



DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ONTARIO NORTH EAST

Parent Involvement Committee Meeting

Committee Members

Present: Stephen Aitchison, Kerns Public School (via videoconference)
Kim Skidmore, Cochrane High School
Cathy Senyuk, W.E. Miller P.S.
Tuula Bernard, RMSS
Saunders Porter, Chair, District School Board Ontario North East
Rosemary Pochopsky, Vice-Chair, District School Board Ontario North East

Committee Members

Absent: Roxanne Thompson, Englehart High School
Sharren Riel, NLPS
Joanne Hagger-Perritt, Golden Avenue Public School

Administration

Present: Linda Knight, Director of Education
Michelle Leigh, Assistant to the Director

Date: February 12, 2007

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Place: Schumacher Board Office

1.0 Call to Order

Linda Knight, Director of Education, called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m.

2.0 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Tuula Bernard was elected as Chair of the Parent Involvement Committee. Steve Aitchison was elected Vice-Chair.

Linda Knight turned the meeting over to Tuula.

3.0 Approval of Minutes

Moved by: Kim Skidmore
Seconded by: Cathy Senyuk

That the Parent Involvement Committee minutes of November 20, 2006 be approved as presented.

Carried.

3.0 Business Arising Out of Minutes

Tuula Bernard inquired about the School Council funding for 2006 – 2007 and if it had been distributed to schools. Linda informed those present that this money was available and some schools have already used their \$500.00 allotment.

4.0 Terms of Reference and Procedures

The Draft copy of Terms of Reference and Procedures for the Parent Involvement Committee was discussed and some changes made. The amended copy will be posted on the Parent Involvement Committee web page along with the approved minutes.

Moved by: Saunders Porter
Seconded by: Cathy Senyuk

That the Terms of Reference and Procedures for the Parent Involvement Committee be adapted.

Carried.

5.0 Parent Reaching Out Grants

Linda Knight advised the committee that out of 200 applications received only 50 submissions were approved by the Ministry of Education. Those present discussed the submissions that had been approved and those that had not. It was suggested that schools share their submissions and have a “bank” for schools to review them. Successful submissions can be used as a template for other schools to follow. Linda will request the schools submissions and create a template.

Tuula Bernard discussed the shared submission between RMSS and Golden Avenue which is a conference that the schools will be hosting. A variety of workshops and speakers are planned and it is hoped that the conference will attract students, teachers and school councils. The conference will be held April 20th and 21st, 2007 in South Porcupine.

The group discussed the criteria that the ministry used to decide which submissions would be chosen. The Director’s Office will contact ministry officials and request more details on criteria used.

6.0 Committee Mandate

Tuula Bernard asked if the committee could receive more details on their mandate to give them more structure and direction. Linda Knight’s understanding of the committee’s mandate was for P.I.C. members to share the information received at these meetings with the school councils in their respective regions. Linda Knight will investigate when more information will be forthcoming regarding the Parent Involvement Committee.

Kim Skidmore felt that one of the things that the committee should focus on is general sharing of information with schools councils by helping school councils to understand the flow of communication throughout the board, who is responsible for what and definitive timelines. As representatives the P.I.C. can decimate that information to the school councils and advise them of where they can get answers to questions and concerns. In many cases by simply sharing experiences and best practices the P.I.C. and School Councils can work together and find the answers amongst themselves.

Tuula Bernard suggested getting more parents involved and come up with initiatives to help school councils function effectively. Help those schools without school councils to get answers and ideas. Involvement on Parent Councils was discussed and ways of attracting parents to get involved. It was felt that this committee could assist new School Councils and make their involvement less intimidating by making the P.I.C. available and open for questions and advise on procedures.

It was suggested that a letter be drafted by the Chair, approved by the Director and then sent out in March or April to School Councils giving them a background on the Parent Involvement Committee and asking each School Council to submit three points needing clarification. Examples of questions could be relating to programming, interests in staffing, policy etc. These questions will be collated and when the committee meets in May they will review and prepare responses. Tuula Bernard suggested that they will include the survey in their Symposium Workshop at their Conference in April.

7.0 Virtual Learning

Kim Skidmore voiced her concerns regarding Virtual Learning within our board. She felt it was a Catch 22; though this is an excellent opportunity to make courses available for students who might not otherwise be able to take them, the students are counted on the independent register but not on the school's daily register and therefore no funding is given for staffing. She felt that this system unfairly penalizes the small schools and will eventually deplete the schools enrolment. Linda advised that the board is looking at ways of addressing this issue.

8.0 Update on Initiative Dollars Received for Special Projects

- **Psychological Assessments**

The Ministry released to all boards in the province a base of \$25,000 in September for psychological assessments with the opportunity to get more dollars over the next 3 years. District School Board Ontario North East has a contract psychologist who comes for one week each month to do psychological assessments district-wide.

- **CODE**

Dollars that were provided by the Secretariat for Literacy were given to CODE (Council of Directors of Education) to dispense to Boards. District School Board Ontario North East submitted a proposal one year ago and received \$250,000 and this year another \$250,000. The focus of our project is on Early Intervention. If a student has language delay and auditory discrimination they are flagged in primary grades and given some intense support within the classroom. We do not identify unless there is a significant challenge in the later grades.

- **PRIME**

CODE and OFIP focus on Literacy, PRIME is mathematics.. It was initially started amongst many boards working together in the north that took training and went back to their boards and started these pilot programs. This Diagnostic program is now expanding into the upper junior grades.

- **Integrated Behaviour Program**

The Board introduced 3 pilot programs this year in New Liskeard, Cochrane and Swastika and we are looking to expand the Integrated Behaviour Program to the Timmins Area. We have put a proposal forward with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. The two agencies are working together because they realize that behaviours are disruptive not only for the child being disruptive but for the mental health of the students in the classroom. We are hoping to secure at least \$80,000 to bring this project to the Timmins area.

9.0 Aboriginal Framework

The Ministry of Education just released an Aboriginal Framework. Lengthy consultation that was to have ended last July was extended and was only finalized in September. The Ministry of Education released 6 million dollars for school boards to help them develop a Self-Identification for Aboriginal Students policy. As District School Board Ontario North East already developed this policy last year we are not eligible for the policy development funding. We do plan to apply for funding that the Ministry is giving to C.O.D.E. to dispense for programming for Aboriginal students.

10.0 4th Annual School Council Symposium

The 4th Annual School Council Symposium being sponsored by the Thames Valley District School Board is being held in Toronto on April 27th. The office of the Director will send out registration packages for this initiative to School Councils. Three School Council members may attend from each Board.

11.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parent Involvement Committee will be May 7th, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. in the Schumacher Board Office.

***Janice Sharpe,
Recording Secretary***