medical Office of Health and the Ministry of Education.
- What impact will the cancellation of EQAO have going forward?
School boards have not been given clear direction. EQAO was under review. The OSSLT (Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test) is a graduation requirement. There is a plan in place for those students graduating in January who had not had an opportunity to write the OSSLT (adjudication). There is discussion on possibly offering two OSSLTs next year, one in Grade 10 and a second in Grade 11 for those students who missed writing in Grade 10.
- Will students get the opportunity to get their personal belongings?
The LKDSB and the SCCDSB are in the process of developing a protocol for access for students and or parents/guardians to gather belongings. Protocols need to be approved by the local Medical Officers of Health. The process for all students/parents to access schools will take weeks.
- What will transitioning from Grade 8 to 9 look like for students with special needs?
Transition plans are being developed for those students new to Kindergarten with exceptionalities and for students moving from Grade 8 to 9. Information will be coming out soon.
- Has consideration been given for graduating students who will not be going to post-secondary school and want to return to secondary school?
The Ministry of Education changed the funding a few years ago so students with 34 credits are no longer funded. Students wishing to return should notify the principal or guidance staff. Although class size caps are in place, typically adjustments are made to welcome students back.
- Who will determine if Grade 8 and Grade 12 graduations take place in the fall?
The Ministry has not provided specific direction so it will be up to individual schools to organize. Direction will come from Senior Administration that Grade 12 graduations take place in the fall. Previously secondary graduation ceremonies took place in the fall and recently shifted to spring. Plans for Grade 8 graduations have been postponed and are on hold at this time.

Reopening Considerations

- Direction will predominantly come from the Ministry level. The Board will likely send out another Thoughtexchange to gather parent voice. Input/concerns can be shared via email to the Director's Office. Should schools reopen, and if any limitations are put on numbers, priority would be given to graduating students. Online options would still be available for parents who are not comfortable sending children to schools.
- The 2020-2021 School Year Calendar is posted on the Board website.
- The work of the local Health Units was acknowledged during these extraordinary times.

Board Strategic Plan – Priorities – Director Howitt

- The draft format of the Board Strategic Plan was presented to Board at the April 28 meeting and will go to Board on May 12 for final approval.
- The Board of Trustees is not recommending changes to the Vision and Mission – Our Students Shaping Our World and Fostering Success for Every Student Every Day.
- Director Howitt presented the final version of the Strategic Priorities:
 - Student Achievement & Well-Being
 - Advance high standards for innovative and responsive learning
 - Inclusive Diversity
 - Champion anti-oppressive education
 - Trusting Relationships
 - Strengthen relationships based on respectful collaboration
 - Sustainable Stewardship
 - Optimize human, financial and physical resources

Thoughts and feedback are welcomed.

Co-Chair Update from Ministry Teleconference on April 23

- Tracey and Jamie took part in the Ministry teleconference for Parent Involvement Committee Chairs.
- The purpose of the virtual meeting was to allow PIC Co-Chairs to share their experiences supporting students with home learning.
- The Ministry will provide a summary of the experiences and challenges that were identified. Similar comments were made as to what was shared by PIC members during the meeting. The summary will be shared with the full committee once received.

District Event with Dr. Karyn Gordon – April 30 – Postponement and Options to Reschedule in the Fall

- We can reschedule the presentation prior to December 1, 2020 with no penalty.
- Option for hybrid model for events hosted by school councils or by family of school regions.
- Both options are on hold until larger gatherings are permitted by the Medical Officer of Health.
- PIC members supported the hybrid model that would involve reduced numbers at multiple sites and allow for social distancing.
- Sue has reached out to Dr. Karyn regarding a possible extension to the timeline to reschedule in light of COVID 19; to confirm if recording the session would be permitted; and whether an alternative platform is an option.

PIC Planning for 2020-2021 - Membership

- Members who will not be returning next year were asked to notify Sue.
- The revised application form incorporating the agreed upon suggestions will be shared with members prior to September to prepare for the 2020-21 application process.

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- The question was asked whether schools who have not spent the \$500 allocated to school councils will be permitted to carry it forward. The technical paper with the GSN release is needed to know what the Ministry is expecting Boards to internally fund.

Next Meeting

- Tentative date - Monday, October 5, 2020 - if face to face at the Chatham Regional Education Centre at 6:30 p.m. Remaining dates for 2020-21 will be set at the October meeting.
- Jamie thanked Director Howitt for his involvement in the PIC and thanked everyone for participating in the meeting.

Adjournment: 8:21 pm

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary