



**Parent Involvement Committee Minutes
MS Teams Virtual Meeting
November 23, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Heather Campbell, Director of Education; Carla Magisano, Trustee; Cindy Homer, Robert Moore School Council Representative; Lonna Oster, Fort Frances High School Council Representative; Alexa Wideman, Mine Centre School Council Representative; Sharla MacKinnon, Principal Representative; Heidi Loney, Donald Young School Council Representative; Nancy Pitura, Atikokan K-12 School Council Representative; Robin Holden, Nestor Falls School Council Representative; Krista Brusven, Rainy River K-12 Council Representative; Shannon King, Seven Generations Institute, Community Representative; Michelle Strachan, Weechi-it-Te-Win Family Services Inc., Community Representative

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Marni McDonald, Recording Secretary; Tracey Idle, RRDSB Mental Health Leader

ABSENT: Chantal Seguin, Sturgeon Creek School Council Representative; Jessica Tucker, Crossroads School Council Representative; Sara McCormick, Donald Young School Council Representative; Jamie Petrin, Community Representative, Northwestern Health Unit; Helena Guertin, JW Walker School Council Representative

1. Call to Order

The first meeting of the 2021-2022 Parent Involvement Committee was called to order by Cindy Homer, Co-Chair, at 6:31 p.m. Members and community representatives in attendance introduced themselves, and Director Heather Campbell provided a brief overview of the role of the Parent Involvement Committee as an advisory committee. Committee by-laws are due for review this year and will be sent out along with information for new members.

2. Election of Co-Chair

Co-chair Cindy Homer provided a brief overview of the duties of the Co-chair, and opened the meeting up for nominations. Cindy Homer nominated Alexa Wideman, and Alexa accepted. There were no other nominations, and Alexa Wideman was acclaimed Co-chair.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as circulated.

4. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest disclosed.

5. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of October 25, 2021 were approved by consensus.



6. Unfinished Business

a) PIC Representation and Recruitment Update

Director Heather Campbell provided an update on recruitment efforts. All community representative vacancies have been filled. The only school not represented by the 2021-22 Parent Involvement Council is McCrosson-Tovell. Director Campbell will increase efforts to actively recruit a teacher representative as well.

7. New Business

a) Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grant

Co-Chair Homer briefly introduced the PRO Grant and spoke on previous successes. Director Campbell outlined the eligibility requirements for this year, and noted that the funding had been significantly increased from last year. Funding is specifically geared toward parents, and not students. Although there is some flexibility within our budget outside of the grant, the PRO Grant is not intended for meals or door prizes. Co-Chair Homer shared a quick facts infographic on the PRO Grant provided by the Ministry of Education (attached).

The Committee held a brief brainstorming session for PRO Grant ideas. Committee Member Shannon King shared some previous parental experiences, noting that even though meals are not eligible, offering a meal has been a definite selling point for busy parents.

Co-Chair Alexa Wideman brought up the possibility of a yoga/meditation evening, which could be offered in person or virtually. Committee Member Robin Holden agreed that yoga would be well-received in general, but probably not very well attended by male parents/guardians. Guest presenter, Tracey Idle, added that there were numerous mental health and well-being resources through School Mental Health Ontario that could be adapted for the parents.

Shannon brought up the possibility of a virtual scavenger hunt, which the Committee noted could easily incorporate STEAM learning objectives. Robin shared his experience with a similar event held over the summer by the communities of Sioux Narrows/Nestor Falls, noting that although it had not been well-attended, it was a great idea and could be easily modified for parents.

Committee members will continue to brainstorm, bringing ideas to the January meeting to give the School Councils as much lead time as possible to administer the program.

b) Mental Health Programming

Mental Health Leader, Tracey Idle, spoke to the current supports available through the Board's partnership with Kenora Rainy River District Child and Family Services (KRRDFS),



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noting that the Board was able to increase the number of contracted clinicians working in our schools this year from 4.5 to 6.5. Although employed and administered through KRRCFs, these clinicians are exclusive to our schools and are qualified to employ numerous assessment, prevention, and intervention strategies for our students. This partnership structure allows for seamless referrals for more significant mental health issues and gives Tracey the opportunity to focus on broader mental health literacy and stigma-reduction initiatives.

Tracey asked the Committee for insight on possible topics of concern and best strategies to reach parents and students.

Shannon noted that parents sometimes feel like they have information overload with all the materials coming home with students, but suggested we may be able to leverage some of the social media platforms that are already popular with parents and students. TikTok, for instance, allows for 3 minute videos, and might be a good vehicle to relay information. The resulting discussion led to a dialogue on the mental health repercussions of unrestricted social media access for students. Director Campbell noted that commonsensemedia.org, although an American site, was an excellent resource for parents to keep abreast of current social media trends.

Members also identified that a safe space or forum – possibly a support group or drop in either virtually or in-person – for parents to ask questions, learn to advocate, and discuss mental health without judgement may be a good option.

Committee Member Nancy Pitura remarked that she had noted the absence of a physical newsletter being sent home in Atikokan, which led to a discussion on communication methods, and how best to foster communication with parents. Not all parents remember to check the website for current information, and social algorithms do not always allow for the most effective notification system.

8. **Correspondence**

Director Campbell spoke on the policies out for stakeholder consultation, giving a brief overview of the changes made to the policies, and encouraged Committee members to submit any feedback via the methods outlined in the memo.

9. **Director's Update**

Director Campbell reported as follows:

- The Ministry of education released the updated Guidelines for Managing Covid in Schools on November 18:
 - Musical instruments, specifically woodwinds, are allowed indoors without cohorting now; this means that extra-curricular bands are now permitted.
 - Each student will be sent home with Rapid Antigen Test kits at winter break to self-



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administer should the need arise.

- Following winter break, all elementary assemblies and parent-teacher interviews will be held virtually.
- The Board will be sending devices home with students over the break as a precaution.
- The COVID vaccine has been approved for children aged 5-11 years. The Board will be sending information home as the Ministry makes it available. Children aged 12 and older do not require parental permission to receive the vaccine, but children aged 5-11 do.
- The Ministry of Education announced that all Grade 9 courses will be de-streamed beginning in the 2022-23 school year. A new destreamed science course will be developed, but English, Geography, and French will be delivered at the Academic level. Our Secondary Numeracy Coordinator, Denise Rybuck, is available to provide more information on de-streaming if the Committee is interested.
- Voluntary Ontario Tech U sessions have begun for teachers. The focus is on math and making and coding which complements the Grade 1-8 revised math curriculum coding emphasis.
- Kim Kirk, Indigenous Education Leader, is collaborating with Elder Don Jones to provide land-based learning activities for December in the form of trapping excursion. Students from various schools will be participating to start, with an eye toward expanding the program.
- Experiential Learning Coordinator, [RobRoy Donaldson](#), is available to help set up parent accounts for Xello, our career pathways platform for students in Grades 7 - 12. The parent account is adapted so parents can see their children's career interests.
- [The Strategic Planning ThoughtExchange](#) closes November 30. We are still looking for feedback, please share the link with your friends and family.
- Unvaccinated students must self-isolate for 10 days following international travel (Including into the USA). There are no exceptions for border towns, but some allowances have been made for cross-border custody agreements.
- The Mine Centre School outdoor classroom has been featured in the [Robertson Program Blog](#).

Following Director Campbell's updates, concerns were brought forward regarding when vaccinations are being administered at school. Even though the program is run through the Northwestern Health Unit, the school will work to inform parents about what is taking place and when.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be scheduled for January to allow enough time for school councils to arrange for PRO Grant activities. Marni McDonald will send out a poll with possible meeting dates.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. CST