

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: March 9, 2021

ITEM 1 PRAYER/WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. via Teams and C. Ciapanna led the committee in the opening prayer. L. Perini Parkes 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 DECEMBER 8, 2020 MEETING

MOTION:

THAT THE CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2020 BE APPROVED.

MOVER: C. CIAPANNA

SECONDER: T. HARTNETT

CARRIED

ITEM 4 REPORTS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) D. Eberts/L. Perini Parkes

No report.

b) P. Daly

P. Daly thanked parent leaders and T. Hartnett for their invaluable work this year. He provided the following updates:

i) Home, Parish and School Partnerships

He reported that all CPIC members should have received a copy of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association Home, School and Parish document. This document was distributed widely throughout the province. It is hoped that the Board undertake a similar process to survey schools, Catholic School Councils, parishes to share promising practices with regard to strengthening the home, school and parish partnership. He suggested that a subcommittee of CPIC be established to review the responses and decide how to promote and share those practices with all of the Board's schools.

ii) Planning for 2021-2022 School Year

Last Spring, a steering committee comprised of the Mr. Daly, Mr. Hansen, Mrs. Pace-Gubekjian, Mr. Romano, and Mrs. Degiuli was established to provide recommendations and direction with regard to planning for the next school year. Subcommittees are in the process of being established to provide advice with regard to the 2021-2022 school year.

A survey for parents, students and other stakeholders will be sent out to gather information on thoughts for the upcoming year. At the Provincial level, the Minister of Education has been meeting with Trustee Associations to discuss and establish priorities including student and staff mental health and, closing the learning gap for all students - especially disadvantaged students and families. It is hoped that those priorities will be supported with resources and programs for school boards and students.

iii) Capital Priorities

Annually, school boards are invited to submit a list of capital priorities to the Ministry of Education regarding the building of new schools and the replacement of existing schools. The Board approved that the following projects be submitted:

- Replacement school for St. Francis Xavier in Stoney Creek,
- Replacement school for St. Joseph in the West End,
- Replacement school for St. Margaret Mary on the East Mountain,
- Replacement school for Regina Mundi on the West Mountain,
- A permanent addition at Guardian Angels in Waterdown, and
- Replacement school for St. Paul in Heritage Green.

iv) Our Lady of Hope Opening

It was a blessed day for that school community as the system welcomed and opened this new Catholic school facility.

v) Update – St. Patrick’s Project

Mr. Daly reported that the Board approved the tender for the contractor and that work has begun. In the next six weeks, the existing school will be demolished and construction of the new school will commence.

vi) Ministry of Education Funding

The Board received additional COVID-related funding from the Ministry of Education for technology, PPE, HVAC systems and improvements to buildings, Mental Health, and Summer Learning Programs. The Board approved tenders last week for the purchase of technology, HVAC and other improvements at schools. These projects will be completed over the next year.

c) D. Hansen

Mr. Hansen reported on the following:

i) School Re-organizations

Since the last meeting, there have been re-organizations in both elementary and secondary schools. Students did not return to school after the Christmas Break until February 8th when students returned to in-person learning. The opportunity to change the modality of learning was delayed due to the uncertainty of the return to in-person learning permitted by the Ministry. Elementary schools were re-organized with some re-assignment of staff; however, the disruption was minimized to the greatest extent possible. According to the data, more elementary school parents chose to move their children to face-to-face instruction. 2% of the population that were remote returned to in-person instruction. The Board still continues to operate an on-line/virtual elementary school.

In the secondary panel, schools are working on an octomester schedule consisting of eight 23-day blocks/semesters. Semester five is finishing March 10. Secondary schools are working on a hybrid model where students are placed in cohorts and classes are composed of in-class learners as well as on-line learners. The move to this hybrid model allowed for more elective and pathway course choices. Data shows that more secondary students moved to virtual/fully remote learning.

Planning for the next school year is underway. It is hoped that students can return to in-class learning but the Board is also preparing for remote learning and cohorting as that may be part of the 2021-2022 school year.

ii) COVID-19 Update

In conjunction with the return to school learning in February, there were some health and safety measures introduced – including:

- Students are expected self-screen daily (if old enough or through their parents) for COVID symptoms.
- It is now expected that if a student/staff member are exhibiting just one COVID-19 symptom they are to stay home until receiving a negative COVID test or an alternate explanation for the symptom.
- If someone is symptomatic, there is an expectation that all members of the household will quarantine until there is a negative COVID test or there is an alternate reason for the COVID symptom.
- Secondary students are expected to confirm that they have successfully completed the self-assessment daily. This is recorded daily during morning attendance.
- While the Board had already mandated masking for students from Kindergarten to grade 12, recently the Ministry increased the masking mandate to include Grades 1-3 and strongly recommended for Kindergarten.
- Masking is also required for students when outside in the playground where social distancing is not possible.
- Expanded targeted asymptomatic (less evasive) testing has been offered in schools. There were initial pilots at Bishop Ryan Catholic Secondary School and Cathedral High School. This testing was available for staff and students. The Ministry of Education mandated that school boards were to test weekly 5% of its schools (3 schools) and make testing available to 2% of the student population each week. The Board's strategy is to test according to family of schools (the secondary school and its feeder schools). If the results of the asymptomatic testing raise concern, individuals will be directed to take the full nasal swab at a clinic. The Board has also been able to provide testing to schools with outbreaks. Outbreaks have been identified at St. Eugene and St. Teresa of Avila. This upcoming weekend, St. Thomas More Catholic Secondary School and its feeder schools will have the testing available.
- Since the return to in-person learning, there have been 47 students identified as COVID positive.
- When a student tests positive (still the majority of cases are outside of school), the cohort is quarantined for fourteen days and transition to remote learning.
- An outbreak is determined by Public Health when there is a connection within the school (when one person is COVID positive and another person contracts it from someone within the school).
- The board has had four outbreaks since returning to school.

iii) Academics

The Ministry is in the process of de-streaming the Grade 9 curriculum in various areas. This de-streaming will start in September and will commence with Grade 9 Mathematics. Data has shown that black students, racialized students, students from low income households, students with disabilities and other special education needs are adversely impacted in a streaming model. Starting September, there will be a single Grade 9 Mathematics course for all students with no streaming. Streaming will occur at the end of Grade 9. The curriculum for the new Mathematics program has not yet been released. The Board will continue to provide a Mathematics gap closing course in advance of the Grade 9 course for those students that require such assistance. The Ministry's goal is to de-stream other Grade 9 courses in the coming years.

iv) Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

Students that graduated last year and those that are graduating this year have been exempted from the literacy graduation requirement. This year, the Ministry is offering a field test of the OSSLT. This test is available only for students studying in-person. Details of the Board's participation are still being worked out.

T. Hartnett asked if the grade ten curriculum will be revised. D. Hansen advised that the overall curriculum is being reviewed. It is believed that the grade nine curriculum will prepare students for the grade ten curriculum for either the academic or applied stream. Based on how a student is achieving in grade nine will direct them to the stream in grade ten.

d) C. Ciapanna

C. Ciapanna reported on the following:

i) Opening of Our Lady of Hope Catholic Elementary School

He advised that the opening of Our Lady of Hope Catholic Elementary School was very different this year. The school had a ribbon cutting ceremony at the front door and an assembly outdoors in the playground with students remaining with their cohorts. Social distancing was maintained while outdoors. J. Vandenbosch, the Principal, led the students around the school, through the front entrance and then each class went to their respective classrooms.

He advised that Our Lady of Hope Catholic Elementary School was on the capital priority list approximately five years ago. St. Patrick's was the next school along with St. James the Apostle. He thanked D. Hansen, P. Daly and Finance for putting those projects together for students.

ii) Reaching Out Grants

Applications were received and reviewed from 34 applicants. Available funds totalled \$17,500.00 while applications totalled over \$33,000.00. The co-chairs and Superintendent of Education reviewed the applications and set parameters for the grant so that all applicants received some money and that all applicants receive not less than half of the amount requested. Using these two basic parameters, the total amount allocated was approximately \$18,000.00. Some schools have already started their projects. Reporting documentation will be provided to all applicants.

iii) Parent Conference

The virtual Parent Conference took place on February 3rd. D. Eberts and M. Daoust were the co-chairs. Sara Westbrook did a presentation for all present. Approximately 900 people registered for the event and approximately 400+ were in attendance. The topic was beneficial for all present.

The committee is considering offering another event before the end of the school year. An update will be provided.

iv) OAPCE

A list of liaison persons from each Catholic School Council was provided to OAPCE. OAPCE will contact schools directly regarding upcoming events. A newsletter with ideas and webinars planned was sent to all schools.

L. Perini Parkes advised that she participated in the first webinar with Paul Davis and found it to be a very good presentation. She advised that St. Thomas is having Mr. Davis do a presentation for the school community on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

v) School Year Calendar

The 2020-2021 calendar was updated to reflect changes to the PA days. PA days were strategically placed throughout the school year due to certain criteria. Criteria included collective agreements and trying to coordinate dates with the Public Board to be cost effective regarding transportation.

The Ministry of Education mandated School Boards to schedule three PA days prior to students returning to school. It was a good strategy to help teachers prepare for in-class and on-line learning. An additional change was made due to the Ministry of Education changing the March Break to April (April 12-16).

The committee received copies of the proposed school year calendars for 2021-2022. The timelines were changed and the Board did not receive criteria/guidance from the Ministry of Education. Consultation with the various stakeholders is being done over the next three weeks. The Ministry has recommended three PA days again next year prior to the start of school for the students. Most dates coincide with the public board and the Board is trying to meet the needs of the Ministry, the collective agreement and transportation.

ITEM 5      MEETING DATES

Next meeting dates is:

- Tuesday, May 11, 2021

ITEM 6      ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

THAT THE CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING BE ADJOURNED.

MOVER: D. EBERTS  
SECONDER: C. CIAPANNA

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.