

Upper Grand District School Board

Parent Involvement Committee

February Minutes (February 25, 2012)

In Attendance:

Parents: Axy Leighl, Martha MacNeil, Kathy Watts, Deb Drake, Jaspreet Dhillon, Rhonda Sharpe, Scott Doern, Heather Janes, Sarah Bolton-Blair, Andrea Brown, Jan Pettigrew, Jen MacLeod, Barb Ash

Board Personnel: Martha Rogers, Brent McDonald, Marty Fairbairn

Guest Speaker: Dr. Lynn Woodford

Regrets: Carrie Proudfoot, Kay Elford, Ann Charles, Heather Bailey, Giselle Scanlon

Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome extended to all and introductions were made.
- Approval of February agenda and January minutes.

Board and Ministry Report

1. Guest Speaker – Mental Health Initiatives and Supports in the UGDSB

- Dr Lynn Woodford – Manager of Mental Health/Addiction Programs and Services
- Mental Health Lead for the Board resulting from the new Ontario Mental Health Strategy and responsible for developing a Mental Health Strategy for the Board and coordinating it at a systems level. Next September all boards in the Province will have a Mental Health Lead.
- Mental health exists on a continuum from no impairment to disabling/chronic impairment. Goal is to move children along the continuum by helping with services and supports, and developing resiliency. The goal in the Board is for students to achieve a state of complete physical, mental and social well being. The role of the Mental Health Lead is to work with educators and students to promote mental health wellbeing and to develop strategies to achieve this.
- Schools provide an optimal setting in which to reduce stigma, promote positive mental health, identify students in need and provide/build pathways to care.
- Discussed causes, onset, co-morbidity and impacts of mental health problems. Some statistics: 50% of cases start before age 14, 70% before age 18; up to 80% of children and youth will not receive treatment due to difficulty accessing services, lack of diagnosis or misdiagnosis; stigma.
- Discussed the supports and strategies that are available.
- Priorities: Structural - create organizational conditions for effective school mental health; Knowledge - capacity building for educators; Implementation - promotion and prevention strategies; Pathway - improving the process to access/receive care.
- Demonstrated the tiered support system in place to support those with mental health issues. Inter-ministry coordination (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Children and Youth Services) is a large part of the strategy in order to work together to support children and families dealing with mental health issues.
- Process for the current year: Board Scan (November 2012) to determine what is in place and how it is working, define areas of strength and of need; Resource Mapping (January to March 2013) to gather information from various groups within the board (i.e., trustees, educators,

students, PIC); developing a Board Mental Health Strategy (by March 31 2013) which will be reviewed annually; planning for implementation (May and June 2013); and implementation of the strategy and capacity building for educators (fall 2013).

- Resources: School Mental Health ASSIST <http://smh-assist.ca>; Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health <http://www.excellenceforchildandyouth.ca>.
- Currently two Teacher's Colleges are carrying out pilot projects to introduce mental health education into their curriculum.

2. Other

- Clarification on Diagnostic Assessment (PPM 155) – This is not about diagnostic assessment in terms of special needs or mental health, but is about achievement testing (CASI and informal achievement tests).
- As a result of Bill 113, the Board's Code of Conduct will be reviewed to ensure it reflects Ministry policy with respect to bullying and potential expulsion and revised as necessary.

Chair's Report

- Principal Leadership Reports are due to respective Superintendents on March 8th. All School Councils should be filing these reports.
- PIC Symposium (Ministry of Education) in Toronto, April 19th & 20th, 2013. Each Parent Involvement Committee can send 2 representatives - Kathy would like to attend and Martha M. will as well unless someone else is very interested.
- Part of PIC's role is to sit on the Safe, Equitable and Inclusive Steering Committee – members involved are Carrie, Marty, Brent and Martha M. The Board's Safe, Equitable and Inclusive Schools link is <http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/program/article.aspx?id=35009>
- Wednesday, February 27th is Anti-Bullying Day in Canada – “Pink Shirt Day”.
- April 10th is the International Day Against Bullying – “Day of Pink”.

Focus Group Project Progress

- Several sessions had 10 or more participants, but the last session had only 4 attendees, therefore representation by schools outside of the Guelph core may be low in terms of running the focus groups.
- The sessions went well and it was felt the moderators did a good job.
- King George is running their focus group on Wednesday.
- Typically it is the ‘engaged’ parents who participate in many of these types of activities. Questions were raised with respect to difficulties attracting participants who may not typically get involved. It was suggested approaching parents personally to invite them may be effective. Events at the school can be a good venue to do this.
- Recommendation is to keep the groups small (6-8 participants).
- Next step – follow up with those that attended the training sessions to ensure effort is being made to schedule focus groups.

Spring Event

- Thursday April 25th, 4:30-8:30 p.m. at College Heights. Annie Kidder and Jacqui Strachan (People for Education) are confirmed speakers/moderators. Dinner will be provided.
- Working on details of getting invites out, hope to send out soon. They will be distributed to all School Council chairs (First Class and hardcopy), Principals (via Principal's conference) and to PIC members.
- Planning is focused on the event content and looking at ways to build on last year's event.
- There are no conflicts on the Board calendar.

Communications

- Trellis Mental Health and Development Services Walk-In Service for Children, Youth and Families (age 6-17), Tuesdays - 1:30-5:30pm, 485 Silvercreek Parkway North at Woodlawn, Guelph. <http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/uploadedFiles/pic/walkinservice-cmh.pdf>
- WCDSB (Catholic) PIC group is presenting Parents as Partners: Building Relationships, Promoting Success on Saturday May 4, 9:00 a.m – 2:30 p.m., St. James Catholic H.S. Guelph. This is a PRO funded event. There are 8 guest speakers and topics include communication, bullying, drug awareness, self-esteem, cyber safety, transitioning from Gr. 8 to 9, technology and mental health. This is a free conference and lunch will be provided.
- Grant information on the PIC website – efforts ongoing to contact the company that originally provided the list to see what supports, updates, etc. may be available. Most of the links don't work or are not grant opportunities. We may ultimately take on compiling a list and monitoring it ourselves.
- Upper Grand Learning Foundation – the Board/Schools are not able to issue tax receipts for donations, however, the Board has a charitable foundation set up that schools can use to process donations. Donations can be directed to a particular school as well as designated for a specific purpose. There are ~ 10 schools in the Board that use this effectively and it can be an additional option to consider for fundraising. Suggestion to put UGLF link on the PIC website <http://www.uppergrandlearningfoundation.com/>

Budget Items

- Focus group materials printing ~ \$200 to \$300.
- Other expenditures related to the focus group training and event will appear on next month's budget.

Open Discussion: Labour Situation

- The OSSTF President has encouraged members to participate in extracurricular activities if they choose. ETFO may be considering the extracurricular issue.
- Provincial unions and local School Boards should be meeting with government representatives in the near future.
- In the UGDSB, some extracurricular activities are coming back on line.
- Our Board is the only one with a ratified agreement (OSSTF) in the Province. A contingent will be presenting at the Ontario Labour Board tomorrow re concerns about the ratification process.

Next Meeting

- Monday March 25th, 2013 at 7:00 p.m., Board Office (Victoria Road, Guelph).

Minutes prepared by D. Drake