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Upper Grand District School Board PIC Committee

Monday, January 31, 2022

# MINUTES

## Those Present:

Gillian Prieur, Barb White, Martha MacNeil, Kumudinie Kariyapperuma, Jason Boyce, Ben McCabe, Mahrukh Syed, Tina Burden-Coates, Heather Coates, Jennifer Edwards, Bertha Lopez, Jeff Bennett, Ashley, Jennifer Cowie, Anita Macfarlane, Joanne Jordan, Laura White, Sarah Ward, Jen Tulloch, Maureen Oesch

## 1. Welcome And Introductions

- Gillian Prieur welcomed everyone to the meeting and individuals in attendance introduced themselves. Everyone shared their favourite winter activity

## 2. Approval Of Agenda

- Gillian Prieur made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Jeff Bennett. All in favour.

## 3. Approval Of Minutes

- Gillian Prieur made a motion to approve the previous minutes. Seconded by Maureen Oesch. All in favour.

## 4. Board Report (Input for Future Meetings, Draft of 2022/23 School Year Calendar)

Board Report Matt McCutcheon:

### 1. School Updates - Return to In person Learning

#### Tracking and reporting Staff and Student absences

- Public Health no longer recording or tracking covid cases
- Request from Ministry of Education for school boards to look at other ways they could track student absences related to covid
- Daily Absence Tracking Pilot - Notify parents and public health authority when school student absenteeism strikes 30% higher than average absenteeism
- Tracker provides information about Student/Staff absence from school so parents can make informed decision about schooling
- The 30% is not based on students in whole school being absent, but it is 30% increase in student absence as per the baseline average or trendline created from data gathered from school absences from September to December
- When average number of absences rises 30% above average trend baseline there is a report to public health who are then involved
- Only data that is included is when family report child is ill or isolating or they are absent but reason unknown

- Absenteeism not related to covid is not being tracked on this data if known
- School Boards are also mandated by Ministry of Education that any absences of 30% or more must be reported to Public Health Authorities (Absence Reporting Tool - ART)
- Public health is closely monitoring absent trends, if they see spikes, then will support enhance testing in communities, vaccine clinics in particular hard-hit areas, and in extreme circumstances might liaison with school board, schools and families

#### Transportation - Monitoring bus delays

- Currently there are driver availability challenges
- This is causing impact on daily arrival and departure of bus routes
- Alternate plans when routes are delayed or canceled are necessary
- As a board have looked at first prioritizing bus runs for children who have complex special education and need to be at school in person
- This means canceling other bus routes to fill driver shortages in those areas
- Second criteria is filling bus runs for elementary schools and then third criteria is secondary schools
- Board is working on supporting, recruiting, and retaining more employees to minimize bus delays and cancellations and also to communicate such matters to parents in a timely manner

#### Masks - 3 Ply Cloth Mask Variations and sizes

- Face masks were distributed during week of Jan 17th when students returned to in person learning
- Board is strongly suggesting students wear these 3 ply masks
- If family prefers to wear a different mask then they are free to make that choice
- Staff working with students and families to provide adjustments for masks so they fit well
- Ministry of Education has also provided staff with 3 options of masks they may choose to wear; non fit N95 for staff, ASTM Level 2 medical masks or Health Canada non fit N95 mask
- Mask Exemption Certificates - Before doctor signature or medical practitioner signature was not required to be approved for mask exemption
- However due to Omicron and level of contagion in system, school board revised process so that in order to renew mask exemption, families must receive medical practitioner signature for exemptions for masks

#### Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for Staff and Students

- Elementary Schools students were given 2 additional rapid tests week of January 17 when students returned for in person learning
- Test kits are to be used when child is symptomatic
- Approximately 60, 000 tests were received for student and staff
- Secondary students to also receive 2 kits on Friday February 4<sup>th</sup>

#### UGDSB Sites - Vaccine Clinics

- Vaccine clinics are continuing in secondary schools outside of school hours
- Have also started to host in some elementary schools, outside of instructional days when students are not in attendance
- These clinics are fully operated by WDG Public Health
- School Board is supporting and communicating advertising of the clinics
- Consent required by parent to have child vaccinated

#### Secondary - Semester 2 update

- Return to 4 period per day semester model as of Wednesday February 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Decision is supported by WDG Public health and consistent with coterminous Board (parents, staff and students all supportive)

#### Secondary - EQAO grade 9 Math Update

- Math assessment for students in quadmester 2 has been DEFERRED
- Ministerial order required to cancel or alter EQAO
- Student final grades this quad will not include EQAO Assessment mark

#### Mental Health Support Updates:

- A lot of challenges for everyone in society related to mental health and wellness
- This issue is even more prevalent in children and also in some communities that have been more impacted by Covid than others
- Board will be working proactively on an ongoing basis with students and classrooms to establish positive relationships and safe spaces in classrooms
- Goal is to reestablish positive relationships and safe spaces for students in schools and classrooms
- Offer learning environments that include mental health and well being activities on a regular basis

- Upcoming Resources:
  1. Event hosted this Thursday Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> on Nurturing Resilience through Community Involvement
  2. Virtual Screening of movie Screenagers - Date in April
  3. 3rd parent webinar in later May early June

## 2. Board Updates:

- Multi Year board Plan by Director Sovran being launched
- Process of Development includes community education opportunities for parents, students and other stakeholders through spring
- School boards are required to develop a multi layer plan that focuses on their key priorities and strategies
- Director Sovran to attend February PIC meeting to outline this process and provide midyear report
- Superintendent appointments:
  - Belal Taha as of January 1st replacing Cheryl Van Ooteghm who retired
  - Wendy Donaldson as superintendent of Program services replacing Tracy Lindsay who is retiring effective March 31st.
- 2022/23 School year calendar review input
  - Key Elements: 194 days each year between September 1<sup>st</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup>, 10 exam days for secondary schools, 7 PA days, 10 days min for board holidays during winter break
  - Ministry requires calendar submitted for approval process - Deadline March 1st
  - Upper Grand School Board looking at Modified Calendar Submission
  - Changing winter break to December 23rd to January 6th
  - Proposed that Dec 22nd be last day then 10 days mandated through to January 6th and return to learning January 9th
  - Feedback or questions to be submitted to Matt by February 4<sup>th</sup>
- Board is seeking Input for Future PIC Meetings
  - What would parents like to see for the board report in terms of topics, feedback, input, etc.
  - Some ideas were more information on program or curriculum, Special education, Equity or Indigenous awareness and education in the board, Board/School budget and what funding is coming into school, motions recently passed at Board meetings, Brief Presentation - Day in life of Director or Superintendent, Trustee Presentation

## 5. Trustee Report - Martha MacNeil

- Informed PIC of some organizational changes in the Board of Trustees: Linda Busuttill is the Chair of Board, Barb Lustgarten is Vice Chair, Martha MacNeil PIC representative, Jen Edwards an alternative
- A motion was passed in previous Board meeting directing chair to write a letter to Minister to consider canceling EQAO testing for grade 3 and 6 students this year
- Trustees have written letter to consider it as it must be a Ministerial Order and cannot be removed by Board themselves
- Dr. Martha Rogers passed away at the beginning of December, board is planning a celebration of life for her, when covid allows it. Will share information with committee

## 6. Chairs' Report

- Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant Initiative Discussion And Planning
- Gillian Prieur presented Event Planning
- Subcommittee has met and discussed format for 1st event
- Planning two events, March 3rd, and second date to be determined for either April or May
- EVENT 1: Presentation 1 My Blueprint - Pre recorded format for this years event
- Q & A - Live Verbal Questions or through chat
- Presentation 2 Assessment with a Focus on Destreaming and how that impacts assessment - pre recorded for this years event
- Next Steps - Finalize speakers, Advertise events, Taping of the pre recorded presentations
- EVENT 2 is being targeted for April/May time frame with topics of Equity and Indigenous education awareness
- Feedback welcomed from PIC representatives on Allocating PIC funds
- Due to the virtual nature of planned events cost is not as high as it use to be for live in person event
- Have staff to support topics being presented so cost of guest speakers is saved as well
- Have funding allocated that can be used to enhance what we are doing with these presentation, such as materials, books that can be used to support topics being presented
- A future survey maybe to school councils to get ideas for further event topics was suggested
- Use some funds to have PIC event videos recorded in high quality to have available on PIC website and

share with school websites to create a library for enhancing parent engagement, share videos online to reach out to families

- Survey monkey to find out importance for family and use speakers or board staff to make videos to address parent concerns, issues
- Use funds to have ASL presentation and translation for PIC Event that is recorded
- Funding must be spent by June 30th of that school year
- Topic of allocating funds can be discussed again in next month PIC Meeting

## 7. Kids live free from hunger campaign - Anita Macfarlane

- The Help Kids Live Free from Hunger campaign started in 2009
- Way to engage schools and communities to help support the Food & Friends Programs and make them more sustainable
- Live Free day is on the first Friday of March
- The idea around the Help Kids Live Free from Hunger campaign is to challenge students and staff to promise to Live Free of something for the day – something that they maybe take for granted - like their electronics, coffee, a warm pair of socks, or dessert at dinner time
- After committing to their promise and writing that pledge on a promise card , a donation can be made of a toonie (or funds in lieu of their pledge) in honor of those who live without, to help raise much needed funds to help kids live free from hunger
- Promise cards and posters will be delivered by the end of this week.
- Resources, including the sponsorship package will also be available online: <https://www.childrensfoundation.org/ways-tohelp/events/live-free-campaign>
- Will also be promoting Live Free in the community throughout February to continue to raise more funds for the growing need within Food & Friends programs
- Goal is to raise enough funding to provide 30,000 meals based on \$1.85 per meal.

## 8. Questions, New Business And Final Remarks

- Gillian thanked everyone for their attendance.

**The next meeting will be on meeting: Monday, February 28 at 7:00 pm, Using Microsoft Teams**