

Parent Involvement Committee Annual Report 2018-2019

About the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)

The purpose of a parent involvement committee is to support, encourage and enhance parent engagement at the board level to improve student achievement and well-being. (*O. Reg. 612/00 with an Amendment 330/10*). The PIC acts as an advisory body to the District and provides a vital link between parents and the Director of Education and Trustees. Parent involvement committee builds parent engagement by:

- Communicating with parents, providing information and advice to the District on parent engagement;
- Developing strategies and initiatives on how the board could engage diverse parents to support their children's learning at home and school;
- Sharing information with, and supporting the work of school councils; and
- Identifying and reducing system barriers to parent engagement.

Parent involvement committees and school councils both encourage parent involvement in children's learning. Where school councils focus on the local schools and communities, PIC participates as an advisory committee at the Board level and focus on things that affect more than one school.

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board recognizes the critical voice of the parents in a collaborative approach to educate their children. The PIC provides regular opportunities for the parents to network, share innovative ideas, offer advice, encourage partnerships, and stay informed by attending educational presentations throughout the school year.

PIC Membership

2018-2019 PIC Members

Chair: Mostafizur Khan,

Vice-Chair: Carm Janneteau

Parent Members:

- Susan Fullerton
- Gita Nurlaila
- Diana Mills
- John Marshall
- Graciela Jasa Silveira
- Geneviève Harte

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OCASC Members:

- Malaka Hendela
- Martyn Reid
- Amber Labelle (Alternate)

Community Representatives:

- Susan Ingram (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ottawa)
- Mante Molepo (Parents for Diversity)
- Carolyn Hunter (Ottawa Network for Education)
- Melissa McGuirk McNeil (Ottawa Network for Education, Alternate)

Non-Voting Representatives:

- Brett Reynolds, Associate Director of Education (Director Designate)
- Wendy Hough, Trustee
- Shannon Smith, Principal

Staff Support:

- Michèle Giroux, Executive Officer, Corporate Services
- Engy Abdel Masieh, Policy Analyst

The PIC members are appointed to either a one-year or two-year term. This tenure allows for consistency in membership between school years, which also ensures a variety of parents can participate in the Committee year to year. PIC is a parent-led committee; our Chair and Vice-chair are parents, and the majority of the members are parents.

In January 2019, PIC warmly welcomed new trustee, Wendy Hough, to the Committee. She replaced outgoing trustee Chris Ellis. Trustee Hough, new to the District, has brought fresh eyes and a unique perspective to the PIC.

The District requested an expression of interest from the parent members of PIC whose terms expired as of 30 November 2018, and all the respective members indicated their interest to sit on PIC for another term of office to continue their work.

The Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC) appointed a new member, Martyn Reid and a new alternate, Amber Labelle. The Co-Chair of OCASC, Malaka Hendela, expressed her interest in continuing on PIC.

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Appointment of Community Representatives

The community representative vacancies were well advertised on various news media between 24 February and 22 March 2019, and the District received four applications. A membership sub-committee was formed and the sub-committee considered how the applicants could contribute to the mandate of the PIC, whether the applicants could bring a new perspective to PIC discussions and whether the applicants had an established relationship with the OCDSB and public education.

After careful deliberation, the sub-committee recommended Ottawa Network for Education and Parents for Diversity as the two applications that best addressed all of the criteria and needs of the PIC. At the 8 May 2019 meeting, PIC warmly welcomed the new members and received a presentation from the new members on the work of their respective organizations.

PIC 2018-2019 Achievements

The Committee continued to build on the three guiding principles in their work: support, encourage and connect parents in education. Throughout the 2018-2019 school year, the committee accomplished the following activities to fulfill the above three areas of work:

SUPPORT: the infrastructure of resources available to facilitate parent engagement across the district includes: providing opportunities on parent engagement; parent learning; providing resources to support structures/strategies (i.e., School Councils, PIC, and OCASC).

- Hosted five Speaker Series events;
- Hosted the annual Parent Conference;
- Hosted a PIC-led workshop to engage parents in the Ministry's 2018 Consultation: Education in Ontario as part of the Parent Conference; and
- Revised the PIC Bylaws and Standing Rules

ENCOURAGE: developing strategies through the PIC that encourage parent involvement, particularly for those who are traditionally less engaged in their children's education.

- Participated in the consultation of:
 - Parent School Climate Survey Results; and

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- Strategic Plan 2019-2023: Pre-Consultation
- Provided parent input on:
 - Ministry Consultation on Education Reform in Ontario;
 - Ministry Consultation on Class Sizes and Hiring Practices
 - Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2018 Regulatory Registry Consultation
 - School Climate Parent Survey;
 - OCDSB Parent Portal;
 - Identity Based Data Collection;
 - Field Trips;
 - Data Security;
 - Parent Conference planning; and
 - Speaker Series planning.

CONNECT: building capacity of the parent members in school and district initiatives to enhance parent engagement in favor of children's higher academic achievements.

- Established a Membership Sub-Committee;
- Provided information on the new community representatives;
- Hosted the Parent Conference; and
- Hosted a focus group session for the advisory committees in support of the 2019-2023 Draft Strategic Plan

Speaker Series

The OCDSB Speaker Series offers free presentations to the community and seeks to provide parents and educators with access to leading ideas and information on how parents can effectively contribute in their children's learning at home and school.

The series is sponsored by the PIC and supported through PRO grant funding from the Ministry of Education. During 2018-2019 school years, the following speaker series events were held:

Concussion Management with Dr. Michael Vassilyadi

Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and Gordon and Kathleen Stringer advocates for Rowan's Law (September 26, 2018)

Parents learned about Gordon and Kathleen Stringer's efforts to make Ontario a leader in concussion awareness and prevention. Dr. Vassilyadi provided valuable lessons on concussion management, causes, symptoms, and recovery.

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Cannabis Information Sessions (October 23 and November 6, 2018)

The District, in partnership with Ottawa Public Health, hosted two sessions for parents to learn about cannabis. The discussion involved tackling the myths, what is known about the new laws, how to talk to youth, protecting youth, and available services.

UNSTOPPABLE YOU with Unstoppable Tracy Schmitt (February 28, 2019)

Tracy Schmitt, a four-way amputee from birth, shared her three keys to success: exceed uncertainty, embrace possibility and earn independence. The presentation for parents and students reminded all those who attended about the need to set high expectations and take extraordinary actions to achieve success.

Autism: An Information Night for Parents

Supporting the Mental Health of Students with Autism presented by Dr. Jonathon A.Weiss (April 23, 2019)

Dr. Weiss spoke about promoting positive outcomes for youth with autism. He noted that indicators such as happiness, satisfaction and resilience on the school level, parent/ family level and individual level are important areas of focus. He emphasized the importance of inclusive schools, improving parent-adolescent attachment, and participating with positive peers to promote positive growth.

When Technology Takes Over: Navigating Through the Teen Years with Liz Parsons and Matt Young of Rideauwood Addiction & Family Services (May 2, 2019)

The session offered parents practical strategies to encourage the healthy use of technology in teens. Liz and Matt emphasized that technology addiction is a general term that can include excessive behaviours related to playing video games; accessing social networks such as Instagram and Snapchat; watching videos on YouTube; excessive texting; smartphone overuse, and more. They encouraged parents to acknowledge the good as well as the bad in conversations with their kids so that the talks are not only about the negative.

The Parent Conference

The Parent Conference and School Council Training Day was held on November 3, 2018, at Gloucester High School and was once again a great success. Over 200 dedicated parents and guardians attended. The Conference provided parents and educators with a fantastic opportunity to learn about issues related to children's learning and well-being, special education and school council best practices.

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The keynote speaker, Dr. Peg Dawson, co-author of *Smart but Scattered*, spoke about the connections between the District's Exit Outcomes and the executive skills critical to effective learning. She offered parents tips and strategies to cultivate these skills in their children to enable them to navigate their educational path and prepare for life successfully. Educational sessions presented by highly skilled facilitators provided more in-depth learning opportunities for parents and included topics such as growth mindset, leveraging digital technology in the classroom, the parent-child connection, self-regulation, math fundamentals, active transportation, special education supports and more. School council training sessions focused on best practices, finance, and school council websites.

Parent Involvement Committee Session on the Ministry of Education Consultation on Education Reform

At its 17 October 2018 meeting, PIC members presented a motion to hold a workshop during the 2018 Parent Conference to receive feedback from parents on the Ministry's consultation. Approximately thirty parents attended the PIC workshop.

The OCDSB Parent Involvement Committee hosted the workshop-style session to discuss the ongoing provincial consultation on public education reform. The PIC was able to provide the attendees with valuable information on how to participate in the Ministry consultations, why participation is meaningful and was able to collect parent feedback to the Ministry.

The PIC prepared a summary of the workshop which was presented to the Board of Trustees to help inform the OCDSB's submission to the Ministry on the provincial consultation on education in Ontario. The PIC summary was also provided to the Ministry of Education and posted to the District's website to help promote parents' awareness and participation in the Ministry Consultation.

The 2018 Parent Conference was a unique opportunity for PIC to expand discussions and engage in direct communications with the parents of the District around important changes that may impact their children's education. The PIC is in the early planning stages for the 2019 Parent Conference and building on its success will again be hosting a workshop to engage parents.

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PIC-hosted Focus Group

The 2018-2019 school year saw the District begin the development of the OCDSB 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. PIC was engaged in early consultation and used its 9 January 2019 meeting as a focus group session to support the Strategies & Actions stage of the strategic plan process. PIC invited the Chairs and three members of all of the Advisory Committees to the Board to attend and participate in the focus group through the contribution of ideas and sharing their committee's voice.

At the session, participants from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), the Advisory Committee on the Arts and the Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC), were provided with feedback from the ThoughtExchange and worked in small, independent groups to develop strategies and actions for the following themes: curriculum, teaching and learning, school environment and student supports. PIC and their colleagues were able to explore and discuss the results of the online consultation and helped define some unique strategies for achieving identified goals.

Staff and trustees were able to use the valuable input to further their work in the strategizing stage. PIC plan to incorporate the elements of the finalized 2019-2023 Strategic Plan in their work plan for 2019-2020.

PIC Bylaws and Standing Rules

The PIC last approved its By-Laws and Standing Rules in 2011 and they had not undergone any revisions since their development. The PIC reviewed the changes to ensure the Bylaws and Standing Rules reflect the current practice, ensure compliance with the Regulation, and optimize the resources available to the Committee. The major revisions included specifying the number of the one (1) and two (2) 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. The review and update of the By-Laws and Standing Rules will help guide the work of the PIC in the 2019-2020 school year.

Funding

As part of its commitment to increase parent engagement across the province, the Ministry of Education provided funding to school councils and PICs to support local initiatives in more effective ways. The OCDSB-PIC received \$10,000 in 2018 for the Parent Conference and Speaker Series.

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In addition, 87 School Councils shared \$ 84,475 in PRO Grant funding. School Councils used their funds to work on projects that made an impact on parent outreach related to children's learning and well-being. Projects included mental health and resilience development workshops; computer and social media safety presentations; family arts, science and math events; and celebration of diversity.

Looking Forward

The Draft 2019-2023 Strategic Plan outlines parent engagement as a key performance indicator in the creation of a culture of caring. In 2019-2020 school year, PIC will continue its work to support student achievement and well-being through initiatives that empower parents to play active roles in making their children successful learners and contributory citizens. PIC will also continue its collaborative approach, share accomplishments and create resources in the engagement process to support and increase parent voice.

PIC members have expressed an interest in providing parents with additional resource documents and online links with relevant information. Together we can make the District a more inclusive place for our children.

Contact Us

PIC members want to connect with their communities. If you're interested in learning more about PIC or wish to discuss a parent involvement idea or concern, contact a PIC representative at PIC@ocdsb.ca