



PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 20, 2019

6:00 pm

Trustees' Committee Room

133 Greenbank Road

Ottawa, Ontario

- Members: Mostafizur Khan, John Marshall, Gita Nurlaila, Diana Mills, Susan Ingram (Community Representative), Susan Fullerton, Martyn Reid (OCASC Member), Amber Labelle (OCASC, Alternate)
- Non-Voting Members: Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Shannon Smith (Principal), Wendy Hough (Trustee)
- Staff and Guests: Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Erica Braunovan (Trustee), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer), Sandy Owens (Interim Manager, Business and Learning Technologies), Rosemary Kitts (Project Manager, eSystems), Engy Abdel Masieh (Policy Analyst), Nicole Guthrie (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Martyn Reid,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Review of PIC Reports

3.a 21 November 2018 Report

Moved by Susan Fullerton,

THAT the report from the 21 November 2018 PIC meeting be received.

Chair Khan requested the following be added to the last paragraph on folio 6: "Chair Khan indicated that there was no intention to offend the speaker and his comments were offered respectfully."

Mr. Reid inquired whether Chair Khan's comments and apology occurred during or outside the meeting.

Ms. Fullerton and Ms. Mills recalled a broader discussion on the matter during the meeting and felt the proposed amendment would be an accurate reflection of the statements made.

Moved by Susan Fullerton

THAT the report from the 21 November 2018 PIC meeting be received, as amended.

Carried

3.b 9 January 2019 Report

Moved by Amber Labelle,

THAT the report from the 9 January 2019 PIC meeting be received.

Carried

4. Chair's Report

Chair Khan provided the committee with a brief overview of the PIC Bylaws.

Chair Khan noted that education is a partnership which involves students, parents, teachers, principals, trustees, administrative staff, the government, and its local communities. He thanked new Chair Lynn Scott, new Director Camille Williams-Taylor, new trustees and board staff as well as Mayor Jim Watson and City of Ottawa councillors for their role in public education.

Chair Khan noted the significant number of parent participants in the District's recent idea exchange and was encouraged by the attendance of fellow advisory committee members at the PIC focus group on 9 January 2019.

Chair Khan advised that he attended the farewell ceremony for former Director of Education, Jennifer Adams on 11 December 2018 and on behalf of PIC thanked her for her commitment to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

5. Director's Report

Associate Director Reynolds noted that secondary report cards were sent home. He reminded parents that secondary students and those transitioning to grade nine will be completing course selections for the 2019-2020 school year. He added that the application deadline for cross-boundary transfers is 22 February 2019.

Associate Director Reynolds advised that all children attending school in Ontario between the ages of 4 and 17 are required to be vaccinated or have a valid exemption. Parents are required to report all immunizations to Ottawa Public Health (OPH), and OPH has the authority to suspend students from attending

school if they do not have a record of immunization. Parents were notified of the requirement and suspensions have begun. The suspensions will run for 20 days or until OPH provides notification to the school indicating the student can return. He added that questions can be directed to OPH and that they have offered support to families who require assistance with the process.

Associate Director Reynolds advised that the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan process is well underway and that trustees and staff are reviewing the data and refining the inputs. He noted that staff will continue to work on the draft plan in the coming months and the community will have an opportunity to review the draft plan in May 2019.

Associate Director Reynolds noted that Black History Month is being celebrated at schools across the District. This is the first celebration since the District adopted the motion endorsing the United Nations Declaration for the Decade for People of African Descent. Curriculum Services has provided schools with learning materials, posters, and guides. Many schools have undertaken their own initiatives and the events will continue until the end of the month.

Associate Director Reynolds reported that the Identity Based Data Collection project has commenced and that the District aims to capture information which will better identify the racial identity of students. The District will conduct several community meetings in April 2019 designed to gather qualitative, lived experiences. Quantitative data collection is expected to begin in November of 2019. He added that Report 19-019, Identity Based Data Collection, was shared at the 4 February 2019 Committee of the Whole (COW) and provides information on next steps and key dates.

Associate Director Reynolds reminded PIC that some prom and grad activities are neither school sponsored nor supported. He noted that there are only 6 schools in the District that offer school supervised proms.

Ms. Labelle noted that Vimy Ridge Public School will celebrate International Mother Language Day on 21 February 2019. The school created a language tree with leaves that represent the languages the school community speaks.

Chair Khan commented that International Mother Language Day has been observed annually since 2000 to promote peace and multilingualism around the world and to protect all mother languages.

In response to a query from Ms. Labelle regarding the immunization policy, Associate Director Reynolds noted that the immunization policy is established in legislation and the District takes its direction from OPH. Students who are not immunized or whose records are incomplete are not suspended for disciplinary reasons, schools simply enforce the suspension order received from OPH.

In response to concerns raised by Ms. Labelle regarding a stricter immunization policy, Associate Director Reynolds advised that the Education Act establishes

the limits for authority with respect to immunization. The District has a regular relationship with OPH and has discussed opportunities for increased awareness and promotion of immunization.

In response to a query from Ms. Labelle regarding the percentage of unimmunized students, Executive Officer Giroux shared the 2014 immunization rates which indicate a high overall vaccination rate.

Mr. Reid expressed the view that the Identity Based Data collection should also include information on socio-economic status. He highlighted that income is generally a better indicator of student success than race. Executive Officer Giroux noted that Identity Based Data collection will feature a qualitative data collection process which will gather lived experiences and a quantitative data collection process which will include demographic data questions formulated based on the required data standards. Additional questions will focus on well-being and school experience. The data standards permit questions regarding family income but a decision on the questions has not yet been finalized.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that the District does have access to the socioeconomic index and analyzes achievement gaps based on the data.

6. Action Items

6.a Report 19-024, Recruitment of Community Representatives to the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)

Your committee had before it Report 19-024, providing information on the process to select new community representatives to sit on the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).

Ms. Ingram volunteered to sit on the membership sub-committee as the community representative.

Martyn Reid volunteered to sit on the membership sub-committee as a parent representative.

Moved by Susan Fullerton

THAT staff proceeds with seeking expressions of interest for the Community Representative position; and

THAT the following persons be appointed to the Membership Sub-Committee, to review applications, if required:

- **Mostafizur Khan (Chair);**
- **Carm Janneteau (Vice-Chair);**
- **Brett Reynolds, Director Designate;**
- **Parent Member Martyn Reid; and**
- **Community Representative Susan Ingram.**

Carried

7. Presentation and Discussion

7.a OCDSB Parent Portal Features and Functionality

Executive Officer Giroux introduced Sandy Owens and Rosemary Kitts who provided the committee with information on the District's parent portal.

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

- The parent portal currently provides parents with unauthenticated access to a variety of resources. Parents are not able to access information regarding their children without secure authentication. Other school districts are utilizing parent portals with authenticated access. Attendance, grades, school payments are options that are available through authenticated parent portals;
- Authentication for secure access is a technical challenge that currently impairs progress on the parent portal;
- Mr. Reid noted that the app is currently only available for download from the Canadian iTunes store. He advised that many newcomer families may continue to maintain iTunes accounts in their country of origin;
- The calendar is an important element that must be included in the parent portal. The calendar should include information on midterms, exams, class and school trips so that parents may use it for planning;
- Mr. Reid highlighted school cash online as a useful tool for both parents and school administrators and must be available in the parent portal;
- Ms. Nurlaila expressed the view that information related specifically to her children and their schools and activities would be valuable to her family. She would prefer the parent portal to be personalized rather than generic;
- Mr. Reid expressed concern over the possible duplication of effort and data. He added that it will be important to maintain continuity in messaging between the parent portal and the school website;
- Mr. Reid suggested the parent portal include potential parents. He noted that registration is the optimal time to create designated, authenticated users;
- Mr. Reid noted that many parents currently use Facebook groups as their primary source of information but an informal survey of parents revealed that emails and notes home from school were preferred as the primary methods of communication with the school;
- Ms. Labelle noted that direct emails from the school and teachers are also important and valued. She noted that she visits the District

website for information on the overall governance and policy related queries;

- Current traffic counts to the parent portal page would not provide meaningful statistics. Without authentication there is no way to know who the users are;
- Mr. Marshall expressed the view that the amount of information a parent needs depends on the grade level of their children. More information is required at the elementary level;
- Mr. Reid expressed the view that the app or parent portal should have a notification system as good as the Facebook notification system;
- Ms. Nurlaila noted that she receives information regarding her children's school work and information from teachers through Google Classroom alerts;
- Ms. Mills expressed her appreciation for those principals who proactively provide families with information via an email and post regularly to the school webpage;
- The District has created a platform and template for all school websites and the principal is responsible for the content of their school site. District links, available on every school site, provide parents with common and consistent messages;
- The District is currently in the process of hiring a school website content coordinator. The coordinator will be responsible for auditing and organizing the school sites and investigating target areas for building and enhancing content;
- Trustee Hough commented that the parent portal should provide access to attendance information;
- The long range plan for the District includes an upgrade to the current student information system, the upgrade would permit parental access of student report cards via the portal;
- In response to a query from Ms. Mills, Executive Officer Giroux noted that teachers are not required to use a particular platform;
- Principal Smith expressed the view that feedback from parents regarding their desire for more communication and positive feedback on applications like Google Classroom is helpful to her as an administrator;
- The District is exploring plugins such as the eLearning solution currently being used by other school districts in the province; and
- Chair Khan requested that a list of the PIC membership be added as a link from the PIC page of the District website.

7.b Memo 18-104, 2017-2018 School Climate Parent Survey - District Report

Your committee had before it Memo 18-104 highlighting the results of the school climate parent survey conducted in the spring of 2018.

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

- In response to a query from Ms. Nurlaila regarding staff training, Principal Smith advised that the results of the data for her school indicated a need to improve attachments. School staff undertook internal training on the subject with Learning Support Services. Her staff were also able to identify measures for success and will utilize suspension and attendance rates as well as other markers to determine if the actions implemented are having an impact;
- Groups of schools in a superintendency receive support from the Research, Evaluation and Analytics Division (READ). The team reviews the results of their own school and is able to make comparisons to other schools in their area as well as schools from across the District;
- Ms. Mills expressed the view that peer to peer transitioning and character development programs have been successful in her child's school. Principal Smith noted that character development programs are a part of the pedagogy for deep learning framework within the District and Curriculum Services utilizes a variety of evidence-based programs to promote self-advocacy and resilience. All programs have a direct link to the well-being objectives of the school and the District;
- Strategies to increase engagement were discussed and proposed by PIC after the 2016 survey but did not result in an increase. The timing of the administration of the survey as well as the distribution of notice may have been contributing factors to the lower than anticipated participation;
- The "OurSCHOOL" survey was developed by The Learning Bar and is anonymous, voluntary, and confidential. All Ontario school boards are required by the Ministry to conduct school climate surveys of students, school staff and parents at least once every two years. Use of The Learning Bar survey allows the District to compare its results to Canadian norms;
- The District is currently exploring the possible acquisition of a new survey tool for a wide range of uses which would allow for the generation of District specific questions;
- Mr. Reid expressed the view that comparisons to other districts in the City of Ottawa may offer a better frame of reference to make improvements and that a District specific survey tool would enable the District to collect more quantitative data which could be mapped directly to the strategic plan; and
- Ms. Labelle expressed the view that the ability to cross-reference identity based data collection results may be more important than a comparison against Canadian norms. Principal Smith advised that

principals do compare their schools to Canadian norms and appreciate the reference to other schools and districts of similar size.

8. Member Information

8.a Report 19-015, Report on the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan Consultations

Executive Officer Giroux noted that Report 19-015, Report on the Strategic Planning Consultations, provides an update on the feedback received to date on the strategic plan consultation. She noted that the session hosted by the PIC on 9 January 2019 was helpful for staff in their preparation for additional focus group sessions and presentation to the Board. The powerpoint presentation referenced in the report was based on the feedback provided by the committee.

Executive Officer Giroux advised that the Board and senior staff also evaluated and discussed the Thoughtexchange data as well as the environmental scan data at their retreat on 8 February 2019. She noted that staff anticipates the draft plan will be presented to the Committee of the Whole on 7 May 2019. The timeline will be communicated in the School Council Newsletter. She added that between 8 May 2019 and 18 June 2019 parents can provide their feedback on the draft plan. The draft will be finalized by the Board by the end of June 2019 and will come into effect in September 2019.

8.b OCASC Report

Mr. Reid advised that 17 January 2019 meeting of OCASC featured a roundtable discussion on the Health and Physical Education curriculum changes. He noted that three motions were put forward and will be voted on at the 21 February 2019 meeting.

Mr. Reid expressed the view that many OCASC representatives are disappointed that results of the provincial consultation on education will not be released until the end of the year and are concerned about the impact of the lack of clear direction with respect to programming.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that the OCASC motions are directed at PIC as opposed to the Board of Trustees. Many of the matters may be of interest to parents but are not directly related to parent involvement nor the mandate of the committee and OCASC might want to consider directing them to the Board as the Board may be better positioned to respond.

Mr. Reid expressed the view that School Councils supplement the curriculum with various events such as math nights or science in schools utilizing school council funding. OCASC seeks clarification on whether or not funding could be used similarly to fill the gaps in the Health and Physical Education curriculum.

Ms. Mills expressed concern with the suggestion that school councils are properly positioned to identify curricular gaps.

Mr. Reid responded that the primary goal with the motion is to alleviate the pressure felt by principals and teachers who may be wary of answering specific student queries for fear of being reported to the Ministry.

Associate Director Reynolds advised that although the Health and Physical Education curriculum at the K-8 level has changed, there is much the school and school council can do to improve the school climate to ensure inclusivity.

Trustee Blackburn noted that she is proud of the District and its continued leadership in the support of LGBTQ students. She noted that the support will continue, despite changes in government.

Mr. Reid noted that the Arts Advisory Committee is seeking new members and encouraged PIC members to help in engagement.

Mr. Reid advised that the 21 February 2019 meeting will feature a presentation by My Life Online, a program designed to teach students to be safe, smart and kind online. Associate Director Reynold noted that Canadian Centre for Child Protection offers a number of free online resources for parents on the subject of online safety.

8.c PIC Long Range Agenda

The PIC Long Range Agenda was provided for information. Executive Officer Giroux noted that the committee may wish to consider the addition of nominations for the Community Recognition Awards to the 17 April 2019 meeting.

9. New Business

There was no new business.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

The next meeting of PIC will be held on 17 April 2019.

Mostafizur Khan, Chair, Parent Involvement Committee

