

UGDSB Parent Involvement Committee

Monday October 24, 2011 - 6:30 pm, Room 9

1. Welcome and Introductions

Welcome to everyone, especially new attendees. Introductions were made.

In attendance: Giselle Scanlon, Chair; Kay Elford, parent; Ann Charles, principal of Eramosa PS; Heather Anderson parent; Kathryn Cooper Trustee; Denise Starr, parent; Rose Weyer-Keller, parent; John Gerrard, parent; Heather Bailey, parent; Martha Rogers, Director of Education UGDSB; Doug Morrell, Superintendent of Education, UGDSB; Marty Fairburn, trustee; Kathy Watts, parent

2. Budget information

- Although the opening balance is more than \$46,000, over \$35,000 of this is dispersed to the schools at the \$500 Parent Involvement grant. The remainder is used for events and parent involvement-related materials/activities.
- Each PIC receives \$5,000 + .17/student. In our case, this amounts to \$10,894.00
- In anticipation of our planned spring event with the co-author of “Beyond the Bakesale – The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships”, enough books were purchased to allow one/school. The cost was \$1,730.00 See 5. Below for further information.
- The PIC produced Parent Involvement brochure needs another run as it has been very popular. A decision is needed as to the size of print run.
- As our spring event was cancelled, approximately \$4,000 remained in our account after all other expenses were paid. Rather than return this to the Ministry, as required with excess funds, it was decided to divide the balance between all school councils, giving them each an additional \$67.
- There was an enquiry about the total cost for the Annie Kidder event last fall. The estimate was \$3,000. Actual costs came to \$2,259.90.

3. Martha Rogers’ Board Report

Martha walked through the capital plan in detail. For full information, see the links at the end of this section.

Highlights:

- At the Sept board meeting a draft capital plan was approved to include full day Kindergarten. The projects are part of the Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) Capital Plan, a district-wide strategy to provide classroom space for full day kindergarten students by 2014, and to relieve enrolment pressures in high-growth areas. There has been growth in East Guelph and Shelburne.
- Funding has been received for years 2 and 3 for full day kindergarten. Hopefully additional funding will be received for the necessary renovations and additions required to bring full day kindergarten to the remaining schools in years 4 and 5.
- A revised funding model and sale of properties has raised approximately \$35 million. Renovations and additions valued at \$4.6 million will go ahead at five elementary schools in Guelph and Shelburne

- To meet East Guelph growth, a new JK-8 elementary school was approved. Present-day Laurine Avenue Public School will be replaced by a new two-storey building at an estimated cost of \$6.7 million. Expected opening date is September, 2013.
- There will likely be a boundary review in East Guelph. (See the board webpage for links to provide your opinion) <http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/planning/article.aspx?id=23837>
- Location of French Immersion students in Guelph will have to be addressed again.
- There are 100-150 more students in the secondary panel than projected (final numbers due on October 30th).

For additional information, see:

<http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/article.aspx?id=23328>

<http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/article.aspx?id=22710>

<http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/article.aspx?id=22126>

4. Communication

- John Gerrard presented the new PIC website, highlighting the new elements (www.ugdsb.on.ca/pic)
- A package was sent out to all principals with information for their School Council. It provided reference to the new PIC website, and requested a Council non-First Class email address since feedback suggests most Councils are not reading their Board email.

John's proposed Communication Plan:

- Phase one of the website was to find and provide best practices e.g. how to hold effective meetings, how to write a financial report, how to connect with parents. PIC website traffic is up 300 percent from last year
- Phase Two: Focus on how to engage the councils.
- Phase Three: Use social media, which adds another element of fast paced communication

Doug recommended that members of the PIC executive attend the next Family of Schools meetings to get the information out to the principals. John and Giselle agreed to go, subject to scheduling.

5. GTA PIC Meeting

Giselle reported attending a second meeting of this informal group that connected at the Ministry of Education spring PIC conference. This group represents about 70% of Ontario's students.

Meeting highlights:

- It was a valuable meeting for the interaction and idea-sharing.
- The group shared that time, language and socio-economic issues were barriers to parent engagement across all boards, to varying degrees
- Peel did an in-depth study on this last year – same results as anecdotal evidence
- Peel showed their free PIC folders available to councils. Giselle requested if that either the folders or artwork might be made available to other councils. This will be discussed at the next

Peel PIC meeting. The group felt that, ideally, these should be produced by the Ministry and available to all PICs. This will be brought up with the ministry PIC contact.

- Peel is using Facebook for both Board and PIC communication; news releases; monthly piece for schools sent out by the communication department for parent engagement
- Peel is a big geographic area that took quite some time to grow in terms of school council support (so we should not expect instant success)
- Board support made a positive difference.

6. **Spring Event**

Doug explained that “Equity” is one of his portfolios. Karen Mapp was a speaker at a diversity workshop earlier this year. Among other things, she is the co-author of *Beyond the Bakesale – The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* which provides ideas and strategies to encourage connections and partnerships between schools, parents and communities.

- Although Karen Mapp is unavailable, Anne Henderson, one of the book’s co-authors, would be interested in coming to do a half- day workshop. Her main focus is to help school boards strengthen the partnership between schools and school councils (parents).
- For an event such as this to be effective, teams from schools should attend (including the principal, a few teachers, school council members).
- School teams would take home action plans; they would be asked to report back to PIC, sharing successes and hurdles, at a later date.
- Costs could be shared between PIC and school board PD budgets.
- After much discussion, it was decided that late spring would be the best timing.
- A compromise on actual event timing was reached: 3 pm – 8 pm during the week. This would allow working parents to potentially attend with enough notice, yet provide enough time for school teams of parents, administration and teachers to actually develop a plan to further engage families in their children’s education.
- It was agreed that we would focus our efforts on doing this one event really well.
- The book will be included as part of the invitation package, once a date is set.
- It was suggested that promotion should include internet clips to entice people to attend.
- The idea of video-streaming was also discussed, to allow all interested parties to “attend”, whether in person or virtually. This would require further discussion with Anne Henderson to determine if she would allow it, and if it would change her fees.
- Very important to get the word out about this event through every means possible, including Family of Schools meetings, website, email, ads, ideally Facebook. Need to start this as soon as there is a date and information.

Next meeting is November 28