

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: December 8, 2020

ITEM 1 PRAYER/WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. via Teams and C. Ciapanna led the committee in the opening prayer. D. Eberts chaired the meeting.

ITEM 2 ATTENDANCE

PRESENT - COMMITTEE:

D. Eberts, Co-Chair, L. Perini Parkes, Co-Chair  
L. Fraser, R. Gambale, T. Hartnett, S. Heenan, A. Mari

BOARD/ADMINISTRATION:

D. Hansen, Director of Education  
P. Daly, Chairperson of the Board  
C. Ciapanna, Superintendent of Education

RECORDING SECRETARY: K. Bullard

ITEM 3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2020 MEETING

MOTION:

THAT THE CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2020 BE APPROVED.

MOVER: L. PERINI PARKES

SECONDER: T. HARTNETT

CARRIED

ITEM 4 REPORTS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

D. Eberts congratulated L. Perini Parkes for being elected co-chair. She welcomed new members – Su Heenan from Regina Mundi Catholic Elementary School and Anthony Mari from St. Michael Catholic Elementary School and Bishop Tonnos Catholic Secondary School.

a) D. Eberts/L. Perini Parkes

D. Eberts shared an article written by Roots of Empathy Founder/President, Mary Gordon entitled “Towards a Bully-Free World”. She suggested that this article be shared with Catholic School Councils and principals.

She reported that COVID-19 parent resources are available on the Roots of Empathy website. Resources includes a two-part video series – “Parenting Through COVID-19” and “Through the Lens of Temperament”. These resources were designed to assist parents in supporting their children through the challenges of the pandemic as well as supporting student social/emotional learning needs.

b) P. Daly

P. Daly congratulated L. Perini Parkes on being elected co-chair and he welcomed new members – Su Heenan and Anthony Mari.

He advised that at a recent board meeting, candidates for the position of Trustee were interviewed and, through a voting process, Tyler Iorio was elected the new Trustee for Wards 3 and 4.

i) Update – St. Patrick’s Project

P. Daly reported that approval was received from the Ministry of Education to proceed with the tendering process for the new replacement school. The project is currently out for tender and is scheduled to close in the New Year.

ii) Update – Our Lady of Hope

P. Daly reported that construction is in the final stages and the expected date of opening is late January/early February.

iii) Distinguished Service to Catholic Education Award

P. Daly congratulated Teresa Hartnett for receiving the Distinguished Service to Catholic Education Award for her extraordinary service to publicly funded Catholic Education.

iv) Ministry of Education Funding

P. Daly reported that the Board was given funding (approximately 1 million dollars) for additional support related to COVID-19 as Hamilton moves into the red level. This funding will assist the Board with hiring additional support - teachers, educational assistants and custodial staff.

The Ministry will also provide school boards with Stabilization Funding to assist with the impact of declining enrolment based on projections made in budgets as a result of parents, particularly parents of JK students, who elect to not enrol their child in schools due to COVID-19.

v) Update on Anti-Racism in Education

To assist with the eradication of racism in our Board an Equity Officer was hired. Alicia Ralph was hired for this position.

vi) Home, Parish and School Partnerships

Parents play a critical role in the evangelization and religious education of their children. We will reach out to committee members to join a subcommittee to assist in providing input and recommendations on how to support parents in their roles as the primary educators of their children.

A document is in the process of being released by the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association outlining effective practices to strengthen the home, parish and school partnerships. This document will be shared with the subcommittee when released.

c) D. Hansen

D. Hansen congratulated P. Daly for being re-elected as Chairperson of the Board. John Valvasori was re-elected as Vice-Chair.

i) Virtual Learning Update:

D. Hansen reported that since the lockdown last March, the tool – Thought Exchange has been used to communicate with the community. It has provided valuable information to assist with planning as well as providing feedback. Most recently, the tool was used at the end of October/beginning of November to receive feedback from families currently enrolled in full virtual learning. He shared the following results:

- 502 participants shared 801 thoughts and approximately 12,000 ratings of other people's thoughts. There was an 18% participation rate.
- 82% of respondents were parents of elementary students
- Less than 20% of respondents were from secondary school parents
- A series of 8 questions were asked:
  - Question 1 and 2 gave details of general information (grades and number of children):
    - 50% of respondents had children in primary grades
  - Question 3 – What was the virtual learning experience like for their children:

- Responses ranged from much better than expected to much worse than expected on a five-point scale
- 85% of respondents identified that the virtual learning experience was about what they expected to much better than expected
- 55% of parents identified much better or better than expected
- When reflecting on the ease of access to the on-line class and teacher each day:
  - 93% of respondents identified that they strongly agree or agreed that their child found it easy to get in touch with their class and teacher each day
- Parents were asked about their child's participation in the on-line setting and how easy they found it:
  - 83% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that their children found it easy to learn and participate in the remote setting
- The next two questions were related to the actual work that was assigned:
  - 87% of respondents responded that it was just the right amount of work
  - 22% responded that there was too much
  - 5% responded that there was too little
- The last question related to the amount of time students spent doing on-line learning:
  - 82% of respondents indicated that students spent 4-5 hours each day engaging in learning on-line (a school day is 5 hours/300 minutes)
- Parents were then asked an open-ended question that provided additional feedback on experiences with virtual learning and what would best support children in virtual learning.

When reviewing the responses, eight themes emerged:

- it was a positive experience
- secondary parents were grateful that the opportunity was provided
- elementary parents recognized the work teachers were doing
- regarding assessment and evaluation, it was important to parents that their children receive meaningful and timely feedback in order to support their learning
- online instruction in general (learning task design, delivery, homework, student work, parent and teacher communication) – parents appreciate the work teachers are doing, they were looking for more opportunity in on-line learning for small group participation or personalized feedback and parents emphasized the importance of parent/teacher communication and interviews

- virtual school procedures – concern was expressed regarding number of students in the class and background noise  
As a result, some teachers at the Nicholas Mancini Centre have been moved creating more space and less background noise
- Most secondary parents appreciate the 23-day octomester model
- Supporting connections – this is challenging in a virtual setting - to find more ways for students to interact with each other
- Mental health and well-being – suggestions received - backing off on screen time and giving more breaks and incorporating physical activity to step away from the screen
- Special education – regarding start-up and ensuring educational plan in the hands of teachers in a timely manner

In response, the Board is:

- working with teachers
- looking at the responses
- providing detailed instructions on expectations and due dates
- reviewing communication with parents and students ensuring timely and relevant feedback
- supporting teachers in developing daily learning schedules and outlining an appropriate amount of work for each grade level
- looking at how breaks work into the schedule
- giving teachers suggestions and strategies on communicating with parents
- providing on-going training for teachers to enhance their use of video - to enhance personal contact
- making changes to teaching environment (where they are working)
- supporting teachers in both mental health and special education resources.

With the assistance of ICT and the Curriculum Department, the Board is preparing to provide self-help and tech help to parents.

At the end of January, parents will have another opportunity to choose their mode of learning – either virtual or face-to-face.

ii) COVID-19 Update

Public Health has reported that staff and students are going to school or work with symptoms. This has increased COVID-19 cases in schools and the community.

The Board has been asked to amplify the advice that if you feel sick – stay home, wear your mask and wash your hands.

The following statistics to date were shared:

- 73 students have tested positive for COVID-19
- 17 staff members have tested positive for COVID-19
- The board has 29,000 students and approximately 3,700 staff (less than 1% positivity)
- most COVID-19 positive cases come from outside the school
- the board has had 2 student to student outbreaks and 1 staff to staff outbreak as identified by Public Health an epidemiological connection in the school (student passed on to another student or staff and vice versa)
- when a student or staff member tests positive, the classroom must self isolate for 14 days and the teacher teaches remotely
- 50 cohorts have had to self isolate since the start of school (there is approximately 1,400 classes in elementary and secondary) – percentage is well below 1% impact of COVID-19 in the schools
- Cases are very low due to staff, Health and Safety Staff, parents and students in keeping COVID-19 out of schools
- The face-to-face experience is safe for our students and staff.

d) C. Ciapanna

Catholic School Council Items:

i) Reaching Out Grants - discussion:

C. Ciapanna gave a brief overview of the history of Parent Reaching Out grants. He advised that PRO Grants are one of three ways Catholic School Councils receive funding. Two years ago, the Catholic School Councils applied to the Ministry for this grant. Last year, feeder schools were to plan events but due to COVID-19, plans were cancelled. Most of the money will be returned to the Ministry. This year the board received \$17,651.62 for the Parents Reaching Out grant. 34 schools applied for this grant. This committee is tasked to oversee the applications. The challenge is that all the applications provide for an overage of \$14,000.00.

C. Ciapanna requested suggestions regarding the PRO Grant be sent to the co-chairs and himself.

K. Bullard will send applications to the co-chairs to review with C. Ciapanna. Criteria will be established and they will provide recommendations to this committee. A meeting to discuss will take place in the new year.

Committee members briefly reviewed projects submitted.

T. Hartnett suggested that a group virtual presentation take place as many schools have selected similar speakers.

P. Daly agreed that a combined presentation made economical sense.

Suggestions were made regarding getting additional information to assist with the decision making process.

ii) Parent Conference

C. Ciapanna reported that the committee met. D. Eberts and M. Daoust chair the committee. At least one mini session is planned. Sara Westbrook is tentatively scheduled to do a virtual presentation on Nurturing Your Child's Emotional Well-being. The event is scheduled for February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

C. Ciapanna thanked D. Eberts and M. Daoust for their work in planning this event.

iii) OAPCE

C. Ciapanna advised that OAPCE has not provided details of upcoming events. Information will be shared when received.

ITEM 5      OTHER ITEMS

T. Hartnett advised that the Pope has announced the theme for next year - "Year of St. Joseph". The Diocese is reviewing the distribution of materials.

ITEM 6      MEETING DATES

Next meeting dates are:

- Tuesday, March 9, 2021
- Tuesday, May 11, 2021

CPIC-20-3-8

ITEM 7      ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

THAT THE CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING BE ADJOURNED.

MOVER: L. PERINI PARKES

SECONDER: R. GAMBALE

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.