

Upper Grand District School Board PIC Committee

Monday, October 25, 2021

MINUTES

Those Present:

Matt McCutcheon, Martha MacNeil, Gillian Prieur, Kumidine Kariyapperuma, Ben McCabe, Jason Boyce, Debbie Bush, Tina Burden Coates, Rachel Albanese, Barb White, Jen Tulloch, Monica Cojocar, Tara Dean-Whitt, Tracy Smitt, Leo Song, Elaine Churly, Heather Coates, Jeff Bennett, Jennifer Peterson, Jenny Marsh, Laura White, Lee Cross, Maureen Oesch, Thomas Samson Elizabeth Tozer, Jennifer Edwards, Lorrie Wren, Mahrukh Syed, Ashley Garvin

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Barb White welcomed everyone to the meeting and individuals in attendance introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Agenda

Gillian made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Kumudinie. All in favour.

3. Approval of Minutes

Monica made a motion to approve the previous minutes. Seconded by Debbie. All in favour.

4. Board Report (including Student Mental Health Presentation)

Matt McCutcheon & Jenny Marino shared information.

- Matt shared the following highlights:
 - September 27 through October 1 was Truth & Reconciliation Week. September 30 was the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation. Schools were engaged in a variety of learning activities with a special focus on the Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action number 62 and 63.
 - Schools continue to focus on student mental health & core instructional areas of literacy and numeracy.
 - Extra curricular opportunities are returning for students and they are beginning to move indoors.
 - Secondary School Commencements have (or are) taking place in a modified, in-person, format.

- There is a continuation of “essential visitor” practices in schools and all visitors must be fully vaccinated.
- Health & safety protocols have been successfully implemented as we have only had 5 active cases as of October 22, 2021.
- Superintendent Cheryl Van Ooteghem is retiring on December 31.
- The UGDSB hosted an information session for aspiring superintendents on October 14. Approximately 50 individuals attended and the Board is looking to create a “pool” of candidates with diverse backgrounds who are ready to be hired should future opportunities arise.
- October 29 is a PA Day for elementary students.
- In November we are learning more about Hindu Heritage month, Remembrance Day (November 11), Bullying Prevention Week (November 15 through 19) and will be hosting online parent-teacher interviews as well.
- Jenny Marino shared a mental health update on supporting student mental health and wellbeing. She shared these highlights:
 - The Stress Busters program for students aged 8-12 was successful in the summer and will be run again this year. Registration has been strong and a 4th session was just organized.
 - The Living Life to The Full program for students aged 12-17 was also moderately successful.
 - There was a Parent/Caregiver Support Circles program offered for 8 weeks over the summer.
 - A webinar entitled The Struggle to Juggle and a program called SafeTALK regarding suicide awareness were also presented.
 - The Board is planning a webinar series for parents about the importance of relationships, social and civic engagement, as well as social-emotional growth.
 - The Umbrella Project has been updated and renamed as Wellness Works. It provides teaching materials and lesson ideas on a monthly theme to help promote equity and well-being.
 - Our School Board is committed to a mentally healthy return to school that honours the identities and lived realities of students and makes meaningful connections to life at school.
 - Teachers presented students with a “First 10 Days and Beyond” program from School Mental Health Ontario.
 - We are learning as we go and have learned many things from the return to school process. Equity and well-being are being intertwined with a strong curriculum focus to help create a place for students to thrive.
 - Student centered planning and support is helping to integrate teacher best practices, school staff, Board staff and community partners to best help students.
 - 2SLGBTQIA+ focused resources relating to mental health and well-being are created.
 - Staff have been learning about anti-racism and anti-sex-trafficking measures and policies.
 - Matt answered a variety of school-based questions that were raised about topics like essential volunteers and hot lunch programs. He encouraged families to reach out to teachers and administrators if needs arise. He reminded parents that as always, if needed, Superintendents of Schools are available to provide support.

5. Trustee Report

Martha MacNeil shared information.

- The Board continues to transition well under the leadership of Peter Sovran.

- Trustees continue to work towards promoting and learning more about the concepts of Truth and Reconciliation.
- Community use protocols are starting to be developed in order to address requirements concerning vaccination status.
- As the return to indoor sports in schools at the secondary level begins, please continue to monitor the UGDSB communication channels for further updates.
- Jennifer Edwards shared about Take Me Outside Day, virtual meetings with Dr. Jane Goodall and other environmental initiatives this year so far.

6. Chairs' Report

Gillian Prieur shared information.

- The Parent Involvement Committee still needs a secretary, treasurer and communications person.
- Mahrukh volunteered to be the Secretary for PIC Meetings.
- Monica offered to help with Communications.
- Due to time restraints this evening, Gillian will share her written report alongside the minutes.

7. Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant Initiative Discussion and Planning

Gillian Prieur shared information.

- The Ministry provides funding to plan parental engagement activities.
- Last year there were virtual parent engagement events with a strong level of participation across a broad geographic area.
- A Committee is being formed to help plan events for this year. Gillian and Barb will serve on the committee and those individuals who are interested will be contacted by Matt.

8. Questions, New Business and Final Remarks

- Barb thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next meeting will be on Monday, November 29th, 2021 at 7:00 PM Using Microsoft Teams.