

Parent Involvement Committee Minutes

Date: September 24, 2012
Time/Place: 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Trustees' Area, HJA Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga

Anthony Blair, Parent representing Brampton, Co-chair
Stan Cameron, Trustee representing Caledon
Barbara Cyr, representing the board's Special Education Advisory Committee
Salha Jeizan, representing Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel
Janace King-Watson, Parent representing Brampton
Harinder Malhi, Trustee representing Brampton
Shan Rai, Parent representing Mississauga
Sukhjit Singh, Parent representing Mississauga
Lisa Skeete, Parent representing Mississauga
Lisa Thompson, Parent representing Brampton
Dan Wilkinson, Parent representing Brampton

Regrets:

Lori Holloway, Parent representing Caledon
Meredith Johnson, Trustee representing Mississauga
Tony Pontes, Director of Education
Kelly Ralston, Parent representing Mississauga

Resource:

Alison Farbar, Acting Communications Officer
Jay Fedosoff, Leader, Parent and Family Literacy Centres
Varsha Naik, Community Liaison Co-ordinator
Carla Pereira, Acting Manager of Communications

Call to order, welcome and introductions

Chair Anthony Blair introduced himself and welcomed new and returning members. Each member took the a moment to introduce themselves and why they were interested in being part of the committee.

Election of Co-chair

The committee decided to wait until next meeting to select a co-chair to give new members the time to think about whether they are interested in the role. The position is open to new parent members and it is a two-year term. Lisa Thompson has expressed interest in putting her name forward for the position. Election of co-chair will be on the next agenda.

Membership on Ontario PIC and School Council Association

The committee agreed to join the Ontario PIC and School Council Association (OPSCA). The cost of membership is \$100 annually. Individuals can also join for \$25 annually. Alison volunteered to look into paying the membership fee and will send any information received to the committee.

OPSCA was created by parent leaders for parent leaders to:

- Promote and support parent involvement and engagement across Ontario
- Establish partnerships with government and other organizations to promote excellence in the publically funded education system
- Provide information, resources and support to PICs and School Councils
- Support and facilitate the education, training and development of parent leaders to improve their leadership skills and effectiveness
- Facilitate and encourage collaboration and sharing of effective practices among PICs and School Councils
- Advocate for, and advance the interests of, members and parents, reflecting the diversity of views, opinions, perspectives and collective voice of PICs and School Councils at the provincial level

Update on Ready! Set! High School! materials

Last year, the PIC funded the printing of a Ready! Set! High School! parent guide that provides parents of grade 8 students information about what to expect in secondary school. The guide was printed and inserted in every grade 8 term three report card. Feedback from parents, school staff and school councils has been very positive. The guide has been posted on all school websites, and www.peelschools.org here:

<http://www.peelschools.org/parents/helpyourchild/parentguide/Pages/default.aspx>

Schools are asking to have the guide produced again this year. Carla will bring the cost of printing to the committee at the next meeting to consider. The goal is to include the guide in the term two report this year to provide more time for parents to prepare for the transition.

Update & discussion - ELL/ESL resource package

Varsha updated the committee on the creation of an ELL/ESL resource package to help increase awareness among parents of the benefits of the ELL program. The PIC funded the creation of the resource last year. The resource packages includes a powerpoint presentation with speaking notes that can be delivered by a facilitator. It also includes handout materials for parents, which will be translated into at least the top five languages. The current package is geared towards the elementary level. The plan is to offer presentations at schools, the We Welcome the World Centres and other locations in Peel where families gather, including faith centres.

School council event – Nov. 15

The *Great Start* orientation event for school council members is on Thursday, Nov. 15 at West Credit Secondary School in Mississauga. The event starts at 5 p.m. with a buffet dinner. The formal program will start at 6 p.m. PIC members plan to have a booth at the event and Alison will facilitate the parent engagement workshop again this year. The chairs will likely be part of the workshop as well.

It was suggested to offer a workshop on writing an effective PRO grant application at the event. Jay offered to facilitate this session.

Barb Cyr asked if SEAC can have a booth at the event. A booth will be available for the group.

PRO Grants

One hundred and seven PRO grants were received by Peel board schools this year. The funding will be transferred to schools in October. One regional grant was received by The North Central Community Network, which involves schools in the North Park family of schools. The project will create a parent ambassador program, modelled after the student ambassador programs that exist in many schools. Parents will be invited to participate in workshops to build skills and then become ambassadors for new families moving into their communities.

It was suggested to offer a workshop on writing an effective PRO grant application at the school council event. Jay offered to facilitate this session.

New business/additions to the agenda

Bill 115

Lisa S asked about the impact of Bill 115 on the school council event and Parent Literacy Conference in terms of the voluntary participation of teachers. It was explained that the school council event is still happening at this point. The impact on the Parent Literacy Conference is not known right now, but the intention is to have the event go ahead.

Event on mental health

Varsha shared information about the South Asians Forum on October 13. The event focuses on mental health. See the flyer included at the end of this document.

OSR

Barb asked about the OSR information for parents that the committee recommended last year. An article was written and has been included in the camera-ready package for schools, which contains articles schools can include in their newsletters. The article has also been posted on all school websites.

Minutes

Barb presented an excerpt of Reg. 612 of the Education Act, which deals with school councils and PICs. She indicated she felt we may not be complying with the regulation because our minutes are “highlights”. The suggestion was made by Janace to just change the title of our document from highlights to minutes. Alison pointed out that there is no requirement for minutes

to be taken by a staff member. She invited another member of the committee to take minutes if they are interested. There were no volunteers at the meeting.

Alison contacted the ministry and received the following response, *“In my opinion, if you called the highlights “Minutes”, you are compliant. I am unaware of any requirements (specifics) around the keeping of minutes.”* The title on the website has been changed, as well as on this document and all future documents. Past highlights have not been altered to reflect this change.

Set meeting dates, planning meeting for 2012-13

The committee set the following dates for future meetings:

Oct. 29

Jan. 28

Feb. 25

March 25

May 27

The committee had originally selected Nov. 26; however, there’s a major board event that night so Tony, the trustees, Carla and Alison will be unable to attend.

All meetings will start at 5 p.m. and take place at the HJA Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street in Mississauga. Room locations will be communicated once they are available.

Public questions

Catherine Soplek attended to invite members to a Poverty Reducation meeting and said she will send information to Alison to forward. She also questioned why documents she provided to the committee last spring were not indicated as ‘Received’ in the minutes. It was explained that the documents were forwarded to all members. The documents are included at the end of these minutes.

Patricia from MiWay at the City of Mississauga attended and provided positive feedback about the parent high school guide funded by the committee. She suggested adding a section about transportation in the guide, including information about public transit that’s available. There was some concern among members that the public transit information would not be equitable because there is not public transit available in Caledon. Staff will take the suggestion under advisement. Varsha suggested that MiWay should do bus tours for newcomers like the City of Brampton does. Carla suggested Patricia contact the School Support Department, which looks after distribution of information and materials.