

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

6:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Members: Abdulnaser Atef, Annette Dillon, Diana Mills, Jacquie Samuels, Jaime Morse, Jennifer Hood, Malaka Hendela (OCASC Member), Martyn Reid (OCASC Member), Seyi Okuribido-Malcolm, Kahmaria Pingue, Heather Kotelniski (ONFE)

Non-Voting Members: Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Wendy Hough (Trustee), Ian Morris (SEAC), Alain Brule (Principal, Cedarview Middle School), Sarah Pope (Principal, Castlefrank Elementary School)

Staff and Guests: Lynn Scott (Trustee), Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Nadia Towaij (Superintendent of Programming and Learning K-12), Kevin Gardner (Manager of Financial Services), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Kristin Riddell (Curriculum Services-Secondary Team), Brent Smith (Curriculum Services-Elementary), Emily Wagner (Curriculum Services-Elementary Team), Jennifer Offord (Curriculum Services-Elementary), Stephanie Bishop (Curriculum Services-Elementary Team), Engy Abdel Masieh (Policy Analyst), Nicole Guthrie (Manager of Board Services), Rebecca Grandis (Senior Board/Committee Coordinator), Darren Gatley (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Reid called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Annette Dillon,

THAT the agenda be approved

Carried

3. Action Items

3.a Parent Involvement Committee Work Plan

Chair Reid presented the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Work Plan to members.

During the discussion and in response to questions regarding the proposed PIC work plan, the following points were noted:

- In response to a query from Ms. Hendela, Chair Reid noted that the PIC Work Plan should not duplicate the Board's Work Plan as this would not allow PIC to bring forward items regarding parental issues, perspectives, and concerns;
- The PIC Work Plan allows flexibility in adding policy consultations and other items on agendas from Board directives;
- Chair Reid noted that some school councils and principals aided in reaching out to parents for feedback on the PIC Work Plan;
- In response to questions about how PIC advises on policy reviews, Executive Officer Giroux noted that the first draft of the PIC Work Plan included relevant Board policies for review, but that there was some concern that the committee work plan should not be dominated with Board reviews. She explained that the Board develops a Board Work Plan that informs policies and key initiatives, which can indicate which discussions or policies that may be presented to PIC or added to the agenda. She added that the Chair has proposed that the PIC Work plan be a two-year plan and, therefore, staff would not be able to predetermine all incoming items from the Board, although the plan could be regularly compared to the long range agenda. She further explained that once a consultation plan that involves PIC is approved by the Board, that there would be a request to PIC for it to be included in meetings for discussion or action which would be determined at the PIC agenda planning meetings;

Ms. Hood provided a presentation on a communication strategy for the PIC Communications Sub-Committee. The presentation outlined the structure and approach of the sub-committee, including developing a guiding document, the action plan, communications calendar, and onboarding of new members.

- Speaking in favour of the sub-committee, Ms. Mills noted that the sub-committee would allow PIC to effectively communicate the committee's role and responsibility to the community while also reaching out to give voice to parents, families, and non-traditional parent groups;
- Executive Officer Giroux noted that the sub-committee direction aligns with District practice and noted that the District communications team could collaborate by working with the communication sub-committee;

- Ms. Dillon noted the importance of the sub-committee working with Communications staff to ensure consistent messaging to the community;
- Ms. Hood expressed confidence in creating communications plans; however, she would welcome governance support to implement action;

Moved by Martyn Reid, seconded by Diana Mills,

THAT the PIC Communications Sub-Committee be established and that volunteers for the sub-committee be sought by email.

Carried

- Chair Reid noted that after the return to school in September 2021, PIC could have an opportunity to reach out to families to solicit feedback in order to communicate parental concerns to the District. He added that exit interviews could also be conducted with families having completed their first year in junior kindergarten, first or last year of secondary school, and other key transition experiences to further communicate parental feedback. He queried if there was a central mechanism to collect this data so that new families entering the District could have a better understanding of the education system;
- Chair Reid suggested that staff provide more information on the resources available to the Parent Involvement Committee;
- Executive Officer Giroux noted that this topic could be raised at PIC agenda planning to identify a timeline for discussion; and

Moved by Martyn Reid, seconded by Malaka Hendela,

THAT the Parent involvement Committee Work Plan be approved and continually reviewed.

Carried

- In response to a query from Ms. Hendela, Chair Reid noted that the work plan encompasses oversight of parental engagement spending.

4. Discussion Items

4.a Presentation: Destreaming the Grade 9 Math Curriculum - What Does this Mean? What do Parents Need to Know? (N. Towaij)

Superintendent Towaij provided a presentation on destreaming the grade 9 math curriculum which outlined destreaming research and District data.

During the presentation, the following highlights were noted:

- The Ministry has committed to destreaming grade 9 math beginning in September 2021, which is the first of five compulsory grade 9 courses to be destreamed;
- Ontario is the only province that streams students at 13 years old; however, international data supports that streaming students should not occur before the age of 15;
- Other provinces begin streaming in the senior secondary grades at grade 11;
- The entire OCDSB community must be engaged to understand the impacts of streaming and to inform destreaming practices going forward;
- Destreaming will be applied from kindergarten to grade 12 for early intervention to ensure students have greater chances for success;
- Destreaming will involve all departments within the District. The destreaming team has over 40 individuals, including educators, administrators, psychology and social worker, Black and Indigenous graduation coaches, and school representatives;
- The five-year graduation rate for students in the locally developed grade 9 English pathway is 48%. Students in the applied English pathway have a 69% graduation rate and students in the academic English pathway have a 94% graduation rate;
- The five-year graduation rate for students in the locally developed grade 9 Science pathway is 50%. Students in the applied science pathway have a 71% graduation rate and students in the academic science pathway have a 95% graduation rate;
- The five-year graduation rate for students in the locally developed grade 9 mathematics pathway is 48%. Students in the applied math pathway have a 64% graduation rate and students in the academic English pathway have a 94% graduation rate;
- In a cohort of 5,000 students, 1% would equate to 50 students. Those in the locally developed and applied pathways are disproportionately represented which include Black and Indigenous students, English language learners (ELL), from low income households, and those with special education needs. Both District and provincial data support this;
- The premise of the neutrality of the design would be that students interested in university would take academic courses, students interested in college would take applied courses, and students interested in going directly to the workplace would take locally

developed classes. Although the pathways were neutral in design, implementation demonstrates that it is not the case;

- The District has 14 secondary schools that are looking to destream a second course from grade 9 math and six schools are working to destream all compulsory courses;
- Until 2016, students were streamed as early as senior kindergarten regarding Early French Immersion. Streaming occurs when students receive individual education plans (IEP), are placed in specialized classrooms, when selected to attend Sir Guy Carleton Secondary School, Ottawa Technical Secondary School, Clifford Bowey Elementary School and Crystal Bay Centre for Education, and other alternate programs;
- Staff who are implementing destreaming in grade 9 math will have collaborative partnerships with grades 6 to 10 educators. The destreaming team will work with writing teams to build resources and supports, scoping sequences, diagnostics, and long range plans to ensure that educators are properly supported in implementing the destreaming process;
- 72 school boards across Ontario are creating a process for each district to engage with each family with a child in grade 8 who has selected either locally developed or applied level courses to ensure these families are aware of which pathways and opportunities will close or remain open. The District is working to provide transparency to families by providing graduation rates and post-secondary statistics;
- Superintendent Towaij noted that the District will be sharing with families in June 2021, the kindergarten to grade 12 Achievement Report from the Research, Evaluation and Analytics Division (READ), tied to the identity-based data to clearly demonstrate which groups of students and identities are disproportionately represented in specific pathways and achievement outcomes;
- Provincial-level data revealed that 59% of students in the applied pathway attended post-secondary education while 88% of students in the academic pathway attended post-secondary education;
- The District has partnered with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), the lead board in destreaming with over six years of implementation. TDSB data has indicated that destreaming has had a positive impact on students with increased student achievement and outcomes; and
- Superintendent Towaij noted that through a lens of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP), 100% of Indigenous students have

earned their Contemporary Aboriginal Voices (NBE) course in 2021 after its implementation six years ago.

A Jamboard was used to solicit feedback from PIC members.

During the discussion and in response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Ms. Morse expressed concern that those who self-identify as Indigenous and do not belong to a community are advising on policy. Superintendent Towaij noted that staff are engaging with the Indigenous Education team to ensure that Indigenous representatives are part of the destreaming team;
- Chair Reid noted that students could be engaged in order to discover more effective ways to engage their families;
- Ms. Okuribido-Malcolm suggested that the District could provide a mechanism for parents to submit questions or concerns in a low stress environment. She noted that this would allow families to present questions at their leisure when queries arise throughout the school year;
- Superintendent Towaij noted that when creating a destreamed environment, it is also important to provide further support for students. She noted that there will be significant enhancements to summer programming which will be offered from kindergarten to grade 12. Both early numeracy and literacy programming intervention will be provided as part of the heightened support offered to students when destreaming;
- Ms. Dillon hoped that destreaming would raise the expectations for learning of every student;
- In response to a query from Ms. Dillion, Superintendent Towaij noted that funding in math appears different than other subjects as math courses utilize digital resources rather than textbooks that are updated to align with changes to the curriculum and to be more culturally relevant. She noted that significant destreaming work has been applied to the elementary level as elementary grades do not have math specialists and the grade 9 destreamed curriculum has been designed for easier transition from the grade 8 curriculum. She anticipates positive outcomes in the revised curriculum;
- Ms. Hendela noted that intentions need to be funded and tangible. She noted that math tools and resources need to be equally distributed to all classes to ensure equitable outcomes. She expressed the view that math tools are often provided upon teacher requests and that school councils are asked to fund these resources. She added that District

staff need to be properly resourced to be able to respond to all family inquiries; and

- Superintendent Towaij noted that staff provided clear direction, for the 2020-2021 school year, that those teaching math in grades 6-9 were to be specialized, rather than having a homeroom educator teach a subject they are not familiar with. She noted that the District partnered with University of Ottawa to co-create a math additional qualification program in which over 250 educators have participated. This is part of the District's commitment to ensure that educators have the knowledge and confidence to prepare students for success in mathematics.

4.b Report 21-044, 2019-2020 School Council Financial Reporting (M. Carson)

Your Committee had before it Report 21-044, to provide a summary of the financial information received from school councils for the 2019-2020 year.

Kevin Gardner, Manager of Financial Services noted that the request for information originated from the Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC) the report is also relevant to PIC.

Manager Gardner noted that the report outlines the financial summary and identifies each school's banking status. He advised that many schools manage their funds through their own bank account and make their own expenditure decisions. He added that the District provides a guide to school councils to manage funds appropriately to ensure accountability, transparency, completeness of reporting, information on records retention, how to raise funds with a fundraising plan, and establishing fundraising purpose. He added that due to the pandemic, unspent amounts are carried forward to benefit school councils.

Manager Gardner noted that information is collected at a summary level to meet the mandated Ministry reporting requirements for the consolidated financial statements. He pointed out that staff do not receive all detailed information on school council spending as this information is retained by the council. He added that it is a requirement that school councils share summary information with the finance department and detailed information with the school community. He noted that some school councils raise more funds than others which can raise concerns with equity; however, some programs provide additional funding to schools that are identified as a school in need or with low enrolment.

During the discussion and in response to questions, the following points were noted:

- School councils are required to regularly report financial statements at council meetings and these should be posted on their school council

website for the community. School council financial reporting varies and not always compliant with reporting requirements;

- Ms. Hendela expressed the view that the report presented was not what was requested and was a “ledger exercise”. She queried how the report reflects funds held by schools and wanted to view granular data. She added that the report does not reveal engagement or transparency as the details of expenditures are not shown. Manager Gardner noted that in order to provide granular information, a centralized reporting system would need to be developed to generate information on fundraising activities of school councils, as many school councils currently have different approaches;
- School resources are to be provided at the District level and not at the school level. School council funds should be used to augment student learning experiences;
- Ms. Hendela expressed the view that some school councils are requested by principals to provide resources such as all Chromebooks, sport funding, or furniture for classrooms. She noted that records of school council audits should be in the District’s possession. She noted that she would like PIC to engage previous balance sheets for transparency;
- Staff noted that although some members may be interested in more information from a reporting perspective, some schools self-manage their finances and the practice of the District is to not be directly involved in the day-to-day transactions. Staff will take the concern back for further discussion;
- Principals receive financial reports each month; however, the reports arrive in various formats that cannot be readily adapted to a comprehensive summarization;
- The “school cash” system is a structured financial reporting system that can be used for detailed reporting, but still needs further development; and
- Executive Officer Giroux noted that school councils could be encouraged to post financial statements on their websites more frequently in future. She noted that although not all schools bank through the District, those that do could be provided with a standard format for consistency. She added that staff can review which practices can be immediately corrected and to consider long term strategies.

5. Review of PIC Report, 31 March 2021

Moved by Diana Mills, seconded by Annette Dillon,

THAT the Parent Involvement Committee report, dated 31 March 2021, be approved.

Carried

6. Information Items

6.a Chair's Report

Provided for information.

6.b Director's Report

Provided for information.

6.c OCASC Report

Provided for information.

6.d PIC Correspondence

Chair Reid confirmed that parent member Noura Ahmed resigned from her position.

After much deliberation regarding the approach to fill the parent member vacancy, PIC members agreed that staff will approach the candidates from the PIC membership waiting list to confirm their interest and eligibility. Members also agreed that a special PIC meeting may occur to conduct a vote in the event that both candidates on the waiting list are eligible and interested.

6.e 2021-2022 Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Schedule

Provided for information.

7. New Business

There was no new business.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Martyn Reid, Chair, Parent
Involvement Committee