

**Upper Grand District School Board
Parent Involvement Committee
Minutes of Meeting on Monday November 24th, 2014**

In Attendance

Parents: Kathy Watts, Vikki Brown, Wendy Bauman, Martha MacNeil, Deb Drake, Debbie Bush, Mollie Loughran, Michelle Watterson, Heather Bailey, Kay Elford, Jane Brown, Heather Mewhinney, Katie Lamarre,

Board Personnel: Martha Rogers, Brent McDonald, Mark Bailey, Marty Fairburn, Susan Moziar,

Teacher Rep: Andrea Higgins

Community Member: Heather Bailey

Elementary Admin: Darren Hale

Secondary Admin: (Jeni Vaughn regrets)

Guest Speaker: Darren Hale

Regrets: Sara Dick, Jeni Vaughan, Cindy Gibson, and Jen Macleod

Minutes Written by: Wendy Bauman

Welcome and Introductions: Kathy Watts

- Welcome to all extended, and all present introduced themselves.
 - Introductions of PIC Executive: Co-Chairs Kathy Watts; Treasurer Vicki Brown; Secretary Wendy Bauman
- Approval of Agenda: Marty and Heather
- Approval of Previous Minutes: Katie

Guest Speaker: Darren Hale on Parent Engagement

- Darren is Vice Principal at Elora Public School.
- Family School Partnerships - a better term? - not just the parents' responsibility...
- Parent engagement matters. It affects student learning. Partnerships with community members are encouraged.
- Dr. Joyce Epstein and Karen Mapp's *Joining Process* modified by Parent Involvement Centre (Ontario):

www.parentinvolvement.ca/eight_strategies.htm

1) Welcome parents into the school

- remove barriers (language, celebrations) - Open House
- visuals should reflect the school community
- showcase the plethora of talents
- invite new families to the school along with Kindergarten parents at the beginning of year
- personal invitations from teachers and mass emails (e.g. Remembrance Day)
- family resource room
- exhibit students' work in the community - retirement homes, recreational centres

2) Honor their participation

- seek information from parents: surveys, question boxes, questionnaires
- workshops, school events

3) Connecting with parents by focusing on children and their learning

- newsletters, Twitter, webpage, class presentations, and trips
- ongoing communications is VITAL

- Spread the word:

- School Council - listen to concerns, questions, appreciations
- PIC - system perspective (lost in our own reality) - snack program
- Ongoing dialogue with colleagues (Principal Learning Teams, staff meetings)

- PIC Members' ideas:
 - Parent Workshops - free and with child care, in evenings. Ideas for workshop can come from annual survey ask about barriers, follow up after workshop to help with next year, possible staff involvement etc.
 - Local Beavers/ Brownies/etc at Open House so that parents know what is avail in community
 - Mitchell Woods has a welcome back event in Sept - same night as meet the teacher. The West End Recreational Centre, Immigration Services, local neighbourhood group, etc come with brochures. It is helpful to have all in of these community organizations gather in one place for parents. Food is provided by parents that have catering businesses or own restaurants.
 - Diversity of communication: use multiple modalities, including paper newsletter - not all want to spend more time on screen (website, twitter, Facebook)
 - Community skills Inventory - e.g. yoga during DPA, artist for art activity. Skills are curriculum oriented and can be offered on an ongoing basis or for a single day
 - Victory Public School runs Enrichment Clusters. Parents come in and teach skill sets for two or four days during the last block of day - e.g. jam making, calligraphy, geocaching, board game making, yoga . Teachers are there to support behaviour management. There is then an evening celebration of sharing.
 - Engagement can be outside of school - e.g. reading with child, asking about school day. Ask for a list of home activities from school/teacher. See People for Education tip sheet and video *Seven Steps for Building an Engaged Community* (www.peopleforeducation.ca/how-does-education-work/training-and-resources/7-steps-for-building-an-engaged-community)

Board and Ministry Report: Brent McDonald

- Family Engagement:
 - Family of Schools meetings coming up - will share PIC ideas for family engagement
 - We should continue to talk about family engagement - need new ideas, need to be current
 - PIC booklet *If You Have 5, 10, 15 Minutes* is stored in Board Room closet. **Is it time to reprint?** These could be included in Kindergarten packages
 - Share link to online P4E tip sheet:
 - Eng: <http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/SuccessParentTips.pdf>
 - Fr: <http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/P4EParentTips-What-matters-most-French.pdf>
 - Share link to online P4E video:
 - Eng: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0S_gLw9pXg&list=UUMi9ExZXteTDi9cshPatakQ
 - Fr: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAcTefKbB5Q&list=UUMi9ExZXteTDi9cshPatakQ>
- Darren has been involved in CASL registration of emails with UGDSB. Thank you!
- Digital Saturdays are happening, which compares work done in classroom using technology versus what comes home via Cloud, how to bridge the divide, and how parents can be engaged in this modality of learning
 - Jan. 24 at Island Lake PS in Orangeville. Parent/PIC presentations are welcome. This will be in the morning and will involve an interactive storefront approach (drop-in friendly, hands-on). Brent will forward info to PIC members
 - March at Palmerston PS - date TBD
- "TEDx"-type event in Guelph with UGEDIT. This will take place on May 14 in the evening in the EL Fox Auditorium at John F Ross CVI. The theme will be about the use of tech to support learning in classroom and at home. The call for presenters is out to parents, staff, and students.
- *Building Healthy Relationships* kits went out a week ago, which includes parent and student engagement tips. Please share these at School Council meetings.
- Pan-Am Games: How can schools and parents be involved? The Ministry has sent a kit with healthy living and physical activity curriculum links with Pan-Am and Para-Pan-Am Games.
- PIC and PRO-Grant money has been distributed. Please let Brent know if it hasn't arrived.

Treasurer's Report: Vikki Brown

- see handout

Chairs' Report: Kathy Watts

- **People for Education Conference:**
 - People for Education conference took place in Toronto. Many from Guelph attended
 - Speakers to consider for Spring Event:
 - Paul Tough is author of *How Children Succeed*, writer for NY Times, science-based researcher on how children succeed. It would be great to have him at a PIC event but high price-point.
 - Trustee Bailey's wife might also be available to speak about attachment theory and relationship to learning. She works in psychology at U of G, as well as Family and Child Services.
 - Dr. Lynda Colgan - math - unable to come to multiple locations
 - conversation tabled to later in this meeting
- **Barrier-free/remote access to PIC meetings:**
 - There is a continued desire to take some meetings to other areas but this is challenging in terms of remote access.
 - Via conference call or Google hangout: Difficult with respect to logistics (e.g. accessible phone jacks).
 - Board Office's console system (up to 15 people can call in, use of microphones) can replicate if there is a phone in the room (though more limited - fewer callers, harder to hear large group). Perhaps Board Office in Orangeville has a good set-up?
 - Elora - no phone in meeting room for remote access
 - Google Hangout - volume concerns unless there is a large screen TV and a console chrome box
 - Does the high school in Fergus have options?
 - Join Me via Adobe Connect would allow people to view on screen
 - Calls can be recorded and listened to later for those who miss the meeting (available for a limited time)
 - Next meeting's agenda to include a phone number for connecting via conference call with suggestion to record
 - Direction is needed regarding the February 2015 meeting in Elora
 - Conference call set-up in January? We can hold up to 15 participants on the console in the Board Office. If there is a presentation, it could be sent out ahead. Cheryl Van Ootegham or a rep will be presenting the BIPSA – Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement for January. Could this information be posted on the PIC website?
 - Parents beyond PIC may be interested in viewing recorded meetings. Google Hangout would lend itself to this, but this requires a room with a large screen TV and a chrome box. The Board Office doesn't have this system in a room large enough for the PIC meeting.

PRO-Grant Spring Event: Martha MacNeil and Kathy Watts

- **Speaker ideas:**
 - Dr. Lynda Colgan is not available unless as a single math presentation in March. She is unavailable for multiple locations.
 - Options other than Paul Tough due to high cost?
 - Dr. Alex Russell - *Drop the Worry Ball* - Martha read the book and doesn't feel this would be appropriate for PIC, as it involves parenting advice rather than parent engagement in learning
 - Dr. Bruce Ferguson - Sick Kids connection and presenter at the P4Ed conf . He does not travel much, but perhaps Guelph could be tied in with a Toronto event? He speaks about community involvement, and community-parent-school-teacher connection, which is closer to PIC mandate than Dr. Alex Russell
 - Chris d' Souza - teacher/VP in Toronto, author - speaks on inclusivity, engaging community - very engaging
<http://chris dsouza.ca>

- Currently leaning towards Bruce and Chris. Martha and Kathy will look into fees and availability
- Volunteers needed for organizing the event (5 people) and event prep (10 people)
- Thurs. April 30 at Centre Wellington in Fergus (4pm?)

Planning for 2014/2015

- Subcommittee ideas -
 - Hints and tidbits on applying for PRO-Grants?
 - Community involvement?
 - No volunteers came forth this evening

Communication:

- Megan Taylor's event –Seasonal school party.
- PIC website has been updated and will be reformatted next year
- School Community event postings are available on the UGDSB website
- Speakers:
 - Nov. 26th at 6pm at Mitchell Woods - Fitness (Zumba) and Nutrition
 - Dec 4th at King George: Dr. Lynn Woodford, Mental Health Lead for UGDSB. Childcare available.
 - April 21st at Victory PS: Marion Small on parents engaging with their children in math
- Tytler School's Two Rivers Neighbourhood Group - Upcycling sewing workshop for holiday gifts (Monday afternoon workshops Dec 1-15, 11am-1:30pm). See their website.
- Immigrant Services Open House was last week, which is a great resource for parents, with translation options
- The UGDSB webmaster has a translate option. Note that Google Translator is not great.
- Trustee Bailey, Fairburn, Moziar, and soon-to-be Trustee MacNeil went to We Day, which was wonderful.
 - Rotary involvement as follow-up from this event? Please share ideas with Kathy

Questions, New Business, and Final Remarks

- Elora Parent Council has an entry in the Santa Claus Parade (6 or 7pm) - Candy Cane theme
- Westfield Village Christmas Event Dec 6th, 13, 14, 20, 21 - evening - fireworks, buildings decorated, meet Santa
- Walk to Bethlehem Nativity Pageant in Heritage Park in Milton on Nov 28, 6:30-9pm
- Arbour Vista - going well - School Council meetings are well attended - ~ 370 kids - adding Gr 8 next year
- **Pro-Grant discussion**
 - Can this be an opportunity for a common message with teachers and students as well, to continue the focus and motivation?
 - Additional parent engagement resources:
 - *It's a piece of cake* - Maria Fisk - a ten-page booklet offering a cake analogy of home-school connection (www.wafamilyengagement.org/system_files/researchs/27.pdf)
 - *Beyond the Bake Sale* - Anne Henderson
 - Susan Defoe Abbey - local speaker on parent engagement (www.dafoe-abbey.com)
 - Nicole Raftis (OT) - local speaker children and anxiety, organization and behaviour (www.nicoleraftis.ca)
 - PRO-Grant - up to \$1000 for event/speaker - application deadline in May?
 - Plus \$500 from PIC can be used towards anything for parent engagement - e.g. school BBQ, movie night, speaker
 - asking School Councils to look at school's School Improvement Plans and their community engagement links

Next meeting: Monday, January 26th, 2015 at 6:45pm, Board Office, Victoria Rd, Guelph