

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

6:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Members: Abdulnaser Atef, Annette Dillon, Diana Mills, Jacquie Samuels, Martyn Reid (OCASC Member), Seyi Okuribido-Malcolm, Suzanne Lyon, Kahmaria Pingue, Kristina Price

Non-Voting Members: Justine Bell (Trustee), Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Alain Brule (Principal, Cedarview Middle School), Sarah Pope (Principal, Castlefrank Elementary School)

Staff and Guests: Trustee Donna Blackburn, Trustee Lynn Scott, Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Instruction), Sandra Owens (Manager of Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Nicole Guthrie (Manager, Board Services), Erin Paynter (Principal, Stittsville Public School) Kristen Grant (Vice-Principal, Business & Learning Technologies), Joe Koraith (Communications Coordinator), Sue Baker (Acting Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Reid called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Diana Mills,

THAT the agenda be approved

Carried

3. Action Items

3.a Appointment of New Parent Member - Suzanne Lyon

Chair Reid recalled that the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) approved the recommendation from the PIC Membership Sub-Committee to add Suzanne Lyon to the waiting list in the event of a vacancy of a parent member. Noura Ahmed resigned her two-year term in May 2021, and PIC may now appoint Suzanne Lyon as a parent member to the PIC for the duration of the current term ending 30 November 2021.

Moved by Diana Mills,

THAT Suzanne Lyon be appointed as a parent member of the Parent Involvement Committee, for the term ending Movement 30, 2021.

Carried.

Chair Reid introduced Ms. Lyon and welcomed her to the meeting.

Ms. Lyon noted that she is interested in how PIC can be effective with respect to Indigenous issues, special education, and ensuring that schools are inclusive and equitable.

4. Discussion Items

4.a Review of Policy P.100.IT Appropriate Use of Technology

Superintendent Lehman introduced Erin Paynter, Principal of Stittsville Public School, Kristen Grant, Vice-Principal of Business & Learning Technologies, and Sandy Owens, Manager of Business & Learning Technologies, to the PIC and noted that they are working on the review of Policy. P.100.IT, Appropriate Use of Technology.

Principal Paynter advised that this policy was developed in 2001 as the Acceptable Use of Technology policy. It was updated in 2012 and renamed as the Appropriate Use of Technology policy, and is now under review with a view to updating it to address mandatory cyber security training, rapidly changing technology, virtual learning, digital citizenship, and to align with the Board's Strategic plan and other issues as identified in the consultation phase. In addition to the discussion at this meeting, members may provide feedback at a meeting of advisory committee representatives on 27 October 2021, or via email to aup.consultation@ocdsb.ca

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were noted:

- Consult with information privacy experts with respect to changes to privacy legislation, monitoring, and enforcement in the learning and working environment;
- What are the implications of students who are using a private computer from their home to access the District's network and lose their privileges and cannot access education;
- How would the policy increase the involvement and engagement of parents in their child's learning process;
- How would the policy remove barriers to engagement for families without electronic devices or internet access;

- The District's website is difficult for parents to navigate and find contact information for their child's teacher or principal;
- Students in some classes are asked to login with their name, turn on their video, and provide pictures of themselves engaged in various activities which may invade their privacy open them up to online bullying;
- Some students may be uncomfortable about having images of their room at home shared with the class;
- Has the District considered using a uniform background for students and/or teachers who wish to have their cameras turned on;
- Recording virtual class sessions and redistributing them raises privacy concerns and more online bullying;
- Consider the role and timeliness of response of the District when students' accounts are hacked and inappropriate materials are uploaded and distributed to the class;
- Resetting passwords should be simplified;
- Virtual meetings of school councils has increased parent participation because they are not required to attend the school for evening meetings;
- Consider virtual meetings for discussion rather than using online surveys;
- Is there any merit in having separate policies for staff and students;
- Chromebooks seem to have replaced textbooks in schools; is there any consideration of providing the same standard devices to all students;
- Could children remain at school to use the internet if necessary?
- Provide guidance to school councils who wish to purchase devices for students, recognizing that some school councils have more fundraising capability than others; and
- Consult with students in a variety of programs about the policy.

Staff provided the following comments in response to some of the issues raised by PIC members:

- There has been a huge increase in how technology is being used over the past two year;

- The District is providing Chromebooks to approximately 50% of students who do not have devices for learning;
- Business & Learning Technologies has a new security team to investigate hacks and other issues in a timely manner;
- It is not a requirement for students to have their camera on when learning remotely;
- Most classes use "Google Meet" which has the option of using a generic background;
- The procedures to accompany and implement the policy will also be reviewed and revised after the policy has been completed and approved by the Board;
- It is hoped that future meetings can be a hybrid model of both in-person and virtual meetings;
- The Ottawa Catholic School Board also provides Chromebooks and tablets for students who need them;
- A broad representation of students will be invited to take part in focus groups to provide input on the policy;
- The Educational Computing Network of Ontario (ECNO) conducts privacy impact assessments for member school boards;
- All curriculum documents include prompts for teachers to consider how best to imbed technology to enhance learning and connect with the outside world. It is up to the teacher, who knows their students best, to select the appropriate way to imbed technology in their classrooms;
- It is a priority for the District to provide training to staff on the use of technology in learning and meeting the needs of their students; and
- Staff training is provided on professional activity (PA) days, online modules, or summer programs. In addition, staff may take self-funded leaves of absence to further their learning.

Chair Reid thanked staff for their presentation and noted that PIC will look forward to seeing the revised policy.

4.b Parent Involvement Committee Work Plan

The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) had before it the PIC work plan, revised as of September 2021. Chair Reid advised that he would like PIC to focus on barriers to parental engagement and what PIC can do to support the District with financial resources and engaging school councils

for discussion at the October 2021 meeting. During discussion of the work plan, the following points were noted:

PIC and communications with the parent community (Q3/4 2022):

- How can PIC help parents have a voice with the District;
- How can PIC reach out to marginalized groups and give parents a voice who might not know how, or be confident to do so;

Helping parents be part of their children's education (Q2 2021):

- How can PIC, trustees, members of advisory committees, and staff reach out to non-traditional parental groups/clusters to inform and engage;
- The reference to "non-traditional parental groups/clusters" refers to methods of reaching parents other than notes to parents that are sent home in students' backpacks;
- Ms. Dillon noted that she talks to people about school while out walking in different neighbourhoods in the community;
- Ms. Lyon noted that when she was a member of a school council, the school sent out a package of information to new families at the school. The information was customized for the school, short and easy to read, and available in several languages. As a result, the school had a high level of engagement in a very diverse neighbourhood;

* * * Quorum having been lost, it was agreed that the discussion would continue and no actions would be taken. * * *

What does the future look like as COVID pandemic response develops (Q3 2022):

- How can PIC support parents moving from virtual to in-person learning or if virtual learning continues;
- It was agreed that this question would be addressed later in the school year;

Funding/resource support for parental engagement (Q3 2022)

- Oversight of spending PIC financial resources will be discussed at the October PIC meeting;
- It is anticipated that the District will receive the same level of Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grant funding as was received in 2020-2021;

- It has been suggested that PIC may want to consider using some of the funding to pay for a dedicated person to support PIC; and
- PRO grant funding may continue to be used to support the provision of virtual learning for school councils rather than returning to an in-person school council training day in 2021-2022.

Chair Reid advised that he attended a useful training session for chairs of the Board's advisory committees.

The PIC work plan will be added to the agenda for the next PIC meeting on 13 October 2021.

5. Review of PIC Report, 12 May 2021

The Parent Involvement Committee report, dated 12 May 2021, was received.

6. Information Items

6.a Chair's Report

The chair's report was provided for information. Chair Reid noted that he and Co-Chair Diana Mills attended a regional meeting of PIC chairs.

He noted that he would not run again for Chair of PIC when his term of office expires next year, and that he would be happy to discuss the role of the chair with anyone who might be interested in running. Co-Chair Mills advised that she would also be happy to discuss the role and responsibilities of the chair.

6.b Director's Report

Superintendent Duah advised that he is the Superintendent of Instruction for the Central area, as well as having responsibility for family and community engagement (FACE) and support for the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).

The Family and Communication Engagement department (FACE) was established to cultivate partnerships between schools and families. Some families may not feel welcome in their child's school or may not have opportunities to access information or provide input. Where there are partnerships based on trust and practices that are respectful, there is growth. One of the challenges is that educators may not have been exposed to training on family engagement. Some families have not been exposed to engagement with their child's school or may have had a negative past experience and not feel invited to become involved. Some parents may feel disrespected, unheard or not valued.

FACE will focus on building relational trust and linking to asset-based learning and development. It will look at policy and programming goals and consider organizational and systemic conditions that may be present.

FACE will work on skills and knowledge, build networks, share beliefs and values, and develop self-efficacy. Evidence of success is when families are seen as co-creators, supporters, encouragers, monitors, advocates and models of engagement. The District is hiring a FACE coordinator who will work with PIC and the Ottawa-Carleton Association of School Councils (OCASC), and going forward, FACE will share information and communicate with PIC.

The District uses a Resource Allocation Index based on Socioeconomics (RAISE) index using data collected on poverty, family/community, mobility, cultural/linguistic diversity, and readiness to learn, to identify schools that will receive additional funding based on their need to mitigate barriers to learning.

The Student Achievement Through Inquiry (S.A.T.E.) is a pilot project in 11 OCDSB elementary schools to reduce barriers, overcome emotional and psychological hurdles, and create the right learning conditions. S.A.T.E. uses recent studies of outstanding schools and highlights factors known to contribute to successful schools to bring children, families and communities together into the educational environment as participants and partners in the learning process, with the school becoming the "Heart of the Community." These factors include achievement and standards; leadership and management; teaching and learning; innovative curriculum; targeted intervention and support; inclusion; family engagement; use of data; effective use of students' voice; and the celebration of cultural diversity.

Superintendent Duah advised that he has reached out to many groups in the community who are willing to partner with the District on this initiative.

During discussion of Superintendent Duah's report, the following points were noted:

Ms Lyon expressed the view that parent and family engagement is one of the most important determinants of success in school. The level of engagement matters and doing things together to support and enrich the child's education will help to ensure good student outcomes and student success.

Superintendent Duah advised that a school in another school board had a large Muslim population and they held their school council meetings at a mosque on Saturdays with a good turnout of parents.

Ms Dillon noted the time needed to bring resources together and asked what parents can do to ensure their child has access to the resources they need to succeed no matter where they live. Superintendent Duah commented on the importance of developing relationships with parents and inviting them to talk about issues such as saving for post-secondary

education and how to access grants and other resources that may be available to them.

Trustee Scott expressed the view that parent involvement is not only about how often parents go to meetings or teacher interviews, send emails to trustees, or make delegations at Board meetings. She noted the value of informal conversations with parents in the community about having high expectations for their child's success in school.

6.c OCASC Report

The website address for the Ottawa-Carleton Association of School Councils (OCASC) was provided for information.

6.d PIC Correspondence

Chair Reid briefly reviewed the PIC correspondence received since 8 May 2021.

With respect to parents making a delegation to PIC, he suggested that non-members may provide a written submission or complete a questionnaire if they are uncomfortable speaking directly to the Committee.

A volunteer wishing to become involved with PIC was advised of the meeting schedule and possible positions on PIC.

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) has advised that the online application process for council, committee, and roster members will be available until 30 September 2021.

7. New Business

Ms Samuels asked for clarification regarding the eligibility of school council members at the Ottawa-Carleton Virtual School (OCV) to be members of their designated in-person school council to maintain ties with their home school. Superintendent Duah advised that he would seek clarification and provide a response.

(Note: Following the meeting, Superintendent Duah provided the following response:

"As a follow up to the question regarding parents holding positions in both virtual and in-person school councils, we will adhere to the same practice as last year.

Similar to last year, parents of students enrolled in a virtual school can do the following:

- *Seek election to the school council of the virtual school;*
- *Be non-voting members of their child's home school council;*
- *Seek election to the school council of the home school if there are insufficient numbers of parents of in person students who have put their names forward for election; and*
- *Be eligible for appointment to any position on the executive if they have been elected to the home school council;*

A message will be shared in the school council newsletter.")

In response to a query, Superintendent Duah advised that there are no plans to return to in-person meetings or school visits for parent at the present time. Staff is working on "easy to understand" digital and hard copy information documents for parents.

Chair Reid advised that he would update the work plan and seek assistance from PIC members to help implement the work plan activities at the October meeting.

8. Adjournment

Chair Reid thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7.55 p.m.

Martyn Reid, Chair, Parent
Involvement Committee