

OCDSB PIC Chair report

25 March 2021

Welcome to my first chair report. In order to reduce the time spent in the actual meeting on standing reports the intent is to provide as much pre-reading as we can deliver.

I am looking forward to the next two years and hoping we can do some real good for our students.

The PIC website has been revamped and I would recommend you bookmark it - [Parent Involvement Committee \(PIC\) - Ottawa-Carleton District School Board \(ocdsb.ca\)](https://ocdsb.ca/parent-involvement-committee)

Also the Ministry of Education (MoE) website has useful information on PICs as well as other resources - [Parent Involvement Committees \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca/parent-involvement-committees)

Finally is the regulations that govern both school councils and PICs - [O. Reg. 612/00: SCHOOL COUNCILS AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEES \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/reg61/612_00.html)

Those links have helped me navigate all sorts of questions raised to me in my time on the committee.

On that I wanted to talk about our role. From the regulations (Part III PIC) our purpose is to support, encourage and enhance parent engagement at the board level in order to improve student achievement and well-being. A simple statement but in the past, we have sometime strayed from this. Additionally, we are directed to communicate and support school councils and undertake activities to help parents of pupils of the board in their children's learning at home and in school.

My intention is reach out to school councils chairs and make a linkage there. However, it is not all about school councils and we need to be thinking about other parents and how we support them. We will talk more about that in the meeting but if anyone thinks of a group, cohort, collection or gathering they would like to act as a liaison I'm all ears.

As I said I am really looking forward to our time together and I am sure we are going to do good things. Please reach out to me anytime. Also, I'm an old (according to my teenage daughter) white male who has a very different lived experience from most (26 years in the Navy, you get to see the world and realise how different/alike we all are). I never mean to cause offence and if you feel I have please let me know. Even at 50 I have plenty of learning left to do.

Since we last met Diana and I joined other PIC Chairs from across the Province to for a chance to discuss the Pro Grants and have a presentation by the Province on Skilled Trades and how they want to promote the skill trades as a career option.

Some notes from the meeting.

Context – Ministry Response to Parent Concerns

As of February 1st, the province announced additional measures for the 520,000 students who returned to in-person learning that included:

- Provincewide access to targeted asymptomatic testing for students and staff;
- Mandatory masking for students in Grades 1-3;
- Enhanced screening of secondary students and staff;
- Temporary certification of eligible teacher candidates to support staff levels and well-being.

In 2021, Ontario has supported increased safety in schools through:

- Hiring of an additional 3400 teachers and 500 administrators;
- Hiring of 650 education assistants and mental health workers;
- Purchasing of over 23,000 HEPA filters and 20,000 portable HEPA units.

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Context – Ministry Response to Parent Concerns

In February, EDU announced additional supports through the \$381M Federal Safe Return to Class Fund. The funding will further support students, parents, and teachers through:

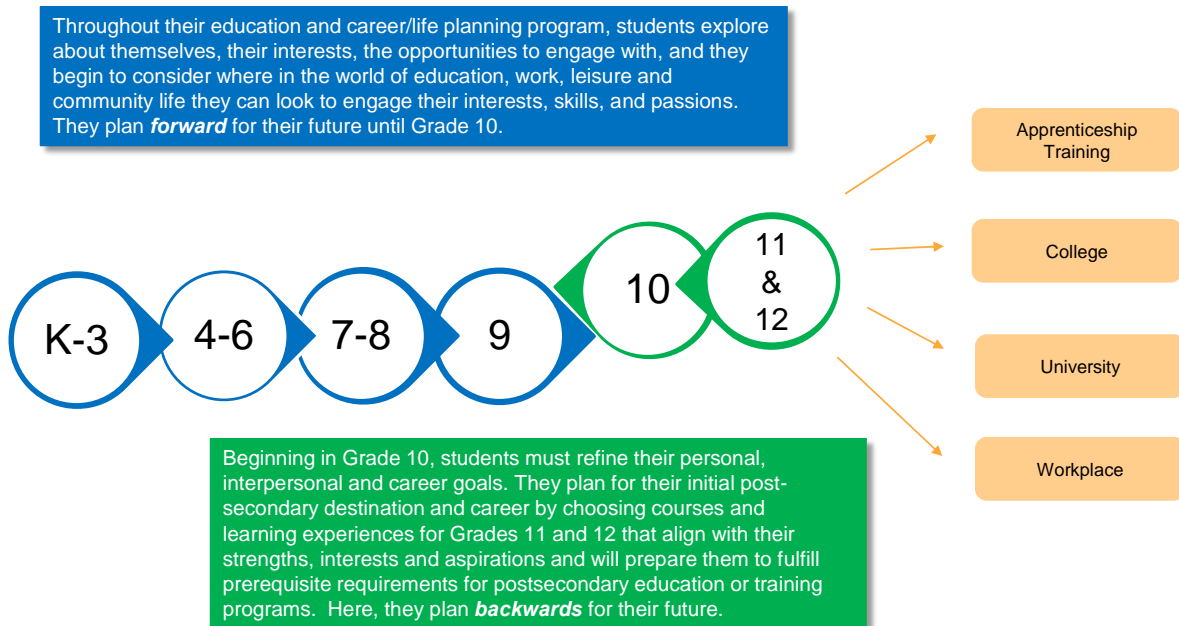
- Improve air quality and ventilation in schools;
- Support online learning;
- Promote student mental health;
- Hiring additional staff (Education Assistants, Mental Health Workers, and Professionals to provide special education and mental health supports).

Since the start of the pandemic, Ontario has invested \$52.5M in student mental health and a total of \$1.6B to better protect students, staff, and families.

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The skilled trades pieces was interesting. We discussed the challenges each board has, from rural communities that lack coop opportunities to convincing parents that a trade is a valid career path. The main thrust was that skilled trades should be as important a career path as going to Uni. Additionally, Jennifer Green (one of the Youth Advisors) who is an engineer

discussed how academics are as important for some trades as those taking the more traditional university or college route.



A good meeting, lots of exchanges and a chance to hear how other PICs operate.

Diana and I also had a very productive conversation with the Director of Education and look forward to working with her and her staff.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting

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