

MINUTES - Parent Involvement Council - September 23, 2013
UGDSB Board Office

Meeting called to order at 7:10PM

1.0 Welcome by PIC Co-chairs Axy and Martha - introductions made around the table, majority of parents w/ wide range and balance of the age groups.

Explanation of the function of PIC: Board wide capacity.

Terms of Reference read - Mission noted to support and encourage parents.

PIC will meet a minimum of 4 times per year

2.0 Approval of the Agenda, as written.

Moved: Maureen Oesch

Carried

3.0 Approval of the previous meeting minutes, as written.

Moved: Axy

Carried

Additional welcome made by Superintendent Brent M.

Brent commented on the good cross-section and gave kudos to the wide range, large numbers of parents.

4.0 Board /Ministry Report (3 Special Guests)

a) Allowable Expenditures Policy - Janice Wright

Presented on Allowable Expenditures Policy and the implications for the broader public sector. Provincial gov't decisions have impacts on the expenditures policy.

OBJECTIVE: that money is spent in a transparent and accountable fashion. New policy passed around and the policy is on the main site at

Policy at

http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/uploadedFiles/policies/708_policy_statement.pdf

Manual at

http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/uploadedFiles/policies/708-A%20_procedures_manual.pdf

Policy statement highlights transparency and outlines who is responsible for what.

Other policies that are tangential:

A) Allowable Expenditures Policy

Includes a policy of allowable PERKs for Board employees outlining appropriate personal privileges given to some members of Board staff. Should be spent for the benefit of students and includes a list of allowable expenses (i.e. t-shirts for staff).

HIGHLIGHTS

This policy comes from the provincial gov't as a directive; and is mandated.

Allows for greater transparency in expenditures and expenditures should be provided for in the plan.

(i.e. hospitality expenditures - should be for people who are not employed by the Board unless circumstances like; PD and meetings). Also included information on

Travel reimbursement amount is .42/km, and meals allowable - limits spent. NO ALCOHOL.

Consultancy - Consultancy policy sets out parameters of the contract. Competitive process

Q: can we use school funds to provide the flowers to the family of a student or a family member who passes away and/or is sick?

A: YES - because they are not an employee (unless stated in the plan OR in a transparent method is communicated that is how the fundraising is being spent)

Q: Do schools need to have something specific written OR can school's insert an *in the event of* clause, with the stipulation that potential spending of up to an amount: be permitted.

A: Clear record keeping is best

Q: can schools direct money spent for events mixed w/ staff and parents directly?

A: Yes, try to note it in the plan beforehand.

Q: is this info going to be included in the handbook and where do questions go?

A: Yes. Questions can be directed to Kelly's group.

Q: Are there verification processes in place for compliance, and what are they?

A: Yes. Fill out and sign w/ verification by Supervisor, on-site training, cheques/bills is a protocol in place. (i.e. the most senior position in the group picks up the bill w/ the uplink of 1 level up providing expenditures.)

b) School Generated Funds Handbook - Kelly Culver

Funds - reported on financial statements

Definitions in book posted on the website regarding audited funds both through fundraised and directly received.

Condensed guide for school council, now 16 pages from 50. Board can file for the HST reimbursement on behalf of the schools by filling in the p.15, and can go back 3 years. Also a checklist on p.16 - for use by council - on best practices

Q: How are monies handled?

A: Each school had a bank account now have closed individuals and use a central fund w/ a monthly report. Assists treasurer and Chair - year end and the reconciliation but can still have own Bank accounts

Contact: Jennifer & Darlene from Finance - to assist w/ council queries

Q: procedures how long a school can hold on to funds?

A: 2 years unless otherwise stipulated

Q: is there a possibility to provide training for the treasurer's position -?

A: attendance is an issue. Perhaps a job aid could be made available, a handbook of quick hit reminders... any in existence

Q: What is the training that is provided to the office coordinator to explain the view on how and who is able to have governance over money?

A: Nothing official in place. Call Finance as questions arise

Q: Can we improve the transition planning between the years or when boundaries change or when amalgamations happen? Need some ideas around how to support or to plan for this.

A: Will pass this concern to Superintendent or Principals of the schools. To clarify how record keeping is handled and designated during these change periods.

Q: How do we move funds between schools and ensure that the funds are being used as designated. Is learning foundations the best place to use the funds to hold funds?

A: Best Practices are still being investigated but one option is the Student Learning Foundation.

c) Changes to Copyright policy - Michelle Campbell

Copyright Laws changed Nov 2012 - feature films during the school day w/out a licence can be done. Not movie nights or fundraisers outside of the school day as have sometimes happened in the past.

Options now:

- 1) Free option - a movie for movie night from learn 360 - from our board... lots on there. Do not even need to use the streamed version provided we have it on Learn 360 AND can charge admission
- 2) Can pay for a licence (Disney, Pixar) - pay to Criterion or AudioScene and pay through there. Will do a pre-release movie at 1/2 price - still in theatres and not on DVD. Approx. \$250 - 300: see link on bottom of the handout

NOTE: If there is a small independent supplier Michelle can source.

Music/ dances are the same issue - during the school hours. If using a DJ; they are responsible. School day is 8:45AM to 3:15PM. Between the bells.

ACTION: Michelle to send this information to Martha to post this on the PIC website for schools to use

5.0 Chair's Report

From last year's PRO grant

1. Barriers for parental involvement - language barriers, childcare and goal was to have every school run the groups and reported on what was found out in the spring. PIC to continue on with this info gathering project and to continue to gather info forth coming
2. Martha can send an interim report - trends suggestions and strategies. Unintended consequence provided additional info in the school level in particular.

Q: 8-9 schools completed (elementary). Why focus group - why the parents approach? Maybe parents to a different school approach

6.0 Open Discussion

People for Education Conference - November 02 in Toronto - tickets available

Suggestions for how to proceed with this year/ what shall we focus on?

- Do we want to focus on education of the group?
- Focus individual role and broader focus/ function of the council?
- How can we get more people involved?
- Chair's Treasurers' training evening for a best practice - build the networking opportunity that can help to cross between and some family of schools have joint council areas in their family of schools. Shelburne & Orangeville are good examples of schools that are taking advantage of regional opportunities (using their family of schools). Perhaps the city of Guelph areas could investigate similar opportunities.

7.0 Budget Items

\$0.17 per student is allocated to PIC

Last year's PIC underspent budget by \$5000... approx. \$46, 000 - 71 schools (\$3,500). Leftover cash to the Board

PIC used money to improve their own games boxes and can be borrowed by schools for games nights - literacy OR math related. Upgraded the games and processed now at the Terry James library and order it to the school and have them delivered through the interoffice to the schools. Also, maintained a parent lending library through the Terry James library.

Q: if a surplus, like in past years there was a redistribution of the surplus i.e. \$67 per school returned
Parents commented that we need a better method notify school councils when the PIC money is rec'd in schools.
A; No set practice here.

8.0 Communication

Use PIC Website to promote all schools' events to have a better way of describing and inviting each other to the various Parent Engagement events that we have scheduled across the school system.

UGDSB now has a Twitter account. It is @UpperGrandPIC. It has 11 followers.

9.0 Question and final remarks

SUGGESTION for November meeting: Perhaps have a workshop on tweeting and the UGCloud and councils

10.0 Adjournment at 9PM. Next meeting: Monday, October 28th.

Submitted by Sue Shaw