

LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

February 10, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.

Sarnia Education Centre and Chatham Regional Education Centre (Video Conference)

Present:

John Howitt, Director of Education; Ruth Ann Dodman, Trustee; Sue Fraser, Recorder; 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; Nicole Hopper, Thamesville Area; Annette Schliehauf, Zone Central; Nancy Simon, Chatham-Kent S.S.; Jacqueline Dick, John McGregor S.S.; Tracey Machan, Northern Collegiate; Marian McEwan, Chatham-Kent Public Health

Regrets:

Jamie Tinney Rea, Bright's Grove; Alexandra Smith, Great Lakes S.S.; Karen Slater, Sir John Moore; Martina Jackson, Lambton Public Health

Welcome and Introductions – Director of Education John Howitt / PIC Co-Chair Tracey Machan

- Tracey welcomed everyone to the Parent Involvement Committee meeting.

Business Arising from the Meeting of December 2, 2019

- The PIC Facebook Group will be further discussed at the next meeting. Google Hangout cannot work with non-Board staff. In the meantime, Melinda Hazen will be added as an administrator for the closed PIC Facebook Group.

2019-2020 Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grant Applications - Update

- Director Howitt thanked members of the sub-committee for their work in reviewing all PRO Grant applications.
- We received a total of 17 applications, one of which was a joint submission between two elementary school councils. The LKDSB's total allocation is \$13,873.94. The total funding requested was \$15,585.00, an average of \$1,711.06. Members of the Sub-Committee agreed that individual school councils know the needs within their school communities. They therefore did not want to prioritize project submissions but rather grant each school a fair amount. Four of the funding requests were below the maximum of \$1,000 while the other 13 schools applied for the full \$1,000. The funding requested from the 4 schools was subtracted from the total allocation and the remainder divided among the 13 schools.
- PIC supported the recommendations of the sub-committee. **Sue will notify schools.**

District Event with Dr. Karyn – April 30, 2020

- Dr. Karyn is booked to present on April 30, 2020 – 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
- Marian volunteered to pick her up from the train station and drive her to the hotel/venue.
- Discussion took place on whether to alternate hosting the large parent events between Sarnia and Chatham. In the past this has been done but we did not see higher attendance rates. PIC supported hosting the event in the middle of the district at Lambton Kent Composite School in Dresden. Sue will make arrangements for the school booking, AV needs and order refreshments.
- Dr. Karyn's keynote will be Building Confidence – Learn 3 Strategies Parents Can Use to Build Their Kids' Confidence. The presentation will be of interest to parents and educators (Grades K to 12).
- Marian will contact DK Leadership to obtain the logo and Dr. Karyn's bio for a promotional poster or flyer along with the website link. Information will be shared with schools and posted on the Board and school websites. Sue and John will work with the Board's Public Relations Officer regarding other communication strategies. The two local health units will also promote the event via Twitter etc. All are welcome to attend.

- A suggestion was made to reach out to schools with culinary programs to assist with refreshments. Tracey and Nancy offered to pick up and deliver if needed.
- Director Howitt will welcome Dr. Karyn and Marian will do the thank you on behalf of PIC.
- PIC members thanked Marian for her work in booking Dr. Karyn and volunteering to be her driver.

Director's Update – John Howitt

Snapshots of Excellence

- Director Howitt shared the Snapshots of Excellence link on the LKDSB Website (Under Board, Communications). Each quarter, pictures and updates are posted highlighting some of the many good things happening in our schools. PIC Members were encouraged to check out Snapshots of Excellence.

Labour

- Feedback from PIC members was sought on the Board's communications regarding negotiation updates and notifications of strike actions. Secondary parents indicated that information for secondary schools was not as easy to locate and that there is some confusion with elementary updates. Parents may not be going to specific sites - ETFO for elementary and OSSTF for secondary. Some parents are getting updates from the school website. Emails are going out to parents where email addresses are in the system. Some schools are sending information home in hard copy.
- Professional Development opportunities are provided to staff that are working in schools during the strike action. Superintendents have organized PD sessions for ECE's and Educational Assistants. Principals are also utilizing time to review student profiles.
- Concern was raised over the number of days that elementary students are missing (5 as of this week). It was noted that last year more days were missed by the end of February due to bus cancellations. Curriculum is being adjusted because of days missed. Historically the government has considered the number of days missed, and the year deemed at risk before back to work legislation was imposed.
- Parent members spoke to the childcare supplement being paid by the government. Parents can claim up to \$25 per day for each child up to Grade 7. The link on the CLASS website was not very visible. **John will take feedback back to CLASS.**
- The question was raised as to when a decision will be made about the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). Concerns were raised that students are not getting the practice test. Directors across the province are asking as the test is scheduled for March 30. The government will make a decision, but it will be later than boards want. Should the test be delayed this year, it will be administered next year for Grades 10 and 11 students. Exceptions would need to be considered for students waiting to graduate and were attempting the OSSLT again this year.

Coronavirus

- The Board is in close talks with Chatham Kent Public Health and Lambton Public Health who communicate regularly and provide consistent messaging re the Coronavirus.
- Precautions for regular flu season should be taken. Beyond that we have not been directed to do anything further at this point.
- The closest reported case was a student in London who self-isolated knowing there was potential exposure.

Student Access to VPN's

- Background information was shared on the inappropriate use of social media by some students. The Board blocks inappropriate sites so that they cannot be accessed by students. Students are adept at getting around blocks and some students have gotten into trouble.
- A brief video on Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) was shared and will be sent to PIC members to share with their school councils.
- VPNs can be put on phones or iPads. A VPN works by routing a device's internet connection through a VPN private server rather than the internet service provider (so that when data is transmitted to the internet, it comes from the VPN rather than the computer. They allow individuals to connect in a secure way but can also allow access to blocked content. This allows an individual to trick or bypass the firewall into thinking they are somewhere else.

- The Board blocks VPNs as they become aware of their use, but others pop up. Blocks are put into place for security and protection. If students have access to a data plan, they can turn off the Board's Wi-Fi and go through the service provider and that Board has no control over that. Parents need to be aware and remind students that just because it may be easy to access a VPN, they should not circumvent the security measures put in place.

Other Business/Future Agenda Items

- PIC Facebook Group
- Update on PRO Grant events that have taken place.
Send snapshots of excellence to Sue or to Heather, including PRO Grant activities.
- Membership for the 2020-21 School Year.
- Fundraising ideas.

Next Meeting

- **May 11, 2020 – Sarnia Education Centre – Board Room.**
Superintendent Brian McKay will provide an overview of the 2020-2021 Budget.
The meeting will begin at 6:30 with dinner provided at 5:45.

Adjournment: 7:37 pm

Sue Fraser, Recording Secretary