

**Upper Grand District School Board  
Parent Involvement Committee  
Minutes of Meeting on Monday, September 28, 2015**

**In Attendance**

Deb Drake, Kay Elford, Jane Brown, Darren Hale, Andrea Higgins, Vikki Brown, Maureen Oesch, Heather Janes, Martha MacNeil, Brent McDonald, Cindy Gibson, Renee Chumbley, Jennifer Byard, Hayley Warren, Kathryn Selves, Mollie Loughran, Megan Taylor, Debbie Bush-Bernabe, Kathy Watts.

**Regrets:** Sara Dick, Rosemond Anim-Somuah, Martha Rogers, Lorrie Wren, Katie Lamarre, Heather Mewhinney.

**Minutes written by:** Jane Brown and Deb Drake

**Welcome and Introductions**

- Welcome to all extended
- Sara Dick is stepping back from co-chair and committee responsibilities until January – her role will not be filled in the interim
- Approval of Minutes: Mollie Loughran
- Approval of Previous Minutes: Deb Drake and Andrea Higgins

**Healthy Schools Conference Information (Debbie Bush-Bernabe)**

- Arbour Vista Public School(200 McCann Street, Guelph) opened in September 2014 and the school started a Health Club and received \$15000 seed funding in May and are presenting a conference on Thursday, December 3, 2015 from 6:30pm-8:30pm for school leaders (students, parents, staff, community) in the Wellington and Dufferin boards.
- Currently calling for presenters and those who would like to set up a display – anyone working on health and wellness initiatives in the schools are invited to present and/or set up a display.
- Ontario Healthy Schools will be presenting
- The theme is to share, learn and celebrate together on health and wellness issues
- To apply to present, please go to [www.kwpublichealth.ca/schools](http://www.kwpublichealth.ca/schools) and complete the form there by October 21 (also a new date), 2015
- For more information please contact [Glenna.rogers@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:Glenna.rogers@wdgpublichealth.ca) or [kirk.runciman@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:kirk.runciman@ugdsb.on.ca)

**Board and Ministry Report (Brent McDonald)**

- Thank you to everyone for coming
- Martha Rogers sends her regrets
- Ads were placed in the papers advertising PIC as it was decided at the May meeting
- Also as decided at the May meeting, the PIC brochure was printed and distributed to all JK and SK parents in the board

- School Council Insurance – a memo was sent out to all school councils from Karen Zorzi recommending the purchase of this - there are 2 reasonable insurers – OPSBA and OSBIE – there have been lawsuits in the province and this insurance can protect school councils as we present events that may not be covered by board insurance – for more information please contact [Karen.zorzi@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:Karen.zorzi@ugdsb.on.ca)
- A list was distributed of all the schools that received PRO grants and this number is about the same as last year – also will be posted to PIC website so that schools can see what topics/events other schools are presenting this year – money should be available soon and it will go directly to school councils
- PIC funding to schools – budget \$46000 dollars from the Ministry and board gives \$500 to each school in the board along with 17 cents for each student, remainder goes to PIC (approx. \$6-7000 annually). School councils and schools decide how to use this money – there are no parameters other than it must be spent in the same school year and cannot be carried over – a note will go out to all principals when these funds are available
- Labour front – not much to share other than what is out in the media – secondary teachers have ratified their agreements and negotiations are all but complete – process is going well. French language boards have also ratified their agreements. CUPE is at stage 2 sanctions as of Sept 29 – shouldn't impact schools that parents will see. ETFO has not reached a central deal – there are no dates to go back to the table – we are at a stalemate. Fundraising within school councils can still be done, but teaching staff can neither hand out forms nor collect money. How do we collect the money? Parents can do this – talk to your principal. There will be lots of impact in our programs, - it is not business as usual. School front office staff cannot pick up the money either as they are in a separate union and cannot do work that another union group is refusing to do. Many schools chose to postpone welcome back events and Terry Fox runs. Teachers will only do inside classroom work on Wednesdays – no picture days, assemblies, etc. As updates are other phases come in, the board will keep website and twitter current. Rotating strikes across the province could be presented in a number of ways and there is no rhyme or reason to it – it will be handled like a bad weather day – you may have notice before the day, or on that day. Our experience in the past is that there has been notice in our board – not always the case in all school boards.
- First Class no longer available – now school councils should stay abreast of current information on the PIC website under the school council section. Brent will also send out emails to school council chairs provided he has been provided with those email addresses.

### **Trustee Report (Martha MacNeil)**

- All the information about each Trustee is up on the website including their photo, committees they sit on and portfolios they are responsible for – this allows parents to contact the Trustee relevant to their concern.
- French Review Committee Update – programs have been provided for 45 years – several meetings have been held and the committee is made up of Trustees, board staff, parents and students – presentations have been made to the committee by school boards and their experiences with their French programs – parent survey is being developed to gather feedback from all parents and the communication plan for the survey has not been developed so we don't yet know how the survey will be made available. There is no plan yet as to how the issue of the current program space being used when there are more students space than will be available in the future based on current demand. Current demand in Guelph is 30% of JK/SK students and 15-20% in the rest of the board.
- Survey was conducted on how to manage extreme weather closing of schools – currently working on the outcome of this

### **Co-Chairs Report (Kathy Watts)**

- We received a \$15000 PRO grant to bring in speaker David Bouchard in November 2015. First presentation will be at Westside Secondary School in Orangeville on November 4. A second November 5 presentation will be held at John F Ross Secondary School in Guelph.
- Spring topic will be Multiculturalism to address the diversity in our schools across the board. Please let Rosemond know of events you are hosting at your schools (dates/topics/speakers) to avoid conflicts and maximize resources.
- Considering purchasing some of the speaker's books and producing swag bags for attendees.
- Hopefully any potential work sanctions will not impact these events. The concern is that maintenance personnel must be available to open/close the schools for these events. However, they are being held at Secondary Schools, so this should not be an issue since maintenance personnel are regularly scheduled to be there in the evening.
- Kathy to send out the dates and locations of the above tomorrow so schools might be able to get the information in their October newsletters.
- Upper Grand Learning Foundation can act as a resource for schools – They recently helped Hyland Heights connect with an individual who will be helping them find grant and funding opportunities for their playground project.
- Multicultural Challenges – There are many schools in our board with a large population of parents whose native language is not English. PIC would like to try and set up a partnership with local services to help those parents access resources, e.g., directing parents to the Guelph Public Library where there are books and information printed in various languages.

- The current issue (September 2015) of Today's Parenting has some great articles including 25 Ways to Volunteer at School, Peanut Allergies and Self-Esteem.
- **PIC Executive:** Chair - Kathy Watts will continue (Sara Dick to provide support as Co-Chair)  
Treasurer - Vikki Brown will continue  
Communications Officer - Rosemond Anim-Somuah will continue  
Secretary – open – contact Kathy if interested

### **Treasurer's Report (Vikki Brown)**

- In the 2014-2015 school year PIC spent \$42,485. There is a remaining balance of \$14,481 left from last year's Regional PRO grant. Typically this must be spent by June 30<sup>th</sup>, however we have received an extension and must now spend these funds by February.
- PIC applied for and has received a \$15,000 Regional PRO grant for this year, which must be spent by June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- General funding from the Ministry includes the \$500 Parent Involvement funding for each school plus \$0.17 per student (\$46-48,000 annually), \$39,000 of this goes out to the schools leaving ~ \$6-7,000 for PIC. These funds must be spent by August 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Help will be required to organize and implement all the events planned. Please let Kathy know where you can help.
- The labour situation prevented some schools from moving forward with planned events at the end of the 2014-2015 school year and the question was asked "What does a school do if it has remaining funds left from last year's PRO grant?" It was suggested that these schools contact the Ministry, explain the situation, and ask for an extension. These are sometimes granted assuming the project doesn't deviate significantly from the original proposal. Contact: Parent Engagement Leads - Glenn Court at 416-325-7802  
[glenn.court@ontario.ca](mailto:glenn.court@ontario.ca) or Ayn Posada at 416-325-7774  
[ayn.posada@ontario.ca](mailto:ayn.posada@ontario.ca)

### **Communications**

- The possibility of adding an events calendar to the website was proposed to help schools avoid scheduling conflicts with other events. Currently events are posted on the events page.
- Send any information/posters on PRO events planned to Rosemond who will then post them on the events page.

## **New Business**

- **Your Future Your Choice** – Annual Career Fair. November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 6-8 p.m., Centennial CVI, 289 College Ave., Guelph  
<http://careereducationcouncil.ca/programs---events/your-future-your-choice>
- **Go Eng Girl** - Opportunity for girls in grades 7-10 to learn about engineering. Free Event - Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Cambridge Campus Conestoga College, 850 Fountain St. S.  
<http://www.conestogacommunity.ca/goenggirl>
- **The Canada 150 Fund** – Grant opportunity to create celebrations that contribute to building a sense of pride and attachment to Canada. Schools are eligible to apply. <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1424795454758>
- Ideas implemented at Edward Johnson to help with the transition due to splitting of schools (Couling Crescent)
  - Arts Night where children did pieces of art and decorated the school walls with it. There were 2 large canvas' as well where each child put their thumbprint and one canvas will go to each school.
  - Planning events together to keep that connection whole i.e., A Fall Social
  - Greening Playground Celebration – Celebration for all involved in the playground project which includes parents from both schools. Food trucks will be on site. October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., Edward Johnson, P.S.
- Food Allergies – Is there a school or board standard as to whether a particular food item is banned in the case of allergies? Decisions are made in consultation with the family and administration and depend on the allergy, the severity and details of the life threatening allergy management plan for the individual child. The management of allergies is approached differently by different families and there must be sensitivity in dealing with this, particularly for families with young children entering school for the first time.
- Ideas for welcoming and attracting parent involvement
  - Off site Pub Nights – this was successful for one school
  - Blogs
  - Be effective in sharing info
  - Orientation evenings for parents of incoming students i.e., Gr. 7 & 8's in feeder schools, Gr. 9 in high schools.
  - Tea for parents of Kindergarten children at drop off on their first morning.

**Next Meeting:** Monday October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 6:45 p.m., Board Office, 500 Victoria Rd., Guelph