

District School Council / Parent Involvement Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 16, 2017 7 p.m.

Lindsay Education Centre – 300 County Road 36, Lindsay

Haliburton County Education Centre – 12 Vintage Crescent, Minden

Muskoka Education Centre – 1271 Cedar Lane, Bracebridge

A G E N D A

1. Welcome and Introductions

Grant Boudrault – Kawartha Lakes area chair

- Grant welcomed participants from each of the sites.

2. Update from the Director of Education

Larry Hope – Director of Education

- **EQAO and assessments**
 - number of expectations and depth of curriculum will be quite an undertaking when being reviewed by the Ministry
 - so far we have been asked for a team to participate in a review of assessment and reporting. There is also an evening session planned by the Ministry for parents to provide input
 - a couple of school boards have petitioned the school board to ask that EQAO be put on hold while this assessment is ongoing – so far we have not heard anything from the ministry in response to this request. We do not know the intended outcome of this speculation at this time.
 - there has been a commitment that by the end of this school year there will be direction on what large scale assessment looks like in Ontario.
 - School boards have raised concerns about accommodations – extra time, preferential seating, prompts, etc. We have received formal notification from EQAO that an IEP will no longer be required for a student to receive accommodations.
- **Elementary Sports**
 - some changes have been made in the way elementary sports take place
 - we have had very different practices across the district – wanted to harmonize the way we conducted sports as well as reduce the number of days staff are out of school to participate in coaching or accompanying students to sporting events
 - staff out of school is problematic for a number of reasons – we are having a problem finding enough supply staff to replace teachers. We are working on this in a number of ways: reducing or limiting the amount of PD we are engaging in, the number of days we are releasing staff, eliminating Fridays and Mondays for things where support staff might be needed
 - No longer offering competitive primary sports – research tells us that it is not good practice to have young children involved in competitive sport and

instead are having these students engage in activities that are more inclusive. This fits with the well-being and student achievement agenda that we are trying to accomplish

- Another small part of the issue is a shortage of bus drivers and a shortage of buses being available. School trips cannot leave and arrive back with the same flexibility as in the past. Daytime sports activities have compounded some of the transportation issues we had been happening.

- **Embrace Learning**

- This year the [2017-2018 strategic action plan](#) is displayed in an easy to read, shorter format. [Department plans are available online.](#)
- One item is an opportunity to engage with community members, moms, and dads – we will be going out over the next few months offering “town hall” type opportunities to chat with the Direct – want to know how we are doing, what we can improve, etc.
- There will be forum opportunities for secondary students as well – hoping this will be a random sampling of students so that we can improve where we need to and celebrate our successes as we hear about them

3. Special Education Advisory Committee ([SEAC](#)) Presentation

Katherine MacIver – Superintendent

Janice Balfour – SEAC Chair and Stacey O’Hare – SEAC Member

- Katherine MacIver introduced attending members of the TLDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Every school board is mandated to have a SEAC
- SEAC members work in the interests of all students in the board. They make representation to the board on matters that affect the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programming
- There are 10 meetings in the school year – 2 are face-to-face, the rest are by video or teleconference
- The SEAC has recently helped to develop information tip sheets that are available on the [board website](#)
- Currently working on a survey for parents to gain feedback on the IEP experience in TLDSB – a survey will be sent out in February to all parents that have an IEP.

4. Updates for School Councils

Catherine Shedden – Manager of Corporate Services and Communications

a. **Annual Report**

- The 2016-2017 annual report is available for review.
- The report is a summary of the 4 meetings that took place last year as well as activities from each school council – it does not include a list of each school’s meeting dates, but rather the activities that took place using the Parent Engagement grant.
- This report will be available on the school board website <http://tldsb.ca/parents/get-involved/>

b. **Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grants for Schools and District**

- Very exciting news ... 18 schools have received Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grants for a total of \$17,499 (6 Muskoka area schools, 7 Kawartha Lakes schools, and 4 Haliburton area schools)
 - We knew that preference was going to be given to schools that applied for a PRO grant that focused on Math – 7 projects are math-centric.
 - And here's some more exciting news – in partnership with our District School Council chairs, and on behalf of the District School Council – Parent Involvement Committee, we applied for a District PRO grant and have received \$20,000 to build an app for the district.
 - A district App will be a perfect addition to our communication toolbox – and I'll tell you more about it in a little bit – because we need your help in planning what this looks like.
- c. **Parent Engagement Fund for Schools and District**
- A reminder that each school has received \$500 for parents engagement initiatives. If you are stuck on ideas- have a look at the annual report I referenced earlier – you'll see what our schools did last year using this funding.
 - The District also received \$8000 for parent engagement initiatives. We have used some of this funding to send 5 school council members to the [People for Education conference](#) last weekend.
 - There will be an ongoing annual cost for the app and we hope you are in agreement that some of this funding will come from the yearly Parent Engagement Funding for the district.
- d. **Parent Communication**
- **OverDrive** – the TLDSB digital library – accessible to students and staff and also parents. School Council Chairs provided suggestions for parenting resources which were added to OverDrive. As part of your offsite conversation, please list any other resources you would like to see on OverDrive and we will pass these suggestions along. How do parents access OverDrive – go to <http://tldsb.ca/ereads/> scroll down, click on parents and follow instructions. You will need to complete and submit a form. Instructions will then be sent to you.
 - **District App** – planning and development has begun for a district app – we need feedback from School Councils on what options we want to have available on the app. [Click here for survey.](#)
 - **Videos** – We've started a series of Student Tips – for kids by kids. Here's one we developed for the beginning of the school year: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrc6sV--VoY> We plan on making several more – if you have a topic (or a child star in your home) let us know!
- e. **Muskoka Area DSC-PIC Chair**
- We are seeking a District School Council chair to represent the Muskoka area. The job is not onerous, there is lots of support for this position
 - Please discuss during your offsite time and anyone interested, please email Catherine Shedden catherine.shedden@tldsb.on.ca

- And one more item for Muskoka area school councils – your local health unit has asked us to share with you a resource for food drives and the concern around hunger in the community.
- f. People for Education – Each of the individuals attending the November 11, 2017 People for Education conference have provided a summary of their learning. This makes for some very interesting reading:
- [Summary 1](#)
 - [Summary 2](#)
 - [Summary 3](#)
 - [Summary 4](#)

5. Site Discussion

Kawartha Lakes

1. Introductions around table
2. Discussion about OverDrive - There is a need for more communication so parents know that they can access OverDrive
3. District App
4. School Connects
 - a. Concern over multiple messages arriving – text, phone, and email – there needs to be a choice rather than a message going to all 3
 - b. Perhaps training for parents, training for schools
 - c. Should there be a review or opportunity for feedback from parents
 - d. Good conversation for school councils – what is the best way for communication
5. Discussion on best time to have school council meetings – daytime or evening, offer daycare or not
6. Discussion on best way to survey parents – paper versus online
7. Discussion on how to encourage parents to come to school council meetings – suggestions included posting minutes on the school website, setting up display table at parent nights

Muskoka

1. Debbie Marling has agreed to be the Muskoka Chairperson.
2. TLDSB APP Discussion:
 - a. group feels a link / streamlined communication from the variety of different platforms used by classroom teachers is important to explore
 - b. linking the Board and School calendars on one calendar is important
 - c. is there a privacy concern with this 'free' communication?
3. General Discussion:
 - a. if some of the \$8000 in DSC money is being spent on the TLDSB App, what is the rest being spent on?
 - b. How much is the annual upkeep costs for the TLDSB App
 - c. Can schools use their \$500 to have school specific features added to the TLDSB App? (some wanted the feature to harmonize classroom communications fast-tracked)
 - d. Discussion about resolving 'conflict' within School Council - speak to principal directly or approach Catherine Shedden

District Chairs 2017-2018:

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District of Muskoka

Debbie Marling