

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – February 8, 2024

### Roll Call:

Members:	Staff:
V. Wood, Co-Chair and Sydenham HS M. Glassford, Co-Chair S. Bradley, Outgoing Co-chair and 2SLGTBQIA+ Focus Group S. Coleman, Amherst Island PS S. Black, Bath Road PS M. Rickey, Bayridge PS T. MacDonald, Centennial PS M. Chapman, Ernestown SS C. Wither, Frontenac SS M. Hudson, LCVI/Calvin Park PS M. Foster, Module de l'Acadie J. Kehoe, Molly Brant ES M. Richmond, Odessa PS V. Venditti, Polson Park PS J. Jodoin, Rideau PS S. Gratto, Storrington PS K. Mennie, Welborne Ave PS E. Offshack, Virtual School C. Glavin, WJ Holsgrove	S. Gillam, Superintendent P. Gollogly, Assoc. Superintendent M. Christopher, IT
Trustees:	Recorder:
B. Godkin R. Hutcheon	E. Smith, Administrative Assistant
Community Members:	
L. Lollar, KFL&A Public Health F.S. Zadeh, KEYS (regrets)	

## 1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Wood called the meeting to order at 6pm.

Co-Chair Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided the Acknowledgement of Territory.

“We recognize that The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit, and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

## 2. Adoption of Agenda

Adopted.

## 3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest declared.

## 4. Approval of Minutes

November 2023 minutes were approved by consensus.

## 5. Delegation/Presentation

Co-Chair Wood informed that there are three presentations.

Co-Chair Wood invited Mr. Jeremy DaCosta, Chief Executive Officer, to deliver his presentation on Tri.Board Student Transportation. Mr. DaCosta expressed his appreciation for the work that School Councils do and the work that PIC does. Tri.Board is a student transportation consortium established in 2006. They transport about 30,000 riders each day, over 600 routes, about 85,000 km serving 135 schools. Tri.Board does not employ any of the bus drivers directly. Route cancellations in LDSB, due to driver shortages, were 0.25% in September 2023, with peak of 0.80% in October 2023 and 0.27% in January 2024, i.e. 0.45% for a period of 5 months. Mr. DaCosta further informed that regular contact is maintained with bus companies and operators experiencing cancellations. Discussions revolve around staffing levels, recruitment, retention, and driver training efforts. Where possible, bus companies and Tri Board work daily to combine routes based on location and timing. This strategy aims to avoid cancellations without causing significant delays for students arriving at or leaving school. It was acknowledged that there will be ongoing struggles with having enough bus drivers for the foreseeable future. In response to the ongoing driver supply challenge, efforts are being made to reduce the demand or the number of overall drivers required. This involves planning for the next fall and considering how to minimize the number of routes, thereby potentially addressing some of the driver shortage by requiring fewer drivers. Route cancellation alerts are sent out through email system and the Bus Planner Delays application. Mr. DaCosta encouraged the group to share information about the driver shortage within their school community, including how to apply online. He stressed the importance of showing appreciation to bus drivers for their role in safely transporting students to and from school. Presentation will be shared.

Question and answer followed.

Co-Chair Wood introduced the next presenter Gemma Zelmanovits, School Manager at Brave Education. Brave Education is a social emotional learning program that works with kids across and outside the province, teaching them necessary skills. The program focuses on discussing difficult things and skills that kids need to be successful in life, particularly in their social health. Ms. Zelmanovits discussed the origin of the program.

The program worked with 80,000 kids in Ontario last school year. The approach of Brave Education is to go class by class, working with one class at a time on a curriculum chosen by the school's administrators and teachers that meets the needs of their students. The presenter provided information on different workshops offered by Brave Education. The presenter answered follow up questions.

Co-Chair Wood invited the final presenter Laura Conboy, LDSB Mental Health Lead, to deliver her presentation on Mental Health Literacy Modules for Grade 7 and 8. The new mandatory 7-8 mental health literacy modules came into effect on 1 January 2024. The modules are resources for educators to equip them and students with culturally responsive, evidence-based knowledge, skills, and strategies to support their mental health and wellbeing. Complimentary resource material will be shared with families at the end of the meeting. In grade 9, right now there are optional lessons through School Mental Health Ontario that are not part of any curriculum or mandatory curriculum that some schools have chosen to engage in. We are expecting in 2024-25 that there will be mandatory lessons coming for grade 10. The presenter further discussed LDSB Implementation Plan. Power Point presentation will be shared.

The presenter answered follow up questions.

## **6. Reports for Information**

### **6.1 Co-Chairs Update**

Co-Chair Wood welcomed everyone. Co-Chair reported that PIC attended provincial PIC meeting on 22 January organized by the Ministry of Education. Some updates provided were related to Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act 2023, improving accountability and transparency at the Board level. Other key points were achievements of learning outcomes in core academic, preparation of students for future success and students' engagement and well-being. Further discussion from break-out rooms was related to Trillium Lakelands SB who is looking into mandating first aid for teachers. Ottawa Carlton SB had issues with transportation. York region is using one of their platforms for communication with PIC and SC representatives. Co-Chair was wondering if LDSB could perhaps have something similar that PIC/SCs could benefit from, but also noted that we use School Messenger, School-Day etc. PRO funding: 31 school applications were approved. She thanked PIC representatives who participated in the committee. There were a couple of applications that were rejected because of late submission. She also noted that funding was made available to schools earlier in the school year than it was the case in 2022/23.

Co-Chair Woods further reported that Superintendent Alison McDonnell will be joining the May PIC meeting to discuss Student Census Achievement Report.

Corrections for previous meeting: PIC does have an open seat to Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee and Mental Health and Substance Leadership Committee, and if anyone is interested in being involved, please reach out.

Treasury report: parent engagement allocation funding this year was \$8,444. Approx \$7,072 is available for the PIC committee to organize speaker workshop.

Co-Chair Woods noted observation dates: February is Black History Month, 10 February is Chinese Lunar New Year, 11 February is International Day of Women and Girls in Science, 19 February is Family Day, 22 February Human Trafficking Awareness Day; March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness month, Ramadan is starting second week of March, 8 March is International Women's Day, March Break is 11-15 March.

Discussion followed concerning First Aid training for teachers.

## 6.2 Trustee Update

Trustee Godkin acknowledged and welcomed Trustee Chair Hutcheon to the meeting. Trustee Godkin recognized that this is Black History Month and that is time for us all to reflect and to appreciate the contributions that the black community has made over the centuries of being in Canada, as well as current and future contributions.

Trustees attended their annual Public Education Symposium (PES) in Toronto. The conference was deemed successful. The Trustees were encouraged to attend at least one meeting per year to gain a provincial perspective on common issues. The conference provided insights into the position of Limestone in relation to provincial developments. The conference equipped the trustees with tools to handle potential situations of hatred and other unfortunate events. The Trustees felt better prepared to respond to such situations should they arise. Each conference, including this one, had a component on the Indigenous community, the history, and the meaning of reconciliation. As most of the Trustees are non-Indigenous, they found it tremendously valuable to learn about these topics.

The Education, Policy and Operation Committee meeting took place on 7 February. Topics discussed were:

- School enrolment and facility capacity: provincially mandated to operate at 100% capacity (collectively); the Board is aware for those schools that are over capacity, up to 130%, and have many portables; the Board, along with other Boards in the province, puts forward its requirements, such as new schools, maintenance and fixing of the buildings, etc., but it is the Ministry of Education who decides how funds will be allocated.

- Elementary Special Education Support Model: the Board of Trustees is 100% committed to Special Education and those kids who are in the margins. The Board of Trustees continues to find other ways through their reserves and puts an additional \$8 million into the special education budget every year. Trustee Godkin pointed out that the Trustee Chair regularly advocates with the Ministry of Education to properly fund special education.

Trustee Godkin pointed out that he was not aware of chronic bus cancellations on some routes. He encouraged parents/guardians to contact their local Trustee in such cases and to copy the Board of Trustees Chair and Vice Chair. Trustee Hutcheon informed that chronic bus cancellations are absolutely the norm across the province due to shortage of drivers. A question was asked about the bus routes where cancellations have become chronic, at which point does the Board of Trustees take some action and write letters on behalf of students who have the right to get to school? Trustee Godkin pointed out that is the reason why this subject was brought up and why it is critical to inform the Board of Trustees when these situations arise.

Trustee Godkin further informed that draft Strategic Plan Reporting template was discussed at EPOC meeting. The Board of Trustees reviewed it, and it is available on the Board's webpage. Trustee Godkin expressed satisfaction with the level of consultation and presentation of information to the board over the past five years, he also acknowledged the need for further improvement to ensure all voices are heard. Trustee Godkin again encouraged parents to reach out to their local Trustees, scheduling parent council meetings on a day when Trustee is available to attend, allowing them to hear concerns directly from parents. He emphasized that the effectiveness of policies is determined by feedback from the community.

Discussion followed on special education school and school boundaries.

## 6.3 Board Update

Associate Superintendent Gollogly reported that the Second Semester started on 5 February 2024.

There are numerous activities taking place within the school and the community to celebrate Black History and Futures Month. She reported on next year's school calendar planning which is being conducted with other two

Boards and their calendar committees respectively (including PIC, union and non-unions). There are three options for 2024/25 calendar. Survey is open until 12 February. Currently 5500 people have voted. The Board encourages people to participate in the survey. A PIC Representative provided feedback by noting that survey is text-heavy and suggested that visual calendar highlighting the differences might be more user-friendly.

Reminder that 8 April is the Total Solar Eclipse and that PA day was moved from 12 April to 8 April.

Pink Shirt Day will be observed on February 28th. Many schools are teaming up with the Boys and Girls Club to either wear pink or buy their shirts from the club to support the community. The day is dedicated to promoting kindness and inclusivity.

Assoc. Supt. Gollogly informed that Principal Mike Blackburn gave a presentation about proposed changes to the Special Education Delivery Programs at the EPOC meeting on 7 February. A comprehensive presentation on these changes will be given at the next PIC meeting on 4 April. The changes need to be presented to SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) first, which is scheduled for the following week.

#### 6.4 KFL&A Public Health

Lisa Lollar, RN, reported for KFL&A Public Health:

- **Food Neutral Kids Webinar:** A live webinar titled “Food Neutral Kids: A Parent/Caregiver Presentation is scheduled for Wednesday, February 28th from 6:00 to 7:00 PM. The school team dietitian and a nurse will present ways families can help kids develop a positive relationship with food. Registration details will be shared, and a recording will be available for those who register but cannot attend.
- **Annual Immunization of School Pupils Act Review:** The annual review is underway. Notices have been sent to students who do not meet the immunisation requirements. Families who received a letter are encouraged to call public health and speak to someone on the Vaccine Preventable Disease (VPD) team. The goal is to get students immunised if families choose to do so.
- **Reporting immunisations:** Many people are unaware that family doctors do not report immunisations. Parents can report their child’s immunisations and book appointments for routine immunisations on the Public Health website.
- **School safety:** RN Lollar responded to a concern raised by a PIC representative from Odessa PS about safety around the school. She encouraged reaching out to public health and speaking to someone on the school health team. They have worked with many schools on safety issues and can provide messaging and support. One of their nurses, who works with the city and the school boards and is heavily involved in the Community Safety Zones project, could visit the school to assess the situation and provide support.

#### 6.5 Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC)

Superintendent Gillam informed us that there is nothing to report at this time and that he is hoping that a new representative will be confirmed for the next meeting on 4 April.

#### 6.6 2SLGTBQIA+ Focus Group

S. Bradley informed that the next meeting is 13 February at 7PM.

#### 6.7 KEYS

Regrets.

### 7. Reports for action - None at this time.

8. **Unfinished Business** - None at this time.

9. **New Business** – School Council of Frontenac Secondary School wishes to express concern regarding overuse and misuse of personal devices at schools. The topic of overuse and misuse of personal devices in schools is frequently discussed in meetings. While some parents advocate for a total ban, most recognize the learning benefits for all students and additional benefits for those with special needs. However, there are still many concerns, with stories of incidents happening at school involving cell phones. Review of the guidance documents on the Ontario government page, which state that the use of personal devices is allowed for education. The council does not want to remove this benefit but is looking for better ways to manage device use in schools. Discussion followed. Suggestion was made to perhaps reach out to Student Councils and seek their views as well.

Formal request was placed for recording of PIC meetings to be made available to public, as is the case in some other School Boards.

10. **Correspondence** – None at this time.

11. **Next Meeting** - Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 6:00pm.

12. **Adjournment** - The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.