

Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 7 pm
In Person at 408 Wembley Drive and Via Google Meet

Attendance:

Steffany Bourque, Parent, Chelmsford Valley District Composite School; Melissa Gladu, Parent, Northeastern Elementary School/Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School; Ashley Vickman, Parent, Walden Public School; Jenne Atkinson, Parent, Walden Public School; Jessica Lamarilli, Parent, Lasalle Elementary School; Kylee MacCormack, Parent, C.R. Judd Public School; Jessica Newell-Tremblay, Parent, Copper Cliff Public School; Deanna Hardy, Parent, Charles C. McLean Public School; Kelly Rodriguez, OSSTF representative; Julie Cuss, Parent, R.H. Murray Public School; Coleen Eberlein, Elementary Principal representative; Natasha Delaney, Parent, Jean Hanson Public School; Ashley Hurley, Parent, Alexander Public School; Erin Holloway, Parent, Lockerby Composite School; Melissa Harrison, Parent, A.B. Ellis Public School/Espanola High School; Jennifer Harvey, Principal, Churchill Public School; Melanie Bertrand, Principal of Student Success; Sarah Clarke, Mental Health Lead; Ryan Jones, Senior Technician; Leslie Mantle, Superintendent of Schools; and Nicole Charette, Senior Advisor, Corporate Communications and Strategic Planning

Regrets:

Trustee Alex McCauley; Bryanne de Casto Rocha, Parent, Lansdowne Public School; Laurie-Anne Lielkalns, Secondary Principal representative; Meredith Coulas, OSSTF representative

Call to Order: 7 pm

1. Welcome

Chair Steffany Bourque 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 27, 2026 be approved.”

Moved by: Erin Holloway, Lockerby Composite School

Seconded by: Melissa Gladu, Northeastern Elementary/Lo-Ellen Park SS

Carried

4. Approval of Minutes

“That the minutes of the meeting held on December 2, 2025 be approved.”

Moved by: Ashley Vickman, Walden Public School

Seconded by: Erin Holloway, Lockerby Composite School

Carried

5. Panel Presentation

Attendance and Lates - What You Can Do at Home

Superintendent Leslie Mantle said regular attendance and arriving at school on time are essential habits that play a major role in a student’s success. Being present in class every day ensures that students do not miss important lessons, discussions, or instructions. Punctuality helps the school day begin smoothly and teaches responsibility, time management, and respect for others. When students attend school consistently and arrive on time, they are better prepared to learn, achieve academically, and develop positive habits.

Superintendent Mantle introduced the panel of three experienced administrators and leaders who provided their perspective on attendance and lates, offered strategies and solutions, and answered questions. The panel discussion was recorded for sharing with Principals and School Councils.

Jennifer Harvey, Principal, Churchill Public School

Principal Harvey said students thrive on routine and repetition. She invited parents/guardians to be role models by talking about school in a positive way, showing interest in what their children are learning or excited about, talking openly about punctuality and attendance, celebrating student success, displaying school work at home to show pride, and building positive relationships with teachers and administrators. Parent involvement in the school shows children that education is valued. When children engage fully in school life, through sports and clubs, they gain a

sense of belonging. When there are challenges, inform the school early and seek solutions together.

Melanie Bertrand, Principal of Student Success

Principal Bertrand encouraged parents/guardians to keep the Rainbow District School Board card calendar on the fridge for daily reference, be aware of what is happening at school and with peer groups, be aware of the number of days your child is missing school which results in learning loss, and know school and classroom procedures on absences and lates. Parents can support their child's education by scheduling appointments after school, knowing school start times and arriving on time, knowing a student's course schedule, and reaching out to the school to explain absences. When students miss school, it's important to develop a plan to get back on track. Co-constructing routines is also important such as regular bed/wake up times, limiting screen time, scheduling homework time, preparing lunches in advance, etc.

Sarah Clarke, Mental Health Lead

Mental Health Lead Sarah Clarke emphasized the importance of engaging students in co-curricular activities which engages them in school life and fosters positive attendance and mental health. If a child needs support, contact the school. It's important to understand why your child is missing school or does not want to attend school. Talk to your child and engage in collaborative problem-solving. Work with the school to make a plan to address barriers to success. Sarah Clarke talked about the anxiety/avoidance cycle, where long term avoidance leads to more anxiety. She also stressed the importance of accessing a mental health professional, if necessary. On behalf of Brien Managhan, Manager of Applied Behaviour Analysis Services, she shared evidence-based strategies on establishing and maintaining routines and increasing motivation to attend school. Self-monitoring against pre-determined expectations is an effective tool.

Summary:

Regular attendance and arriving at school on time helps students achieve academically and socially, and develop positive habits.

Academically, students who attend school regularly are more likely to understand lessons and keep up with their work. Each class builds on the previous one, so missing school or arriving late can create learning gaps. Being on time allows students to fully participate in lessons, ask questions, and complete assignments, which leads to better grades and stronger study habits.

Socially, regular attendance helps students build and maintain positive relationships with classmates and teachers. Being present every day allows students to take part in group activities, discussions, and teamwork, which strengthens communication and cooperation skills. Arriving on time also shows respect for others and helps students feel connected to their peers.

Consistent attendance provides structure and routine, which are important for mental health and well-being. Knowing what to expect each day can reduce stress and anxiety. Students who attend school regularly often feel more confident and motivated because they are prepared and not constantly trying to catch up. This sense of stability and achievement supports healthy mental development.

Parents/guardians asked questions at the end of the panel discussion and also requested a flyer about attendance and lates for sharing at school events.

7. Communications Report

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

Rainbow District School Board's **Annual Report for the 2024-2025 school year** is now available online at rainbowschools.ca. The Annual Report provides a snapshot of how the Board's strategic priorities are being implemented in Rainbow Schools. There is also an overview of the 2025-2026 budget.

Rainbow District School Board's **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2027** was approved by the Board at its regular meeting on January 20, 2026. Melissa Gladu attended the accessibility planning committee meeting on behalf of the Parent Involvement Committee. The plan is updated annually and posted on the Board website. The plan includes two important summaries - A Wheelchair Accessibility Report and a Lockdown Tracking Report. 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 - at the following link:

<https://www.rainbowschools.ca/about-us/our-values/accessibility/>

The Education Quality and Accountability Office presents **EQAO webinars for parents/guardians**, including math sessions, literacy sessions with a focus on writing, etc. Visit the Board's Facebook page to learn more and to register. We would like to thank parents/guardians for supporting your children with reading, writing and math. Our results continue to trend upwards, an indication that our efforts are having a positive impact on student achievement and well-being.

We would like to thank families who visited Rainbow elementary schools for our **Kindergarten Information Nights** on January 14 and 15, 2026. Families who were unable to attend and have a child starting school, can register by contacting their area Rainbow school.

Secondary School Information Nights will continue in the coming weeks including Manitoulin Secondary School on Wednesday, February 11th at 7 pm and Espanola High School on Thursday, February 12th at 6 pm. For the Information Nights that have already taken place, there is still time to register for the fall. Visit the board website to learn more.

The **Environmental Education Committee** has challenged Rainbow Schools to kick off the new year with an e-waste clean up drive. Personal electronics have a large environmental impact. Over the last decade, there has been a substantial increase in ownership of personal electronics and the lifespan of our devices is becoming increasingly shorter. In February, all schools will be challenged to reduce their electricity consumption. This environmental challenge will kick off with Bundle Up Day on Thursday, February 5, 2026. Schools will turn down the heat and invite staff, students and visitors to wear a warm sweater, hoodie, poncho or alternative for students with sensory needs.

Some 39 elementary students in Grades 4 to 6 from Rainbow Schools will test their technical skills during Science North's first annual **Robot Builder Showdown** on Monday, February 9th in the Vale Cavern. Students will compete in teams of three to build a robot using LEGO Spike Prime Essential Kits to complete a series of challenges.

Parents/guardians of students with special needs in Rainbow District School Board are invited to provide **input for the 2026-2027 Special Education Plan**. The deadline to complete the survey is Friday, March 6th. The survey link is available on the board website.

Visit rainbowschools.ca for more information throughout the school year.

8. School Announcements

Erin Holloway of Lockerby Composite School said the popular school newsletter has a new look. She also highlighted the school's food and culture fair, fundraising, successful Open House, and news broadcast room.

Melissa Gladu said the Kindergarten Information Night at Northeastern was well attended. She highlighted the holiday feast (facilitated by the newly renovated kitchen) as well as upcoming ski trips. She indicated that Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School also had a well-attended Information Night and continues to achieve success in athletics.

Ashley Vickman of Walden Public School said the school had a successful Kindergarten Information Night and recognized that early registration of children starting school helps schools plan for September. She asked when schools needed to submit projected enrolment for staffing purposes and was advised prior to March Break. She highlighted a number of activities, including the parade to the local food bank to deliver donations, grant applications to support the ongoing school yard enhancement project, planning for the PRO grant family engagement evening, the annual spring fair, and the whole school pancake breakfast.

Julie Cuss said R.H. Murray Public School students are enjoying cross-country skiing, with upcoming field trips. The micro hatchery is running once again this year. Students will work with community partners to release fry in the coming months.

Kylee MacCormack of C.R. Judd Public School said the school's festive events were successful, including a partnership with the Capreol/Hanmer communities. She also highlighted the cereal box dominoes drive, a challenge to build positive attitudes and great habits, the Kindergarten Open House, and a visit by the Think Trades trailer. The new Principal has been well received and there is a renewed focus on community involvement.

Natasha Delaney of Jean Hanson Public School said the school also welcomed a new Principal. Students continue to visit the Lancer Dome and will soon participate in a winter carnival. Fundraising is ongoing.

Deanna Hardy of Charles C. McLean Public School highlighted the festive concert, food bank donations, a cake walk fundraiser to support the Grade 8 year-end trip, and student participation in chess and volleyball.

Steffany Bourque of Chelmsford Valley District Composite School said the annual feast was a success and praised the students' good manners. The school participated in the food drive and sponsored families. She also highlighted the ongoing success of the Robotics Team. Students in the leadership class are serving as mentors for primary students. The school is also hosting tournaments, planning field trips, and raising funds.

Superintendent Mantle reviewed the upcoming meeting dates and topics.

March 3, 2026:	Thrive/Thrive Together
April 21, 2026:	Safe and Caring Schools
May 19, 2026:	Planning for the 2026-2027 school year

Chair Bourque thanked all parents/guardians and staff for participating in the meeting.

Adjournment at 8:42 pm

“That the meeting be adjourned.”

Moved by: Melissa Gladu, Northeastern Elementary / Lo-Ellen Park SS

Seconded by: Ashley Vickman, Walden Public School

Carried

Next meeting:

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 7 pm

In Person at 408 Wembley Drive and Via Google Meet

Topic: Thrive/Thrive Together