

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

October 29, 2019 – 6:30 p.m.

Chatham Regional Education Centre

Present:

John Howitt, Director of Education; Ruth Ann Dodman, Trustee; Lareina Rising, Trustee; Sue Fraser, Recorder; Jamie Tinney Rea, Bright's Grove; Angie Baresich, Brooke Central; Tracy Pound, Errol Village; Melinda Hazen, High Park; Melissa Hewitt, Queen Elizabeth II Sarnia; Karen Slater, Sir John Moore; Nicole Hopper, Thamesville Area; 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

Regrets:

Jennifer Whiteye, Naahii Ridge; Sharon Chapman, King George VI Sarnia

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

- Director Howitt welcomed everyone to the first Parent Involvement Committee meeting of the school year and thanked members for attending.
- Director Howitt introduced himself. He stressed the importance of living in the local community and noted that he works between the Sarnia and Chatham Education Centres. Director Howitt spoke to the warm welcome he has received since joining the LKDSB and to the strength of the Board's Senior Team and their staff. As part of his entry plan, he hopes to visit every school prior to the holiday break.
- As per the PIC By-Laws employees of the Board may serve as parent members of the Committee but they must inform the Committee of their employment at the first meeting they attend. Jamie informed the Committee that she is employed as an Occasional Teacher with the Board.
- Members introduced themselves and a special welcome was extended to new members.

Business Arising from the Meeting of May 13, 2019

- Information submitted by PIC was included in the Board's submission to the Ministry of Education as part of the consultation process on the impact of funding changes.

Director's Update – John Howitt

- Director Howitt spoke to the warm welcome he has received by staff, students, volunteers, community representatives, First Nations partners and local politicians. He has met with local leaders to discuss strategies to bring families into Chatham-Kent and Sarnia Lambton.

Pupil Accommodation Report

- The annual Pupil Accommodation Report was presented at the October 22 Board meeting. The report provides detailed information on student enrolment compared to funded pupil spaces in schools, conditions of facilities along with operating and maintenance costs. The moratorium on school reviews and closures is still in place so school boards cannot pass any motions for school consolidations. At the time the moratorium was put in place there was mention of a possible review of process and considerations given to rural schools. An end date to the moratorium and/or changes are unclear at this time. Once the moratorium is lifted, it is expected that the government will issue revised procedures on what the process will look like. Accordingly, Administration would make changes to the LKDSB regulations for approval by the Board before any formal accommodation reviews could begin. Director Howitt noted that declining enrolment continues in the LKDSB schools but has levelled off compared to earlier in the decade.
- The LKDSB has over 8,000 empty pupil places. This is an ongoing challenge because it impacts staffing and the Boards ability to provide program, especially in smaller schools. Recommendations contained in the Pupil Accommodation Report are the same as what was presented to Trustees four years ago. Of the eight recommended areas for review, four have been completed and four remain. Director Howitt explained that when the moratorium is lifted the remaining phases will be reviewed and if appropriate, presented to Trustees for consideration.

- Thoughtexchange was used previously to seek input from communities prior to naming the phases outlined in the Pupil Accommodation Report. Phases one to four were adjusted and the ARC process was based on the revisions. The Board would look to gather input through Thoughtexchange for the remaining four phases.
- The 2019-2020 Pupil Accommodation Report can be viewed on the LKDSB Website.
- It was noted that the Board can learn from prior consolidations and areas that can be improved on.
- An announcement regarding the Forest K to 12 consolidation is expected soon.

Entry Plan

- Director Howitt reviewed the standard questions posed to stakeholders as part of his Entry Plan. The Board's strategic plan and engagement model are reviewed every five years and a review will take place in late February or March 2020. **Members of PIC were asked to share their thoughts on the Board's mission, vision and belief statements and the engagement model.**
- Comments were shared on the branding of the LKDSB and options to refresh or rebrand. The current logo has been in place since amalgamation in 1998. The current format does not translate well to social media. There was consensus by PIC members to adapt the logo to social media vs an entire rebrand due to cost.
- PIC members commented on achievements that the LKDSB should be proud of which include offering the Grade 11 Indigenous Education course; being a leader in the use of technology; introducing Math coaches and resources to improve achievement results.
- PIC members spoke to areas that they feel pose challenges for the Board. Timelines for standardized assessments (Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10) and ensuring that when students reach Grade 11 that they "are getting it and not flying under the radar". Declining enrolment and funding reductions continue to be a challenge.
- **Director Howitt will email Entry Plan questions to PIC members to respond prior to the next meeting.**

Parent Communications

- Feedback was requested on the Board's communication process to parents related to the possible CUPE strike. Parents indicated that emails were timely, and the email blast was effective. Information was also posted on school websites and shared via social media. It was noted that secondary teachers were preparing students by providing work to be done in the event of an extended strike. Similar plans would be implemented in elementary schools, especially for students in higher grades. Director Howitt advised that the completion of student work would have to be on a voluntary basis and not assessed as not all students have access to technology/Wi-Fi. The LKDSB worked in consultation with the SCCDSB to develop a communication strategy.

PIC Update – Sue Fraser

Budget

- The 2018-2019 Budget Summary was included in the agenda package. The summary will be posted on the LKDSB website.
- The central PIC budget for 2019-2020 is \$8,545.00. The funding allocation is enrolment based along with a board amount of \$5,000.00. Any surplus funds remaining in the central budget must be returned to the Ministry of Education.
- Each school once again received \$500 to be used to enhance parent engagement.
- It was recommended that additional parents be given the opportunity to attend the People for Education Conference should there be funds remaining in the central PIC budget.

PRO Grant Update

- Previously school councils would submit project applications directly to the Ministry of Education who would approve funding.
- This year the Ministry of Education has changed the process for the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants program. New for this year, school boards will receive a predetermined funding amount for parent engagement projects.

- Projects will be required to demonstrate a commitment to respecting the role of parents in students' educational experiences by working with parents or seeking parent input on how schools can:
 - Provide a safe and welcoming school environment;
 - Maintain open communication with teachers;
 - Respect parents as valued partners within the education system in relation to decisions about their child's education; and,
 - Parents are informed about the content of the Ontario Curriculum Guidelines.
- District school boards will work with their Parent Involvement Committees and are encouraged to work with parent stakeholder groups, school councils, Special Education Advisory Committees, and Indigenous Education Advisory Councils.
- The LKDSB received funding in the amount of \$13,873.94.
- Information was shared on past PRO Grant events held by schools as well as larger district events hosted by PIC. Attendance at smaller school events has been better than at larger events.
- The Committee discussed options regarding the application and approval process as well as the need to develop guidelines, confirm timelines and outline next steps. Other options would be to divide the funding among schools and allow individual schools to organize events focusing on the areas identified; to divide the funding among schools that apply; or to organize one large conference type event with a big-name speaker(s).
- Funds would need to be spent by June 1 as the Board is required to submit a final report to the Ministry by July 15, 2020. If the application process is supported, information would be sent to principals to work with their school councils to submit applications by January 1, 2020.
- PIC members supported forming a sub-committee to bring back recommendations.
Melissa Hewitt, Tracey Machan and Nancy Simon volunteered to work with John and Sue to develop an application and approval process for review at the next PIC meeting.

Event Planning

- Each year the Parent Involvement Committee organizes and hosts a spring event(s) for parents. Past speakers and event themes were highlighted (mental health, resiliency, cyber safety etc.). Event costs are paid through the central PIC budget. Many parents are unable to attend the district events and often speakers do not allow their presentations to be taped for parents to access later.
- Possible options regarding the use of funding included: development of online resources for parents to access; having students present on school projects to demonstrate how they are learning and becoming good citizens or have them make movies at school to share at an event; community speakers with more nights in targeted areas to appeal to all; or carousel sessions to allow parents to select areas of interest.
- Director Howitt spoke to the Board's shift to the *Family of Schools* model where Superintendents are working with the secondary school and elementary feeder schools to build continuity from K to Gr. 12. Administration is looking at data related to students in academic vs. applied courses and the need for staff and parents to work together to make informed choices to ensure that education pathways remain open to ensure that students are on the right path to reach their goals. Based on grad rate data, students taking a majority of academic courses are far more likely to graduate than if the majority of courses are applied. Director Howitt commented that generally when we raise the bar, students will rise to the occasion and meet the level of expectation. Parents need to be informed of course selection options and be involved in conversations. They also need to be aware that Math and Science help is available to students and how to access it. This could be incorporated into an information session.
- **PIC members were asked to give some thought to topics of interest for discussion at the next meeting and to email suggestions to Sue or John.**
- Trustee Rising spoke to providing enrichment opportunities for all students (film makers, scientists) and to provide them with opportunities to discuss areas of interest (volunteer involvement, scouts). Students excel in areas that are not always mark related. Experiences feed into further interest in different subject areas.

Upcoming Events

- People for Education's "Making Connections" Conference is being held on Saturday, November 2 in Toronto. Alexandra Smith and Mel Hazen will be attending on behalf of the LKDSB. They will report back at the next meeting.

Purpose and Review of PIC/By-laws – John Howitt

- Proposed revisions to the current By-laws were sent out for review and input.
- The document was updated to reflect parent/guardian.
- The title of the committee will not be changed at this time as the Ministry reference is still Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).
- Background information was shared on the selection process for the two community members. It was noted that the two local health units work closely with the school boards on several initiatives and representatives often present at school and parent events. It was suggested that a selection process for community members be implemented. Representatives from other agencies such as Rebound or local law enforcement would also be good community members. Community representatives need to have a district perspective. The health units have a similar mandate and would continue to work collaboratively should only one representative be on PIC going forward.
The PIC By-laws allow for up to three community members. The selection process for community members will be reviewed for next year.
- The Committee will also revisit having Board employee group members on PIC (principals, teachers, support staff). Under the Ministry regulations inclusion of Board employee group members is an option for parent involvement committees but is not mandated.
- At the last People for Education Conference the question was asked if local Parent Involvement Committees are parent led or Board led.

Review of Parent Application Form

- The term *mandate* at the bottom of page two will be changed to *purpose* to align with paragraph two on page one.
- A correction was noted on the line *Which school(s) does (do) your child(ren) attend.*
- Comments were shared regarding additional information provided. It was recommended that a check box be added to identify if their child is in a French Immersion or Special Education program. A suggestion was made to add a section to have parents check off other demographic information; if they wish to voluntarily self-id; if the student is in a Kinship home or if their child is LGBTQ. It was suggested that perhaps a section could be added at the bottom of the form to allow parents to voluntarily identify any areas of diversity they wish to represent or advocate vs. listing check boxes.
- **An updated Parent Application form will be reviewed at a future meeting.**

Nominations and Election of PIC Co-chair for Two-Year Term

- Tracy Pound and Tracey Machan volunteered to be the PIC Co-Chair for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years Tracy Pound supported Tracey Machan being the Co-Chair.
- Tracey Machan will serve as PIC Co-Chair for the two-year term. Congratulations were extended.

Future Meeting Dates

- The LKDSB PIC typically meets four times per year with the first meeting being held at the Chatham Regional Education and the final meeting held at the Sarnia Education Centre. The other meetings are held via videoconference from the two Education Centres.
- The next meeting will be held on Monday, **December 2, 2019**, at 6:30 p.m. via video conference from the Sarnia and Chatham Education Centres.
- **February 10, 2020** at 6:30 p.m. via video conference.
- The final meeting of the school year will be held on **May 11, 2020** in the Board Room of the Sarnia Education Centre beginning at 5:45 p.m. Superintendent of Business McKay will provide an overview of the 2020-2021 Budget.

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- People for Education Conference report back. Attendees will obtain information from other parent representatives regarding the new PRO Grant process.
- Teleconference for subcommittee members to discuss the PRO Grant application process.
- Director Howitt will follow up with the Principal of CKSS regarding a parent session on differentiated instruction.
- Sue will invite Katie Colameco, the Board's Mental Health Lead to attend the next meeting to speak to results of the School Climate Survey.
- Superintendent of Education, Ben Hazzard will attend the next meeting to obtain input from PIC on the 2020-2021 School Year Calendar. A draft of the proposed calendar will be sent out with the agenda to allow members to review it prior to the meeting.

Adjournment: 8: 33 pm

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary