



PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 17, 2018

6:00 pm

Trustees' Committee Room

133 Greenbank Road

Ottawa, Ontario

- Members: Mostafizur Khan, Carm Janneteau, John Marshall, Diana Mills, Gita Nurlaila, Geneviève Harte, Graciela Jasa Silveira, Susan Fullerton, Malaka Hendela (Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils), Bonnie Oaks Charron (Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils)
- Non-Voting Members: Marisa Moher (Community Representative), Shannon Smith (Principal), Christine Boothby (Trustee), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director)
- Staff and Guests: Michele Giroux (Executive Officer of Corporate Services), Engy Abdel Masieh (Policy Analyst) and Nicole Guthrie (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Khan call the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Malaka Hendela,

THAT the agenda be approved.

- Carried -

3. Review of PIC Report

3.a Report 4, 16 May 2018

Moved by Susan Fullerton,

THAT Report 4, dated 16 May 2018 be received.

Ms. Fullerton requested that her statement in paragraph 5 on page 2 be revised to read "Ms. Fullerton encouraged the District to consider Walking the Path: A Model for Promoting Student Well-being and Achievement as a teaching strategy."

Moved by Susan Fullerton,

THAT Report 4, dated 16 May 2018 be received, as amended.

-Carried-

4. Chair's Report

Chair Khan thanked the members for attending the meeting and providing their valuable input. He hoped the committee could provide support to the Parent Conference and build on the success of previous years and that the committee would grow during the 2018-2019 school year with the addition of new community representatives.

Chair Khan reminded the members about his participation at the PIC Symposium and commented that it is a valuable opportunity for parents to learn from and engage with other parents from across the province. He hoped that despite the change in government the Education Minister would attend the District's parent conference on 3 November 2018.

Chair Khan thanked Director Adams and Chair Seward for their continued support of the PIC.

5. Director's Report

Associate Director Reynolds advised that the 2018-2019 school year began smoothly and construction improvements to schools were completed over the summer months to ensure they were ready to receive students in September.

Associate Director Reynolds reported that all Ottawa area school boards came together to support students and families impacted by the tornado that hit Ottawa on 21 October 2018. A decision to close all schools on 24 September 2018 was made and the District appreciated the support of all parents as school staff worked to assess the damage and hazards at all school sites. The District continues to work closely with the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) to ensure those students displaced by the tornado can still attend their home school.

Associate Director Reynolds announced that the Board has appointed a new Director of Education, Camile Williams-Taylor. Ms. Williams-Taylor will officially assume the role January 2019. Ms. Williams-Taylor has been a senior executive with the Durham District School Board since 2011 and has considerable experience with special education and equity.

Associate Director Reynolds noted that cannabis became legal on 17 October 2018. The District amended its policies in anticipation of the change in legislation and cannabis will be treated similarly to alcohol. The District, in cooperation with Ottawa Public Health, has organized several parent information sessions where parents can learn more about cannabis, the new legislation, and how to talk to their youth as well as available resources and services.

Associate Director Reynolds advised that progress reports at both the secondary and elementary level will be provided to parents in the coming weeks.

Associate Director Reynolds reported that OSTA is dealing with a driver shortage and has advised that there may be disruptions to service. OSTA is working hard to address the shortage and is investigating a variety of options, including the use of taxi companies to manage the demand.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that the province announced on 17 October 2018 that it would be putting a pause on the Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grant. The District has not received any other information on the status of the PRO Grant at this time. She added that further announcements and information will be provided to the members as received.

In response to a query from Ms. Mills regarding the District's Plans to recognize the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, Associate Director Reynolds advised that the District has begun some intensive training in equity as a part of the commitment to the declaration. He added that he will provide the committee with further details on the District's plans for Black History Month.

In response to a query from Ms. Mills regarding the policy of the District on the communication of the death of a teacher to students and parents, Director Reynolds noted that the District is sympathetic to the wishes of the family and the District cannot make an announcement until the next of kin authorizes it. Ms. Hendela indicated she was familiar with the situation described by Ms. Mills and conveyed her support for the way the administrative staff of the school handled the situation.

6. Action Items

6.a Report 18-109, Revisions to the PIC Bylaws and Standing Rules (M. Giroux, ext. 8310)

Your committee had before it Report 18-109, Revisions to the PIC Bylaws and Standing Rules. The report proposes several revisions to the By-Laws and Standing Rules governing the committee and seeks members' input on the new content in compliance with the *Ontario Regulation 330/10* under the *Education Act*.

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

- The Bylaws have not been reviewed and updated since 2011;
- There are three major elements of the proposed revisions:
 - Specifying the number of the one and two-year terms of office;
 - Clarifying the process of appointing Community Representatives to the Committee; and
 - Simplifying the process of acquiring the names of the OCASC Representatives to the Committee.
- Electronic communication will be used to confirm the OCASC representatives;
- Letters of interest will be sent to local associations requesting the appointment of a primary and an alternate community representative;
- In alignment with Board policies, a provision concerning meeting absence was added. In such case, membership would cease if the member was absent from three consecutive meetings with no prior notification;
- Page 17 outlines the term of office of 2 years for parent members. However, if this is enforced it precludes parents whose children are in their last year of high school from participating. Staff recommend section 5.1 be revised to read "The eight (8) Parent Members of the Committee shall be appointed to serve a term of office of either one (1) or two (2) years and, wherever possible, members shall be appointed for a two-year term.";
- OCASC members will continue to be appointed for a one year term of office;
- Ms. Hendela noted her support for the changes to communication with OCASC regarding the appointment of representatives;
- Ms. Fullerton supported both one and two-year appointments for parent members to encourage participation;
- In response to a query from Ms. Hendela regarding term limits and whether or not a priority is given to the new or returning member, Executive Officer Giroux advised that reappointment is subject to the Membership Sub-Committee. There is no specific term limit defined in either the bylaws or the regulation. The position of chair is subject to a term limit whereby the chair cannot serve more than 2 consecutive terms. The Membership Sub-Committee has flexibility in their decision making and a skills matrix is prepared for the Membership Sub-Committee to assist them in reviewing the applicants and making a recommendation. The skills matrix addresses the points outlined in section 6.7;
- In response to a query from Ms. Janeteau, the mandate of the PIC as outlined in the bylaws is dictated by Ministry regulation and therefore cannot be altered;

- The Board does not have to approve the PIC Bylaws. Amendments to the Bylaws and Standing Rules are approved by the PIC members;
- The PIC minutes and PIC participation in consultations serve to inform the board of its opinions related to matters that relate to improving student achievement and well-being;
- In response to a query from Ms. Hendela, Executive Officer Giroux noted that Section 47 of the regulation provides that the Board must formally provide a response to the PIC, however, the Ministry does not distinguish or highlight a difference in the words board and district; and
- Ms. Janeteau and Ms. Moher queried whether or not an action tracker or checklist could help organize the recommendations of the PIC and provide a better mechanism for informing the members of actions take by the Board or staff.

Moved by Malaka Hendela, seconded by Marissa Moher,

THAT proposed changes to PIC By-Laws and Standing Rules, as outlined in Appendix A to Report 18-109 be approved, as amended.

-Carried-

7. Presentation and Discussion

7.a Parent School Climate Survey Results (M. Giroux ext. 8310)

Executive Officer Giroux advised that a link to Report 18-085, Measuring Progress on Well-being would be shared with the PIC members and the item will be added to the 21 November 2018 agenda. The report contains the results of the "OurSCHOOL" parent survey that was conducted in May and June 2018.

Ms. Moher advised that as a community representative the information provided in the report and feedback from the survey is important to the work of her organization and she would appreciate the opportunity to review the document carefully and to have a broader discussion on the document at the next meeting.

Principal Smith will provide the committee with details on how the results of the survey are used to support school planning to create positive and accepting school environments.

Ms. Janeteau queried the type of feedback sought by PIC on the report and the results of the survey. Executive Officer Giroux responded that a review of the survey results will provide members with an understanding of the results and participation rates. In the past, the committee had recommended that the District work on initiatives to increase the participation rate and remove barriers to parent participation.

7.b Report 18-108, Consultations on Education Reform in Ontario (M. Giroux ext. 8310)

Your committee had before it Report 18-108, Consultations on Education Reform in Ontario. The report provides the members with a status update on the provincial consultations on education reform in Ontario.

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

- The provincial government launched a consultation on education reform in Ontario on 28 September 2018. The consultation asks for participants' input on a variety of subjects including:
 - Improving Ontario students' performance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM);
 - Preparing students with job skills, including skilled trades or fields, such as coding;
 - Graduating students with life skills like financial literacy;
 - Providing age-appropriate health and physical education curriculum that includes subjects like mental health, sex-education, and legalization of cannabis;
 - Improving standardized testing;
 - Banning cellphone use in the classroom; and
 - Developing a parents' bill of rights.
- The government has provided for three methods for parent engagement: an online submission, an online survey and telephone town halls. As of 10 October 2018 only the online submission form is available. The consultation closes on 15 December 2018;
- The Chair and Vice Chair and the Board will be submitting a formal response on behalf of the Board of Trustees;
- The provincial consultation has been undertaken by the Ontario Government and although there is limited reference to parent councils or PIC it does not preclude a PIC response;
- The members noted that the consultation contains many open ended questions and it will be difficult for the province to review and evaluate responses in a meaningful way;
- Ms. Hendela expressed the view that the response to questions should be up to individuals and that the role of PIC and groups like OCASC is to ensure the process is accessible and that parents can voice their personal opinions;
- Ms. Hendela commented that she is not clear how the results will be shared with parents. Owing to the open ended nature of the questions, aggregating the data will be difficult. She expressed the view the PIC, OCASC and parent councils must advocate for all parents and encourage and inspire parents to participate. She noted that the nature of the questions make participation intimidating and as a result participation may be limited as a result. She advised that PIC, OCASC and parent council leadership can help;

- Ms. Mills queried how the provinces's proposed ban on cell phone use in the classroom would impact the District's Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) commitment and whether or not the District has enough equipment to ensure students have the tools they need. Associate Director Reynolds noted that BYOD and its use is different from school to school. The District has increased the number of chromebooks in the system and, should a cellphone ban be implemented, would have to increase the number of devices to accommodate the need;
- Principal Smith expressed the view that a cellphone ban does not fit with the District commitment to digital citizenship and fluency. Educators want to help students navigate the digital world and a ban does not help educators teach valuable technology use lessons. She added that District schools do have technology available and the students with special education needs have the devices they need;
- The consultation provides for limited response from newcomers and those with language barriers. It was felt that newcomers will not be able to understand or be able to communicate their thoughts. PIC members agreed the consultation questions do little to assuage their comfort in the process or confidence in the results;
- The members noted that it is typically more learned, knowledgeable and engaged parents who complete surveys like these and expressed their concern about the results and the lack of a valid cross-section;
- Executive Officer Giroux noted that the provincial consultation is important and that the PIC should encourage broad participation from the parent community. The PIC must focus on those elements within its control and how they can support and encourage participation;
- Ms. Moher advised all PIC members to encourage their community organizations to connect with parents and to assist parents in completing the survey. She expressed the view that, given the concern with the questions, PIC may take on an advocacy role and request from the province the methodology of the survey and the baseline response rate for validity. She queried how the province would be able to use the data to inform policy decisions;
- Ms. Hendela noted that the PIC may choose to communicate with their PIC colleagues in other Districts and request an audience with the Ministry. PIC should monitor the social media of the other local PICs to get a sense of their efforts in response to the consultation;
- Executive Officer Giroux reminded the members that the role of the PIC is to encourage and enhance parent engagement through its advice to the Board on strategies to communicate with parents in the District. The PIC role is to undertake the advocacy or encourage the Board to do the advocacy work. PIC must be strategic about the role it plays and what it expects to accomplish. She suggested that PIC recommend to the Board that it reach out to broadly engage all parent

groups to ensure a broad cross section of voices are heard. She added that the discussion of this item will be presented to the Board at a future meeting;

- Ms. Nurlaila suggested that PIC advise the Board to promote and encourage parent participation in the Ministry consultation. She added that the Board may also request the Ministry to provide an accessible version of the survey and that the results of the consultation be disclosed;
- Ms. Hendelea queried how the discussion could be parlayed into action. Executive Officer Giroux suggested that the PIC consider the action that is required by parents and to determine the best way to achieve it. She noted that, should the PIC decide to form a sub-committee to provide a response, the meeting will have to be open to the public and notice provided;
- Ms. Janeteau noted the importance of the response and how the PIC responds should be carefully considered;
- Ms. Hendela expressed the view that the Ministry consultation is different and that the use of the traditional board mechanisms to provide a response is not ideal. She noted the consultation is specifically addressed to parents and not the institutions and therefore the parent voice must be the loudest;
- Ms. Hendela expressed the view that the PIC is appointed to represent parents and that a message and response from PIC may carry more weight if increased parent participation is the goal;
- Associate Director Reynolds noted that the PIC are the subject matter experts and that their role is to advise the Director and the Board on how best to proceed. He noted that a response can be both individual or from the PIC or other bodies like OCASC. He encouraged the members to promote the completion of the consultation through their own networks; and
- Executive Officer Giroux advised that PIC may chose to play a role to build participation in the Ministry consultation. The District has a variety of ways to convey the message and she encouraged the members to provide suggestions and strategies to reach out to the parent community.

Moved by Malaka Hendela, seconded by Carm Janeteau,

THAT Parent Involvement Committee host a workshop at the Parent Conference on 3 November 2018 to discuss the provision of a PIC response to the Consultations on Education Reform in Ontario; and

THAT the feedback from the workshop be presented for discussion at the 21 November 2018 PIC meeting.

-Carried-

7.c 2018-2019 Initiatives

1. Draft PIC Work Plan

At the PIC agenda planning meeting on 17 September 2018, the Chair and Vice-Chair discussed the work plan for 2018-2019 with staff. The draft PIC 2018-2019 Work Plan was presented for discussion.

During discussion of the 2018-2019 Work-Plan, the following points were noted:

- A large part of the work of the Parent Involvement Committee is funded through the PRO Grant. The District was informally alerted on 17 October 2018 that the Ministry would be halting the PRO grant. The PRO grant for school councils will still be distributed as planned. The District will seek further clarification from the province on the status of the PRO Grant and will provide an update at the 21 November 2018 meeting;
- The District will cover the cost of the parent conference and it will proceed as planned. The funding for the event will come from the Corporate Services budget;
- The total cost of the parent conference depends on several factors including but not limited to guest speakers, childcare and food. Typically the District budgets \$20,000 for the event but it fluctuates from year to year;
- Ms. Hendela noted that the Pro Grant typically distributes approximately \$80,000 to schools across the District and a total of \$2.45 million across the province. She added that the pause will have an impact on local schools and hoped the District would make up for the loss;
- The District will begin the pre-consultation on the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan and a discussion with PIC is planned for 21 November 2018;
- The consultation process for the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan has four stages:
 - Pre-consultation (October/November 2018)
 - Idea exchange (November/December 2018)
 - Developing strategies and action (January 2019)
 - feedback on the draft plan (May 2019)
- The District had a total of 13,500 participants engaged in the creation of the 2014-2018 District Strategic Plan and are aiming for an increase in participation to 20,000;
- A discussion on the Provincial Parent Bill of Rights is scheduled for the 9 January 2019, conditional on input from the province;

- The Research Evaluation and Analytic Division (READ) will begin to formulate a process for identity-based data collection. The READ team plans to meet with several audiences, including PIC, to seek input. The District recognition of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent will ensure that elements of equity and diversity are built into the overall Equity Plan for the District. Funding was expected from the province and the District is still waiting to receive confirmation of the funding before it proceeds;
- Ms. Oaks-Charron requested that an additional column be added to the work plan which would identify a clear goal. She expressed the view that identifying clear goals and objectives would advance the work of PIC and provide an element of accountability;
- Ms. Hendela and Ms. Janeteau expressed their frustration with the lack of clearly defined goals and outputs in the draft work plan. They suggested that defining goals and outputs would provide for a greater narrative on the work of the PIC for the annual report;
- Ms. Janeteau expressed the view that the work plan must reflect the mandate of the committee; and
- Ms. Hendela suggested that the work plan include the production of some tangible products such as toolkits and legacy projects which could assist parents in the District and further enhance communication.

8. Member Information

8.a OCASC Report

Ms. Hendela advised that 37 District schools were represented at the 27 September 2018 meeting of OCASC and that the schedule of meetings and meeting minutes are available on the OCASC website.

Ms. Hendela noted that OCASC participated in the Ottawa offering of Random Hacks of Kindness, a hackathon for social good that brings together volunteer developers to work with charities, community groups and social enterprises. OCASC members sought solutions to engage parents through the use of technology. A portal for parent council access was created and is designed to be a place where parent councils can share documents and best practices for fundraising, hosting events and general information. Ms. Hendela expressed the view that navigating the District website can be challenging for some parents and the storage of digital tools in one location could support broader parent engagement and assist those schools that may not be able to participate in the traditional parent council model.

Ms. Hendela shared that the OCASC executive is discussing methods to increase participation which include changing the meeting location from the Fisher Park Public School location and using social media and a live chat model to broaden access for parents.

Ms. Hendela advised that OCASC had discussed the Gifted Advisory Group. It was suggested that the input of the volunteer members of the Gifted Advisory Group was not considered in the final product produced by the District. Ms. Hendela expressed the view that the issues were not solely confined to the Gifted community and that OCASC is concerned that the District did not follow its own policies. She added that decisions on special education programs also impact children in the regular classroom as more students with special education needs are integrated into the regular classroom.

Ms. Hendela noted that the next OCASC meeting will be held on 18 October 2018 and feature an update from Executive Officer Giroux about the Board's new strategic plan and the cannabis policy.

Ms. Hendela thanked Ms. Oakes Charon for her commitment to and participation on the PIC in 2017-2018. She added that OCASC members expressed considerable interest in PIC membership and two new OCASC representatives will be introduced in November.

9. New Business

Executive Officer Giroux advised that the District has assisted 17 schools with the migration of their standalone Parent Council websites to the District site. She noted that the ability for school councils to have their site integrated into the school website builds capacity for the support of content management and can help school councils save on monthly hosting fees. The District will share a report on the status and the rollout to principals and finally to school councils. She added that the schools that have migrated required immediate assistance and were engaged in the trial.

Chair Khan requested that members review the PIC page of the District's website and provide feedback on the content of the page. He requested the item be added to the agenda for the 21 November 2018 meeting.

Chair Khan noted that due to technical difficulties he was regrettably unable to participate in the VoiceED radio podcast scheduled for 13 June 2018.

Chair Khan noted the presence of Julie Cranton, Vimy Ridge Public School Parent Council and Sonia Campbell-Nadon, a member of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Mostafizur Khan, Chair, Parent Involvement Committee