

Minutes - Virtual Meeting

Parent Involvement Committee

May 27, 2020

Attendance: Mangaljit Dabb, Co-chair, representing Brampton
Shazia Hassan, Parent member representing Mississauga
Warda Abdulsamed, Parent representing Mississauga
Karla Bailey, Parent representing Brampton
Neema Bhanot, Parent member representing Brampton
Leona Chen, Parent member representing Mississauga
Heather Munich, Parent member representing Caledon
Arvind Phansatkar, Parent representing Mississauga
Diane Sardi, Parent member representing Caledon
Tina Walia, Parent representing Brampton
Romana Siddiqui, Parent member representing Mississauga
Barb Cyr, representing Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Peter Joshua, Director of Education
Susan Benjamin, Trustee representing Mississauga
Will Davies, Trustee representing Brampton;
John Marchant, Trustee representing Mississauga
Ashley Bigda, Community Relations Officer
Audrey Crasto, School Communications Assistant

Regrets: Dr. Salha Jeizan, Committee member MIAG Ctr. For Diverse Women & Families

- 1. Welcome, Introductions, Declaration of Conflict of Interest, Approval of Agenda and Approval of Minutes:**
 - No Conflict of Interest declared at this time;
 - Agenda for meeting to be accepted , motion from Karla; seconded by Barb;
 - Minutes from April 20 meeting accepted, motion from Tina; seconded by Neema.
- 2. Director Update , Peter Joshua:**
 - Appreciation of the partnership with families in the challenges of distance learning. There is an expectation of 'synchronous learning', incorporating ways for teachers to connect with small groups of students; video / audio conferencing for students to connect with teacher; provisions for students to continue learning
 - For grade 12 students, the required volunteer hours have been waived. Ways to support graduating students, equitably, are being investigated. Many secondary students requesting an extra year – Ministry is opening doors to allow this;

- COVID-19 update – Schools closed until end of school year, but will be organizing for students to pick-up personal items and clean-out lockers. It is strongly recommended that students wear masks, but not mandated. Masks and gloves will be made available for staff. Uncertain what landscape of schools will look like in the Fall. Summer school will be offered on-line. Not sure of status of Summer Camps;
- Rental rates for community organizations will not be raised for at least another year. Status of PIC funding and Grants - awaiting direction from Ministry;
- Mangaljit raised concern that PIC was not notified of situation where the School Chair was removed from their position, until after the incident. Peter advises that there is a need to look communication pathways. Looking forward, issues pertaining to PIC should be shared, hopefully before media releases, so that PIC has opportunity to prepare statements;
- IPRC status – Special Education departments have process they are implementing virtually. Barb has heard that this is happening;
- Diane questions what 'normal' will look like in the Fall. Peter responds that there is currently no indication from the Ministry. He anticipates that there will be models considered from other School Boards. Surge of pandemic will dictate approaches and level of social distancing;
- Mangaljit queries potential difficulties that could arise from Teacher Unions, in the use of distance learning methods. Peter responds that there are good relationships in the Board, and there has been a lot of learning from this situation, and many possible approaches. As a potential time line of receiving information, Peter suggests that the Ministry tends to provide about a “one month of knowledge” pattern, Announcements regarding return to school should be anticipated near the end of July, with consultations between the Ministries of Health and Education;
- Directives from Ministry Review – Will incorporate consultation with PIC throughout the processes. There will be development of practices and processes for different approaches to discipline, with no suspensions for students in kindergarten to grade 3. There will be a focus on “de-streaming”, with revision and review of guidance practices, with a need to breakdown barriers for parents and a need for parents voice to help select streams. Ask for PIC to be at the table with consultation of the Black Community. Discussion of Members, with Mangaljit stating that we are attempting to create an Anti-Black racism sub-committee, with a list of Members who will participate in consultations, with opportunity to develop annual equity plan and measures to be put in place. Karla states that she has received positive comments on the engagement with the Black Community, but raises concerns with the robotic voice that delivered the voicemail message, and advises that “actions need to match words’.

3. **Trustee Updates:**

- Susan Benjamin reports info from two meetings last week. 1. Budget Development Meeting, with info from on-line survey – suggests PIC to promote use of funds by School Councils; 2. Student Census data

received, and to be made available on Board website. There was a good rate of response in the Census (75 – 80%) by comparison with other Boards. [Comment from Karla that the PDSB website can be difficult to navigate. Peter affirms that website re-development is on-going];

- John Marchant shared concerns of resources available for families of which English is not the primary language. He has spoken at Board Meetings of the lack of support to PIC and the struggles to connect with School Councils – there is a need to get resources to all stakeholders. He also shared info re: Directives from Board Meetings. Targets will hopefully be better received than an apology letter;
- Will Davies reports that he has received positive feedback from families in Wards 2 and 6, whom he has guided in contacting Principals and Superintendents in dealing with student learning.

4. **Co-chair Updates:**

- Ontario PICs had a virtual meeting with the Ministry to discuss challenges and successes of 'distance learning'. Appeared that all Boards are having similar experiences. A joint statement by 38 PICs was submitted to the Minister of Education, requesting that PRO-Grant and PIC Funding to be carried over to the next school year. They are currently awaiting communication from the Ministry;
- Elections for coming year – Application process opened earlier this month. Ten applications have been received, but many are incomplete. The deadline will be extended by one week, until June 4, 2020;
- Karla reports that some community groups have reached out to have PIC help them to share their messages. Discussion of appropriate messages, with John cautioning partnerships with agencies that do not serve all Municipalities in the Peel Board. No objections received. Karla to network / share social media with Neighbourhood Watch;
- Planning for next year – Targets to be identified. Parents have inquired if there are plans / tools for virtual platforms or meetings – not specific at this time. Continued need to reach out to schools without School Councils;
- Discussion of an Equity Statement - Romana shares concern that mechanisms need to be in place for parents / community members to be held accountable, when volunteering with schools. Mangaljit states that there is a Code of Conduct in place, but PIC and School Councils should have statements should ensure that these are in place. An on-line module, or written agreement would help with an awareness / understanding. Warda shares concerns, that from an operational point of view, many Councils will require more comprehensive training in order to prepare School Council members. Mangaljit reports that Toronto PIC has a number of resources. The Outreach sub-committee will be able to address some of these issues and help to access resources
- Sub-committee addressing Anti-Black Racism will be shared by e-mail.

5. **New Business:** Not at this time.

6. **Public Questions:** None received, at this time.
7. **Closing Comments:** Mangaljit, in his last meeting in the role of Co-chair, thanks the Committee for their support in an incredible year of challenges. He praises Shazia for being “wonderful” and working so well together. He hopes that PIC will continue to evolve in its role and find its independence, as this is a constructive period for Peel Board to be more of an outstanding model in education, not just in the province, but across the country;
- Shazia thanks Mangaljit for his leadership, and the Committee for their support;
 - Arvind, Heather and Leona are thanked and wished well, as their terms are ending;
 - Peter has appreciated being held accountable and opening opportunities for discussions that may not have been addressed in previous years.

Next Meeting: To Be Determined.