

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: December 15, 2021

ITEM 1 PRAYER/WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. via Zoom and J. Angiolillo 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

J. Angiolillo, Superintendent of Education

GUEST: T. Kovach, Superintendent of Education

RECORDING SECRETARY: K. Bullard

ITEM 3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 12, 2021 MEETING

MOTION:

THAT THE CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 12, 2021 BE APPROVED.

MOVER: L. FRASER

SECONDER: S. HEENAN

CARRIED

ITEM 4 REPORTS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) T. Kovach

i) Policy S.M.15 Bullying Prevention and Intervention

T. Kovach reported that PPM144 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention was revised by the Ministry of Education on November 25, 2021 and that the Ministry has provided further direction to school boards. She highlighted the current Board Policy S.M.15 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention and requested input and recommendations from this committee. She advised that feedback has already been received from various groups: Special Education Advisory Committee, various student groups, Student Council Presidents, Cathedral High School Indigenous student group, St. Thomas More United Against Racism and various staff. Consistent input from those consulted indicated a need to include the unique characteristics of a Catholic school climate, that there is not a tolerance for bullying, and that there is a need to add references of the Catholic faith.

T. Kovach reported that Board supports are in place - including an Anonymous Bullying Reporting Tool on the Board website. Recommendations include: regular staff professional development on bullying and cyberbullying to be provided to all school board staff, annual professional development for teachers and staff who work directly with students on bullying prevention strategies to promote a positive Catholic school climate. The School Bullying template includes how to create a safe environment so that students know how to report and have confidence that something would be done about it. Another recommendation includes: that bullying prevention and intervention awareness raising strategies for staff, students, parents and guardians will occur and include the Board Anti-Bullying Plan, reporting procedures, the Anonymous Bullying Reporting Tool, materials, resources and programs available for students, parents and guardians. The website will include an area that provides recognizing signs and what a parent or guardian could do to support the child in reporting.

Committee input included:

- faith support from staff in dealing with incidents;
- challenge to get students to report incidents;
- how to engage students to report; and
- lunchtime bullying solutions.

ii) Policy S.M.09 Code of Student Conduct and Discipline

T. Kovach highlighted the current policy. Input from other groups included the addition of distinctiveness of the Catholic school student and the Catholic school environment – that we are held to a standard where it is not solely respect and civility but rather who we are called to be as children of God. The policy speaks to a sense of security and importance to ensure that one can achieve their fullest capacity and the responsibility of all those involved with the child.

Items highlighted included:

- standards of behaviour;
- requirements for students;
- rights and responsibilities;
- student discipline;
- discipline;
- progressive discipline;
- consequences/situational factors/mitigating factors;
- types of suspensions;
- new legislation regarding Kindergarten to Grade 3 students;
- infractions;
- long term suspension program;
- expulsion; and
- refusal of access.

T. Kovach reported that all policies are posted on the Board website, and are included in school presentations and assemblies where codes of conduct are explained. In addition, educators review expectations with students and reinforced messaging may also take place if required.

Committee input included:

- clarification of students' rights and responsibilities to include respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, creed, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability – that a student has a right to fair, equitable treatment, not biased and discriminatory in any way;
- include that we do this because we are called to it by our Catholic faith;
- add to progressive discipline – The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board supports and actively promotes the practice of progressive discipline as influenced by our Catholic values and the Human Rights Code and other legislative mandate;

- to include in the policy a reflection that everything in our Catholic schools is different than other schools because it is based on the foundation of our Catholic principles; and
- that an emphasis on digital media and copyrights (logos) be respected.

iii) Policy S.M.08 Safe Schools

Committee input included:

- the need for stronger messaging regarding Catholic values and expectations – It is the commitment of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board whose foundation is set on Catholic teachings and values, through its programs, policies and procedures, to provide as a safe a learning and teaching environment as possible for its inclusive school community and, in particular, for its students and staff.

Additional comments and recommendations can be shared with L. Perini-Parkes and D. Eberts for T. Kovach.

b) D. Eberts/L. Perini Parkes

i) Parent Engagement Session

D. Eberts reported on a virtual Parent Engagement session held on October 26th hosted on by the Ministry of Education for Chairs, Co-Chairs and School Board Leads. Ministry Parent Engagement session notes were forwarded to committee members for their information and are attached to these Minutes. D. Eberts highlighted the following:

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action in response to the revisions underway to introduce mandatory Indigenous-focused learning to the Social Studies, Grades 1-3 curriculum, for an anticipated implementation in September 2023. Resources and links are shared in the document.
- It was suggested that these session notes be included with the Minutes and shared with Principals, Catholic School Councils and parents.
- Listening and Learning: Supporting Parent Engagement Together session included a discussion via chatrooms to discuss:
 - How parents and families in the community feeling about the new school year?
 - What are PICs plans for the school year?
 - What would you like to discuss at the next Parent Engagement meeting?

- Parents advised that while there are improvements, new challenges were added and that there remains a concern for the physical and mental health of staff and students.
- Parents are happy to have their children back in schools interacting and connecting with their peers in the classroom.

ii) Parent Conference

The co-chairs of the Parent Conference Committee, D. Eberts and M. Daoust met with J. Angiolillo to discuss this year's plans. The event was held virtually last year and will be held virtually again this year. Parent Conference Committee members were asked for input regarding this year's event. A two-speaker series is being planned - the first event will be held on February 2, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. with Paul Davis speaking on social networking. The second event will be held April 26, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. with Anne O'Brien speaking on Catholic Identity. A "save the date" notice was sent to schools and more information will follow.

iii) CPIC on Twitter

L. Perini-Parkes reported that the CPIC account on Twitter is up and running. Thank you to Denise Yamashita for her assistance. Additional training is being planned. It is hoped to provide information to parents and to open lines of communication.

iv) PRO Grant Update

D. Eberts, L. Perini-Parkes and J. Angiolillo met last week to review PRO Grant applications. A total of 35 schools applied and proposals were reviewed. Collaboration with other schools was suggested.

c) P. Daly

P. Daly thanked the co-chairs and committee members for their significant contributions to our Catholic school system and D. Hansen and J. Angiolillo for their leadership.

He provided updates on:

i) Capital Projects Update

- The new St. Patrick school is currently on schedule;

- A \$17-million tender was approved by the Board of Trustees for the construction of a new St. James School. Students will move to the former Our Lady of the Assumption School site in the New Year so that demolition of the existing St. James School and construction can begin;
- Confirmation was received for an allocation from the Provincial Government for a five-classroom addition and forty-nine child care spaces addition at Guardian Angels School. Tendering for an Architect will take place soon.

ii) Catholic Identity

P. Daly shared a quote regarding Catholic Identity – “the Catholic Identity of Catholic Schools is to place Christ at the centre and to be in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church.” It is important for all to make the connection with Christ as the centre and that we are only Catholic schools because we are an extension of the teaching ministry of the Church.

iii) Board Letters

A letter from the board was sent to parents and staff encouraging students and staff to bring belongings home for the break in the event a return to on-line learning is directed by the government.

He wished all committee members God’s blessings for a blessed Christmas.

d) D. Hansen

D. Hansen provided updates on the following:

i) Hamilton Public Health

Regular meetings are being held with Hamilton Public Health to collaborate on issues with respect to COVID-19 in schools.

Recent changes include:

- elementary and secondary students must remain in cohorts;
- inclement weather days include two options: buses cancelled and schools remain open or full closure;

- childcare visitor restrictions have been relaxed to allow parents to drop off/pick up their child and exit the building after doing so;
- Public Health has changed the view of the virus and are treating most cases as the new Omicron variant. When a positive case is determined, regardless of vaccine status of students they are treating the class cohort as a close contact and dismissing the class cohort. Public Health investigates to see if it is the new variant. If not Omicron, fully vaccinated students may return to school.
- The Ministry of Education has provided health and safety updates for School Boards requiring that parent-teacher meetings are virtual;
- assemblies in elementary schools are still on hold;
- daily screening will be reinstated after the break and confirmation of screening is required;
- a return to a full semester system in secondary is being planned for February 2nd with a contingency plan in place in case it is necessary to remain in a quadmester model;
- voluntary rapid antigen kits were distributed to students and are encouraged to be used over the break;
- Public Health has indicated that anyone in high contact extracurricular sports (including basketball, hockey, wrestling, indoor soccer and cheer) are required to show proof of double vaccination;
- elementary student sport participation is currently being reviewed;
- fans at games were limited to two parents/family members per student in secondary, one parent for each elementary student;
- limited student attendance at Championship games was allowed;
- Federal rules, up to recently, indicated that those twelve and under travelling with a fully vaccinated companion did not have to quarantine on arrival to Canada, however, these children were required to stay home from school for a two-week period when arriving in Canada;
- Positive COVID cases as of yesterday were 205 students, 36 staff, with 18 outbreaks – which remains a low percentage of overall students and staff.

R. Gamble asked if vaccine clinics would be reinstated for the third booster. D. Hansen advised that the Board is working with Public Health. Parents will be notified when a plan is in place.

R. Gambale expressed concern regarding restrictions to secondary washrooms. D. Hansen advised that there are capacity limits and the Board is working with school principals regarding policing and educating students on protocols.

S. Heenan inquired about vaccine status. D. Hansen advised that the Board does not know a student's vaccine status. If an outbreak occurs, Public Health receives a cohort list and Public Health views their database for information. Parents provide a declaration to schools in order for the student to return. Public Health holds the record of vaccination and it is not shared with the Board.

e) J. Angiolillo

J. Angiolillo spoke to the following reports:

i) Anti-Racism Education Committee Report

A brief description was provided.

ii) Focus on Youth: Summer Program 2021

Many staff were involved in promoting and delivering this program. The program provided mentorship and assisted students to feel connected, valued, empowered and engaged.

iii) Indigenous Gathering Space Project

Gathering Spaces at St. Eugene CES, Holy Name of Jesus CES and Cathedral HS were highlighted.

iv) Synod 2023 Diocese of Hamilton Survey

A letter to Catholic School Council Chairs/Co-Chairs, memorandum to Principals, Vice-Principals and Site Managers were shared. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

v) HWCDSD Cares Newsletter

This newsletter is an excellent resource and will be posted on the Board website.

vi) Pilgrimage

The Pilgrimage is being planned for May 1, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. at Cathedral High School.

vii) Catholic School Council Breakfast

This event is being planned for February 4, 2022.

J. Angiolillo thanked L. Perini-Parkes for her suggestion of a Catholic School Council Retreat – to be reviewed in the future.

A. Mari thanked Mrs. Fortino and Mr. Ciapanna for their successful careers in helping students and staff reach their goals

f) Other Business

No other business.

ITEM 5 MEETING DATES

Next meeting dates are:

- Tuesday, March 8, 2022
- Tuesday, May 10, 2022.

ITEM 6 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

THAT THE CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
BE ADJOURNED.

MOVER: A. MARI

SECONDER: T. HARTNETT

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.