



## PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

**Monday, September 21,  
2020  
6:00 pm  
Zoom Meeting**

Members: Mostafizur Khan, Diana Mills, Gita Nurlaila, Malaka Hendela (OCASC Member), Martyn Reid (OCASC Member), Seyi Okuribido Malcolm (Parents for Diversity), Jennifer Hood, Kahmaria Pingue, Noura Ahmed, Carolyn Hunter and Melissa McGuirk McNeil (Ottawa Network for Education),

Non-Voting Members: Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), Wendy Hough (Trustee), Alain Brule (Principal, Cedarview Middle School), Sarah Pope (Principal, Castlefrank Elementary School)

Staff and Guests: Lynn Scott (Trustee), Justine Bell (Trustee), Engy Abdel Masieh (Policy Analyst), Nicole Guthrie (Manager of Board Services) Michael Gilbert (Audio-Visual Technician) and Darren Gatley (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Khan called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

**Moved by Mr. Reid,**

**THAT the agenda be approved.**

**Carried**

3. Delegations

3.a Nancy Dean, Re. PIC and School Council Communication

Ms. Dean expressed concern regarding communication from the District to parents. She noted that parents with questions seem to be asked to go directly to teachers and principals. She asked how the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) will engage parents, how they can give feedback, and how PIC is structuring communication. Ms. Dean asked for clarity regarding where to go for information and where parents can ask

questions. She also noted that she would like to know a timeline for postings on the OCDSB website. Communication needs addressed and improved. Ms Dean also offered her help where possible.

Executive Officer Giroux responded that when students transitioned to learn at home in the spring, the newsletter was cancelled and the District started communicating directly with parents. During the closure period, the District sent over 30 direct messages to parents. Over the course of the closure, the district managed communications centrally and are now migrating this task back to schools and school principals. Executive Officer Giroux noted that the District news email is an opportunity for two way communication and that staff have responded directly to close to 4000 emails from parents. She added that when the newsletter was reintroduced last week, there was a link to the 21 September 2020 PIC meeting.

Mr. Reid suggested that school councils communication could be incorporated into the workplan.

3.b Robert Crampton, Re. Council Membership at Home School for Parents of Children in OCV

Robert Crampton is the chair for the Honeywell Elementary School Council and expressed concern that parents that chose Ottawa Carleton Virtual (OCV) may not be able to remain as members of their in person school councils. He stressed that school councils do not want to lose committed parents and hoped they could remain as full members for their in person schools.

Mr. Reid, noted that parents he spoke with voiced similar concerns and expressed the view that the tie to their in person school gives parents a feeling of normality. He added that parents also feel more comfortable discussing issues with staff and other parents they are familiar with.

Mr. Crampton also noted that parents are concerned about their eligibility to vote. He explained that parents do not want to lose the community they have worked to build and wanted to ensure that these volunteers continue their support.

In response to a query, Mr. Crampton noted that principals are focused on operations but the schools councils need direction now on how their councils will function this year.

4. Review of PIC Report

4.a Parent Involvement Committee Report 19 February 2020

**Moved by Mr. Reid,**

**THAT the PIC Report of 19 February 2020 be approved.**

**Carried**

5. Discussion Items

5.a Update and the Reopening of Schools under COVID-19

Director Williams-Taylor provided members with an update on the reopening of schools under COVID-19 via a powerpoint presentation.

During discussion, the following comments were noted:

- Every effort has been made to meet class size parameters and the District is below the requirements in most cases. There may be a reorganization in the coming weeks as there is every September based on enrollment;
- Director Williams-Taylor noted that she had visited several schools during the opening week and observed how efficient students are in entering, exiting, and moving throughout the school, demonstrating that the district's planning has been successful;
- The course calendar has been posted on the OCDSB website for parents who have concerns on the balance for semester one and two for quad semester schools;
- OCV launched on 18 September 2020 with over 17,000 students. One secondary and six elementary virtual campuses;
- Having one OCV secondary campus maximizes course options and every effort has been made to ensure all course options are available;
- OCV faces challenges to offer instructional music and physical education, however, teachers have been looking for creative ways to teach their classes while still following guidelines to avoid the sharing of equipment;
- Co-op courses have similar challenges, but are still operating;
- The district has been working hard to make ensure students have a dedicated teacher, but some staffing challenges remain;
- Principals and vice-principals have been assigned to OCV campuses. The district has been investigating ways to maximize services in the virtual campuses while continuing to build school culture. Early Childhood Educators (ECE), Educational Assistants, and Student Success Teachers have also been assigned to OCV to

ensure students will not lose the services they would normally receive at in person schools;

- Director Williams-Taylor recognized staff for the enormous amount of time invested into meeting health and safety requirements in order to reopen schools;
- Specialized Program Classes (SPC) have been organized to adopt to keep students matched with their regular teacher and classroom;
- Childcare and Extended Day Programs (EDP) are operating. Staggered entry is matched to start dates to ensure families will not pay additional fees for days their child was not attending. Registration is lower than normal, however, registration is still open to welcome new students;
- Concern regarding transportation are in part due to many last minute resignations of bus drivers. Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) is actively pursuing all options to resolve the issue. OSTA understands the urgency but must ensure safety guidelines and quality training requirements are met;
- Google Meet is available for all school councils;
- School Council elections will be held 30 days from 14 September 2020;
- Three PA days were provided at the beginning of the school year that prioritized health and safety training;
- Ottawa Public Health (OPH) has a nurse affiliated with each school;
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies are provided monthly from the Ministry of Education. Specialized PPE has been given to staff with students with special needs as required;
- Staff and students must use the OPH daily self assessment screening tool before entering OCDSB properties;
- Reminders regarding the self assessment are sent regularly to increase awareness of daily self assessment;
- OPH maintains a COVID-19 “do not attend” list for the District. Any individual on the list must be cleared by OPH before they can return to work or class;
- OCDSB has a 10:30 a.m. reporting time to the Ministry, however, the number of cases reported can change throughout the day as cases are identified;
- OPH defines an outbreak as two or more positive cases related to a school;
- OPH defines: close contact, positive cases, outbreaks, and closures. If a student does test positive for COVID-19, OPH must advise parents and administrative staff;
- If students or staff are symptomatic or if there is an outbreak, a flowchart is provided on the OCDSB website to describe how to manage an individual’s symptoms or outbreak;

- Social networking and online safety webinars with Paul Davis were very successful with over 3,600 participants to date; and
- The “It takes a community” advertising campaign allowed OCDSB to connect and work with communities and with links to the district’s strategic 2019-2023 plan;

In response to a query from Mr. Crampton, Executive Officer Giroux noted that the District cannot compel parents to bring forth a negative COVID-19 test result for students and in most cases, the student will have to remain in isolation for the full 14 day period.

In response to a query from Ms. Hood, Executive Officer Giroux acknowledged that some parents of remote learning students have trouble understanding the technical instruction provided by teachers. Executive Officer Giroux pointed out that as some teachers have only recently been assigned to their classes, they may require more time to prepare. Executive Officer Giroux noted that staff is working diligently to normalize communication between teachers and parents.

In response to a query from Ms. Hendela, Executive Officer Giroux noted that the Board and Board Services make every effort to include all those that wish to delegate. Board Services often makes exceptions to allow additional delegations by extending time limits for that item and has not turned anyone away. Executive Officer Giroux also clarified that information on how to register as a delegation can be found on the OCDSB website.

5.b Supporting School Councils in the 2020-2021 School Year

Your Committee had before it for consideration, a report regarding the issues relating to school councils for the 2020- 2021 school year, including meeting format, elections, and engagement between families attending Ottawa-Carleton Virtual - OCV schools and their home school in order to inform the drafting of necessary revisions to PR.509.SCO School Council Elections, Constitution and By-Laws.

During the discussion of the report, the following points were noted:

- Mr.Crampton expressed concern that some parents may lose interest in school councils if they are not associated with their home school and that the Board must recognize the importance of letting OCV parents be part of the executive if possible. He urged the Board to find some flexibility to permit participation and for school councils to remain strong;
- Mr. Reid sought clarification on the requirement for councils to record meetings. Executive Officer Giroux noted that School Council meetings are public meetings and as such the minutes of

the meeting must be posted and available to members of the public;

- Staff noted that meeting management guidelines or best practices could be created to assist school councils in conducting virtual meetings to meet the requirements of the regulation, policy and constitution;
- In response to a query from Trustee Hough, Executive Officer Giroux noted that it is in the best interest of the Board and the school councils to find a solution that fits within the policy and/or procedure. Despite the unusual circumstances, the Board must work within the confines of the regulation;
- Ms. Dean expressed concern that her school council will lose executive members should parents of the OCV be precluded from participation. She added that there is not enough time to properly engage and recruit new members;
- Ms. Arajs noted that her school council has enough parents whose children are attending in person to fill all of the positions on the executive despite a loss to OVS and private schools. She noted that her council has expressed interest in allowing parents whose child attends OCV to attend meetings but not serve on the executive. She noted that her council is interested in the Board decision and the conversation at PIC and is anxious to begin addressing the issues in the school. She added that she would need assistance in reaching out to parents in OCV;
- Executive Officer Giroux noted that Option A within the report could allow for the flexibility Ms. Arajs and her council have envisioned and provide school councils with more autonomy in their decision making;
- Ms. Hendela expressed concern with a requirement for parents to disclose their schooling choice and forcing volunteers to share personal information which could be a barrier to participation;
- Mr. Crampton suggested that in the interest of keeping parents engaged, that parents may make a voluntary declaration about enrollment in either their home school or OCV;
- Ms. Hendela queried the consequence of not meeting the school council election guidelines, and hoped councils could have more time to address the issues of meeting management, communication and elections;
- Mr. Reid suggested that school councils make the determination of their membership themselves and make allowances for parents to be a part of both school councils; and
- Executive Officer Giroux noted that one solution may be to change the definition of parent in the policy, procedure or by way of motion.

Moved by Martyn Reid,

THAT PIC recommends that the OCDSB allow OCV parents to continue to be parent members of the School Council at their children's home schools.

In response to a query from Trustee Hough, Mr. Reid expressed confidence that parents will support both the OCV and their home school council. He added that parents want to continue their affiliation to the school where their child will eventually return.

**Moved by Martyn Reid,**

**THAT PIC recommends that the OCDSB allow OCV parents to continue to be parent members of the School Council at their children's home schools.**

**Carried**

5.c Report 20-078, Parent Involvement Committee Membership Update

Your committee had before it Report 20-078, to update the Parent Involvement Committee on the current status of its members and seek approval to begin to address its membership needs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that two year terms are becoming more common as long as the applying member being appointed is interested.

Moved by Mr. Reid,

THAT staff contact the individuals currently on the waiting list inquiring about their continued interest in serving on PIC as Parent Members for a term effective 21 September 2020 to 30 November 2020;

THAT the Membership Subcommittee be established and the following persons be appointed to serve on the committee:

Chair: Mostafizur Khan

Parent Members: Martyn Reid, Diana Mills, and Malaka Hendela

THAT the Committee asks the Membership sub-committee to identify key local associations to be contacted in terms of their interest in sitting on PIC.

In response to a query from Mr. Reid, Executive Officer Giroux clarified that OCASC representatives on PIC serve a one year term as parent members are appointed annually by OCASC.

In response to a query from Ms. Malcolm, Executive Officer Giroux explained that the sub-committee will address any membership interest and will present a recommended membership waiting list.

In response to a query from Ms. Hendela, Executive Officer Giroux noted that the chair position serves a two year term. If, however, a member serving a one year term becomes chair, their term automatically becomes a two year term.

In response to a query from Ms. Hendela, Executive Officer Giroux noted that in the past, one or two year term requirements did not deter interest in membership, however, Executive Officer Giroux will seek clarification of the bylaws and report back to the committee, if necessary.

**Moved by Mr. Reid,**

**THAT staff contact the individuals currently on the waiting list inquiring about their continued interest in serving on PIC as Parent Members for a term effective 21 September 2020 to 30 November 2020;**

**THAT the Membership Subcommittee be established and the following persons be appointed to serve on the committee:**

**Chair: Mostafizur Khan**

**Parent Members: Martyn Reid, Diana Mills, and Malaka Hendela**

**THAT the Committee asks the Membership sub-committee to identify key local associations to be contacted in terms of their interest in sitting on PIC.**

**Carried**

6. Chair's Report

Chair Khan expressed his gratitude to OCDSB staff for their hard work in reopening schools and for relaying OPH guidelines to parents and students. He also thanked students, families, and staff for their patience in returning to class and for sharing some responsibilities of educators in OCV and remote learning. Chair Khan recognized that the 21 September 2020 PIC meeting was also the International Day of Peace and urged all to participate by spreading compassion, kindness and hope in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chair Khan reported that informal provincial PIC Chair's Meetings took place during the school closure and made recommendations to the Ministry (ie. smaller class sizes, increase of funding for additional supports and services, clear guidelines for remote learning and virtual schools). Chair Khan noted that during these meetings, the following information was collected:

- 81% of English language committees expressed interest that the Ministry directly inform PIC of announcements and expectations;
- 45% of committees recommended that PIC continue to meet virtually;
- 78% of French language committees recommended that PIC continue to meet virtually; and
- 67% of boards expressed the view that school boards relay information from the Ministries announcements and expectations;

In response to a query from Ms. Hendela, Chair Khan explained that the provincial PIC Chair meetings were informal and ad hoc and that he had distributed all available information from the meetings to the members of PIC by email. He added that the purpose of the meetings was to share general parent and community feedback with other boards across Ontario.

Chair Khan recognized the success of the District's Thoughtexchange program and noted that a total of 7,012 participants shared 8,902 thoughts. Each thought had a rating system allowing the district to receive focused feedback from communities.

#### 6.b Director's Report

Director Williams-Taylor noted that 2020 has been challenging and she recognized that interaction with communities and each other has changed. She reflected that there is an opportunity to build new relationships and she urged PIC to use its leadership to engage the public and communities to hear and support those that are not heard or represented.

#### 6.c OCASC Report

Ms. Hendela reported that OCASC has not formally met during the pandemic, however, OCASC has used social media in an attempt to reach school council communities. Ms. Hendela thanked Trustee Hough for her work, advocacy, and support for OCASC's participation in the budget process. Ms. Hendela also noted that OCASC is looking for new members and participants.

In response to a query from Chair Khan, Ms. Hendela, noted that the basic school council membership fee of \$30 may no longer be required as school council meetings are now virtual. She noted that any school council or parent is welcome to attend OCASC meetings with details on the OCASC facebook page and website. Ms. Hendela noted that OCASC plans to host virtual meetings and will look to either PIC or board staff to facilitate communication with councils. She added that the OCASC model is flexible and would like to connect with schools that have not had a school council in the past. The next virtual meeting will be in October.

### 7. New Business

There was no new business.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Mostafizur Khan, Chair,  
Parent Involvement Committee