

**Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Meeting
Minutes (Unofficial)
Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at 7pm
Rainbow District School Board Office
69 Young Street, Sudbury, Ontario**

Attendance:

PIC Executive:

Chair Sharina Appanna

RDSB:

Nicole Charette, Senior Advisor, Corporate Communications and Strategic Planning; Ruth Ward, Trustee; Dr. Sharon Speir, Superintendent of Schools; Maria Bouwmeester, ETFO; Ada Della Penta, Superintendent of Schools; Linda Goulais, Sudbury Secondary School; Iva McNair, Gatchell School; Janelle Bast, Ernie Checkeris Public School/Carl A. Nesbitt Public School

PIC Members:

Carol Woodliffe, Long Lake Public School; Julie Beare, Lively District Secondary School; Trish Kitching, Gatchell School

Regrets:

Vice-Chair Mona Aelick, Lasalle Secondary School; Megan Sproule-Jones, R.L. Beattie Public School; Leo Bisson, Churchill Public School

1. Call to Order: 7 pm

2. Welcome: Sharina Appanna, Chair

3. New School Year Greetings from Director of Education Jean Hanson

Director Hanson thanked Chair Sharina Appanna, parents and all PIC members for their ongoing commitment to Rainbow Schools and their contribution to parent involvement. She indicated that the Board is working with other community agencies on the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) and commended PIC for their support of this collaborative effort. She invited School Councils to organize a "walking school bus" to promote healthy living and student safety. Parents walk through the community and pick up children along the way to school.

4. Guest speaker: Barb Nott, President of Volunteer Sudbury, Volunteering 101

Following her presentation, Barb Nott distributed the following resources (attached):

1. Recruitment tips
2. What does your group do to avoid burnout?
3. Managing volunteers and avoiding burnout

She also distributed a pamphlet about Volunteer Sudbury (www.volunteersudbury.com)

Chair Appanna thanked Barb Nott for her informative presentation, an excellent topic to launch the new school year and engage parents.

5. Self Introductions

Chair Appanna invited all in attendance to introduce themselves.

6. Approval of Agenda

Motion: That the agenda be approved as presented.

Moved by Julie Beare. Seconded by Ruth Ward. Carried.

7. Approval of Minutes

**Motion: That the minutes of the meeting held on June 9, 2009 be approved.
Moved by Ruth Ward. Seconded by Sharina Appanna. Carried.**

8. H1N1 Communications to Parents/Guardians

Nicole Charette reviewed communications on H1N1 sent to all parents/guardians the first week of school, including symptoms, limiting the spread of illness, what to do if your child is sick, and what protocols will be followed if your child becomes sick at school. Parents asked questions about hand sanitizer and alcohol content / flammability. The Fire Department will be consulted if hand sanitizer is installed in schools. The Board will not be requiring students to bring hand sanitizer to school. The Board does, however, recognize that some parents/guardians may choose to send hand sanitizer to school with their children. This will be permitted for personal use. However, alcohol-based hand sanitizers should be used under adult supervision. Parents wanted to ensure that homework would be provided for students who must remain at home until they are feeling better. Superintendent Ada Della Penta indicated that this may be arranged by contacting the school.

9. Tuesday, November 10, 2009

Annual General Meeting/School Council Orientation Session

Lockerby Composite School, 1391 Ramsey View Court, Sudbury

A more engaging format, with ice breakers, will be adopted to encourage School Councils to network. Ideas will be discussed at the PIC meeting in October, in preparation for the AGM. The AGM will also provide an opportunity for School Councils to learn what others are doing system-wide.

Parents expressed concern about the Terms of Reference. Some who were nominated for the PIC Executive from the floor at the 2008 AGM were told they would be listed as alternates because the slate of 10 candidates had been set in advance. All parents are welcome to attend PIC meetings, but only the Executive can vote. Superintendent Ada Della Penta will send a note to Principals requesting nominations for the PIC Executive early so all parents who are interested have an opportunity to put their names forward and be considered. The term for PIC Executive members runs from November to October annually.

10. PRO Grants and Board News

PIC will fall within the portfolio of Superintendent Ada Della Penta this school year.

Superintendent Della Penta reminded School Councils that the deadline for PRO Grants is quickly approaching. All applications for funding must be submitted to her office by October 13, 2009 so they can be forwarded to the Ministry of Education by October 17, 2009. Nicole Charette will apply for a PRO Regional Grant on behalf of PIC to support the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P).

Superintendent Della Penta provided an overview of enrolment to date. She indicated that actual data is recorded on October 31st, 2009. Enrolment is declining at most school boards in Ontario, including Rainbow District School Board, which welcomed 14,938 students (projected enrolment) on September 1st, 2009.

The Guide for Students and Parents 2009-2010 and School Year Calendar were distributed to all students the first week of school to bring home to parents/guardians.

Holocaust Survivor Eva Olsson will speak in Rainbow Schools the week of September 28th, 2009. "When bad things are happening, you cannot turn your back," is one of the messages that she stresses in her hour-long presentation. Rainbow District School Board will host a community presentation with Eva Olsson on Wednesday, September 30th, 2009 at 7 pm in the Sheridan Auditorium at Sudbury Secondary School. Everyone is welcome.

Rainbow District School Board has purchased access to the Premier Literacy AT Home website. Families of any student registered in a Rainbow School may download Assistive Technology tools without cost. The various tools available on the Premier AT Home website are being introduced to students in Rainbow Schools. As a result, children will be able to access the same tools at home that they use at school. Parents can visit www.premierathome.com and download as many of the tools as needed. However, they may only be installed on computers owned by the family. Once a family enters the website, they will need to use the following username and password to log in. Username: rainbow Password: enable

Dr. Gabor Maté will speak in Sudbury on October 29th, 2009 for the 30th annual Sudbury Alcohol and Drugs Coalition Seminar. PIC is looking for a speaker on addictions for its February meeting. Nicole Charette will follow up with the Addiction Research Foundation and the School of Social Work at Laurentian University.

An Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy will be implemented in Rainbow Schools in the next five years.

11. Communications Report

Nicole Charette provided a communications update, including the following:

Staff and students in Rainbow Schools wore pink on Thursday, September 10th for the second annual Stand Up Against Bullying Day. PIC is to be commended for recommending this initiative, which was unanimously endorsed by the Board in 2008.

Three Rainbow Schools received funds from the S'Cool Life Fund, including C.R. Judd Public School, Chelmsford Public School and Long Lake Public School. Schools are encouraged to apply for S'Cool Life Fund grants for their activities. For more information, visit www.scoollifefund.ca.

A news conference will be held on Wednesday, September 23, 2009 to provide an update on the Joan Mantle Music Trust. Three schools have received instruments thanks to generous donations to the Trust, including Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School, Lockerby Composite School and MacLeod Public School. Lasalle Secondary School and Sudbury Secondary School will benefit from the Trust this year. In order to thank the community for its contributions, Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School, Lockerby Composite School and MacLeod Public School will host a community concert on Tuesday, November 3rd, 2009 at 7 pm. Also in support of the Trust,

Rainbow District School Board will host a Christmas Carol Reading at Sudbury Secondary School on Sunday, December 13, 2009 at 7 pm.

Steam ovens have been installed in all school cafeterias this summer, replacing the traditional deep fryers. This healthy initiative will be shared with the community this fall.

Visit rainbowschools.ca for news.

12. School Announcements

Gatchell School will host an Open House and barbecue on September 16th.

Lively District Secondary School will host an Open House for Grade 7 and 8 students on September 16th.

Long Lake Public School held a corn roast on September 14th, with great attendance.

Carl A. Nesbitt Public School opened its Parent Resource Centre on September 10th.

Sudbury Secondary School will host a Grade 9 Day and Terry Fox Run on September 25th.

Carol Woodliffe of Long Lake Public School presented information about the Community Matters Safe School Ambassadors Program to see if other schools might be interested in participating and sharing costs. She would like a minimum of four schools. This American based program is now being introduced in Canadian schools. The program covers a variety of topics, including what is acceptable behaviour and what is not, and how to diffuse situations before they escalate. Website for more information: www.safeschoolambassadors.org It was suggested that this be presented as a possible budget proposal for 2010-2011 or a PRO grant application.

13. Motion: That the meeting be adjourned.

Moved by Carol Woodliffe. Seconded by Ruth Ward. Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, October 13, 2009

Taking a Stand Against Bullying

Using a Social Inclusion Approach

Presenter: Lise Denis, Social Planning Council

Board Office, 69 Young Street, Sudbury

Recruitment Tips

Get all active volunteers involved in thinking up new methods for recruiting. Pool these ideas.

Use every available source - radio, television, newspapers and personal contacts.

Offer stimulating, in-depth orientation sessions.

Have current volunteers tell their story at meetings or gatherings of membership.

Try to think what would interest YOU in volunteering.

The best volunteer recruiters are volunteers who are happy with your organization.

People are attracted to programs that utilize positive, honest, enthusiastic appeals.

Be interested in your members, not only as volunteers but as individuals.

Don't over-recruit. Volunteers will lose interest if they have signed up to help and there isn't a job for them.

Involve volunteers in decision making. Make certain they feel they are an important part of the organization.

Recognize their efforts. Saying "thanks" goes a long way.

What does your Group do to Avoid Burnout?

Get to know volunteers. Understand why they volunteer with your group – their motivations, their interests, their likes and dislikes.

Share the workload. Ensure the basic, repetitive and routine tasks are shared and spread around.

Offer everyone the right tools, resources and opportunities to succeed. People want to do well, not fail

Communicate, listen to new ideas and encourage open discussion.

Create volunteer positions that are task-driven and specific. When tasks are clear, and work is distributed evenly to members of the group, volunteers are less likely to become overwhelmed.

Create an environment that is welcoming. People want to feel safe and welcome. They need to have access to basic needs—such as a place to hang their coat, a work station, refreshments and support.

Thank volunteers in both formal and informal ways Let them know how their contributions support the group and help achieve specific goals.

Be organized – it will reduce stress.

Make it everyone's business to take care of everyone else. Work as a team and encourage group "check-ins" to reduce the risk of over-working or over-committing certain volunteers in the group.

Managing Volunteers and Avoiding Burnout

Make sure to delegate duties and hold individuals accountable for assignments. The president and cannot do it all! Delegate the smaller tasks.

Assess an individual's skills and time commitments before asking a volunteer to assume responsibilities. Roles should be consistent with a person's abilities, experience, and willingness to follow through.

Seek the advice of others. In preparing for a strategic planning meeting, get the opinions of others you trust when deciding who to recruit for volunteer positions. They may be able to suggest new people you can approach.

Size the task for success. Experience is key to successful volunteer service; so don't start your volunteers off with too tough a task. Starter responsibilities may include leading a task force on a single issue, coordinating a single event, or taking a learning position on a committee. Volunteer burnout is often the result of over-sizing a volunteer task.

Consider building committees to increase your pool of involved persons and to share the workload. Committees are a great way to get more people involved and build a valuable pool of volunteers for future years.

Accurately describe the duties of the position. Provide written position descriptions This will minimize the chances of misunderstandings and miscues.

Ask for their involvement privately, but confirm any commitment publicly, if possible, at your meeting. Tell the volunteer why you think he or she will be successful (e.g., skills, experience, contacts). Don't leave the meeting without obtaining commitments. Summarize responsibilities assumed in the minutes of this particular meeting.

Provide written follow-up. Minutes of planning meetings should be distributed soon after they are held. These are excellent reminders of the responsibilities assigned and assumed.

Hold individuals accountable, and set targets over time as a means of measuring progress. Here are a few examples: "Date will be set by...", "Room will be reserved by...", "Speaker to be confirmed by...", "Publicity ready for mailing by..." Remind your volunteers they will need to provide a progress report at your next meeting.

Check in by phone. Set aside a time each month for quick telephone calls to determine the progress your volunteers have made. People value these check-up calls more if you offer advice or resources to help when progress is going slowly.

Build up the importance of the assignment. Volunteers need to feel their work is important and valued. Invite the volunteer to report on progress. Make sure the report is on the agenda and that it is, in fact, covered during the meeting. If you need to, make it quick, but do not skip over the report, even if you are running late.

Respect youth and enthusiasm. Youth are a great training ground for the leaders of tomorrow. They provide opportunities for leadership. That's why so many enthusiastic and aggressive young people look for the chance to serve. Resist the urge to discourage enthusiasm or new ideas. Your group just might need some new insights and fresh blood.

Accept the role of trainer/coach. Developing leaders often model themselves after their mentors—so set a good example.

Recognize, recognize, recognize! Recognize your volunteers every chance you get: on the spot, in meetings, at actual events, in discussions with their boss, in writing, and at years end. People who feel valued are proud and pleased to be involved. They are also much more likely to recommit for future years