



Joint Educational Parent Advisory Group

34 Sandy Drive, Stoney Creek, ON L8E 4X5

Visit us at <http://www.hwcdsb.ca/parents/jepag>

2009/2010 Executive

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Past Chair

Lisa Rao
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Bishop Tonnos CSS

April 15, 2010 Annual Trustees Meeting

- 1) Meeting called to order by co-chair Angel Vecchiola and all were welcomed.
- 2) Opening prayer – “Prayer for Awareness”
- 3) Introductions
- 4) Pat Daly thanked all for coming and for engagement on the part of Parents – The triad of school, home, parish.
- 5) Questions for trustees:

Question 1 – Effective Feb 1, 2010, the new Safe Schools Act came into effect. Please explain the changes and how they affect parents and students.

Safe Schools Act, 2001. This has not changed. Bill 157 was introduced in Feb 2010, “Keeping our Kids Safe at School” – an extension of the original act - 3 major areas. Original bill spoke of consequences for the student, but was missing specific language regarding responsibilities of others.

A) ALL school staff is required to report to their principal any actions that could lead to suspension.

B) If a student was victimized by another student, the Principal must call the parents/guardians of the victim, unless the Principal believes that this might cause further difficulty at home (i.e., if the student was bullied on the basis of sexual orientation and indicated that they had not yet told their parents.) Exclusions are students over 18, or emancipated minors (16/17.)

C) Ensure that the victim has the appropriate resources to cope, such as Crisis Hotline information, counseling, etc. The legislation extends as far as to the bus drivers, and all of our drivers have received training on this. Does everything that appears to be bullying have to be reported? Anything that happens that WOULD result in a suspension or expulsion is the defining criteria. Must identify what was done wrong, tell them to stop, help them understand why it was wrong, and the expectation of improved behavior. The principal cannot publicly identify the bully, but can let parents of those involved know how what types of things can be done.

Question 2 – How will the board implement the many curriculum changes this coming year?

Our current curriculum is 12 years old. Most changes are revisions, not major changes.

- Completed the purchase of Grade 7/8 Literacy program this year.
- New resource purchased for Gr 7/8 Science.
- Grade 4/5/6 new resources for Family Life Program.
- We have been a part of the program learning about Family Life right from Kindergarten (referring to the news item in the Hamilton Spectator regarding sex education being taught in the province beginning in Gr 3).
- The “Food and Beverage Act” will be fully implemented next year – must be an 80/20 ratio – 80% meet the requirements, 20% slightly higher, list of banned foods. 10 exceptions for pizza days, etc.
- Hope to continue to support the Literacy program with higher level books.
- Early Learning will go into 7 schools – Ministry gave us 18 schools.
 - St. Patrick
 - Holy Name of Jesus
 - St. Brigid
 - St. Lawrence
 - Blessed Kateri
 - St. Matthew
 - Our Lady of the Assumption.
- St. David’s is not an Early Learning school, but the money given to cover the 4 schools full day K (2.5 FT equiv) given to St. David’s.

Question 3 – Will a new reporting card be implemented this coming year for the elementary schools?

- The new report card “Growing Success: Assessment and Evaluation in Reporting” will be implemented in the elementary schools.
- Currently there are 3 reporting periods. Beginning Sept 2010, there will be 2 reporting periods (at the end of Jan (or early Feb) and end of June); with a progress report in the fall.
- Progress report will speak to 6 areas of Learning Skills and Work Habits, which will be on every report card from 1-12.
 - Responsibility
 - Organization
 - Independent Work
 - Collaboration
 - Initiative
 - Self-Regulation
- Progress report will have major subject areas mentioned, but not details.
 - Progressing with Difficulty, Progressing well, Progressing very well.
- Interviews will not be in December since report cards do not come out; however, parents are always welcome, and encouraged, to contact school for meetings.

- Students in Grade 1-6 will receive letter grades, where students in Grade 7-8 will receive percentage grade.
- Ministry is concerned that the Levels 1-4 may not be clear enough for parents to understand. They will list what letter or Percentage constitutes which level.
- Regarding the Arts, Dance and Drama, these are now listed as separate items rather than together.
- Health and Phys Ed -there is now a separate entry on the new report cards.
- Significant changes in Secondary – assessment policy and accommodations for students on IEPs. The Board did suggest that going to 2 reporting sessions is not a good idea, however, Government made this decision.

Question 4 – Have there been any updates or changes to the Education Act that effect our school board?

Bill 177 – comes into effect this year – a number of regulations including audit committees to ensure greater financial accountability. Some areas of the province have experienced great difficulty in knowing the limits of trustees and what they should be doing.

EQUITY POLICY – Mrs. Amos and the administration are working on a policy for our school; For example, the issue of gay students. Our board has had a number of policies in place regarding diversity, such as the Tim Horton’s Camp. We will be keeping to the standards of our faith, but would not permit discrimination or bullying of any student for any reason.

Question 5 – What challenges will the board be facing in the next 3 years?

- 1) Declining enrolment will continue for the next number of years. Consolidations and boundaries are continuously looked at.
- 2) Capital Program – unprecedented construction – St. Matthew’s Binbrook; Annunciation of our Lord, west Mountain; Immaculate Conception, Ancaster; Holy Name of Jesus nearly ready to begin new building; additions to St. Lawrence; replacement school for St. Thomas in Waterdown; replacement for Bishop Ryan. Over the next couple of years, a new St. Ann’s which will also house St. Columba.
- 3) Budget – all non-salary areas will be looked at very closely. Special Education is a concern with the way we are funded. The current Ministry funding formula is flawed for Spec. Ed. Also, Early Years is not being fully funded by the government. The government is not funding the extra half day for the Special Needs students.

Question 6/7 – What are the roles/responsibilities of the trustees to the school board and their constituents? What are the qualifications and term of a trustee? What is the basic framework (hierarchy) of the school board with respect to Director, trustees, etc?

The term of Trustees is now 4 years (has grown from 2-3-4), legally must be at least 18, Canadian Citizen, Catholic School supporter, cannot be an employee of the board. One must have a commitment to the development of Catholic Education and should be real role models in terms of their personal faith. The trustees are responsible for setting policies, approve budget, and approve mission and vision, selection /hiring of Director of Education and Superintendents. Trustees should not be involved in the day to day running of the Board. Need to listen to parents or Catholic rate payers. Listen well and attempt to make sure that that person is connected to the appropriate person.

Don't try to resolve matters personally, but make connections. Hierarchy – our Board historically had a very collegial relationship. Board of Trustees makes policies, Director/Superintendent decides how to make it happen, and principals make it happen. Board that was the last straw to create major difficulties was the Toronto Catholic Board – went way beyond their mandate. Code of Conduct for Trustees is coming in the future to set boundaries and consequences for exceeding the boundaries

Question 8 – How will parents be consulted with regards to the latest development regarding school uniform policy?

The only issue the Board dealt with was around the embroidered crest. A committee will be formed including parents, reps, senior administration, trustees, OECTA, perhaps others under Mr. Ciapanna. That group will recommend what the survey instrument will look like. Then it will be approved by the Board, and some time in the fall it will go to all Catholic School Councils, all parents and Principals.

Mr. Daly invites JEPAG to forward to Mr. Ciapanna the names of 4 people who we think would be good to have on this panel. The board will also invite a representative of the other parent group who has concerns as well. An initial report should be presented to the Director next January 2011.

Questions from the floor:

Question regarding Bullying – what information is available to parents once they find out that their child is either the bully, bullied or bystander, especially regarding cyber-bullying? What should parents be doing and who does it get reported to?

Our Board takes Cyber-bullying very seriously – our Board is working very closely with the police. We have resources available in the school. On Ministry webpage under student safety there are resources and information for parents. “What Parents Need to Know.” See www.ontario.ca/safeschools for this document and more information on bullying prevention. Sexting also a big concern. Once that type of thing is on the Internet, it is out there forever. It is very important to educate parents, especially because the worst of the bullying is often happening from home. Parents must take responsibility for what their children are doing and for knowing what is happening in their own home.

Boundary question – is there going to be a change of boundary with Immaculate Heart being overcrowded and schools like St Clare and Our Lady of Peace with declining enrollment?

Changing boundaries is not as easy as it sounds and will not happen in the next year. Board is in the final stages of trying to purchase a site for a new school (in the Winona area), then get the government to provide us the funding to build a new school hopefully within the next year.

Formal Interview for new Report Cards?

Would encourage that you request an interview after the Progress report, but not a formal interview.

Challenge regarding Catholicity?

There is a difference from school to school and parish to parish in preparing for Sacraments. Is there a guideline as to who is responsible for what? Sacraments are ultimately decided by the Pastor of the Church. Preparation also differs from Parish to Parish, but our Fully Alive curriculum includes the minimum standards for preparation.

Concern surrounds the Confirmation dates pre-dating the instructional time in the school. We must work together to communicate among our parish priests.

Angel thanked our guests and offered to make a donation on their behalf to a Board approved charity of their choice.

- 6) April 29 – Deanery meeting 7pm regarding Year of the Family
- 7) OAPCE – Annual General meeting and Conference this year will be on Saturday May 15th, hosted by Niagara Falls- Sharing the Good News to be held at St.Michael's CSS. Visit the OAPCE website for more details www.oapce.on.ca. Suggestions to arrange for a bus to bring parents from Hamilton to the Conference were discussed. Please contact our Communications Coordinator as soon as possible if you are interested in attending. At the next JEPAG meeting, we will be holding elections for the Hamilton Regional Director, the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education.
- 8) Parent Conference – October 30/10 Cardinal Newman. Luisa is the new Co-Chair for the Parent Conference steering committee. We are also looking for more parents to sit on sub committees for the conference, if interested please contact Luisa Conti.
- 9) Meeting adjourned with final prayer. Next meeting will be on Thursday, May 20th, 2010, Year End Review.

NEXT MEETING

**YEAR END WRAP UP
Thursday, May 20, 2010 at 7:00 pm
Nicholas Mancini Centre**