

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

May 14, 2018

Sarnia Education Centre

Present:

Jim Costello, Director of Education; Karen Phipps, Alexander Mackenzie S.S. / Hanna Memorial; 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; Jennifer Whiteye, Naahii Ridge; Melissa Hewitt, Queen Elizabeth II Sarnia; Annette Schleihauf, Zone Central; Lisa Tetrault, Chatham-Kent Public Health; Martina Jackson, Lambton Public Health; Sue Fraser

Regrets:

Ruth Ann Dodman, Trustee; Sharon Chapman, King George VI (S), Anne Patterson, Thamesville Area; Lisa Russell, Tilbury Area

Welcome and Introductory Remarks – Melissa Hewitt

- Melissa welcomed everyone to the final meeting of the school year.
- She introduced Superintendent of Business, Brian McKay to present an overview of the upcoming school year budget.

Budget Information Session – Brian McKay, Superintendent of Business

- Superintendent McKay provided an overview of the 2018/19 Grants for Student Needs (GSNs), noting that all boards are funded using a similar model. (A copy of the presentation will be included with the minutes.)
- There are no major changes to the funding model. Funding is broken down into four main areas: funding for classrooms; funding for schools; funding a locally managed systems; and funding for specific education priorities. Over half of the province's education budget of \$24.53 Billion is allocated to funding for classrooms.
- Information on birth rate history and student enrolment data was shared. The Board is starting to see some stability with a slight enrolment increase in the secondary panel. International students are included in enrolment numbers. Generally, the Board has over 100 FTE international students and next year we are anticipating approximately 109 students from about 25 countries. Overall the Board will see an enrolment decline next year of approximately 139 students.
- Provincial grant funding changes for 2018/19 were highlighted and include: additional funding in special education; funding for additional teachers to engage Grade 7 and 8 students in career pathways planning; adjustments through Diversity in English Language Learners; increased funding for mental health workers to support secondary students - to be phased in over 2 years; funding to meet requirements under labour agreements; funding for 6 Lead positions previously funded through the GSN allocations will move to School Board Admin. and Governance; joint use funding (application based); Early Years capital, Indigenous Education; enhancements to keep up with transportation costs; and the province's cash management strategy which may impact Board short term borrowing costs.
- The Board's Revenue Forecast Summary by Grant Category was reviewed. Variances between 2018/19 estimates and 2017/18 Revised Estimates reflect an overall decrease of \$5,951,636. Areas reflecting increases and decreases were noted.
- In response to questions regarding TELP Superintendent McKay explained that funding to purchase iPads for next year was allocated in this year's budget. TELP continuation will be year by year decision. Year four of the program will continue next year based on survey feedback and support for equity.

Business Arising from the Meeting of February 5, 2018

- TELP is moving forward for next year as noted.
- Purchasing School Spirit Wear – as a result of feedback from stakeholders, the Board issued a RFP in the spring to create a Vendor of Record list for school awards,

promotional items and spirit wear. Contracts were signed with additional vendors to meet school based purchasing needs for these items. Information was communicated to schools. Based on school needs, vendors can request to be added to the list in future. It was noted that the purchase of team uniforms involves a different process. Questions can be referred back to school administrators to work with purchasing staff.

- KEV School Cash Online Pilot – a total of 20 schools were involved in the phase 1 pilot. Remaining schools will be added by the end of the school year for implementation in September. The vendor recommended not offering the option of credit card payment until the program is fully up and running. This feature can be activated in future. Parents will have an opportunity to change their method of payment. The current built in fee of 2% covers the annual cost of School Cash Online. Fees for parents opting for credit card payment will cost an additional 3% or 5% in total. The fee structure was disclosed up front. A minimum fee is charged based on transactions with funds remaining going back to the schools on a pro-rated basis. The fee cannot be increased based on penetration rate. The issue of equity was raised for schools with a lower number of parents opting in. In future the goal is to have the ability for secondary activity fees to be paid through School Cash Online with parents having the ability to pre-load accounts. The technical slow down during the pilot phase was with the vendor. A communication will be issued to parents regarding the September roll out. **It was recommended that a check box be added to forms confirming the method of payment – paid through KEV.**

The permission form feature is available but has not been added at this time. The Board will look at adding this component in future.

It was also stressed that school staff/event organizers need to provide office staff with information regarding fee collection for events and activities. There needs to be a link between the office and classroom teachers.

During the pilot phase penetration was not great at some schools other than by members of the school council. Communication is needed to make parents aware. It was noted that demographics vary by school and some face socio economic issues. In response to the question “what if a parent does not have a bank account?” - bringing cash to the school to load for School Cash Online is not an option as the secretary becomes responsible which poses a security issue. A student number is needed to sign up. Grandparents or other family members may not have access to the number as schools need to protect student information.

- TELP – Comments were shared. Concern was expressed that some Gr. 7 and 8 teachers were upset that they were not consulted regarding the continuation of TELP. The Director spoke to survey results which reflected support to continue TELP. Changing instructional practices is key. Beyond next year funding would have to come out of the IT budget.

Concern was shared that not all parents are supportive of TELP.

At one school students were not permitted to take the devices home. It was suggested that instructions be provided to parents on how to access student work via Google classroom and other apps.

Some classes are dealing with social media issues. Principals were recently surveyed regarding the use of Instagram and Snapchat and whether there is any educational merit in using these programs.

The question was raised as to whether the Board would be liable for a bullying incident if the student did not have their own device and was using a Board issued device.

Students are engaged using the iPads; however, the EQAO test is written which may be problematic for some students.

- 2018-19 School Year Calendar - PIC feedback was shared with Superintendent Lounsbury, and in consultation with the coterminous board, the April PA Day was moved to April 3. The calendar has been submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval.

Feedback from Minister's Annual PIC Symposium – Alexandra Smith

- A team of 6 from the LKDSB attended the symposium, including Alexandra as PIC Co-chair, 5 school council parent representatives and a member of the Board's Indigenous Liaison Committee.
- Overall feedback from the conference was positive and parents were pleased to be given the opportunity to attend.
- Alexandra spoke to the sessions she attended; one of which was incorporating Indigenous Education in all courses.
- The crossover of information between PIC and other groups such as the ILC is beneficial. Jim noted that the ILC reviews funding and that the creation of an Indigenous Education Advisory Committee could assist in raising awareness among parents. He spoke to the success of the recent system wide Indigenous Education PA Day. The LKDSB is one of the leading boards in Indigenous Education curriculum studies at the secondary level and is looking at embedding at the elementary level as well.

Director's Update – Jim Costello

Pupil Accommodation

- This year a moratorium was placed on any new Pupil Accommodation Reviews until September 2018. The June 7 election will impact reviews going forward. If the Liberals are elected it is expected that the moratorium will be lifted.
- The Board has four consolidation visions yet to start on. Thoughtexchange was used to gather data for the proposed South Kent consolidation. Data was gathered regarding the length of bus rides, quality of program, and the issue of transporting secondary students to co-op placements.
- A Thoughtexchange survey was just conducted to obtain input for a City of Sarnia elementary school accommodation review.
- The other two areas identified for future review are Dresden and Mooretown.
- The Board will be able to enhance program opportunities if schools are consolidated especially in some of our very small schools.
- More information will be available following the election.

Field Trips – Alexandra Smith

- Clarification was requested on whether some field trips are not permitted, even if parents sign a waiver.
- Provincially, field trip safety is under strong review following the death of a student from TDSB who drown while on a field trip. Boards were asked to submit field trip policies and regulations.
- The Board does not have a list of trips that are not permitted. Field trips need to be have an education component and link to the Ontario curriculum. Teachers organizing field trips need to demonstrate the educational merit and ensure that there is an equity component so no students are denied participation because of ability or socio-economic issues. Stringent rules are in place for swimming and canoeing and other activities deemed to be of risk.
- Principals are able to provide assistance to families of students unable to pay the cost of classroom field trips. It was suggested that perhaps proof of need of assistance be provided as some parents have abused the system. It was stressed that public education cannot deny access. It was suggested that parents who don't have means to fund can help out in a volunteer capacity.
- Concerns were raised regarding pre-packaged, unhealthy lunch options provided for some students. This highlighted the need for school programs to provide healthy snacks for all students from an equity perspective, not solely based on need.

Water Bottle Filling Stations – Alexandra Smith

- Plant and Maintenance Staff are working on installation of water bottle filling stations at all schools. All schools should have in place by next summer.
- Digital counters are on filling stations to identify the number of plastic bottles saved.
- Some schools fundraised to purchase filling stations. The question was asked whether schools who purchased filling stations on their own will also receive a Board funded unit. Larger schools need more than one station. **Jim will investigate and report back.**
- Local grants were available through the health unit – Super Kids Chatham Kent.
- Some schools were notified of increased lead counts in water, boosting the need for filling stations.
- The Board is working to significantly reduce the use of plastic bottles.

Opening of Playground Equipment in Spring – Martina Jackson

- Concerns were shared around the timelines for opening playground equipment in spring.
- School inspections are done as soon as possible in April; weather permitting. To ensure student safety, playground equipment must remain closed until the base surfacing below the equipment is inspected and properly prepared from winter settling (i.e. rototilled, topped up etc.).
- If playground equipment is deemed unsafe following inspections, principals should contact Plant staff.
- The Board's insurance provider urges extreme caution and wants to mitigate risk. Questions were raised around liability and parents spoke to the need for physical activity. Students can be active without equipment.
- Natural playground options are being looked at by schools where possible.
- Comments were also shared regarding school baseball diamonds being overgrown. Individual principals can contact Plant staff.
- School tracks are also inspected. Some are in need of refurbishment.

PIC Planning for 2017-2018 – Membership

- **Members who are not returning next year were asked to email Sue.**
- Sue will be reviewing areas in need of representation. Jim will then speak to principals in the fall to submit names of candidates endorsed by their school councils.

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- The track used for the city wide track meet backs on to Hanna Memorial. The rain date for the meet is June 7 which is election day. Hanna has been named as a polling station. Concerns have been expressed over schools being used as polling stations from a safety perspective - strangers entering schools and increased traffic. Limited parking is also an issue. The preference is to use churches or community halls as polling stations.
- Concern was raised by a PIC member that parents were not made aware of the Speak Up School Climate Survey which is done every two years. Information was sent to principals to share with their school community. Survey information was posted on school websites. It was suggested that perhaps information could be posted on the PIC Facebook Page and that the page be opened up beyond school council chairs.
**The survey is mandated by the Ministry as part of the Mental Health Strategy.
Jim will investigate timelines and bring back an update in the fall.**

Next Meeting

- Monday, October 15, 2018 at the Chatham Regional Education Centre at 6:30 p.m.
- Remaining dates for 2018-19 will be set at the October meeting.

Adjournment: 8:47 pm

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary