



ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR EXTENDED DAY AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

DATE: 30 October 2019

A meeting of the Advisory Committee for Extended Day and Child Care Programs was held this evening commencing at 7:11 p.m. in the Trustee's Committee Room, 133 Greenbank Road, Ottawa, with Superintendent Grigoriev in the Chair and the following also in attendance:

MEMBERS: Kass Inglis, YMCA (electronic communication)
Orlie Gagaline (Reksap Centres for Early Learning)

TRUSTEE: Rob Campbell

STAFF: Olga Grigoriev, Superintendent of Instruction
Julie Cyr, Manager of Early Learning
Tammy Piche, Early Childcare Educator, OSSTF representative
Nicole Guthrie, Board/Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Superintendent Grigoriev called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

Quorum could not be achieved. It was considered important to proceed with an information session.

2. Welcome and Introduction of Manager of Early Learning, Julie Cyr

Superintendent Grigoriev introduced the new Manager of Early Learning, Julie Cyr. Manager Cyr noted that she has a

3. Review of Committee Mandate

Superintendent Grigoriev suggested those present review Policy [P.111.GOV](#) Advisory Committee for Extended Day and Child Care Programs to better understand the committee's mandate, to discuss the challenges and possible opportunities to strengthen the committee.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- The committee exists to assist the Board of Trustees to meet its commitment to the provision of quality programming in extended day and child care programs;
- Trustee Campbell noted that he has appreciated hearing the different perspectives and voices around the table and has learned through his participation. He commented on their success in terms of staff dialogue between both the OCDSB staff and third party operators. He noted the importance of these conversations in sharing news, best practices and discussing concerns;
- The committee was established in 2013 when extended day was brought into the board and the program has grown considerably since then with over 6000 children in the programs. It is a major line of business for the Board and is important to the Board and to the community;
- School councils are established to deal with issues at the school level but the mandate does not include extended day care programs. Until the creation of the committee there was no organized venue for parents to advise on emergent concerns or interests within the parent community;
- In many care centres there is parental involvement and through the provision of child care in its schools the Board is displacing those care centres and created the committee to ensure parents could provide their voice;
- Trustee Campbell noted that he is open to all options where the committee is concerned: dissolution, or reorganized into a staff only steering committee or a change in the mandate;
- Trustee Campbell noted that at present the agenda is not posted, minutes are not published and the committee struggles with quorum;
- Some outreach was conducted at the end of the 2018-2019 school year to solicit new parent members;
- It is difficult for parents to attend a meeting. Parents will voice a concern if – they something happens to their child but spare time is spent with their children. Younger parents are engaged but perhaps not in the traditional way, at a face to face meeting. The committee may benefit from alternative methods of engagement the use of technology and innovative practice to reach families with young children;
- The District can use surveys to get input on specific topics or needs;
- Manager Cyr noted that parents will attend with view of what is happening in their environment and staff attends with a system wide perspective. The challenge will be to find a way to provide parents with a voice and help support staff for the benefit of the system;
- The response rate for the survey undertaken by the District in 2018-2019 was high, indicating that surveys are an effective method for reaching the parent community. The traditional committee approach would be much more limited and represent only a small number of parents;
- The conversations of the committee have been meaningful and informative;
- Trustee Campbell noted that there are many system thinkers in the community who will devote their time on matters that are important to them;
- Trustee Campbell suggested consultation with the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC) on whether or not school councils would consider broadening their mandate to include representatives of extended day programs;

- The location of the meetings could be problematic for parents. Electronic communication is an option and the meetings could be held at alternative venues, alternative media formats could be used to encourage participation;
- It will be important to ensure that the appropriate people are at the table and the conversations are reflective and engaging for all. Parents of children in both OCDSB programs and third party programs as well as staff from OCDSB and third party programs should be considered for the membership compliment;
- Staff indicated they would reach out to those individuals selected during the call for membership at the end of 2018-2019;
- Manager Cyr noted that the policy should be reviewed and evaluated;
- Topics for the discussion of the committee should include: the consistency between OCDSB and third party providers, strategies for Early Childhood Educator recruitment, and special education support;
- The District is moving to a digital system for registration and will have better access to the parent community. Will be able to quickly survey parents on their preferred mediums to provide input;
- A call of the chair model to discuss and consult with parent communities on matters of concern or interest i.e. air conditioning or program alignment; and
- Trustee Campbell indicated he will discuss the matter of a policy review with the agenda planning committee and requested that members of the committee receive memorandums that are child care related.

3. Update from Manager

Manager Cyr provided the following update:

- The District received 350 new and unexpected registrations in September 2019 which will require the District to hire a minimum of 23 additional staff. The District and its third party operators are currently experiencing a shortage of ECE works and therefore it has been challenging to ensure children and families had a placement;
- New recruitment strategies have been utilized to attract staff and 174 children have now been placed;
- 41 schools had waitlists, as of 30 October 2019 the waitlist for care had been reduced to 19 schools;
- Finding staff at certain locations has been difficult as well as hiring staff for part time positions when most are seeking full time employment;
- A job fair was held on 26 October 2019 and 46 candidates were interviewed;
- In response to a query from Trustee Campbell regarding the influx in registration, Manager Cyr noted the high number was an anomaly. The numbers have been steadily increasing but the spike was District wide;
- The District does combine part time positions to offer ECEs as many hours as possible in an effort to maintain staff. But it requires a split shift;
- The turn over rate of staff is high. With the demand, employees move from job to job. Employers are sometimes given less than two weeks notice;

- Remuneration is based on fees. The District is bound by the collective agreement. Child care programs are not for profit and programs must run on what the predetermined salaries identified by the federations;
- Ms. Gagline noted that salary is not the only factor for ECEs. Working conditions, locations close to home and other factors influence the work force;
- The government is providing a wage enhancement for third party operators to ensure that all ECEs are making at least minimum wage;
- It was hoped that the Childcare Act, the creation of the college of ECEs, and having ECEs in school boards would create value for the profession but it has still not happened;
- The District will begin utilizing a new registration platform in the new year. Digibot, a parent portal, will enable the District to administer the program more effectively. Parents can request and register online, attendance is available online;
- Digibot will provide families with notices by text, phone and email and is responsive to Ontario childcare needs;
- Digibot can transfer and communicate with other platforms used by the District;
- Income tax receipts will be available in the parent portal;
- The new program will afford some staff with additional time to help coach and support staff;
- The District provide 2 days of professional development training to staff in August 2019 and added an additional in class day to enable staff to prepare, plan and organize their classroom spaces in the schools;
- The PD session featured a town hall to give a voice to ECEs to express how they felt; and
- Manager Cyr advised that she is working to provide PD opportunities for the infant, toddler, pre-school programs.

5. Third Party Provider Update

Ms. Gagline indicated that third party providers are eager to have a meeting with Manager Cyr.

Trustee Campbell noted that he is interested in a report on the differences in the services provided by the District and those provided by the third Parties. Particularly special education services and if there are differences what are they. He noted his rationale for the request is to produce a consistency of service.

Trustee Campbell noted that the infant toddler program is in a chronic deficit position. He queried whether or not it is the role of the school board to be providing the service and whether or not the consistent financial strain impacts other programs.

6. Adjournment

The session concluded at 8:29 p.m.