

Upper Grand District School Board

Parent Involvement Committee

March Minutes (March 24, 2014)

In Attendance:

Parents: Axy Leighl, Martha MacNeil, Kathy Watts, Deb Drake, Renee Chumbley, Libby Malott, Cindy Gibson, Timothy Russell, Rosemond Anim-Somuah, Heather Janes, Andrea Higgins, Mark MacKinnon, Mollie Loughren (via conference call), Jana Bell (via conference call)

Board Personnel: Martha Rogers, Brent McDonald, Ann Charles, Jeni Vaughan, Marty Fairbairn

Community Representative: Heather Bailey

Guest Speakers: Tracey Lindsay, Andrew Cloutier, Cheryl VanOoteghem, Sue Bender

Regrets: Kay Elford, Megan Taylor, Amanda VanSoelen, Julie Patrick, Lloyd Phillipps

Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome extended to all and introductions were made.
- Approval of March agenda and February minutes (to be edited to correct attendance).
- Trial run of the conference call system at this meeting.

Board and Ministry Report

- 1st Digital Open House was held last Saturday
 - Thanks to PIC, Board Personnel and all who helped.
 - Good press presence at the event.
 - Result of the recognition of a need to keep on top of using technology appropriately for student needs; provide technology infrastructure within the Board; recognition that the educational piece for parents is a need – how do we engage them in understanding technology and how to access it?
 - Plan to rotate further Digital Open Houses around the Board to accommodate parents in other areas (Dufferin). Will promote more widely via newsletters, websites.
- PRO grant applications are due May 16th, 2014
 - Ministry focus will be on Math Initiatives – Brent will work on pulling together a list of speakers and ideas to be made available to School Councils in early April.
- Information/checklist will also be provided on how to get support from the Board on Greening Initiatives.

Guest Speakers: Math Curriculum in UGDSB

Guest Speakers: Tracey Lindsay (Superintendent of Program), Cheryl VanOoteghem (Principal of Program), Andrew Cloutier (Elementary Curriculum Leader), Sue Bender (Secondary Curriculum Leader). The guest speakers discussed the steps taken to identify math struggles within the Board as a follow up to the EQAO results presented in October, and development of a comprehensive plan to address these.

1) Improving Student Learning in Math

- The overall goal of the plan. To achieve this goal the following components are planned:

2) Integration

- Working to bring all pieces together and cover multiple perspectives by involving all levels and stakeholders – Elementary, Secondary, Principals, Teachers, Numeracy Committee, Curriculum Leaders, Special Education staff.

3) K – 12 Board Focus

- Elementary and secondary panels working together. What can they learn from each other? What can they do differently?
- Looking at student work, EQAO scores, teaching strategies and assessment practices.
- A large spectrum but helps to learn what needs to be done to help students.

4) EQAO Data

- Board is committed to having EQAO results improve.
- Elementary and secondary panels in sync with the analysis of their EQAO data.
- Curriculum leaders and superintendents working with Principals and Vice Principals.
- Data has been the driving force in all the work done – used to identify areas of struggle, what was done differently, what can be done to improve.

5) Instructional Coaches

- 4 individuals who work specifically with individual teachers in their classrooms modeling best practices in teaching math (and literacy) i.e., how to group students in the most successful way.
- Model 3-part problem solving: collaboration (exploring problems with peers), consolidation (explaining mathematical thinking and reflecting on the learning), independent practice.
- Challenge past practices, push thinking forward and support teachers.
- Coaches are highly in demand and there is a wait list for support.

6) Curriculum Leaders

- 6 teachers assigned to 10-12 schools each (elementary), 3 teachers in secondary: attend Board and curriculum meetings.
- Increasing the capacity and knowledge of all staff.
- Looking at EQAO patterns in grade 3, 6 and 9.

7) Administration Support

- Fall visits with superintendents; discussions on data, goals and next steps.
- Developing instructional leaders – support administrators to learn what a good math lesson looks like, teach the 3 part problem solving model, how to change practices in the classroom, how to do things differently.

8) Math Newsletters

- Each month there will be an article in school newsletters from the curriculum department, some informational, tips and ideas for parents, common messaging for all schools.
- Administrators meeting in Principal Learning Teams, sharing with each other and asking the questions of “What does it look like in your school?” and “Tell me more.”

9) Principal Walk Throughs

- Intentional and purposeful – principals spending time in classrooms.
- Support provided at in-services and FOS (Family of Schools) meetings – what Principals should look for in classrooms, how to “see” higher order thinking.
- Question bank and answers of common misconceptions around Problem Solving.

10) Hub Days/FOS

- System wide gatherings, Hub days, breakout math workshops.
- Goal is to provide practical information and a variety of ideas for schools, and consistent and common messaging across the system about what math should look like in the classroom.

11) Diagnostics

- The process of determining where students are in their math learning and designing a plan to bring them to where they should be.
- Developing diagnostic procedures and sharing with teachers who will use that information to plan the teaching (some developed within the Board and others commercially available).

12) Leaps and Bounds

- Commercially available diagnostic tool - helps determine where students are at, what gaps exist and how to close them.
- Being trialed in a self-contained LD class with resource teachers, and in remedial programs.

13) Balanced Math Discussion

- Ensure that teachers are aware that all components are vital in an effective math program - collaborative problem solving, independent practice, skill development and varied assessments.

14) Curriculum Continuum

- It’s vital to know where students are at and then make a balanced plan for moving them forward.
- Conversations include the big ideas and concepts in the curriculum that students are learning so that teachers understand the “big picture” and how to move students to where they need to be.

- 15) **BIP/ CLiCs (Building Innovative Practice/Collaborative Learning in Classrooms)**
 - A Ministry initiative which has given elementary and secondary teachers the opportunity to learn by collaboration and integrating ideas together to ensure there is a continuum, not a separation, between elementary and secondary levels.
 - Teachers learn the key elements that are building blocks to move through the grade levels.
- 16) **CIL-M**
 - Collaborative Inquiry Learning in Math - Increase the cross-panel knowledge and integration of best practices.
- 17) **Synergy Days**
 - Four main secondary schools and their feeder schools are involved in a collaborative opportunity to build relationships, increase alignment and communication about the math curriculum.
- 18) **Marion Small**
 - Internationally renowned Canadian Mathematics educator.
 - She is a frequent visitor to the Board acting as a coach specializing in facilitating continuum and discussion between elementary and secondary groups.
- 19) **NTIP Training (New Teacher Induction Program)**
 - Collaborative learning sessions in math to provide consistent messaging for teachers, particularly new ones.
- 20) **After School Math Workshops**
 - Some Ministry funding has been made available to offer after school math workshops for teachers on diagnostics, consolidation, independent practice and the problem solving based math program with the goal to build a common understanding across the Board.
 - Offering them at 5 locations across the Board with ~ 200 teachers attending.
- 21) **Online Math Community**
 - An on-line community of support for teachers to make training more accessible, and to share math knowledge and practice.
- 22) **Blended Learning**
 - Teachers and students can access lesson plans and student learning activities online - E-Learning Ontario, Ministry's online learning platform (D2L-Desire2Learn).
 - In the past the focus has been mainly at the secondary level but are attempting to integrate into elementary as well.
 - Sean Hamilton – E-learning support contact for the Board.
- 23) **Online Grade 9 Math Project**
 - Brings together Grade 9 teachers from a variety of secondary schools to generate an integrated on-line question system to give students extra practice, identify misconceptions and strengthen math skills.
- 24) **Math Bridges**
 - A remediation program for level 2 students to provide support to bring them up to where they need to be to transition from elementary to secondary school.
 - Offered outside regular school hours.
- 25) **Homework Help**
 - Grade 7 – 10 students have access to an online tutor, Sunday to Thursday 5:30 – 9:30 p.m.
- 26) **At Risk Proposals**
 - Extra support prior to the EQAO tests provided for at-risk students or groups of students to help them develop their EQAO skills.
- 27) **OMCA/ OAME/ Math Research**
 - Involvement with the Ontario Math Coordinators Association and the Ontario Association for Mathematics Research allows the Board to access very technology based math resources.
- 28) **Community of Learners**
 - There are many pieces to the puzzle, so it takes a community of learners to improve math achievement.
 - Needs: to change perspective or mindset of students on how they view math; to support teachers in how to do 3 part problem solving lessons; to support parents to help them understand why

math is being taught as it is (need to prepare students for jobs that don't yet exist); support principals; enlist the help of Directors of Education, Trustees and Superintendents to support this direction.

Rationale behind a new direction for Numeracy: Math has not changed, however, what we have available to us has changed (i.e., technology); students need help to learn how to 'problem solve' – do multi-step, multi-strand problems using various sources; understanding of the need to meet the needs of and reach all learners; help students to see perspective – develop more depth of thinking, develop and expand reasoning processes, grasp a broader scope. The goal is to increase learning of students, not to increase EQAO scores. However, the scores are a standard indicator and provide valuable information that holds educators accountable for what they do.

Chair's Report

- Program department is conducting a confidential survey, available on the Board website April 14 – 30th, to get feedback from parents of children with IEPs which will be used in planning Special Education supports and services. Attempts will be made to make hard copies of the summary report available.
- Thanks to PIC members who helped at the Digital Open House – Kathy, Kay, Martha, Deb.
- Focus Group Update: more data is required so a couple more schools are running focus groups in May and April. Data will be compiled and a final report on the project will be prepared over the summer.

PIC Spring Event

- Registration is due by April 3rd. All interested parents are welcome to register.
- Keynote speaker – Joe Mazza: has great ideas to get schools connected with parents; very technology oriented.
- Technology component - Each school should bring a technology item i.e., phone or chrome book.
- Breakout sessions planned: Lynn Woodford – Parent Engagement and Mental Health; Finance Department – Treasurer 101; Michelle Campbell – UG2GO; Kay Elford – PRO Grant Writing 101; Lloyd Phillipps – School Council 101; Bill Mackenzie – Technology in the Board; Joe Mazza – Topic undefined but to be taken from his keynote speech.
- Help will be needed with set-up between 2 and 4 on the day of the event – contact Martha M.

Budget Items

- No changes

Communications

- June Avenue PRO event: March 27th, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Speaker – Susan Dafoe-Abbey, Topic – Parenting and Teaching with the Brain in Mind.
- Rockwood Centennial PRO event: April 9th, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Speaker – Susan Dafoe-Abbey, Topic – Anxiety in Children and Youth.
- Daycare and light refreshments will be provided at both seminars.

Open Discussion, New Business

- PIC has a collection of flags that can be shared with schools, however, they are not labeled. Jeni V. has suggested identifying and labelling would be a great student project. She will take to John F. Ross.
- Nature of Things is filming a documentary on children eating sugar. They are in need of more children, age 7 and under, to participate. Martha M. will send out further information.

Next Meeting

- Monday May 26th, 2014 at 7:00 p.m., Board Office, 500 Victoria Road, Guelph.
- Guest Speaker/Topic: "A Day in the Life Of"....Superintendent, Director.