

Parent Involvement Committee

Date: Monday, November 17, 2008

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

Steve Kavanagh, Trustee representing Brampton

Rabia Khedr, Parent Member representing the diverse community

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

Debanjali Paul, Parent Member representing the diverse community

Don Stephens, Trustee representing Mississauga

Brian Woodland, Director, Communications and Strategic Partnerships

Update on multilingual focus groups

Sylvia Link, manager of communications, provided an update on the multilingual focus groups on parent involvement. The focus groups will be facilitated by the board's new settlement workers who will be trained by an external research at a training session on Nov. 27. The groups will be offered in Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, Punjabi, Tamil and Urdu. Focus groups will also be offered in English and will be facilitated by the external researcher. Up to four focus groups will be offered for each language—two for elementary parents and two for secondary parents. The focus groups should be complete by the end of February. A final report should be available late spring.

At future meetings, the PIC will discuss ideas for using the report in the Peel board and in urban centres across Canada.

Update on volunteer video for school websites and 'Get Involved' section of peelschools.org

The committee heard from Sheila Proteau, supervisor of media support services, regarding the creation of a short video for the volunteer section of school websites and for the 'Get Involved' section of peelschools.org. Sheila provided a copy of the proposed script, as well as a storyboard of the video. The video is intended to be a 'trailer' for the longer testimonials that will be pulled out the *A parent's contribution* produced by Pam

Tomasevic's superintendency. The video will be shot during the spring and may be completed in time for the May 2009 volunteer celebration.

Update on settlement workers

Louise Clayton, Multicultural Settlement and Education Partnership facilitator, provided the committee with an update on the board's settlement program. Louise told the group that four new agencies are coming on board to replace the one agency that was lost. As well, 17 additional Brampton schools will now have access to a settlement worker. Louise also told the group that the board has hired six additional workers internally who will be available to schools that don't have a settlement worker already assigned.

The role of settlement workers is to assist newcomer families with settlement issues, including housing, employment, finance and income tax. They also help to create connections between the family and the school and help the family get to know the education system.

Report on school council event and PIC workshop

Great Start: an orientation and training evening for school councils took place on Monday, Nov. 10 at Lincoln M. Alexander Secondary School. About 250 parents attended the event and chose from 14 workshops facilitated by Peel board staff and other council members. The evaluation of the event was overwhelmingly positive. Parents did mention that they'd like more time to attend workshops.

The PIC co-chairs facilitated a workshop with Alison Farbar, acting communications officer, called *Encourage parent involvement at your school*. About 25 to 30 people attended each session. Participants offered suggestions, including offering more resources for secondary councils and the creation of a tip sheet in various languages to help parents of students at all grade levels.

Potential speakers representing diverse community

A list of potential speakers was presented. The list included:

Anita Srinivasan, director of operations at the University of Toronto's School of Public Policy and Governance

Debbie Douglas, executive director of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

Ratna Omidvar, president of the Maytree Foundation

Uzma Shakir, director of the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario

Dr. Usha George, dean of the Faculty of Community Services and Ryerson University

Drs. Ekram and Nida Bashir, authors of *Parenting in the West*

The suggestions be researched and a recommendation will be taken to the parent literacy conference committee to ensure that at least one of the general afternoon keynote sessions at the 2009 conference be facilitated by a speaker who represents the diverse community.

Criminal record check brainstorm

The brainstorm was postponed to a later meeting. The committee will invite a representative from Peel Regional Police to the next meeting to explain the criminal record check process.

Joe Rich bio

The committee received a copy of Joe Rich's bio. Joe Rich was selected by the parent literacy conference committee to speak at the 2009 conference, which is taking place on Saturday, April 4 at Sandalwood Heights Secondary School in Brampton. Joe Rich is a social worker who is featured as the parenting expert on CityLine. He is also the author of *Parenting the long journey*.

Subscribe function for 'Get Involved'

The learning technology department is unable to set up the subscribe function for the 'Get Involved' section of the website because the function will be changing. We will revisit this once a new method of subscription is chosen.

Action items

- Alison Farbar to arrange for a Peel Regional Police representative to attend the next meeting
- Alison and Savi will arrange parents who will be featured in new volunteer video

Next meeting

The next Parent Involvement Committee meeting will take place in the Trustees' Area at the HJA Brown Education Centre on Monday, February 2, 2009 between 4 and 6 p.m. Please let Alison Farbar know if you are unable to attend. Refreshments will be provided.