

**Parent Involvement Committee Meeting  
Minutes  
Tuesday, April 17, 2012 at 7 pm  
Rainbow District School Board  
Board Office Boardroom**

**Attendance:**

Jennifer Michaud, Walden Public School; Tonya Marcotte, Queen Elizabeth Public School/Lansdowne Public School; Kate Barber, Lansdowne Public School; Trish Kitching, Gatchell School/Princess Anne Public School/Sudbury Secondary School; Selena Lavigueur, Carl A. Nesbitt Public School; Gisele Sivret, Queen Elizabeth Public School; Bernadette Rémillard, Queen Elizabeth Public School; Sharon Speir, Superintendent, Rainbow District School Board; Doreen Dewar, Chair, Rainbow District School Board; Bob Clement, Trustee, Rainbow District School Board.

**Regrets:**

Nicole Charette, Senior Advisor, Corporate Communications and Strategic Planning and Terri Gervais, Espanola High School.

**1. Call to Order:** 7 pm

**2. Welcome and Self-Introductions:** Kate Barber

PIC chair Kate Barber welcomed everyone and invited members to introduce themselves.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Jennifer Michaud asked for an addition to the agenda – Report on EQAO parent event. The chair inserted this item following *Planning for 2012-13*

*Motion: "That the agenda for the PIC meeting on April 17, 2012, as amended, be approved."*

Moved by: Tonya Marcotte, Queen Elizabeth Public School/Lansdowne Public School

Seconded by: Jennifer Michaud, Walden Public School

Carried

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Since quorum was not achieved at the February 21, 2012 meeting, there were two sets of minutes for approval at this meeting.

*Motion: "That the minutes of the PIC meeting held on January 10, 2012 be approved, as presented."*

Moved by: Tonya Marcotte, Queen Elizabeth Public School/Lansdowne Public School

Seconded by: Jennifer Michaud, Walden Public School Carried

*Motion: "That the minutes of the PIC meeting held on February 21, 2012 be approved, as presented."*

Moved by: Tonya Marcotte, Queen Elizabeth Public School/Lansdowne Public School  
Seconded by: Trish Kitching, Gatchell School/Princess Anne Public School/Sudbury Secondary School  
Carried

Discussion from the minutes included the suggestion by one of the parents that information about WTK be shared with day care providers and that an effort be made to circulate information through licensed childcare.

A member also asked if PIC minutes are shared with all school council chairs. It was confirmed that the PIC minutes are sent to all school council chairs.

## **7. PRO Grants**

Kate Barber reviewed the process for application for PRO grants for individual school councils or boards or regions. \$1000 is available for individual schools with the purpose of reaching out to parents, creating a welcoming school environment, and/or for building parents skills. The question was posed as to why some schools are more successful than others in their grant applications and it was explained that there is preference given to priority schools. PIC members gave examples of the type of grants and events planned at their schools which included: community and family events, make and take evenings, a chili cook off and story sock, agency fairs, zumba nights, and supporting parents with French. It was reinforced that there are restrictions on how the money can be used. For example, the grants will cover snacks, but not dinners. The applications are due June 8, 2012.

Superintendent Speir distributed copies of the letter and PowerPoint notes provided through the Ministry of Education and sent to School Council chairs via email.

Kate Barber suggested that PIC members could support School Councils who may be looking for help in writing grant proposals.

Superintendent Speir asked PIC members if they would support the idea of a Board application focused on Transitions - to Kindergarten, for special needs students and to secondary school. There was unanimous support for this idea. It was suggested that a new format/venue that would attract and help parents with the transition from elementary to secondary Rainbow schools would be advantageous. It was also suggested that parents require assistance in understanding the courses and the path they are selecting for students as they continue to secondary school. It was also emphasized that transitions be put into place early for students with special needs who may require modifications to the environment. It was suggested that further communication with the local colleges about the seamless day and the relationship between the teacher and ECE would assist in clarifying any confusion.

The recommendation from the Drummond report that a fifth year be eliminated was clarified. Thirty-four credits (four more than the graduation requirement) are fully funded and credits taken above 34 are partially funded by the province. A review of the number of students in the RDSB who take more than 34 credits reveals that this change will have very little impact on students or the system.

One of the parents asked about the continuation of the Full Day Early Learning – Kindergarten program. It was confirmed that the Province is committed to the implementation of this program and that parents who are registered for next year were to receive this confirmation from the schools at which they are registering. This parent commented on how much her daughter learned in the Full Day Early Learning - Kindergarten program.

## **8. Planning for 2012-13**

Superintendent Speir led the discussion, asking for ideas on how to increase and maintain PIC membership. It was suggested that a survey of School Councils and teacher representatives on School Councils might assist in keeping PIC meetings meaningful and relevant. A survey should be brief (five questions). For example: What are you interested in? What would you like PIC to do? An overview of what PIC does could be provided and the various roles (parent, superintendent, trustees) on PIC be outlined. The link on the website could be made more prominent. Following this, a lively discussion about the potential role of Facebook as a communication tool ensued and was captured as a possible topic for next year.

Other ideas for making PIC more meaningful for parents included starting each PIC meeting by acknowledging the success of a school council, identifying examples to be showcased, promoting the willingness of PIC to be consulted and give advice to the Board and to committees, and to create opportunities for parents to sit on various committees in the Board.

The PIC members suggested the following topics for next year:

**Annual General Meeting (October)** – Allan Johnson was well received this year - include motivational speaker supporting parents and parent involvement in education at the AGM.

**Orientation for School Councils: Advocacy, Fundraising and Welcoming School Environment** – It was suggested that school councils who have completed PRO grants in these areas be invited to present, and that contact be made soon with school councils inviting them to participate in this forum next year. Student Senate could also be invited to this forum. It was suggested that the location be Sudbury Secondary School and include a tour of the school. This could be a promotional tour for the Lansdowne, Queen Elizabeth and Sudbury Secondary neighbourhood.

**Communication Tools for Reaching Parents: Facebook, blogs, websites** – It was suggested that the pros and cons of different tools be outlined for communicating with parents.

**Walking School Bus: Active Living** - This might be a great way of promoting healthy lifestyles and supporting families who may not be available to supervise their children as they walk to and from school safely.

**Mental Health Strategies: How to Identify Signs of Stress in Your Child** – A similar presentation is taking place at Walden Public School this month.

**Transitions to Secondary School: Information for Grade 7 and 8 Parents** – It was suggested we provide information to parents in Grades 7 and 8 and include more information on Apprenticeship Programs.

## **9. Report on Parent EQAO Event – Jennifer Michaud**

Jennifer Michaud attended this local event for parents, sponsored by EQAO, and found it to be very enlightening. EQAO assessments are a means for the Board to ensure they are on track, to review the data for future student success, and to identify students who may be at risk earlier. There was dialogue at this meeting about students who do not take the test and the Board's position on students staying home during the testing period. It is important that families have a better understanding on how to prepare for the test and what it means. EQAO scoring is done by teachers who are appropriately trained.

## **9. Communications Report**

Trustees provided the following information:

The annual Student Senate conference was held at Laurentian University on April 16 and 17, 2012. Chair Dewar attended.

The Sudbury Regional Science Fair was held the weekend of April 14 and 15, 2012. Several teams from Rainbow District School Board are heading to the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Charlottetown PEI (four of the six winning teams are from Rainbow Schools).

Chair Doreen Dewar stated that students are doing a fantastic job!

Trustee Bob Clement attended the March 7<sup>th</sup> pancake breakfast at Gatchell School and commented that this was a very special school.

## **10. School announcements**

Gatchell School has received \$1,500 from Botanics in Azilda for schoolyard improvements, part of an ongoing project. Gatchell is also building paths to allow accessibility to the trees on the yard through a Toyota Evergreen grant.

Walden Public School has a parent information night on April 26, 2012 from 6 pm to 8:30 pm at the school. The topic is Raising Your Adolescent. The evening is open to all parents.

Join the Child and Family Centre to celebrate Children's Mental Health Week on Monday, May 7, 2012 from 7 pm to 8:30 pm at the Rainbow Cinemas and hear Dr. Michael Cheng, a psychiatrist speak on "Generation Me: Why it is really harder being a parent these days and what we can do about it."

Carl A. Nesbitt has received a grant for creating an outdoor classroom from VITAC.

Queen Elizabeth Public School is planting cedars (Grades 5 and 6), maintaining flowerbeds (Grades 1 and 2) and planting bulbs (JK and SK).

Carl A. Nesbitt Public School will host a Family Literacy event on Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 1:30 pm.

11. The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Superintendent Speir thanked Committee members for their contributions to PIC this year and encouraged them to put their names forward for next year's executive. Chair Dewar thanked Kate Barber for her leadership.

*Motion: "That the meeting be adjourned."*

Moved by Jennifer Michaud, Walden Public School