



PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

6:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Members: Diana Mills, Abdulnaser Atef, Calla Barnett, Adriana Johnston (Ottawa Network for Education), Christine Moulaison (OCASC Representative)

Non-Voting Members: Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Naya Markanastasakis (Principal, Pinecrest Public School), Sharan Samagh (Family and Community Engagement Coordinator), Chris Ellis (Trustee), Jennifer Jennekens (Trustee), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services)

Staff and Guests: Kevin Gardner (Manager of Financial Services), Stacey Kay (Manager of Learning Support Services), Brent Smith (System Principal, Program and Learning K12-Elementary Team), Oksana Kravets (School Website Communications Coordinator), Lilli Miller, IEC, Bernadeth Betchi, Nicole Guthrie (Manager, Board Services), Mellissa Applewaithe (Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Mills called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Chair Mills acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Territory and thanked the Algonquin people for hosting the meeting on their land.

2. Roll Call

Chair Mills noted the members absent: Suzanne Lyon, Seyi Okuribido-Malcolm, Andre Bergeron, Frempon Bafi-Yebo, Wendy Royer, (City of Ottawa Community Representatives).

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Calla Barnett

THAT the 13 April agenda be approved

Carried

4. Matters for Action

4.1 Report 22-028, Parent Involvement Committee Membership Confirmation (P. Duah)

Superintendent Duah reported that the committee had before it Report 22-028, Parent Involvement Committee Membership Confirmation, with the purpose of appointing new members to PIC:

In March 2022, PIC parent member, Annette Dillon resigned from her two-year appointment to PIC.

In November 2021, Martyn Reid, OCASC member resigned from his two-year appointment to PIC.

It is recommended:

- **THAT Alexandra Arraiz be appointed as a parent member of the Parent Involvement Committee for the term ending November 30, 2022; and**
- **THAT Michelle Presniak Cruikshank be appointed as a representative from the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils for the term ending November 30, 2022.**

Moved By Calla Barnett

Carried

Chair Mills noted that Ms. Dillon was the PIC representative to Committee of the Whole (COW) Budget meetings, and a replacement representative is required .

Chair Mills welcomed the new members to PIC.

Moved By Calla Barnett

- A. **THAT Alexandra Arraiz be appointed as a parent member of the Parent Involvement Committee for the term ending November 30, 2022; and**
- B. **THAT Michelle Presniak Cruikshank be appointed as a representative from the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils for the term ending November 30, 2022.**

Carried

5. Presentations

5.1 Right to Read (Smith, Kay, Symmonds, Towaij)

Superintendent Symmonds System Principal Smith and Manager Kay presented the Right to Read Inquiry report. The report released on 28 February 2022 contains 157 recommendations for a number of areas to address Human Rights challenges for students with reading disabilities. Significant points from the presentation include:

- Ontario Human Rights Commission has a mandate to protect Human Rights in Ontario and to promote the Human Rights Code;
- The Right to Read Public Inquiry was commissioned to ensure Human Rights are protected for all students with disabilities;
- OCDSB actively participated in the inquiry by providing District documentation, resources and data;
- The Board will discuss the next steps and how to link the results of the report to a provincial recovery plan;
- Students are supported in their reading level as early as possible. Levels range from tiers 1-3; and
- OCDSB Cross Departmental Literacy Team is at the centre of 14 operational key components to support students.

5.2 PIC Budget Update (K. Gardner)

Assistant Treasurer Gardner provided an update on the 2021-2022 PIC Budget. A memo was provided that included detail on specific funding and expenses for the current year and a preliminary budget for the upcoming year. The staff-recommended budget is to be presented to the Committee of the Whole Budget Committee and finally to the Board for approval.

Significant points from the memo include:

- The 2022-2023 Technical Paper issued by the Ministry of Education provides an overview of grant formulas and funding benchmarks that are used to calculate each school board's funding allocation through the Grants for Student Needs;
- Parent engagement funding is provided to support the parental engagement activities of 3 components, Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), school councils and school parents (Parents Reaching Out (PRO));
- In 2020-2021 the actual expenses of \$122,000 were considerably less than the allocated budget, due to engagement activities being conducted virtually at minimal cost;

- Funding is similar for the 2021-2022 year with minor variances in the amount of funding received. Due to increased enrolment, the PIC funding has also increased and the grant has almost doubled from the 2020-2021 year;
- The preliminary budget is broken down into four components, PIC initiatives, Translation, Interpretation and Events, School Council and PRO;
- PICs encourage their school boards to collaborate with other advisory committees, the school board's equity and access body, school councils and community organizations to identify projects that will support the diversity of parent's needs and parent communities through an equity and inclusion lens.

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

- \$150,000 was identified in Report 20-082, Investing in Parent Engagement to be allocated to PIC activities. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the funds were not deployed. This figure is reflected on the Comparative Financial Summary under Parent Involvement Initiatives; Translation, Interpretation and Events;
- The sum of \$150,000 has remained available for the current year;
- If funds are not spent due to limited PIC activities, they become an accumulated surplus for the district. The amounts are not carried forward automatically;
- OCDSB prohibits carryforwards to avoid any impact on the financial position. Additional spending as a result of carryforward could result in a non-compliance position with the Ministry of Education, and \$40,000 for Parent Involvement is still available for by PIC.

Chair Mills thanked Assistant Treasurer Gardner for his presentation and noted that PIC would hope for an update in the future.

6. Reports

6.1 PIC Report, 19 January 2022

Moved by Ms.Moulaison

THAT the Parent Involvement Committee Report dated 19 January 2022, be received.

Carried.

6.2 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Duah noted that it is the International Day of Pink. The International Day of Pink is celebrated around the world as a reminder to all of the power of alliance and in speaking out against bullying. The day is marked every year to honour the bravery of two high school students who stepped in when a fellow student wearing a pink shirt was being bullied for sexual orientation. The students mobilized the entire school to wear pink in support of the bullied student.

Students and staff at OCDSB wear pink to stand with LGBTQ students, friends, co-workers and the community and to also stand against homophobia, biophobia and transphobia. OCDSB schools should be spaces where everyone feels safe.

Community Recognition Awards

Superintendent Duah noted that nominations for Community Recognition Awards close on Friday, 22 April.

Virtual Skilled Trades and STEM Expo.

Superintendent Duah reported that OCDSB hosted a Virtual Skilled Trades and Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Exposition on 12 April 2022. The event was for students in grades 7-12 and their parents or guardians and highlighted opportunities in a number of careers around Youth Apprenticeship Programs to assist students in making well-informed career choices.

Summer Programs

Superintendent Duah reported that summer programs for the 2021-2022 year include non-credit programs for grade 6-8 students that are designed to assist them in the transition to secondary school:

- Review and Reinforcement Program for Grades 6-8 and;
- Getting Ready for Grade 9.

There are also a variety of credit programs for Grade 9-12 students:

- Reach Ahead Credit Program;
- eLearning Program;
- Credit Recovery and Academic Upgrading Program and;
- Co-operative Education Program.

Equity-Based Summer programming includes reach-ahead credit opportunities:

- Indigenous Summer Learning Program for Grade 8-12 Indigenous students;
- Sankofa Summer Academy for Black Youth for African, Black and Caribbean OCDSB students;
- 2SLGBTQ+ Voices: Building Bridges Program offering 2SLGBTQ+ OCDSB students a virtual credit opportunity.

a. COVID-19 Update

Superintendent Duah empathized with families on the need for schedule adjustments in response to temporary class closures as a result of changes and staffing issues/replacements.

There continues to be challenges in recruiting replacement staff to cover absences. COVID-19 is a factor; staff taking care of sick family members and illness in the community is also impacting staff availability.

The District advises that all staff, parents and community members follow public health guidance by:

- Checking daily for symptoms;
- Staying home when unwell;
- Washing hands regularly and;
- Wearing a mask.

Mandatory Masking and Guidelines

Superintendent Duah reported that a motion was passed at the 12 April 2022 Board meeting to require everyone to wear a mask in OCDSB buildings. This applies to all staff, students (K-12), volunteers and visitors upon entry into any OCDSB school or office building. Information regarding the implementation of the mandate was shared with schools and families on 13 April 2022. Items to note are:

- The District will continue to make medical or N95 masks available for school staff;
- Students can continue to access cloth or medical masks from the school if they are unable to provide their own;

- Applications can be made for student accommodation or exemptions for mask requirements. Any current student exemptions in place on 11 March 2022 will continue during the new mandatory masking period..

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

- Communications received by Superintendent Duah and Trustee Scott on masking were split by approximately 50/50 in favour of, and against;
- The motion was brought forward at a Special Board Meeting where 8 trustees voted in favour. The meeting is on public record;
- An analysis of the data gathered in the District check-in survey was undertaken by the PIC COVID-Sub-Committee to gather parent perspectives on masking. Results showed the majority were not in favour of masks;
- A number of parents have informed the COVID-19 Sub-Committee that they will not comply with the mandate;
- Trustees at the PIC meeting do not recall seeing any survey information at the Special Board Meeting but it would not have affected the results; and
- The trustees present at the PIC meeting noted they voted on the motion based on class closures, the Ottawa Public Health information and increasing rates of infection.

Chair Miller advised that as Superintendent Duah had previously noted, the Board has sent an email out to parents regarding mask procedures.

7. Information Items

7.1 Chair's Report

Chair Mills thanked former PIC members, Annette Dillon, Martyn Reid, Isabelle DeFaria, Malaka Hendela and Jamie Morris for their time and service on the PIC.

She reported that she had attended the ACE meeting of 27 January 2022 at which the Report 22-091, Sense of Belonging presented. The report provides information on how OCDSB students rate their sense of belonging at school, how it varies across demographic characteristics and identities and what students identify as being important for contributing to their sense of belonging at school.

Chair Mills noted that approximately 32,000 students took part in the survey that was used to inform the report. Some statistical points noted include:

- 34% of respondents were parents of students JK-6 and 66% were students in grades 7-12;
- 57% JK-6 and 36% grades 7-12 have a strong sense of belonging;
- 32 % JK-6 and 47% grades 7-12 have a moderate sense of belonging.

Chair Mills noted she would forward a copy of the report to PIC members.

Chair Mills will be reaching out to other advisory chairs and committees with a view to having a presence at their meetings and will also be reaching out to other PICs to share knowledge and best practices. She noted that she sees a need for advisory committees to collaborate with each other and offer mutual support.

Chair Mills reported that she was considering holding a session for PIC members in response to concerns previously raised on work/life balance to provide guidance and assistance. She asked for members to indicate interest. The consensus was positive if the presentation were to be held as part of a PIC meeting. As there is only one PIC meeting outstanding for the current year, this could be a possibility for the new school year.

Chair Mills advised that the last PIC meeting is on 11 May 2022.

7.2 PIC Correspondence Register

Chair Mills noted that there were no items of correspondence on the register.

8. Standing Items

8.1 Updates from Workplan Subcommittees

Chair Mills called upon Ms.Presniak Cruikshank to provide an update on the COVID-19 Committee and Call Burnett to provide an update on the Communications Committee.

COVID-19 Sub-Committee

The COVID-19 Sub-Committee has met a few times to establish their role. The original intention had been to undertake a survey on COVID-19, but since OCDSB completed the Community Check-In Survey, the sub-committee decided to analyze the data from the survey. Due to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, some families previously provided with devices and internet access during COVID-19 could now lose access to these learning supports. The sub-committee has shifted its focus on ensuring

the maintenance of the technical learning supports as a priority and the analysis of the survey data is still in progress.

Many parents of students at the OCDSB Virtual School are hoping for their children to be able to continue their education in this format as they report the children are thriving. The COVID-19 Sub-Committee is gathering data and information to bring forward to PICto establish the best way forward.

Chair Mills noted that the Workplan Sub-Committee list was formed two years ago. In light of the change in restrictions and the fact the Covid-19 Sub Committee has only started two years after the pandemic, the Committee's focus has moved to issues that are directly affecting parents at this time.

Parents Reaching Out Committee

Ms. Samagh noted that working with Ms. Moulaison, Ms. Dillon and Ms. Dean has been a positive experience. They all joined the Parents Reaching Out Committee (PRO) in January 2022 and first met to establish shared understanding. It was agreed that the Sub-Committee needed to consider how to:

- Look at current parameters in order to undertake PRO outreach;
- Look at parent engagement and how to best support parents and families to better engage with students and the school council.

Ms. Samagh noted that school council members are parent volunteers who genuinely want to help and donate their time. She reported that the sub-committee launched a multi-level communications outreach in collaboration with OCDSB Communications, including blogs and various other channels. * The initiative included solo, in collaboration and school council choice options, and was circulated to all schools with applications having closed on April 4 2022. Feedback provided from the previous year highlighted the importance of 'voice and choice.' A total of 80 schools wishing to participate responded, with only six schools opting not to take part. The exercise identified that:

- More time was required for schools to make a selection/respond;
- It was important to take the opportunity to reach out to schools and communities without active school councils, and
- Every school that has made a submission has been allocated the date and speaker that was requested.

Ms. Moulaison thanked Ms. Samagh for the feedback and for her open, communicative approach in reaching out. She noted that she was very grateful to Superintendent Duah for his involvement.

Communications with Parents and Families Sub-Committee

Ms. Barnett reported that she had been a co-chair of this Committee with former PIC member, Isabelle De Faria who recently resigned. They had met with PIC member Mr. Atef to discuss how to identify parents who are not receiving PIC communications and are being missed due to issues such as language barriers or lack of technology. An information gathering exercise was completed and the data now needs to be analyzed in order to establish a pathway to better reach the parents of children with special education needs and/or English as a second language families (ESL). A co-chair will need to be appointed to help with the workload and more committee members are needed.

Helping Parents Support Their Children's Education

Ms. Barnett reported that she did not have a report.

Funding Resource Support for Parental Engagement

Trustee Ellis reported that he had not met with other members of the Committee.

9. Committee Reports

9.1 Committee of the Whole Budget, 1 March 2022

Chair Mills reported that as the PIC representative had not been able to attend the COW Budget meeting, no report is available.

Trustee Scott and Trustee Ellis reported that:

- The Academic Staffing Plan was presented at the meeting. The Committee looked at actual expenditure amounts and a preliminary forecast for the 2022-2023 budget. COW Budget continue to meet in order to finalize the budget in June; and
- Staff have received the budget template technical papers from the province which will allow them to formulate the 2022-2023 budget. The next COW Budget meeting is on 25 May 2022.

9.2 Committee of the Whole and Continuation Meetings, 8 March 2022

Chair Mills reported that PIC member Suzanne Lyon attended the last three COW meetings, two of which were continuation meetings. The Safe Schools Policy was the main topic of discussion at the meetings and there many amendments were discussed.

Chair Mills invited any trustees present at the meeting to provide information. Trustee Scott noted that:

- There were more amendments to the Safe Schools Policy at the last board meeting on 29 March 2022. Discussion ran over to an 11:00 p.m. deadline and the policy was not approved. It is hoped the policy will be approved at the t board meeting of 26 April 2022; and
- The Appropriate Use of Technology Policy was approved at the COW meeting on 12 April 2022 and will go to the next Board meeting for final approval.

***revision**

10. New Business

Superintendent Duah introduced Communications Coordinator Kravets and thanked her for her work. Communications Coordinator Kravets is responsible for the monthly school council blog. She has been working with the Communications Department to set up a program with a company called MCIS. MCIS is a translation interpretation platform used to translate District-wide materials such as information sheets, videos and report cards in the top five languages spoken within the District. The company has platforms to allow schools and educators to submit requests, creating a direct connection to translation and interpretation services.

Additional research is being done to identify opportunities for integration of these platforms to better connect educators and parents.

11. Adjournment

Chair Mills noted that the date of the next PIC meeting is 11 May 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Diana Mills, Chair, Parent
Involvement Committee