



PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, May 8, 2019
6:00 pm
Board Room
Administration Building
133 Greenbank Road
Ottawa, Ontario**

Members: Mostafizur Khan, Carm Janneteau, Geneviève Harte , John Marshall, Diana Mills, Gita Nurlaila, Malaka Hendela (OCASC Member), Martyn Reid (OCASC Member)

Non-Voting Members: Mante Molepo (Community Representative), Wendy Hough (Trustee), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Melissa McGuirk McNeil (Community Representative, Alternate)

Staff and Guests: Lynn Scott (Trustee), Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer), Engy Abdel Masieh (Policy Analyst), Nicole Guthrie (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Khan call the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Martyn Reid,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Review of PIC 17 April 2019 Report

Moved by Martyn Reid,

THAT the PIC 17 April 2019 Report be received.

Carried

4. Chair's Report

Chair Khan noted the PIC had success this year bringing the advisory committees together to provide input into the draft 2019-2023 strategic plan.

Chair Khan conveyed his sympathies for all those affected by the flooding of the Ottawa River and praised the students, staff, and families who assisted in the flood relief efforts.

Chair Khan expressed his condolences to those families and students in the Ottawa area impacted by the tragedies in New Zealand and Sri Lanka. He expressed his frustration over the attack in New Zealand and his concern for those without religion and country.

Ms. Hendela, on a point of clarification, requested that the mention and reference to religion in the Chair Khan's message regarding those without religion be removed. She noted that the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board is public and non-denominational and provides equal opportunity for all students regardless of faith.

Chair Khan responded that he is respectful to all languages, ethnicities, and faiths.

Chair Khan advised the committee of the following upcoming events:

- The Annual Volunteer Appreciation Awards, 13 June 13, 2019;
- Presentation of the PIC Annual Report to the Committee of the Whole, 4 June 2019;
- Mental Health Week, 6 May to 12 May 2019; and
- Education Week, the first week in May 2019.

Chair Khan noted that further to the parliamentary procedure training he spoke about at the 17 April 2019 PIC meeting, he has prepared a letter to the Director of Education and the Chair of the Board requesting that the training be offered to all chairs and vice-chairs of advisory committees. In response to a question, Executive Officer Giroux clarified that the District retained the services of a registered parliamentarian to conduct the exercise with the chairs and vice-chairs. No additional training is planned at present.

5. Director's Report

Associate Director Reynolds advised that information on the website survey was distributed to all parents through "Keeping You Connected."

Associate Director Reynolds reminded members that students who are in grades four to twelve would complete the OurSCHOOL Survey online at school between 23 April and 10 May 2019. Information regarding the school climate survey was made available to parents through the School Council Newsletter and information from the school.

Associate Director Reynolds advised that the 2019-2020 budget process continues with the Committee of the Whole Budget meeting on 29 May 2019 with the presentation of the 2019-2020 staff recommended budget. This meeting will begin the public debate. Parents and others who wish to provide input are invited to delegate on 3 June 2019 and 10 June 2019.

Associate Director Reynolds noted that A Date for Diversity: Journeying from Diversity to Equity will be held at Canterbury High School on 14 May 2019 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Executive Officer Giroux advised that staff will meet with community partners the week of 6 May 2019 to gather the information that will help inform the focus group sessions aimed at gathering lived experience in anticipation of the Identity Based Data Collection planned for November of 2019.

The focus group for students are planned for 31 May 2019. Focus groups for parents and community partners are planned for 27 May and 11 June 2019.

In response to a query from Ms. Molepo, Executive Officer Giroux advised that the focus group sessions are not a town hall session and that those expressing an interest to participate may attend.

In response to a query from Ms. Hendela, Executive Officer Giroux advised that staff will provide information on the outcome of the focus groups in early September 2019 about what was learned and how the information will inform the work of the District and the next steps.

In response to a query from Ms. Molepo, Executive Officer Giroux noted that the Anti-Racism Act expressly acknowledges four groups, including Indigenous, Black, Jewish communities, and communities that are adversely impacted by Islamophobia. The District has taken a more inclusive approach and also believes that the collection of identity-based data must also address the issues and challenges of the lived experiences of other communities including 2SLGBTQ+, South East Asian, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and disabled (AODA) and newcomers.

The data will be collected from all students. Staff is working on the specificity of the questions, and the focus group sessions will help inform that work. The District will report on the findings and, through the community conversations, will determine comparison groups and data segregation. The District is reviewing the work of other Districts who are further along in their research to help guide the work.

Ms. Hendela and Mr. Reid expressed concern over the volume of data collected and the security of the data. Executive Officer Giroux noted that the data collection will be confidential but cannot be anonymous if it is to be correlated with other student achievement data. The District is currently in the process of acquiring software that will support the collection of the data. Consideration will be given to the storage of the data. There are specific guidelines for the collection and storage of data, and the District will use those to inform the reports.

Ms. Hendela expressed the view that it will be necessary for the District to identify that the ownership and control of the data resides with the District in its procurement process.

Ms. Hendela stressed that storage of school board related data must be viewed as a risk and appropriate measures and controls enacted to ensure security. She noted that information regarding the protection of the data must be communicated to parents as they may choose not to participate if specifications are not met.

Mr. Marshall echoed the statements of Ms. Hendela and Mr. Reid but shared that he could not envision a situation where the OCDSB would entertain the risk of a data leak and has faith that his children's data is protected. He added that he had not seen any sign to the contrary.

Ms. Mills expressed concern with self-reporting surveys noting the data can be skewed as many may not answer truthfully.

6. Community Representative Presentations

Chair Khan welcomed new community representatives Melissa McGuirk McNeil and Mante Molepo.

6.a Ottawa Network for Education (ONFE)

Ms. McGuirk McNeil provided the members of PIC with information on the Ottawa Network for Education (ONFE).

During her presentation, the following points were noted:

- ONFE works closely with all four school boards in the Ottawa-Carleton region to support students and education;
- ONFE has three primary areas of focus: learning, health and wellbeing and career readiness;
- ONFE's Ottawa Volunteers in Education (OVIE) program brings volunteers from the community into classrooms, to help educators ensure the academic success and well-being of their students;
- ONFE places close to 1500 volunteers a year and recruits, screens and trains the volunteers based on requests from teachers;
- ONFE's OttawaReads is an early literacy program that inspires a love of reading in children in kindergarten to grade three classrooms. Volunteers read aloud to children weekly helping develop essential literacy skills;
- ONFE's Ottawa School Breakfast Program provides students in need with a nutritious breakfast. The program operates with the support of individual and corporate donors, volunteers, educators, the City of Ottawa, and the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services;

- Classroom Gardens, a new ONFE pilot project, is available in 24 schools across Ottawa's four public boards. Classroom gardens engage students in the planting, growing and harvesting of vegetables;
- ONFE plays a facilitator role in the Substance Abuse Support Program which offers counseling, treatment and information to youth to prevent life-long addiction and support student success;
- ONFE promotes career readiness through its JA Ottawa (formerly Junior Achievement) program. The programs serve between 5000 to 7000 students a year from grades eight through twelve. JA Ottawa promotes financial literacy and entrepreneurship. JA Company supports students as they work collaboratively to build a business;
- ONFE's World of Choices brings students together with career mentors working in desired fields, industries and professions. In small sessions, students learn first-hand what it takes to be successful; and
- ONFE's Employer Connections program connects educators and employers, creates work-related learning experiences, provides opportunities for career exploration and encourages increased enrollment in STEM-related courses.

6.b Parents for Diversity

Ms. Molepo shared that she was one of the founding members of Parents For Diversity. The Ottawa based organization evolved from their children's personal experiences of racism and other forms of discrimination in their schools and the inadequate response from the schools on how to address the incidents and the absence of a sense of belonging evidenced in the school system.

Ms. Molepo noted a lack of representation in the curriculum and a lack of diversity among decision makers and educators and wanted to be a voice for students and believe that all students have the right to an education free from discrimination. She noted that most of the Parents for Diversity Directors are lawyers and view the work from a human rights lens.

Ms. Molepo advised that Parents For Diversity conduct a variety of workshops for parents, schools and educators on the various forms of discrimination and serve as advocates for change. Parents for Diversity work one on one with parents of children who have experienced discrimination in schools.

Ms. Molepo noted that Parents for Diversity is building a library of children's books that celebrate the diversity of Canada's population. She expressed the view that students need to see themselves in the books they read.

In response to a query from Ms. Mills regarding the diversity library, Ms. Molepo indicated that the Parents for Diversity website has several lists of books about race and culture. She noted that the Parents for Diversity workshops and mosaic audit she conducts with parents and educators seeks to ensure that the school includes more diverse literature in their classrooms. The workshops promote cultural competency and using the lived experiences of the students to inform the teaching practice.

Ms. Molepo indicated that she helped shape the commitments in the Ottawa Catholic School Board's (OCSB) declaration of support for the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent. She noted that collaborative engagement is integral to achieving diversity and inclusion in schools.

Ms. Hendela welcomed Ms. Molepo and invited her to attend a meeting of the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC). She remarked that Ms. Molepo's addition to the committee would help provide an impactful perspective. She noted that the insight from Parents for Diversity may help PIC challenge some of the norms and practices of the District that are rooted in colonialism.

Ms. Molepo added that the collection of identity-based data is significant to the organization.

7. Presentation and Discussion

7.1 Report 19-053, Report on the 2019-2023 Draft Strategic Plan

Your committee had before it Report 19-053, Report on the 2019-2023 Draft Strategic Plan, presenting the Draft Strategic Plan 2019-2023 to the community to encourage feedback.

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

- Ms. Hendela stressed the importance of the connection between the goals of the strategic plan and the budget. She hoped that the budget and communications material for the 2019-2020 budget would reflect the goals identified in the draft strategic plan and that a clear allocation of funding towards these initiatives will be illustrated by staff. She expressed the view that the budget is the engine that drives the strategic plan and it would enliven the budget materials to acknowledge the link between the two;
- Ms. Hendela commended the staff for their effort in the preparation of the draft plan. She expressed the view that the goals, strategies and outcomes are easy for parents to understand and the overall vision of the Board is clear;

- Ms. Hendela expressed concern regarding the key performance indicators and was not sure of the measurables or how the advisory committees of the Board may influence the work;
- Ms. Hendela commented that one of the primary areas of concern in the focus group sessions was infrastructure. She highlighted the lack of a commitment to good buildings, clean classrooms, manageable class sizes and air conditioning and noted that the commitment to decision making must be holistic and that students and staff cannot be well if their environment makes them uncomfortable. She highlighted the Green Energy policies that prohibit the use of fans and air conditioning in classrooms impact the health of the classroom in support of the point;
- Trustee Scott noted the importance of the collection of feedback from the advisory committees. She advised that the trustees felt strongly that the strategic plan must speak to every school, teacher, and student across the system. She noted that the specificity of the key performance indicators would be available in the operational plans and individual school improvement plans;
- Ms. Janneteau noted that the implementation of the plan would be critical, as will its evaluation. She queried how the District will be evaluating the implementation and how targets will be established. Executive Officer Giroux advised that the previous practice will inform the implementation. The senior team will meet at the end of the school year to reflect on progress. Independent work on areas of strength and areas of weakness is then conducted, and the senior team meets again in August to set priorities and allocate resources. The Board does a similar exercise to formulate their work plan. The two will then be aligned;
- In response to a query from Ms. Janneteau regarding math strategy, Executive Officer Giroux noted that changes to mathematics would be driven by the direction set by the province. School learning plans may also include math strategy, which is informed by data on school results provided to principals. The province has indicated a focus on mathematics fundamentals, and it is anticipated that school learning plans and professional development opportunities will focus on mathematics;
- Executive Officer Giroux noted that the strategic plan connects to the PIC workplan and can be used to inform and influence the speaker series, parent conference, and parent voice survey;
- The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) is undertaking a modernization exercise and have appointed a full-time Chair to ensure that their infrastructure is modern and accessible. The language and references within the testing are also undergoing modernization to make it more culturally relevant. EQAO is also undertaking a student engagement campaign to incorporate student

voice questions, student voice and student engagement in the process and helping students normalize the process; and

- Ms. Hendela commented that the District has an opportunity to set high expectations for students, staff, and the system and encouraged the introduction of a growth mindset and design thinking in the culture of innovation area. She expressed the view that innovative risk-taking should be an element as well as stress testing measures. She added that stress testing measures on negative issues are also important elements for the dashboard and course correction.

7.2 Parent Conference Planning

Executive Officer Giroux advised that the Parent Conference and School Council Training Day is funded through the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grant provided by the Ministry. She added that based on preliminary information received from the Ministry regarding the Grants for Student Needs (GSN), she is optimistic the funding will continue for 2019-2020. She indicated that the survey results from the 2018 conference were provided for information.

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

- A tentative date of 9 November 2019 has been identified. The location has yet to be determined;
- The keynote speaker is not yet confirmed. The keynote speaker may connect to the strategic plan and the key areas that were discussed in the strategic planning process such as aggressive behaviour;
- Workshop attendance for topics that relate directly to parenting is generally higher and should be a consideration when planning the schedule, workshops and presenters;
- The PIC facilitated workshop on the Ministry consultations was successful, and the members agreed that another opportunity for collaborative dialogue and sharing should be an element of the 2019 Parent Conference;
- Improvements must be made to encourage participation in the conference survey. The members suggested offering an incentive to increase the response rate;
- The survey results and comments indicate parents appreciate the topics and the learning opportunities provided but would alter conference planning details, such as timing and classroom space;
- Local resources for the keynote and workshop presenters should be sought;
- MyLifeOnline was recommended as a potential subject for a workshop and guest speaker/presenter;

- Parents would appreciate additional time for self-reflection and opportunities for connections with other parents after the sessions;
- "Birds of a Feather" dedicated areas or times could be incorporated to permit further discussion with other parents;
- A panel discussion featuring three resource specialists could be used to save time;
- The members requested that the conference schedule be made available in advance of the conference;
- Many parents have expressed concern regarding having to choose between personal interest or parent council learning. The morning could be dedicated to parental learning and the afternoon specifically for parent council subjects. Additional fundraising sources, including OCASC, could be explored to cover the cost of lunch to ensure the conference is a day-long session and the needs of the parent council are being met; and
- Areas of focus and needs that are missed in the Parent Conference could be targeted within the Speaker Series to ensure the day is more manageable.

7.3 Speaker Series Ideas

A list of speakers was provided for information. Executive Officer Giroux advised that staff are seeking feedback on potential speakers and topics for the 2019-2020 series. She suggested that ideas and suggestions could be sent by email to the attention of Board/Committee Coordinator Guthrie.

Mr. Reid queried whether or not there should be an additional meeting of PIC in June to determine the 2019-2020 speaker series. Executive Officer Giroux advised that PIC is consulted to provide input and guidance on topics of interest for parents, PIC does not approve the speaker series. Ms. Hendela suggested that alternative brainstorming sessions be utilized in place of a meeting.

Ms. Hendela stressed the importance of having the speaker series live streamed or webcast to enable more parent participation and engagement and make it more accessible. She noted that within the speakers series list, the option for webcast or willingness to live stream should be indicated.

Executive Officer Giroux advised that the District does not utilize a request for information process to secure speakers for the series. In the past, the speakers were tied to professional development opportunities for staff, and the cost was shared with Curriculum Services as the speaker would present to staff during the day and to parents in the evening. However, with limits on teacher release time, the series has shifted to include topics that place more emphasis on supporting well-being and parenting and less about academic topics.

Ms. Hendela advised that there may be ways to offset the costs. She queried whether or not school councils could partner and combine their PRO funding or cost share with the District and work collaboratively to take the burden off the school.

Executive Officer Giroux advised that it is preferable to have the speaker series scheduled to ensure dates and related information can be marketed more effectively. Chair Khan encouraged the request for speaker series topics and speakers to be shared with parents in the School Council Newsletter and other communication channels. He urged the members to seek ideas from parents and to provide input.

7.4 PIC Workplan 2019-2020

The annual report for the PIC will be presented to the Committee of the Whole on 4 June 2019 and will provide the highlights of the committees work in 2018-2019. In preparation for the 2019-2020 school year, the members discussed possible connections to the strategic plan.

Trustee Scott noted that the alignment of the work of PIC and the strategic plan would be advisable.

Ms. Hendela noted the importance of engaging other parents in the work of the PIC and suggested that the Thoughtexchange be broadened to include parents who are engaged, e.g., parent conference attendees. She noted that principals could also be invited to participate and provide their knowledge on the types of priorities they hear from their school communities. She added that that the 2019-2020 PIC work plan include tactics and expected outcomes.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that PIC did not set a work plan in 2019-2020. However, the PIC worked on several initiatives and was engaged as advisers of work that was largely staff directed. The PIC workshop regarding the Ministry Consultation on Education held at the 2018 Parent Conference was highlighted as a success. The conversations had by the PIC informed the work of staff and helped inform the practice of the District.

Ms. Hendela noted that it is challenging to be a member of the committee representing a group without annual goals. An ability to pre-engage with OCASC members with a copy of the work plan would better support the PIC.

Executive Officer Giroux advised that PIC will be invited to participate in a Thoughtexchange to collaborate and collect the priorities for the 2019-2020 PIC Workplan. She noted that the Thoughtexchange outcomes would be used to draft a plan for presentation at the September 2019 meeting.

8. Member Information

8.1 OCASC Report

Mr. Reid noted that the presentation from MyLifeOnline at the 18 April 2019 OCASC meeting was informative and encouraged parents to be more involved with their children's online activity to ensure they are safe, smart and kind online.

Mr. Reid thanked Associate Director Reynolds for the clarification regarding field trips but shared that many parents and parent councils still have concerns with the communication they continue to receive from principals regarding the cancellation of field trips. Associate Director Reynolds advised that further outreach regarding the matter of field trips is forthcoming.

Mr. Reid noted that parents have also expressed concern over the lack of information regarding the appointment and transfer of principals and vice-principals. He suggested that parent councils are forced to share the news with parents and that parent councils are seeking more information. Associate Director Reynolds noted that the movement of principals provides for a further opportunity for engagement with the Superintendent of Instruction. The Superintendent can assist with the transition process.

Ms. Hendela noted that the OCASC Annual General Meeting will take place on 16 May 2019 at Fisher Park Public School and that the meeting was open to all.

9. New Business

There was no new business.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Mostafizur Khan, Chair, Parent Involvement Committee