



## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, January 9, 2019**

**6:00 pm**

**Cafeteria**

**133 Greenbank Road**

Members: Mostafizur Khan  
Diana Mills  
Graciela Jasa Silveira  
Malaka Hendela (OCASC Member)  
Susan Fullerton  
Martyn Reid (OCASC Member)  
Amber Labelle (OCASC, Alternate)

Staff and Guests: Camille Taylor-Williams (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director of Education), Erica Braunovan (Trustee), Wendy Hough (Trustee), Lynn Scott (Trustee), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer), Katrine Mallan (Manager of Board Services), Halcion Joseph-Clost (Strategic Business Analyst), Engy Abdel Masieh (Policy Analyst), Rob Kirwan (SEAC), Mark Wylie (SEAC), Sue Cowin (SEAC), Ian Morris (SEAC), Elaine Hayles (ACE), Emeka Ndukwe (ACE), Sebastion Pilon (IEAC), Raigelee Alorut (IEAC), Brittany Hesmer (IEAC), Aana Logie (IEAC), Anthony Debassige (IEAC), Nancy Dean (ACA), and Kate Carroll (ACA).

### **1. Advisory Committee Meet and Greet**

Chair Khan welcomed the attendees and staff. He noted that the role and function of the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) is to encourage and enhance parent involvement in support of student achievement and well-being. PIC provides information and advice to the Board on parent engagement, communicates with and supports school councils, and undertakes activities to help parents support their children's learning at home and at school.

Chair Khan noted that representatives from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), the Advisory Committee on the Arts (ACA), and the Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC) were in attendance and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity for the committees to work together and be involved in the consultation process for the development of the Board's strategic plan.

Executive Officer Giroux acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unsundered Algonquin Territory and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land.

## 2. Thoughtexchange Consultation Overview

Executive Officer Giroux provided the following information regarding the results of the Thoughtexchange consultation:

- The Idea Exchange was conducted from November 21 to December 17, 2018. Over 6000 people participated in the Thoughtexchange and over 10,000 thoughts were contributed with over 178,000 stars assigned;
- The Thoughtexchange process saw a significant increase in the participation of students in grades 7 through 9;
- The District asked all participant groups the same three questions: what does the District do well; where can the District improve; and what should the priorities be. Conversations were held among elementary parents, secondary parents, grade 7/8 students, grade 9-12 students, centrally assigned staff, secondary staff, elementary staff, and community members. There were fourteen conversations in total. The results reflect the input from all conversations;
- Top thoughts are defined as thoughts that received the highest average rating. Top thoughts are specific thoughts and their associated, ranked rating;
- Top thoughts emerged for each question and were analyzed by topic. From the top thoughts, the following key themes emerged: teaching and learning, curriculum, school environment, student support, extracurricular and physical activities, human resources and Board level, and other;
- A powerpoint presentation with the results of the Thoughtexchange will be posted on the District's website. The slides referencing the top thoughts of each of the questions have clickable links which direct the user to a listing of all of the thoughts in rank order and noting the participant group from which the thought was generated;
- The purpose of the focus group session is to contemplate the next steps in relation to the question regarding priorities and to further explore specific strategic goals for each of the priority areas the community has identified;
- The Ministry of Education's Multi-Year Strategic Planning Guide, 2017, suggests the Board set 3 to 5 ambitious priorities which are focused,

- courageous and be reflective of the community. The Ministry recommends the goals be powerful and motivational for staff, parents, and students; and
- A draft plan will be prepared and presented to the Committee of the Whole for consultation and feedback in April or May with a goal of having the final document approved by the Board in June 2019.

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

- Ms. Jasa Silveira remarked that it would be useful for parents to review the breakdown of thoughts contributed by all group categories (e.g. student, parents, staff etc);
- Instructional quality can be characterized by the quality of the classroom teacher and their abilities, whereas instructional practices are the tools and resources that a teacher may access to enhance their teaching;
- The average class size of the District is 22. Class sizes are mandated by the Ministry at the primary level. The junior grades average between 24-25 students per class and secondary classes range in size from as low as 8 to as high as 30 depending on the course;
- Ms. Hendela observed that most goals and priorities are designed to be achievable and measurable and queried the value of aspirational goals versus achievable goals. Executive Officer Giroux advised that the 2019-2023 strategic plan should have a range of both aspirational and achievable goals with specific strategies it can focus on to work towards the broad objective. The strategic plan, with input from the community, will be determined by the Board and will direct the work of the District for the next 4 years;
- In January 2019, the District will enter the Strategies & Actions stage of the consultation which includes two evenings of focus group discussions with parents, 23 January 2019 at Sir Robert Borden High School and 31 January 2019 at Cairine Wilson High School. The District will also host a focus group session for community partners and another for the student senate;
- In response to a query from Mr. Kirwan regarding consultation with advisory committees, Executive Officer Giroux noted that the consultation process has 4 phases, the pre-consultation, the community-wide idea exchange (Thoughtexchange), developing strategies and actions (focus groups) and inviting feedback on the draft plan. She added that Committee Chairs should consider adding the draft plan to their May or June committee meeting agendas;
- Mr. Ndukwe queried the breakdown of respondents and noted that given the lack of access to technology in his community wondered whether or not the District could feel confident that the results reflect a broad enough response of the Ottawa public board user;

- Ms. Dean and Ms. Hendela queried the data analysis and the threshold for a "thought" to become a theme. Executive Officer Giroux noted that a further breakdown of the thoughts is provided within each of the themes through a clickable link within the PowerPoint presentation. She encouraged the participants to explore the sub-themes as a part of their conversation in regard to priorities. She added that the data requires a streamlined approach in order for staff and the community to interpret it. Thoughtexchange provides staff with the ability to examine and present the most important insights; and
- Ms. Hendela noted that the timing of the strategic planning exercise coincides with the 2019-2020 Budget planning process. She noted her recurring request for the budget document to provide clear links to the strategic plan. Executive Officer Giroux noted that the strategic plan will not be complete and approved until June of 2019 at which time the budget process will have been completed. She noted that there are still opportunities for the budget document to address the elements of the current strategic plan.

### 3. Breakout Group Sessions

The attendees worked in small, independent groups to develop strategies and actions for the following themes: curriculum, teaching and learning, school environment and student supports.

### 4. Action Items, Wrap-up, Final Thoughts

During the presentation of the breakout group session findings the following points were noted for each theme discussed:

#### **Curriculum**

- Define equitable outcomes for all students to ensure they succeed academically and encourage their well being;
- Ensure that the curriculum is representative and relevant, diverse and equitable;
- The curriculum should be informed by the current need (math fundamentals) and include relevant skills for 21st-century learners;
- The curriculum must be revamped to decolonize the Indigenous unit, Indigenous content should be found and accessible in multiple areas of study;
- A focus on life skills, self-care, mental health, conflict resolution, digital lives, budgeting, and other relevant skills required in the 21st century;
- Ensure that the curriculum leads to all students achieving and succeeding the Board's outcomes;
- Understanding that the definition of success differs for all students and that the bar must move for each student as it relates to their lives, values and experiences; and
- The strategies implemented must have the ability to be monitored to ensure the District can measure success.

#### **School Environment**

- All students and staff experience a safe, supportive and inclusive environment that enables them to meet their goals;
- The group noted that a proportionately high number of the responses from the Thoughtexchange reference student behaviour;
- The District must ensure the provision of adequate resources to ensure teachers are supported in their efforts;
- Students must feel safe and centered. Students should feel welcome, safe, included and valued at all points of the school cycle;
- In response to queries about 2 spirit indigenous students, the group explained that a feeling of "safety" is applicable to all students and must not be confined solely to gender, race or sexual orientation; and
- The District must be mindful that parents entrust their children to its schools and have an expectation of care "in loco parentis". The group responded that their choice of the use of the safe environment is a part of that care.

### **Student Supports**

- The group noted that many of the responses focused on mental health and well-being, leading them to conclude that the well-being objective set for the 2015-2019 strategic plan must continue;
- The current strategic plans' objective of enhancing the use of resources and supports to improve the well-being of all learners and staff could be aided by investment in additional therapists, guidance councilors, educational assistants, early childcare educators; and
- Building capacity to support mental health could also include professional development, and the addition of more extracurricular activities for students.

### **Teaching and Learning**

- The District should invest in resources to reduce class sizes to ensure the ratio of teacher to pupils is appropriate to the cohort. The group noted that classrooms with large numbers of English Language Learners may require additional support staff and a reduced number of pupils to ensure the students can be successful;
- Technology should be current and relevant and teachers must be trained in its use and application;
- Students should conclude their learning as savvy, aware technological citizens;
- Equitable access to technology in all classrooms across the District should be a priority;
- The District's Technology policy must be relevant to the current and future students, and align with 21st-century skills;
- The District must hire more specialized teachers and invest in the necessary professional development for all staff;

- Improve and review training and capacity building opportunities for teachers and staff. Experienced, specialized teachers should be utilized as instructional facilitators;
- Creating safe, learning-centered environments for students;
- Project based learning;
- Ms. Hendela expressed the view that the budget and hiring process may impact or undermine the goal;
- The elementary program offerings and menu style system should also be evaluated and elements;
- Students are the end users of the services provided by the District and should have opportunities to rate and make suggestions.

The Powerpoint presentation, including links to the Thoughtexchange results, will be posted to the District website in the near future. Executive Officer Giroux encouraged committee members to share the link with their fellow members. She thanked the participants for their ideas and giving of their time and noted more opportunities to comment on the plan will be forthcoming in the spring of 2019.

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Mostafizur Khan, Chair, Parent Involvement Committee