

KAWARTHA PINE RIDGE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

The committee met on January 26, 2015 and reports as follows.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Denise Durnan and Elizabeth Ward (Committee Co-chairpersons), Rhonda Brough, Karen Gleason, Aaron Huizinga, Carolyn McColl, Mary-Ann Meagher, Annette Simpson, Jim Treen, John Vickers and Marie Visser.

Also Present: W.R. (Rusty) Hick (Director of Education), Greg Ingram (Superintendent of Education: Student Achievement), Todd Pottle, Vice-principal of Norwood District High School, and Sonia Wilson (Strategic Priorities Lead).

Regrets: Trustee Sarah Bobka, Kelly Holy and Greg Kidd

Educational Presentation: E-Learning

G. Ingram, Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, provided an overview of the e-Learning and Blended Learning options available to KPR students. Just over 1,000 students are registered in KPR e-Learning courses and approximately 600 classrooms are using Blended Learning. E-Learning courses provide opportunities for students to take courses online in subjects that their home schools are unable to offer, that may be over or under-subscribed, or that conflict with their course timetable. T. Pottle, Vice-principal of Norwood District High School, also has responsibility for supporting the e-Learning and Blended Learning portfolio. He explained that Blended Learning occurs when regular classroom-based courses integrate online components, such as online discussion boards, online quizzes and other collaborative learning tools.

Committee members had a chance to view a sample online learning environment for a KPR course. Committee members expressed their support for these options and discussed how to increase parent awareness of e-Learning and Blended Learning. It was suggested that by providing parents with more information, they can then help to support students in selecting eLearning course options.

Parent Involvement Funds Update

S. Wilson reviewed the committee's current budget. The committee has received \$10,377.00 from the Ministry of Education for the school year (based on a base amount of \$5,000, plus a per pupil amount). The committee also reviewed unspent allocations from the previous term that, balanced with commitments to date, reflects \$12,733.13 in remaining available committee funds for the year.

Director's Updates

R. Hick, Director of Education, provided an update on the Low Enrolment Secondary School Consultations taking place in Port Hope, Norwood, Lakefield, Clarke and Campbellford. Committee member M. Meagher recently attended the Norwood meeting and offered her commendation for the organization of the meeting. In particular, she expressed admiration of the students involved in the meeting, for their articulate and respectful participation. It was agreed that all of our students are passionate for, and proud of, their schools

The Director also provided brief updates on the school board's Strategic Planning process, which will take place over the course of the next few months, and the collective bargaining negotiation process, which is just beginning.

KPRDSB Director's Annual Report – Shaping the World

R. Hick, Director of Education, distributed copies of the Director's Annual Report. This year's report Shaping the World features profiles of KPR alumni who now have successful careers in many different fields: from theatre to medicine, to science, to the Supreme Court of Canada, to name just a few. R. Hick expressed thanks to G. Kidd, Manager of Corporate Affairs, for his work creating the publication. The report has been distributed to schools and the community, and is available on the school board website.

Role of Social Media – in the Classroom and as a Parent Engagement Tool

Committee members discussed the use of social media as both an instructional tool with students and also as a communication medium with parents. R. Hick explained that a Social Media policy is currently being drafted to provide support and expectations regarding the acceptable use of social media to increase parent and student engagement, while ensuring respectful communication and protection of student privacy. S. Wilson provided some demographic information on Facebook and Twitter users and answered questions about current school and school board usage. It was noted that the use of technology could improve parent engagement in a number of ways, such as the use of skype for interviews when parents are unable to meet face-to-face with teachers. Committee members asked about minimum standards of communication for schools and discussed different levels of student and teacher engagement with technology.

Denise Durnan and Elizabeth Ward
Co-chairpersons