

District School Council / Parent Involvement Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 18, 2018 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

Debbie Marling – Muskoka area chair

- Debbie welcomed everyone to the three video conference sites

2. Update from the Director of Education

Larry Hope – Director of Education

- Student Forums – Larry is currently meeting with a group of students at each of the secondary schools. Conversations have been amazing, students are wonderfully candid. Students spoke about what staff and students can do to help make the transition to grade 9 easier for incoming students.
- Larry wants to hear from moms and dads and caregivers. There will be an opportunity for parents to come to a parent forum from 10 to 11 a.m. or 4 to 5 pm. to provide input and feedback on the Embrace Learning Strategic Plan. Parents must register to attend:
<http://bit.ly/parentforums>
 - IEWSS on February 27
 - HHSS on February 28
 - BMLSS on March 7
- The [2017 TLDSB annual report](#) is available in print copy at schools – the online version includes videos and other links.

3. Transition to High School, Pathways to Success, Opportunities for Students

Bruce Barrett, Superintendent of Learning

- **Is high school really that different?**
 - Some things are not fundamentally different from when parents went to high school – currently 30 credits have to be achieved. Beyond this though, much has changed. For example, gathering student voice is a priority to help will planning and decision making
 - At one point in time the transition from grade 8 to grade 9 was the most difficult time for parents as children begin to explore their own autonomy. In this day and age, due to the technology available, parents can be very involved in their child's education
 - The high school program has become very extensive – every student has an opportunity to engage in experiential learning
 - Student profiles and resume content development is now an important component that starts in elementary school

- Historically in TLDSB there would be a BBQ at the end of the summer to welcome grade 8s starting in grade 9 – this would be the one day available for transition activities. Now there are something between 5-15 visits to the secondary school prior to transitioning to the school – getting into classrooms, getting to know the layout of the building, being introduced to key personnel, and more.
- Much of programming is focussed on planning for life after high school – programs such as Specialist High Skills Major are very focussed for students in an area of specialization allowing students to graduate not only with a diploma but also with certificates that will allow an employer to put a resume to the top of the pile. This advantages students in getting jobs as well as college and university acceptances
- Dual credits are taught both by a college professor and a high school teacher – the student receives a high school credit and a college credit but also gains experience in the college environment
- We speak often about pathways – this means all routes that students can take which lead to graduation of some form or another. Important to appreciate the complexity and number of offerings. Students from grade 5 forward are now beginning to experience some of these pathways – e.g. cardboard boat races, Tech-it-Out camp – all help to help students become engaged and interested in a variety of opportunities
- When do we start to plan?
 - Start planning at any time in your child’s school career
 - Lots of parents have in their mindset what their child is going to do (e.g. My child is going to go to university). One conversation that parents can have with their child is what gainful employment and opportunities are out there
 - Lots of parents engaged in youth apprenticeship programs – many students graduating with their level 1 apprenticeship
 - Many students are taking coop in the summer time that they are paid for
 - Lots of things to give parents pause for thought and are encouraged to have conversations
- What are the resources that will help?
 - In secondary school we default typically to guidance counsellors for help for students – this is one resource available
 - However, there is an enormous amount of information through school and school board websites
 - We Got You Covered brochure and companion website www.wegotyoucovered.ca offer lots of information for parents and students – programming as well as health and wellness at school
 - Think about the future – one thing we know about students going to post-secondary is that virtual learning courses will be a common experience – this is possible through our secondary schools as well

4. Updates for School Councils

Catherine Shedden – Manager of Corporate Services and Communications

- a. Parent Engagement Fund/Parents Reaching Out grants for Schools and District
 - A reminder that all Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grant money and each school’s \$500 parent engagement money must be spent by the end of June. Reports for both will be due in June.

- If your area has an idea and plan that would impact multiple schools, please let your District School Council Chair know so we can work to access funds from the district parent engagement funding.
- b. Parent Communication
- Communication plan – school council chairs or members who are asked questions by parents who are looking for assistance for their child, share the board communication plan – ask these questions:
 - Have you spoken to the classroom teacher?
 - If yes, have you spoken to the principal?
 - If yes, then suggest they contact the school superintendent
 - If they have already done this, they can contact their local trustee or they can call the Director of Education’s office
 - Don’t try to resolve a parent’s concern yourself. And it is a good idea to let the principal know that you have been approached by a parent. You can direct parents to the contact us page on the board website - <http://tldsbc.ca/contact-us/>
 - We are well into the development of the district app.
 - Our feedback opportunity is still open but we’ve received a tremendous response with lots of helpful suggestions.
 - Parents are most interested in (not surprisingly) bus cancellations, school news, school calendar, school contact information, parent resources, and the opportunity to provide feedback. We are incorporating as much of this as possible into our app.
 - Many parents are hoping that the app will be able to incorporate apps that teachers are currently using in their classrooms to share specific classroom information. Unfortunately this will not be possible – we hope at some point to have a district wide classroom connection opportunity but for right now classroom teachers are choosing the tool that works best for them. However, we will be able to link to school notifications – so everything you receive from the school from SchoolConnects (soon to be called SchoolMessenger) will be available through the app.
 - Highlights from the TLDSB website:
 - Kindergarten registration is now open – and parents may now register online.
 - Grade 9 information nights for students and parents are happening over the next 2-3 weeks.

5. Site Discussion

Kawartha Lakes Area Schools

Discussion included:

- What do you do if you do not get a return call from a superintendent? Best to try calling again or contact the Director’s Office.
- Discussion on where and how to find out about the process for applying to university. Superintendent Barrett provided some solutions but emphasized that part of the learning process is for students to take responsibility for themselves as they navigate the process.

- Discussion on the benefits of Power-Pack and the IB program at IE Weldon Secondary School compared to academic programming at the other CKL high schools. Superintendent Barrett shared the differences noting that all students have the opportunity to succeed in either program.
- Concern raised over one principal (new to the school) not permitting any fundraising activities – suggestion that the principal is asked if a poll could be sent to parents to see if they would like there to be fundraising events, the number, type, etc.
- It would be great to have discussion around recruiting new members for school council. Using word of mouth rather than a self-nomination form seems to be more successful.

Muskoka area discussion

- Area workshop –
 - Possible panel that allowed parents to hear the reality of school-life, transitions, expectations, responsibility, and resilience from students
 - Possibly with an expert (suggestion - Alex Russell / Tim Falconer “Drop the Worry Ball”) some students, some parents, possibly a couple of kids from post-secondary who can tell their story
 - 50% discussion, 50% instruction
 - Could there be a theme – eg. “resiliency for everyday life”
 - Grade 8 to 9 transition, summer jobs, grade 12 transition to post secondary – a broad range of topics discussed
- Would be nice to develop guidelines for ages and grades to support parents with identifying which kinds of responsibilities and at what ages kids should have

2017-2018 Meetings

Thursday, November 16, 2017

Thursday, January 18, 2018

Thursday, March 22, 2018

Thursday, May 10, 2018

District Chairs 2017-2018:

City of Kawartha Lakes	Grant Boudrault	705-786-3937	eyespydogs@bell.net
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	Jenn Sharp	705-457-6564	jennsharp2@gmail.com
District of Muskoka	Debbie Marling	705-641-0944	marlingfam@gmail.com