



## PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

6:00 pm

Trustees' Committee Room

133 Greenbank Road

Ottawa, Ontario

Members: Diana Mills, Calla Barnett, Seyi Okuribido-Malcolm, Mohammed Saleem, Tabassum Khan, Scott Walker, Alison Kinahan (Parents for Diversity), Kristina Price (Ottawa Network for Education, Alternate)

Non-Voting Members: Suzanne Nash (Trustee), Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Samah Suliman (Family and Community Engagement Coordinator), Naya Markanastasakis (Principal, Pinecrest Public School), Jesse Mark (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Kenan Omercajic (Strategic Business Analyst), Tamara Persaud (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Mills called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Homelands

Chair Mills acknowledged that this meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Homelands and thanked the Algonquin Nations for their stewardship of these lands since time immemorial.

3. Approval of Agenda

**Moved by Alison Kinahan,**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

Vice-Chair Barnett assumed the chair.

4. Presentations

4.1 OCDSB Translation and Interpretation Services

Family and Community Engagement Coordinator, Samah Suliman, provided the Committee with a presentation regarding the importance of

enhancing family engagement through translation and interpretation services; with emphasis on all parents and guardians being involved in students' learning and academic success.

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

- The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) partnered with the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to employ Multicultural Liaison Officers (MLO) to support newcomer students and their families with settlement services, language and cultural interpretation, conflict resolution, navigating the school community and supporting needs within the schools or community;
- The OCDSB also has a strategic partnership with MCIS Language Solutions to provide translation services in 300 languages to students and families, in person or over the phone; to cater to the various communication needs of the diverse community within the Board. MCIS is the provincial standard for interpretation and translation services;
- Automatic digital translation platforms are available to be used in emergency situations where communication is required;
- Schools that have a high population of need for a specific language are to report to the Board in order to have adequate personnel on staff to accommodate the needs of the community;
- Educators and administrative staff are encouraged to view the Translation and Interpretation Resources tab on the [OCDSB Staff Portal](#) for more information on guidelines accessing and providing translation services to students and their families;
- Funding for translation and interpretation services is managed through the Board and not through Family and Community Engagement;
- The Parents for Diversity program will be training their members and parents on how to support other parents with language needs and engage in partnerships with community organizations; and
- American Sign Languages and French Sign Language are included in OCDSB translation and interpretation services but not under MCIS services.

Diana Mills resumed the chair.

#### 4.2 Report 24-110, Elementary Program Review: Relevant Research and District Data (N. Towaij)

Executive Officer Mark and Strategic Business Analyst Omercajic provided an update on the Elementary Program Review (EPR) and requested feedback from the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) members through the online platform, ThoughtExchange.

During discussion and in response to queries, the following information was provided:

- Executive Officer Mark summarized the previous steps taken in the Elementary Program Review and the current status of the consultation phase of the review. Emphasis was placed on the need for feedback from the OCDSB advisory committees to navigate the production of potential models;
- The OCDSB has conducted literature reviews regarding inclusive education, and French as a second language in the elementary programs to inform practical considerations before new models are proposed;
- Strategic Business Analyst Omercajic noted that SEAC members can continue to contribute to the ThoughtExchange for two weeks following the meeting in order to provide ample opportunity to share their thoughts on the current findings of the EPR;

Chair Mills called a 10 minute recess at 7:15 pm.

- Currently, alternative programs in the OCDSB are only offered in English. There is no French Immersion alternative program offered at this time;
- Integrated classrooms to promote peer to peer support was encouraged as opposed to separating students based on need and skill level as it provides opportunities for student development. Furthermore, the concern was raised as many students and families in alternative programs have to travel further from home to attend extracurriculars and participate fully in the school community.
- Many students are unable to receive school bus services before and after school; and
- Executive Officer Mark encouraged committee members to forward any questions regarding the Elementary Program Review to Corporate Services to be shared with program coordinators.

Vice-Chair Barnett assumed chair.

## 5. Discussion Items

### 5.1 Family Conference Planning

Family and Community Engagement Coordinator, Samah Suliman, provided an update on the upcoming Family Conference that will be held at Woodroffe High School on 2 November 2024. The keynote speaker will be author Sam Demma. He will be sharing a message on overcoming challenges in education. The theme for the conference will be "support education through change." There will be 30 community organizations and 10 internal departments there to engage with families. Registration and more information regarding scheduling for the day, can be found on the OCDSB website.

### 5.2 Parent Reaching Out (PRO Grant)

Superintendent of Education, Prince Duah provided an overview of the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant provided to Ontario school councils by the Ministry of Education to enable them to support projects and initiatives that remove local barriers that prevent parents from engaging in students learning and academic progress.

During discussion and in response to queries, the following information was noted:

- Previously, schools councils who wished to participate had to submit a proposal. This has been changed to provide every interested school with the funding at the beginning of the school year;
- Within the OCDSB, about 80 schools engaged in the PRO Grant program. Each participating school received \$750 to promote relationships between families and schools;
- The key focus areas of the grant include, mental health, inclusivity and early learning through innovative projects such as workshops, community events, cultural celebrations, resource development, and guest speakers;
- Applications for PRO grant funding will be released early next week and the link to the application will be attached to the newsletter circulated to schools in the OCDSB;

Diana Mills resumed the chair.

- Concern was raised that the intimidating language in the application form may prevent school councils from submitting applications. It was noted that ongoing effort has been made to

simplify the language while also ensuring that it is acceptable to the Ministry; and

Vice Chair Barnett assumed the chair.

- As a safeguard, applications are done through the OCDSB school council emails. Parents interested in applying for the grant must do so through their schools council, Principal and/or administration.

## 6. Reports

### 6.1 PIC Report, 11 September 2024

Moved by Scott Walker,

THAT the Parent Involvement Committee report dated 11 September 2024 be received.

Chair Mills requested that the minutes indicate that she passed the chair to Vice-Chair Barnett after the acknowledgement of Homelands.

**Moved by Scott Walker,**

**THAT the Parent Involvement Committee report dated 11 September 2024 be received, as amended.**

**Carried**

### 6.2 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Duah provided his report and noted the following:

- For the first time, PIC will have a representative on the school year calendar committee. While in previous years a member has been able to sit in on the committee and report back to PIC, now PIC has an official mandatory spot on the committee and is now able to provide insight to inform decision making; and
- The Student Senate had its first meeting last week. With the changes in student senate structure, each school now has two grade nine and ten representatives and one grade eleven or twelve representative.

## 7. Information Items

### 7.1 Chair's Report

During the report from the Chair, the following information was provided:

- Vice Chair Barnett and Chair Mills attended a meeting hosted by the Ministry of Education for PIC chairs that focused on relevant issues Ontario schools are facing such as addictions, vaping and

cell phone usage. Funding has been provided for communication to support solutions in those areas;

- The PIC Chair received emails concerning trustee absenteeism due to work commitments. A suggestion was made to have a 'proxy' in those school zones, to aid in communication between trustees and families. The Chair of the Board has been notified;
- It was recommended that trustees and City councilors work together to remove any overlap in Board and city services;
- PIC will be selecting a new Chair and Vice-Chair at the 20 November 2024 meeting. If any members are interested in either role, they are encouraged to apply. Chair Mills and Vice-Chair Barnett are available should any members wish to discuss the time involvement and future direction of PIC in relation to the roles; and
- PIC now has a tab on the school council websites with the intention of increased community engagement and promoting PIC initiatives.

#### 7.2 Update on Membership Committee

The membership subcommittee meeting was moved to 28 October 2024. Members who are interested in reapplying but have not done so yet are encouraged to do so on the OCDSB website.

### 8. Standing Items

#### 8.1 Updates from Workplan Subcommittees

There were no work plan subcommittee updates.

#### 8.2 Update from Board Committees

Trustee Nash reported the following:

- A special Board meeting was held on 15 October 2024. Julia Fortey was selected as the new Zone 2 Trustee (Kanata North/Kanata South);
- The Elementary Program Review was the focus of the 24 September 2024 Board meeting and the 8 October Committee of the Whole meeting;
- At the 8 October 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting, the Equity Access to Technology Plan was discussed. Kindergarten and Grade one classrooms will receive a ratio of four students to one iPad. Grades two to six will receive a ratio of two students to one chromebook. Every high school student will receive a Chromebook. iPads and Chromebooks will be distributed to schools over the next three years; and

- The decrease in enrollment in the 2024-2025 school year has impacted funding as the budget is based on the number of students enrolled. This is attributed to families moving out of the city, students being enrolled in schools closer to their homes, and access to before and after school childcare.

9. New Business

There was no new business.

10. Upcoming Meeting Dates

The upcoming meeting dates were provided for information.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

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Diana Mills, Chair, Parent  
Involvement Committee