

Parent Involvement Committee

Date: Monday, February 2, 2009

Time/Place: 4 to 6 p.m.

HJA Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga

Location: Trustees' Area (Mezzanine Level)

Committee Savi Khanna, School Council Chair representing Brampton, Co-chair

Members in Karen McDonald, School Council Chair representing Caledon, Co-chair

Attendance: Valerie Arnold-Judge, Trustee representing Caledon

Ashis Basu, Parent Member representing the diverse community

Alison Farbar, Acting Communications Officer

Jim Grieve, Director of Education

Deanna Henderson, Parent Member representing the Special Education Advisory Committee

Dr. Salha Jeizan, Parent Member representing Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel

Steve Kavanagh, Trustee representing Brampton

Rabia Khedr, Parent Member representing the diverse community

Varsha Naik, Community Liaison Co-ordinator, Communications and Strategic Partnerships

Suzanne Nurse, Trustee representing Brampton

Debanjali Paul, Parent Member representing the diverse community

Allison Van Wagner, Trustee representing Mississauga

Brian Woodland, Director, Communications and Strategic Partnerships

Sally Drew, School Council Chair representing Mississauga

Criminal record check process

The committee believes that aspects of the criminal record check process may create barriers for some parents or community members who may be interested in volunteering in schools. The committee invited staff from the board's human resources department to explain the process and answer questions. Lisa Cruickshank, employee relations officer, and Anne Cameron, manager of recruitment and retention, attended the meeting. The following was explained:

- All volunteers are required to complete a criminal record check.
- As long as the individual volunteers at least once per school year, the record check remains valid.
- Volunteers can transfer between locations—the school can transfer the criminal record check information.
- Individuals requesting a criminal record check are required by Peel Police to go in-person to their headquarters to submit their forms and have identification verified.
- Peel Police offer two days per year when criminal record check requests can be submitted at community stations, rather than the headquarters in Mississauga.
- Although it is recommended, the Peel board does not require completed criminal record checks to be delivered in-person to human resources. Completed record checks can be sent via mail or through the school courier.
- It is recommended that individuals, who are interested in volunteering in the fall, begin the criminal record check process in the spring Peel Police are often dealing with a high-volume of requests.

The committee plans to review the data collected from its focus groups to determine what barriers exist for parents and will request an opportunity to present to the police board later this spring.

Report on the Tools of Cultural Proficiency workshop

Committee members were invited to attend the Tools of Cultural Proficiency on Jan. 9 with Randall Lindsey. Co-chairs Savi Khanna and Karen McDonald shared their experience at the workshop and agreed that it was an effective and important training session.

We Welcome the World Centres – coming soon

Jim Grieve talked about the Peel board's new *We Welcome the World Centres*, which have been made possible because of funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Three centres are under construction—two in Mississauga and one in Brampton. The centres will provide wrap-around service for newcomers to Peel. Staff will help new families settle in the region by providing assessments and registering children for school, helping families find information and access services in their community and much more. The centres are expected to open later this spring.

Committee involvement at parent literacy conference

The Peel board is hosting the eighth annual Make a difference in literacy and beyond parent conference on April 4 at Sandalwood Heights Secondary School. The committee has decided to sponsor the conference and will also have a booth at the event. The committee will use the booth to talk to parents about the role of the committee and the importance of involvement.

Planning for next year

The co-chairs will send a letter to the board chair requesting that the committee's term be extended from two years to two and a half years. This will allow the current committee to maintain its momentum next year and will provide time to plan for the selection of a new committee next spring. The committee would also like to request that some of its members have a three-year term in order to ensure that knowledge is passed on and the group continues to move forward.

Action items

- Lisa Cruickshank to provide committee with approximate number of new volunteers annually
- Alison to contact police board and arrange a presentation
- Alison to arrange for visual identity for the committee and assist in the creation of booth materials for parent conference
- Alison, Savi and Karen to prepare letter to board chair requesting changes to the committee's term

Next meeting

The next Parent Involvement Committee meeting will take place in the Trustees' Area at the HJA Brown Education Centre on Monday, April 27 between 4 and 6 p.m. Please let Alison Farbar know if you are unable to attend. Refreshments will be provided.