

# ***Minutes of the Parent Involvement Committee***

**Thursday, April 23, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.**

A meeting of the Parent Involvement Committee was held on Thursday, April 23, 2023 at 6:30pm.

PIC Members: Jim Van Allen, Huma Choudhary, Lori Dunn, Peter Ackie

Trustee: Stephen Linton

DDSB Staff: Superintendent Margaret Lazarus, Frank Samuels, Carolynne Waters, Nadia Baby, Mitzi Hussett, Patrick Symister,

Regrets: Nadia Nembhard-Hunt, Tracy Marshall, Scott Templeton, Kristen McKinnon, Gurleen Saggu, Trecia Facey, Rupal Patel, SensaRAneb Burrell, Arun Rai, Nigel Hunter, Yugita Looknaught, Angela Mastrangelo, Ebony Gittens, James Klodnicki, Tara Bryan, Waseem Ali

Guests: Ben Cameron, Debbie Miles-Senior

The Parent Involvement Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m.

Item	Discussion
Welcome and Land Acknowledgment	Huma Choudhary read the Land of Acknowledgement and the Indigenous and Human Rights.
Agenda Approval	Motioned by Patrick Symister.
Role of Student Senate	<p>Guest Speaker Ben Cameron, Student Trustee (Pickering-Ajax) spoke about the role of Student Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student Trustees are students elected by students to represent students</li> <li>- The Student Senate is the main connection at the board, made up of 3 students from every high school and they meet monthly to discuss issues relevant to students</li> <li>- They represent Student Voice, Student Success, Equity and Inclusion</li> <li>- Their goal has been to increase student engagement</li> <li>- Reaching out to students – Ben has visited all high schools in Pickering and Ajax over the last 4 months to hear from students directly</li> </ul> <p>Asked: how can parents support students' engagement in schools?            Answered: check school announcements so that you know what is happening in the school community; supporting students taking part in activities; and helping the students know about ways they can be involved.</p> <p>Asked: When you met with the students, did they raise any questions or concerns that came up frequently that as parents it would be important for us to know?            Answered: one of the things I heard the most from students was "I feel like my teachers don't understand me" or "my learning style does not match up with how my teacher teaches".</p>

<p>Durham Family &amp; Cultural Centre – Back to School Community Movie Night</p>	<p>Debbie Miles-Senior, Executive Director spoke on their Back to School event – the event supports all families in the Durham Region, but particularly families of colour and families in need. They speak about how to transition your children from summer vacation to school and how to prepare your children for the school year.</p> <p>2022 was the first year of the event and 400 families registered. It was held in the Pickering High School outdoor area (parking lot/field).</p> <p>The event this year will be held on August 26<sup>th</sup>. DFCC is looking to use Pickering High School once again if the board can support the use of this space.</p> <p>DFCC have already reached out to partners (City of Pickering, Costco, etc) for donations to support the event. Last year Costco provided 300 backpacks for students and they were filled with items.</p> <p>DFCC advised the Committee that they need \$3,000-\$5,000 to run the event effectively this year and asked the Committee to consider support.</p> <p>Advertising is done through Durham region and the towns. Schools in the area can be utilized to also share the information.</p> <p>Superintendent Lazarus advised that DDSB already have a partnership with DFCC, and work with them in support of our black student community.</p> <p>Debbie Miles-Senior left that call and the floor opened to discussion on extending DDSB support and providing Engagement funding for this event.</p> <p>It was agreed that part of the goal of our committee is community engagement, and this supports that engagement.</p> <p>Jim Van Allen motioned to expand DDSB partnership with DFCC and have Parent Engagement provide \$5,000 for their upcoming event. Peter Symister and Nadia Baby seconded. Motion passed.</p>
<p>PIC Sub-Committee Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PIC Newsletter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recap of 3<sup>rd</sup> issue content that went out to our families on April 18<sup>th</sup></li> <li>- It was noted by some Committee Members that some parents have yet to receive it, it was asked that we reached out to schools again to distribute to their communities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Engagement Speaker Series</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dr. James Makokis event will take place on May 9</li> <li>- Lots of advertising has taken place, one last email to be sent out from schools to their communities prior to the event</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Durham Partners Symposium – (formerly Parents as Partners)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keynote speaker is confirmed as former DDSB student Perdita Felician. She is a former Olympian, a two-time Olympian, 10-time national champion and Author.</li> <li>- Break out speakers speaking to mental health and well-being</li> <li>- Advertising has begun and registration numbers are strong within the first week. Advertising will continue through various channels between now and event day.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PRO Grants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Under way, all funding has been allocated. Some schools have completed their events, others are underway or upcoming. Very positive response and interest with all funding being allocated.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Social Justice, Human and Equity Rights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Committee has met twice since last PIC meeting</li> <li>- 2 ongoing projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- create parent-friendly brochure on human rights process and policy;</li> <li>- evening session for parents for children who are struggling in school and want to know more about the identification process (scheduled for the Fall to inform our parents as we begin the year, especially our parents who are newcomers to Canada and newcomers to DDSB).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>-</p> <p>Lori Dunn raised a question to the Committee – as we approach Pride, would there be interest in a group working to provide supports and information to families in light of protests going on in and around the GTA.</p> <p>It was agreed this is an important and time sensitive need, and Parent Engagement will work to get materials/support out late May.</p>
PIC Year-End Report	<p>The PIC Year End Report is mandated by the Ministry - it is a report commissioned by PIC and presented by the co-chairs to the Board. A written report is also submitted to trustees and reviews all of the work that has been completed this year, to support parents in our board.</p> <p>Huma Choudhary and Jim Van Allen will present in-person at the final board meeting on June 19.</p> <p>Superintendent Lazarus and the co-chairs are in the process of developing the report. There will also be an infographic aspect that captures what has been done, showing data and quick facts.</p>
2023/24 Parent Engagement Strategic Plan	<p>A new Strategic Plan for the 2023/24 school year was shared with the Committee prior to the meeting. A Strategic Plan is crucial to ensure we meet objectives that we set out for the year and can plan accordingly.</p> <p>It was raised that we will be sending a survey to all Committee Members in the coming days as we need to determine members who will be returning in the new year and those that we will need to replace. The survey will also ask for member interest in sub-committees for the new years to assist with planning.</p> <p>A summary of the Strategic Plan was shared and opened to discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raised to add Islamophobia under the Human Rights Section</li> <li>- Ensure that Mental Health be included and considered throughout the plan</li> <li>- Intersections of identity – how do we make the connections between the likes of identity and mental health?</li> <li>- Intersectionality works to unpack differences between groups and show similarities to break down the barriers – consider bringing groups together as well as having separate and specific events.</li> </ul>

	<p>Have a discussion at our final meeting about the confirmed plan for next year and discuss ideas, to allow for quicker implementation as we step into the new year.</p>
Supporting Newcomer Families	<p>Nadia Baby shared an experience at her school where a newcomer family was in need, but did not have the language skills or knowledge of who to reach out to for support.</p> <p>Existing community supports were discussed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make a Difference Depot located in Oshawa</li> <li>- DDSB SWIS workers</li> <li>- Ignite Learning Foundation – administrators can request support for families (gift cards) \$250/child per school year is available through this funding</li> <li>- New to Durham DDSB section of the website has resources, such as Durham Immigration Portal with more information</li> </ul> <p>Discussion included having a small one page flyer that can be printed/handed to newcomer families at registration (Main Office in Elementary, Guidance Office in Secondary) that would guide them to where these resources are. Specifically the Durham Immigration Portal that is already available in a significant number of languages.</p> <p>Asked: How many administrators and support staff are aware of the resources and supports available to their families?  Superintendent Lazarus answered: we can raise this in our Family of Schools meetings to ensure that the administrators are aware of these resources</p> <p>Determined action items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-service for administrators as to what is available</li> <li>- Develop a simple handout with QR code linking to the sites of support, especially those that are translated</li> </ul>
Final Meeting	<p>The Final Meeting will be held on Tuesday May 30, 2023.</p>
Meeting Adjournment	<p>The PIC meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm.</p>