

Parent Involvement Committee

Date: Thursday, September 11, 2008

Time/Place: 4 to 6 p.m.

HJA Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga

Location: Trustees' Area (Mezzanine Level)

Committee Savi Khanna, School Council Chair representing Brampton, Co-chair

Members in Karen McDonald, School Council Chair representing Caledon, Co-chair

Attendance: Valerie Arnold-Judge, Trustee representing Caledon

Ashis Basu, Parent Member representing the diverse community

Sally Drew, School Council Chair representing Mississauga

Alison Farbar, Acting Communications Officer, will be replacing Carla Pereira while she is on maternity leave

Jim Grieve, Director of Education

Deanna Henderson, Parent Member representing the Special Education Advisory Committee

Dr. Salha Jeizan, Parent Member representing Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel

Steve Kavanagh, Trustee representing Brampton

Rabia Khedr, Parent Member representing the diverse community

Varsha Naik, Community Liaison Co-ordinator, Communications and Strategic Partnerships

Debanjali Paul, Parent Member representing the diverse community

Carla Pereira, Communications Officer, Communications and Strategic Partnerships

Don Stephens, Trustee representing Mississauga

Brian Woodland, Director, Communications and Strategic Partnerships

Starting Point 2008

Jim Grieve provided a brief summary of the board's focus for the upcoming school year. He spoke of the board's focus on building positive places to learn and work—places where students achieve their best in environments that are nurturing, welcoming, engaging, inclusive, safe and respectful. He also shared the theme of this year's Starting Point event, *The Smile Within*, and shared the video that was shown at the event with the committee.

Update on distribution of parent involvement video created for Pamela Tomasevic's previous superintendency

In June, Savi Khanna brought in a parent involvement video created for Pamela Tomasevic's superintendency. Upon viewing the video, the committee decided to order dubs for all elementary schools in Peel. Communications ordered the dubs and distributed them to schools by the end of June. The video was accompanied by a covering memo that provided schools with tips on when to show the video to encourage parent involvement, e.g. during kindergarten registration.

Consent to post parent involvement video testimonials on board website

The committee discussed posting the video, or portions of the video, on the board's website in the new parent involvement section. Carla Pereira followed up with Tom Hicks, the principal of Queen St. Public School, to determine whether or not consent could be obtained from students and parents who are featured in the video. Unfortunately, Tom believes that many of the students and parents who are featured have left Queen St. Public School and are no longer in contact with the school. At this point, we do not believe that posting the video on the Peel board website will be possible.

Direction on Ministry of Education parent involvement funding

The Ministry of Education has provided the Peel board with \$28,749 in base funding to support the work of the Parent Involvement Committee. The funding must be spent by Aug. 31, 2009.

The committee approved that up to \$15,000 of the funding be dedicated to running **multilingual focus groups** with newcomer parents around parent involvement. Communications believes that for this amount of money, the board can hold approximately 10 focus groups in the top 10 languages spoken by Peel families. Committee members would like to have parents of children with special needs involved in the focus groups.

The committee also approved \$2,000 for the creation of a short, **two-and-a-half minute video** to post on school websites related to parent involvement. The video would encourage and inspire involvement and be posted near or on volunteer job boards. Communications will also look into how to make the video more accessible. An estimated cost for this project will be brought to the next committee meeting.

Committee members will discuss funding keynote speakers for the board's Parent Literacy Conference and Volunteer Recognition Event at the next meeting. They will also discuss providing a thank-you gift from the committee and a parent involvement survey card in this year's volunteers' gift bags.

Parent involvement section of www.peelschools.org

The committee approved the board's new section of its website, dedicated to parent involvement. The new "Get involved" section will be available on the Peel board website during the week of Sept. 15.

Camera-ready article series for school newsletters

Some of the tip sheets and other information that is posted in the new "Get involved" section of the Peel board website will also be sent to schools to be considered for inclusion in their monthly school newsletters.

Action items

- Alison Farbar to provide a bio on Joe Rich, potential keynote speaker at this year's Parent Literacy Conference for the committee to review
- Communications staff will begin planning for the multilingual focus groups and report back on their status at the next PIC meeting
- Committee members to bring suggestions for Parent Literacy Conference speakers who represent the diverse community in Peel to the next meeting
- As a result of a question from community member Catherine Suplet, the committee will discuss the criminal record check process at the next meeting. The committee will brainstorm ideas for simplifying the process before consulting with the Peel board's criminal record check assistant and Peel Police.

Next meeting

The next Parent Involvement Committee meeting will take place in the Trustees' Area at the HJA Brown Education Centre on Monday, November 17, 2008 between 4 and 6 p.m. Please let Alison Farbar know if you are unable to attend. Refreshments will be provided.