

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

6:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

- Members:** Mostafizur Khan, John Marshall, Diana Mills, Malaka Hendela (OCASC Member), Martyn Reid (OCASC Member), Kahmaria Pingue, Jennifer Hood, Melissa McGuirk McNeil (ONE, Alternate)
- Non-Voting Members:** Wendy Hough (Trustee), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Sarah Pope (Principal, Castlefrank Elementary School)
- Staff and Guests:** Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), Lynn Scott (Trustee), Christine Boothby (Trustee), Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Justine Bell (Trustee), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Engy Abdel Masieh (Policy Analyst), Nicole Guthrie (Manager of Board Services), Rebecca Grandis (Senior Board/Committee Coordinator), Darren Gatley (Board/Committee Coordinator), Michael Guilbault (Audio-Visual Technician),

1. Call to Order

Chair Khan call the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Mr. Reid,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Executive Officer Giroux noted a request that item 5 b. Report 20-105, Updates to the PIC By-Laws and Standing Rules be deferred to the 13 January 2021 meeting and that a discussion about secondary school extracurricular activities be added to the agenda.

Moved by Ms. Hendela,

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

Carried

3. Delegations

Due to the agenda change, the delegation will be deferred to the 13 January 2021 meeting.

4. Review of PIC Report, 14 October 2020

Moved by Ms. Pingue,

THAT the PIC Report of 14 October 2020 be received.

Ms. Mills noted that some of her comments and questions to Dr. Etches were not captured in the minutes.

Ms. Hendela noted that her comments related to the lack of school clubs was not reflected in the minutes.

It was noted that comments were sometimes attributed to members. Members noted concern that PIC minutes are presented to the Committee of the Whole (COW) before they are reviewed by PIC members.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that the corrections would be taken under advisement and the committee coordinator would review their notes and regarding the suggested revisions. She explained that the minutes are not a verbatim transcript and are intended to capture the key points of the discussion and the decisions of the committee. She noted that the minutes are presented to the Board to keep trustees informed and not for approval.

Trustee Hough suggested that staff review the practice of posting advisory committee minutes on Board agendas before PIC approves the minutes.

Mr. Reid proposed that minutes be shared with members for their review upon completion.

Trustee Scott noted that if there are significant revisions required to the minutes that PIC members could inform trustees so that they can be addressed during Committee of the Whole, especially an item requiring immediate attention.

Moved by Ms. Pingue,

THAT the minutes be received.

Carried

5. Action Items

5.a Report 20-104, Parent Involvement Committee Membership Confirmation (M. Giroux)

Your committee had before it Report 20-104 seeking the appointment of new members to the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).

Executive Officer Giroux introduced the report and noted that the PIC Sub-Committee reviewed the 36 applications on 5 November 2020. She noted

that the Ottawa Network for Education (ONFE) has been recommended for representation and that Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) be contacted to explore its interest in appointing a representative to the Committee.

Mr. Reid shared his gratitude for the wide array of parent applicants interested in membership.

Ms. Mills noted that as a member of the Sub-committee, her criteria focused on women, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) candidates which reflected in her decision.

Ms. Hendela noted that she hoped the candidates not chosen for membership could be engaged in alternate ways.

In response to a query from Ms. Hendela, Executive Officer Giroux noted a letter of welcome and an orientation package will be sent to the successful candidates. She reminded members that there is always an opportunity for any member of the community to join PIC meetings.

Moved by Ms. Hendela,

THAT the the PIC appoints the following parent members and waiting list candidates for term identified:

-Okuribido- Malcolm, Seyi, Parent Member, 2-year term

-Atef, Abdulnaser, Parent Member, 2-year term

-Dillon, Annette, Parent Member, 2-year term

-Morse, Jaime, Parent Member, 2-year term

-Samuels, Jacquie, Parent Member, 1-year term

Waiting list: Khan, Mostafizur and Lyon, Suzanne

THAT Ottawa Network for Education be appointed as a Community Member for a two year term with representation by Heather Kotelniski and Kristina Price.

THAT staff contact the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization to explore its interest in becoming a Community Member of the PIC with a two-year term ending 30 November 2022.

Carried

- 5.b Report 20-105, Updates to the PIC By-Laws and Standing Rules (M. Giroux)

This item was deferred to the 13 January 2020 PIC meeting

6. Discussion Items

6.a Report 20-106, Allocation of 2020-2021 Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant (M. Giroux)

Your committee had before it Report 20-106, to develop a planned approach for determining an allocation strategy for the 2020-2021 Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant funding.

During the discussion period, the following points were noted:

- In 2019, the province changed the structure of the PRO funding;
- The \$39,986 PRO funding allocation received for 2020-2021 is considerably less than what was allocated from the previous years' regional and school council-based applications;
- Last year, school councils were consulted by the District and at OCASC for feedback on how to utilize the funding, however, the suggestions were not able to be implemented due to COVID-19;
- 2019-2020 PRO funding was used to offset costs associated with the parent conference, the speaker series, and other COVID-19 related communication expenses;
- Previous suggestions for use of the funding included creating toolkits to assist school councils in conducting parent nights or math nights, however, this approach may not be feasible as the District is not in a position to host parent nights this year;
- Members may want to consider if this is to be more of a developmental year than an action year when considering ideas like the toolkit;
- School councils indicated they are interested in a process that streamlines the administrative and reporting requirements;
- The Ministry requires a fulsome report outlining the compliance of the criteria for expenditures;
- Executive Officer Giroux noted that there is encouragement in the transfer payment agreement to consult with other committees about how funds are allocated and that ideas should also include an equity lens;
- Funds can be spent as soon as a plan has been agreed upon and the sooner this can happen, the better;
- Toolkits could be helpful if members are to use this as a development year;
- Toolkits included information on how to host a workshop, planning tips and guidelines, instructional materials, examples of interactive

activities for families, and all necessary steps to promote and host an evening event. Should this idea be deployed, virtual meeting information must be considered;

- Members noted that when the toolkits were previously discussed, it was in the context of some specific initiatives such as supporting parents with Mathematics ;
- Members queried if Ottawa Carleton Virtual (OCV) parents may have any unique requirements and that funds be allocated to support any initiatives identified;
- Principal Sarah Pope noted that her parent council requested a guest speaker to discuss equity and other topics. She observed that a virtual lecture would support further engagement with families and would allow for a larger audience;
- Executive Officer Giroux noted the District Speaker Series will continue;
- Executive Officer Giroux noted that it may be possible for school-based or school council-based requests to be supported centrally using PRO grant funding. The school would have to monitor some elements and provide a summary but the consolidation could happen centrally;
- If guest speakers were brought in to discuss topics around a general theme such as equity, it would allow for more selection for different schools while strategically meeting project activities;
- Members suggested guest speakers could be engaged for grade 12 students to discuss scholarships;
- A virtual guest speaker model could be appropriate for topics such as kindergarten registration, grade eight parent registration nights, and post-secondary transition nights, equity, mental health, and mathematics;
- OCASC received feedback recognizing that reporting takes time and volunteer groups would prefer to participate in an engaging way with families rather than supporting administrative tasks;
- Many parents and volunteers find requesting funds with the added reporting requirement intimidating;
- Some schools that require funding for initiatives may not ask for support as they worry about a lack of experience. This is a barrier;

- A selection of speakers that a school can choose from would be beneficial;
- School councils that have more experience or funds could partner with school councils with higher needs to manage funds;
- Vendors are adapting to offer virtual options;
- Schools do not want to contact vendors individually and would rather that the Board conduct the procurement process so that schools can have access to guest speakers that reach a broader, virtual audience;
- Allowing virtual participation of several schools may engage a larger audience which can be reported to the Ministry;
- A working group with principals to brainstorm ideas could be formed;
- Parents are more engaged than ever. Focusing on engaging families with fun initiatives will help create a leadership opportunity to transform the fear and frustration around COVID-19 into an informative and engaging experience;
- An update will be provided at the 13 January 2020 PIC meeting and a draft summary sent to members by email for comment;
- The Board will look for ways to increase offerings without increasing costs; and
- Other advisory committees of the Board should be engaged to provide input;

6.b Secondary Extracurricular Activities

Members acknowledged staff concerns regarding extracurricular activities being a student engagement issue and not a parent involvement issue, although the issue of clubs at secondary-schools was continually raised at Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC).

In response to a query from Ms. Hendela, Associate Director Reynolds clarified that extracurricular activities requiring students to gather are on hold, however, any clubs that could meet virtually are welcome to continue.

Ms. Hendela noted that staff typically organize and operate school clubs and recognized that staff are maxed out in their capacity as they deal with the added stresses of COVID-19. She suggested that there could be a change in the delivery of these extracurricular activities as feedback from school councils suggested increased parent interest in offering to organize their own clubs. She suggested that parents could be engaged to “fill the gap” in the absence of staff-organized clubs. She queried if parent-

administered clubs could be piloted at secondary-schools in a smaller capacity to aid in the student learning experience. She added that this would allow for parent engagement beyond typical fundraising campaigns.

Ms. Pingue noted that parent-administered clubs could be an opportunity to place parents of marginalized backgrounds into leadership positions and would add a cultural aspect. She noted that parents would be more comfortable to participate if they can offer their talents in a controlled virtual setting.

Mr. Reid raised the concern of any potential Duty of Care or other legality issues and concerns regarding student and parental safety. He also noted that participation in extracurricular activities are important to secondary school students in their acceptance to certain post-secondary institutions. He added that clubs can also aid in student's personal development as it gives them a sense of belonging to similar interest based communities.

Associate Director Reynolds agreed that extracurricular activities are important for student's well-being and social engagement. He noted that the beginning of the school year was focused on keeping schools safe and open as a first priority. The District did not want to inadvertently cause more health problems by allowing in person gatherings for extracurricular activities and promoted clubs to meet virtually, where possible. He noted that discussions with Ottawa Public Health (OPH) and other school districts occur regularly and the issues of extracurricular activities are discussed. He noted that there could be an opportunity for parents to play a role in organizing clubs, however, the same supervision requirements for in person clubs will have to be met in virtual clubs and needs to be considered for the safety of both parents and students. The responsibility would fall on principals to provide oversight, training, and screening for volunteers to operate virtual clubs and events, however, it is also important to consider that principals are preoccupied with school operational matters. He noted that he will bring this matter back to staff for discussion to see if this can be managed as a staff member will need to be associated with any virtual parent-organized clubs and to see what principals can manage. He added that if a parent wants to organize something such as a ski club it would not be associated with a school or the District.

Members suggested that a list of clubs currently available at each secondary school be created as a starting point which will also create awareness of what other schools are doing for further student and parent participation. An update could be provided at the next meeting in order for PIC members to know where to focus attention.

Ms. Pingue suggested that interested parents could submit an application that can be evaluated before a committee in order to assess qualifications and any safety concerns.

7. Information Items

7.a Chair's Report

Chair Khan reported that Remembrance Day recently passed and conveyed his respects for the sacrifices Canadian soldiers have made for the country.

Chair Khan noted that Dr. Theresa Tam warned that COVID-19 cases are increasing. He thanked students, staff, and families for keeping transmission low in the District by following the screening measures, guidelines, and for not attending schools if symptomatic.

Chair Khan thanked all past and present members, Director of Education, community representatives, student senate, OCASC members, students, families, and staff for their professional support. He noted that due to the situational context, he hoped that the election process for chair will be fair and that new members will bring strength, new initiatives, and new approaches.

Ms. Hendela thanked Chair Khan for his service and support to PIC.

Chair Khan noted that the success of PIC and OCASC depend on the successes of the other.

7.b Director's Report

Associate Director Reynolds reported that thanks to the collective efforts of families, students, and staff, there has been very low transmission rates of COVID-19 in the OCDSB buildings which has allowed schools to remain open.

Associate Director Reynolds noted that an extended remote learning period following the winter break will not occur as the District has received direction from the Ministry which permits students to return to school. There is capacity for further remote learning opportunities should the need arise.

Associate Director Reynolds announced that report cards will be available for elementary students on 20 November 2020 and parent teacher interviews will be scheduled on 26 November 2020. Parent teacher interviews for secondary students have already occurred and report cards will be available on 25 November 2020.

Associate Director Reynolds thanked Chair Khan, on behalf of the District and senior staff, for his many contributions to PIC. Mr. Khan has been an

enthusiastic ambassador for PIC and the District at the Provincial PIC Symposiums, speaker series events, parent conferences, and many other events. Chair Khan believes that education is a partnership that involves students, families, educators, principals, trustees, staff, government, and local communities and has worked diligently to strengthen these relationships.

Trustee Scott also thanked Chair Khan on behalf of the trustees for all of his efforts and for demonstrating that OCDSB is a learning organization for all.

Ms. Hendela commented that she recently spoke with Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and was pleased to report that the in-school experience has been very positive. She noted that the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has had a massive redistribution due to implications and changed class sizes. She expressed her appreciation that the District is pausing and reviewing its plan to reorganize.

Associate Director Reynolds noted that the District appreciates the positive publicity and supportive sentiment. He noted that the District does not want any large reorganizations that could cause instability within schools, necessary adjustments will be considered in January 2021, in a limited scale, to minimize disruption.

Chair Khan noted that the Ministry cancelled the PIC Chair Symposium and although there are no formal meetings with PIC Chairs, he will update PIC members if any changes occur.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that this is also the last PIC meeting for member's John Marshall and Gita Nurlaila and extended her appreciation for their service.

7.c OCASC Report

Ms. Hendela reported that school council discussions have focused on how to transition and focus activities virtually. She noted that councils expressed concern regarding fundraising as traditional models such as book sales and movie nights are not an option at this time. OCASC held a discussion on fundraising and considered whether it should be abandoned to focus attention onto other matters. She noted that school councils had concerns regarding the issue of access to reading apps and technology; an issue that was raised by a delegation at Committee of the Whole (COW). There is concern that school councils are asked to purchase educational devices, books, and computers and councils feel that fundraising for this takes away parent engagement. She added that OCASC discussed many ideas for virtual fundraising and the ideas can be found on their website.

Ms. Hendela noted that streaming movies and movie night broadcasting licenses may be something for the Board to consider funding as elementary schools greatly value and miss the monthly movie nights and want to embrace a virtual model.

Ms. Hendela announced that OCASC's next meeting is on 19 November 2020 and all are welcome to attend.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that this year may be an opportunity to transition away from school council fundraising as the key focus of councils. She noted that the District does have a license for films but there are restrictions that fall under the *Copyright Act* and she will investigate to see what is allowed.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that the District is discussing the potential use of reading apps. A list of approved applications will be provided based on staff and provincial guidance.

Ms. Hendela noted that she wished to ensure every student has equal access to reading technology and that PIC or other school councils could help fund school councils that do not have a fundraising history (i.e., OCV)

Mr. Reid noted that school councils used fundraising activities such as movie night as a community building opportunity. He noted that the traditional movie nights may transition to sharing photographs of families in costumes or movie quizzes in order to further engage parents.

Executive Officer Giroux noted that moving forward it will be important to differentiate fundraising and social activities; if the goal is based on community building it should not focus on profit which will change how these events are approached.

Mr. Reid pointed out the importance of transparency and communicating with families regarding the use of funds raised through events.

7.d PIC Correspondence

Executive Officer Giroux noted that the majority of correspondence consisted of applications for membership positions.

8. New Business

Associate Director Reynolds noted that there has been a slight increase in the number of returning grade 12 students and that the District is well equipped to receive any returning students.

Ms. Dean noted that she had an excellent experience in applying for the PIC membership position and suggested that future applications should have a timestamp for application deadlines. She suggested that staff contact the

applicants in advance of the meeting to alert them to the action item on the agenda.

Chair Khan reminded members that the *Let's Talk Geography: Immigration and Supporting Newcomers* project hosted by Cairine Wilson Secondary School will have a discussion panel on 27 November 2020 and 10 December 2020 from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The next PIC meeting will be on 13 January 2021.

Chair Khan expressed his gratitude for his time with PIC and expressed pride in PIC's continued effort to support children's learning and well-being. He wished everyone a happy holiday and prosperous new year.

9. Adjournment

Chair Khan adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Mostafizur Khan, Chair, Parent
Involvement Committee