

Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 7 pm
In Person at 408 Wembley Drive and Via Google Meet

Attendance

Steffany Bourque, Parent, Chelmsford Valley District Composite School; Rebecca Coughlin, Parent, Lansdowne Public School; Melissa Gladu, Parent, Northeastern Elementary School; Ashley Vickman, Parent, Walden Public School; Julie Cuss, Parent, R.H. Murray Public School; Ashley Hurley, Parent, Alexander Public School; Jennifer Dalton, Parent, Adamsdale Public School; Kylee MacCormack, Parent, C.R. Judd Public School; Coleen Eberlein, Elementary Principal representative/Principal of Jean Hanson Public School; Meredith Coulas, ETFO representative; Laurie-Ann Lielkans, Secondary Principal representative; Sarah Clarke, Mental Health Lead, Rainbow District School Board; Leslie Mantle, Senior Administrator of School Support Services; and Nicole Charette, Senior Advisor, Corporate Communications and Strategic Planning

Regrets: Trustee Alex McCauley, Kelly Rodriguez, OSSTF representative; Deana Hardy, Parent, Charles C. McLean Public School; and Stacy Paajanen, Parent, Lively District Secondary School

Call to Order: 7 pm

1. Welcome

Chair Melissa Gladu welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Self-Introductions

Online and in person participants introduced themselves.

3. Approval of Agenda

"That the agenda for the meeting on January 28, 2025 be approved."

Moved by: Steffany Bourque, Chelmsford Valley District Composite School

Seconded by: Rebecca Coughlin, Lansdowne Public School

Carried

Chair Gladu noted that the following parents/guardians were acclaimed to the Parent Involvement Committee at the Annual General Meeting held on October 15, 2024 and constitute the voting members for the 2024-2025 school year.

She asked if there was a parent/guardian from Espanola who may be interested in joining PIC. With no parent present, the position remains vacant.

Melissa Gladu	Northeastern Elementary School
Ashley Hurley	Alexander Public School
Ashley Vickman	Walden Public School
Natasha Delaney	Jean Hanson Public School
Stacy Paajanen	Lively District Secondary School
Kylee MacCormack	C.R. Judd Public School
Rebecca Coughlin	Lansdowne Public School
Steffany Bourque	Chelmsford Valley District Composite School
Deanna Hardy	Charles C. McLean Public School (Manitoulin Representative)
	(Espanola Representative)

4. Approval of Minutes

“That the minutes of the meeting held on December 3, 2024 be approved.”

Moved by: Ashley Vickman, Walden Public School

Seconded by: Kylee MacCormick, C.R. Judd Public School

Carried

5. Presentation: Safe Schools
Mental Health Lead Sarah Clarke
Senior Administrator Leslie Mantle

The presentation provided a summary of the book *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt as well as an overview of Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) 128, and the Rainbow District School Board’s revised Code of Conduct. Parents/guardians received links and/or copies of the resources referenced.

Haidt’s central claim in the book is that the overprotection of children in the real world and the underprotection of children in the virtual world are the major reasons why children born after 1995 became the anxious generation. Between 2010 and 2015, the social lives of teens moved largely onto smartphones with continuous access to social media, online video games, and other internet-based activities.

Jonathan Haidt refers to this as the Great Rewiring of Childhood and believes that this is the single largest reason for the increase in adolescent mental illness that began in the early 2010s. Play-based childhoods were replaced by phone-based childhoods as children and adolescents moved their social lives and free time onto internet-connected devices.

The author said free play is as essential for developing social skills, like conflict resolution, as it is for developing physical skills. Children learn through play to connect and take turns and make connections with family and community. Children require exposure to setbacks, failures, shocks, and stumbles in order to develop strength and self-reliance. Overprotection interferes with this development and renders young people more likely to be fragile and fearful as adults.

According to Jonathan Haidt, foundational harms of a phone-based childhood include: social deprivation, sleep deprivation, attention fragmentation and addiction.

At the end, the presenters asked parents “What can we do?” as an invitation for collective action for a healthier childhood. Copies of *The Anxious Generation* were offered to parents/guardians on loan. Parents/guardians were invited to consider information on page 254 about the Let Grow Project for discussion at the next PIC meeting. Parents/guardians were asked to return the book to the Centre for Education so it may be loaned to other parents/guardians.

Senior Administrator Leslie Mantle thanked parents/guardians for supporting the implementation of PPM 128 and the revised Code of Conduct which have resulted in more focus in the classroom.

Discussion based on presentation

Parents/guardians were invited to ask questions and/or provide feedback. Parents agreed that removing phones from the classroom was positive as it eliminates distractions. They cautioned, however, not to overgeneralize the cause and effect of phone use or to frame it as a moral issue. (ie. Phone use is bad, therefore, if you give your child a phone, you are a bad parent.)

Mental Health Lead Sarah Clarke said we can take from the book what we feel is important. There is a lot of evidence that smartphones and social media play a role in what is happening in child and youth mental health. She added that helping children stay safe online while using technology is critical. She said finding balance is the key.

Chair Gladu said the goal of the presentation was to gather information to use as a springboard for upcoming discussions on mental health and what we can do to support children as they grow and develop.

6. Communications Report

Nicole Charette, Senior Advisor of Corporate Communications and Strategic Planning, delivered the following communications report:

Rainbow District School Board’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan has been updated and is posted on the Board website. Melissa Gladu attended the accessibility planning meeting on behalf of the Parent Involvement Committee. The plan includes two important summaries - A Wheelchair Accessibility Report and a Lockdown Tracking Report.

The Wheelchair Accessibility Report provides data on the accessibility of all buildings, including elevators and internal/external ramps, washrooms, automatic door openers, shops, the stage area, bleachers, science labs, tactile indicators, parking with signage

and lockdown alarms and signals. The Lockdown Tracking Report indicates where lockdown systems have been installed or are being installed. These reports are updated annually as work is completed. The data is presented in a table format.

We invite you to share this information with parents/guardians and school visitors. Our Commitment to Accessibility is under the “Values” section of the board website - [rainbowschools.ca](https://www.rainbowschools.ca) - at the following link:
<https://www.rainbowschools.ca/about-us/our-values/accessibility/>

Many families visited our elementary schools for the Kindergarten Information Nights on January 15th and 16th, 2025. Parents/guardians who were unable to attend and have a child starting school this fall, can still register by contacting their area Rainbow school. Schools will be hosting a Welcome to Kindergarten session later this spring. Registering as soon as possible helps the board to plan its staffing levels for the new school year.

Secondary School Information Nights continue in the coming weeks...
Information Nights will take place on Wednesday, February 12th at Manitoulin Secondary School at 6:30 pm and Thursday, February 13th at Espanola High School at 6 pm. For those Information Nights that have already taken place, there is still time to register.

On January 19th, a group of elementary students from Chelmsford Valley District Composite School's first ever robotics team competed at the FIRST LEGO League Provincial Championships at Durham College. For their efforts, students were awarded the Rising All-Star Award. They earned their spot at the provincials by competing at the qualifying tournament in North Bay in December. Of the 21 teams at the qualifier, they were selected as one of six to advance to the championships and garnered an Engineering Excellence Award. Huge congratulations to students and coaches. The Rising All-Star Award celebrates a team that the judges notice and expect great things from in the future.

Rainbow Schools will participate in Bundle Up Day on February 4, 2025 as part of this month's Environmental Challenge. The heat will be turned down a few degrees in all facilities. We invite students, staff and visitors to wear a warm sweater, hoodie, poncho or alternative for students who have sensory needs. Let's bundle up and save energy as we continue our efforts to reduce our environmental footprint.

Parents/guardians of students with special needs in Rainbow District School Board are invited to provide input for the 2025-2026 Special Education Plan. The deadline to complete the survey is Friday, March 7th. The survey link is currently available on the board website.

Secondary exams continue until Thursday, January 30th, 2025.

There will be no school for students on Friday, January 31st for our fifth Professional Activity Day of the 2024-2025 school year. Information about the PA Day is posted in the Parents Section on the Board website.

There will also be no school for students and staff on Monday, February 17th for Family Day.

7. School Announcements

Ashley Hurley of Alexander Public School said the school was excited to have a breakfast and snack program. She also said the holiday concert in December was a success.

Ashley Vickman of Walden Public School highlighted intramural sports, public speaking and new clubs. A black night glow in the dark dance party was held to thank students and families for their successful food drive and kindness project. The school is participating in the Soles4Souls campaign. Work has begun on the Spring Craft Show.

Julie Cuss of R.H. Murray Public School highlighted math manipulatives and the school's overall focus on math, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing with Spirit North, and a Grade 7 and 8 ski trip. She also said students will have an opportunity to attend the Tim Hortons Camp later this spring.

Kylee MacCormick of C.R. Judd Public School said events held in December were a tremendous success in support of the Capreol Food Bank. Cereal dominoes also proved to be a fun fundraiser. The breakfast program has been expanded from two days to five days, giving students an opportunity to try a variety of food.

Rebecca Coughlin of Lansdowne Public School said staff and the community did an amazing job producing food hampers and baskets for some of their families, which were greatly appreciated throughout the winter break.

Steffany Bourque of Chelmsford Valley District Composite School congratulated the school's first robotics team for their success at the provincial level, noting the school was super proud. She applauded teachers for their creativity in engaging students in their learning. She highlighted festive events, including the school-wide dinner, as well as fundraisers, including the food drive. Grade 8 students will participate in a ski trip.

Melissa Gladu of Northeastern Elementary School said the school hosted a successful feast for families, with a community feel. Fundraising has been underway to support the Grade 7 and 8 ski trip. She also highlighted changes in administration. A long-time Vice-Principal has been promoted to Principal and Northeastern will welcome a new VP.

Chair Gladu reviewed the upcoming meeting dates and topics.

February 25, 2025:	Mental Health (Part 1)
April 15, 2025:	Mental Health (Part 2)
May 13, 2025:	Planning for the 2025-2026 school year

She thanked all parents/guardians and staff for attending the meeting.

Adjournment at 8:23 pm

"That the meeting be adjourned."

Moved by: Kylee MacCormick, C.R. Judd Public School

Seconded by: Ashley Vickman, Walden Public School

Carried

Next meeting:

Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 7 pm

In Person at 408 Wembley Drive and Via Google Meet

Topic: Mental Health (Part 1)