



Summary Report

Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee

Planning Discussion

The Lake House Event Centre

Pickering, Ontario

Tuesday, August 27, 2013

Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	2
Feedback on <i>True Colours</i> Group Activity	3
Call to Order of Planning Discussion	3
Appointments, Senior Administration and Committee Member Roster	3
DCPIC Meeting Dates	5
DCPIC Election – October 10, 2013	6
Orientation and Induction Day – October 17, 2013	6
Desired Accomplishments for the Day	6
Theme Year – Celebration of 15 th Anniversary of DCPIC	8
DCPIC Strategic Plan Review	8
Catholic School Councils/Parent Engagement	8
Things We Can Change	9
Parent Engagement	10
Communications	11
Faith Formation and Student Achievement	12
Who is Responsible for What?	13
DCPIC Sub-committees	14
Next Steps	15
Summary thoughts about the Day	16



Executive Summary

The Durham Catholic District School Board's Parent Involvement Committee held its kick-off meeting for the upcoming 2013-14 academic year on August 27th, 2013 at the Lake House Event Centre in Pickering, Ontario. The all-day event comprised of a retreat and planning discussion.

The parent-led advisory committee working within the Durham Catholic District School Board whose purpose is to encourage, support and enhance meaningful parent involvement to improve student academic achievement and well-being, met to establish the plans and priorities for 2013-2014.

The retreat provided a forum for the 14 participants including DCPIC Executive, Parent Members, Community Representatives, Superintendents of Education and School Board Trustees, to get a view of the past year's accomplishments, determine the areas to be focused on, develop a plan and create the working sub-committees that will implement the plans.

These summary notes capture the day's activities and meeting discussions.



Feedback on *True Colours* Group Activity

Following the Liturgy and Introductions, the Durham Catholic Parents Involvement Committee (DCPIC) members participated in a group activity led by Tricia Dwyer-Kuntz. The *True Colours* group exercise attempts to identify various personality types and behavioural styles and label them with colors, facilitating deeper communications and understanding.

The Committee is fairly new in terms of coming together, so this served as an opportunity and a helpful way to know about one's self and about the group; and a means to gel the group and increase its capacity to work together. The resulting mix of colours in a group is considered vital to a group's positive function.

Call to Order of Planning Discussion

The DCPIC Members assembled at 11:30 AM. Superintendent LePage clarified to those present that this particular meeting of the DCPIC members was not to be regarded as an official board meeting but rather as a planning session - where the outcomes from the planning discussions are to be brought to the upcoming September board meeting.

At the start of the meeting, reference was made to the by-laws that stipulate most of the decisions must be made by consensus. However, this was followed by the possibility that the by-laws may not be reviewed in the day's discussions despite it being one of the items on the agenda.

Appointments, Senior Administration and Committee Member Roster

There have been three board meetings since the summer which has seen much activity in recent weeks. The Members were debriefed on recent events concerning appointments and changes.

A new Director of Education, Ann O'Brien, has been appointed to take over from Mitch LePage. Superintendent Mitch LePage assumed the role of acting Director of Education and has proven

to be a good leader. Director O'Brien officially takes over on Sunday, September 1st and will participate in appointing three new superintendents.

It was announced that Brian O'Sullivan retired from supervisory role on the board. Also communicated is that Bob Camozzi will assume responsibilities for Policies and External Education.

John Mullins former principal of St.Mary's Catholic Secondary School now with All Saints Catholic Secondary School in Whitby. He is taking over the Ajax family of schools and will be occupying Superintendent LePage's office and will have Lorrie MacIntosh working with him.

Gerry O'Reilly former principal of Monsignor Philip Coffey catholic School in South Oshawa, will be responsible for student achievement for Whitby. He is taking over the DCPIC portfolio as the director's designate and resource.

Additionally, Tracy Barill Superintendent for the Durham Catholic District School Board (Pickering) will take on Aboriginal Education; while Jeanine Bower will cover Special Services from Oshawa.

Effective September 1st, John Mullins, Gerry O'Reilly and Bob Camozzi have been promoted to superintendent of education, joining team under the leadership of Anne O'Brien.

Additionally, it was noted that Tina Henry is no longer able to serve as a Member of DCPIC, and the Executive needs to look at the possibility of replacing her spot on the Committee. Also mentioned was the possibility of a second vacancy which needs to be looked into further.

The following Members were confirmed as serving a one-year term: Nancy Carpenter, Tricia Chapman, Liz Lyew, Daphne Pereira and Margaret Stack.

DCPIC Professional Development & Budget Framework

Superintendent LePage pointed out that funds for conferences and professional development are limited. Furthermore, attending conferences is deemed to be beneficial, but there needs to be parameters set around it. There is a surplus noted in the budget and certain dates that the

committee must spend the money by, which changes yearly. It was agreed that decisions surrounding this matter must be discussed and decided upon by the group as a whole.

Beth Hawkins added that information must be shared so that everyone can utilize the knowledge from attending conferences.

Chair Horwitz felt it is important to obtain the figures and the budget at this time so that the committee may know how best to proceed. However, Superintendent LePage felt that because money is being spent at the present time, exact numbers cannot to be obtained at this point and will have them once expenditures of book purchases and folders are done. Approximate budget figures would suffice at this time. Superintendent LePage added that the introduction and completion of quarterly reports will help in obtaining those numbers. Furthermore, what the DCPIC committee sees as priorities is a factor in the development of a proper budget plan.

PRO Grants have been given approval by the Ministry [of Education]. The Superintendent will be reviewing these programs prior to their public release.

The regional PRO Grant is set to gain approval within the next week or two.

There is a need for responsibility and accountability for the budget. Therefore, the use a spreadsheet framework for the quarterly report to monitor the expenditure of PRO Grants would be the best.

DCPIC Meetings Dates for 2013-2014

The following dates were announced as DCPIC meeting dates for the 2013-2014 school year:

- September 12, 2013
- October 10, 2013
- November 7, 2013
- January 9, 2014
- February 6, 2014
- April 10, 2014
- May 8, 2014
- June 5, 2014



A request is to be put forth to Ron Rodriguez to add the dates to the Board Website and add/fix the links.

DCPIC Election – October 10, 2013

The DCPIC election will take place on October 10, 2013. A notice will be sent out in the second week of September. This election will decide who will serve a two-year term. Currently serving a one-year term are: Nancy Carpenter, Tricia Chapman, Margaret Stack, Daphne Pereira and Liz Lyew.

There are two possible vacancies: that of Tina Henry and another which needs to be further investigated.

The note of the election need be added to the parish bulletins.

Orientation and Induction Day – October 17, 2013

Holding an orientation and induction will provide an early opportunity for the newly elected Chairs to build a relationship with one another and move forward. The date of October 17th is currently a tentative date. It will serve as the Commissioning Ceremony.

The master calendar will be checked by Superintendent LePage to ensure the principals are available on this date. The responsibility for holding the ceremony could potentially be shared by both the principal and the vice principal.

Desired accomplishments for the day

There is now the question of where the committee needs to focus and what are the committee's priorities?

- A general agenda is required for the purpose of providing further clarity of the monthly meetings and to make parents more aware of what the DCPIC is doing. [Theresa Corless]

- Planning and direction for DCPIC – What will the various events, i.e. grants and book conferences, be and when will they take place? [Kim Beatty]
- Generating support for the Catholic School Councils (CSC) and informing parents of what they can do within the council aside from fundraising and what they can do with regard to faith development. [Tricia Chapman]
- Giving parents objectives – Providing information about Catholic vocabulary, church leaders, etc. to parents with children at different grade levels so they may know what is important at each age level of the child. Accountability is required to make it more comprehensible. [Beth Hawkins]
- Advanced planning and action – setting things in motion and implementing more advanced planning. [Tina Newth]
- Develop a solid plan for the year – break it down by monthly meeting, record the plan for the year, set dates and see plans materialize through personal commitment. [Roxanne Horwitz]
- Involvement in Sub-Committees - Engaging in monthly meetings, bringing ideas together and committing on an individual basis to what the committee as a whole is going to be doing. [Roxanne Horwitz]. Mitch LePage commented on the importance of scheduling, delegating to the sub-committees and delegating responsibility.
- Enlisting support of external people – One of the ways the DCPIC will flourish is to enlist the support of the people outside of this group. People should be informed in the communities and engaged by the committee, and hold engaging meetings that make a difference. [Mitch LePage]
- Engaging the people – Hold events in order to engage people and inform them of what is being discussed at meetings. [Monique Forster]

- Review accomplishments of the year – A review can provide insight into what areas have been covered and what areas need to be focused on.

Theme year – celebration of the 15th year anniversary of the DCPIC

The theme for DCPIC's 2013-14 year is to recognize its 15th year anniversary. This would be a celebration of the Durham Catholic Parents Involvement Committee in its longevity and would be beneficial for the Committee's visibility. The Committee would work this in its communications to parents and schools.

DCPIC Strategic Plan Review

Three areas have been accomplished thus far: the support of the CSC, Student Achievement, and Support Communications. However, the question is, are these large or small achievements? The small achievements also need to be celebrated and the committee needs to think about setting priorities. These issues/achievements are characterized throughout the notes as "rocks" or "pebbles". Rocks are the larger issues/achievements and pebbles are the smaller issues/achievements.

Catholic School Councils/Parent Engagement

Although parent engagement doesn't seem to be a large priority, it is at the top of the committee's list and thus far it appears to be on the right track. It should be made a priority as issues such as mental health and the provision of resources for parents about mental health are important. Parent engagement is considered by the board as being a "rock".

Better contact with Catholic School Council has been achieved, but it is currently a smaller issue on the list. Outreach Days such as the Parent Principal Partnership Day and Tool Kit have been established and these are very important achievements. Currently, this issue is labeled as a "pebble".

There are more people and more voices now. It is still possible and necessary to have more people attend meetings and recruitment is one possible method of achieving this.



The bylaws are a “rock” and the CSC Best Practices is a “pebble” at present. A point of contact has been arranged for the future.

Resource support for the CSC, a “rock”, is a part of the increased contact goal in tandem with mental health support.

Contacting parents the committee members know is already taking place. It serves as a way to inform them and to make the committee more personal to the parents. This is considered as being a “pebble”.

A parent list and a database have been established, which serves as another important achievement in order to build parent engagement. This is a definite “rock”.

Things we can change

Contact with Catholic School Council and personal contact can be further improved with a follow-up and therefore, turned into a “rock”. This can be done on the first day during Orientation. The Tool Kit may be used as a basis of conversation. It is important to build community and establish a purpose as this is the time when the new elected Chairs are forming their council and setting their goals. It can allow people to be on the same page.

In order to turn smaller achievements into larger ones, the committee needs to prioritize and the sub committees can be in charge of the tasks.

New member recruitment should be expanded to become a “rock”. There has already been a lot of work done with regard to the bylaws, so this issue can be made into a “pebble”. It was determined that Catholic School Council Best Practices should be kept as a “rock”. Because there has been work done with regard to CSC Resource Support, this issue can be made into a “pebble”. Increased personal contact and contact with the CSC should be implemented. The option for parents to be part of the database is one option.

Things that are now a “pebble” that can be made into a “rock”

- Board Representation
- Input to the Board
- Presentations instead of delegation (is there something specific that the DCPIC can arrange through Gerry O’Reilly?)
- Communications

Parent Engagement

DCPIC visibility is a method that will help in improving parent engagement. It is important to always be mindful in representing DCPIC at every event. For example, tables could be set up for optics, recruitment, information and collecting data. This will additionally intersect with communications.

Creating promotional materials is also an important step to better parent engagement, such as having roll-up stands and name tags. This would be akin to branding, as it further announces the committee’s presence. This is a “rock”.

The provision of information through learning opportunities is a “rock”. For example, parent professional development.

Parent contact is another issue that needs to be addressed. It is necessary to establish “accountable talk” in order to make issues relevant. The committee needs to share the parent discussions and input as a group.

Furthermore, individual accountability is necessary in order to make the group more successful. Individuals must be accountable for the roles to which they were assigned.

Compressing meetings is something else that should be done in order to better focus on the conversation. It is important to keep track of time and recognize when the discussion is going off track. Timed items should be introduced in order to keep things moving in the discussion.

The sub-committees will have a lot of work to do with regard to parent engagement and contact between the committee and the parents.

Communications

The DCPIC website is considered a huge “rock” in terms of communications.

The issue of orientation folders is currently a “pebble” but they can be made into a “rock” by including a welcome letter, a DCPIC flyer and a newsletter. This is on the plan for the upcoming school year and should be kept simple. The setup of these folders and their distribution is currently a “pebble”, but should become a “rock”.

Emails are set up and need to be rolled out with some instructions. This is a “pebble”. So far, there is one email for each member and each Catholic School Council. This should become a “rock”

Social Media is a “pebble”. Even though meetings are taking place and committee members are present, it is important to have a purpose each time so that people may be informed about the DCPIC and its operations. Is this issue associated with communications or parent engagement? Is the committee acting as a simply conduit or is this actually parent engagement? Synervoice and Planned Contact are two social mediums currently being used. Social Media should become a “rock”, but Synervoice can remain a “pebble”.

Planned and strategic contact should also be made into a “rock”. It is imperative that everyone be on the same page and a purpose should be outlined. The list of accomplishments and other priorities will be a worksheet for the sub-committees. The issues that are currently “pebbles” needing to be turned into “rocks” are high priority.

Having an annual DCPIC event calendar to determine what is going on in the different schools is a necessary “pebble”. The calendar is currently just an idea, but once published it will become an expectation. A framework will need to be built around this initiative.

With regard to the meeting notifications and agendas, in order to better organize them, the committee should use dates and assign responsibilities accordingly. Ronald is currently trying to increase his capacity with regard to the web aspect of communications. Gerry knows where things will need to be sent and Jennifer will work with the board on this matter. Communications will have a larger priority with the new director being involved.

The committee members are also personal conduits and therefore, it is important to establish and maintain consistency in the delivery of messages and communications to the schools so all the schools may get the same information.

Additionally, standard, consistent and unified messaging needs to be established, as well as the posting of minutes and agendas for all to see.

Faith Formation and Student Achievement

This is an area that needs to be further focused on. Engaging parents through Commissioning Mass can cause students to achieve more. The weakness is in Faith Formation. Being more specific and deliberate in the support of parents can improve that. However, the decision of parents to not have their children attend church outside of school is theirs. So the question is how can the committee build and support the faith life of its families. This issue can currently be considered as a “pebble”, though it was stressed that it should be made into a “rock”.

Providing input to board policies and procedures via policy feedback is necessary and has been done well up to this point. This is a definite “rock”.

Having retreats available for parents to form their faith and reengage with their faith is a definite “rock”. Retreats are already held in the Durham Region, so this can be extended to the parents.

It is important for individual committee members to identify their own capacities in terms of effectiveness as a group, but also fulfilling their respective roles effectively. Sub-committees could be formed to handle these initiatives.

When the 15th year anniversary of the DCPIC is celebrated, the new website should be highlighted. Schools and school councils should be emphasized and the fact that parents are engaged because of these councils. Surveying the parents to see why they joined the school council is one way of getting that information onto the website. Videos, written statements and other forms of testimony can be incorporated as well. Ronald will need to verify all of this before it goes up on the website.

To simplify this and have it serve as a marketing strategy, councils could be encouraged to share some celebratory stories. These will also further the involvement and engagement of other parents. Other suggestions include having one simple question that needs to be answered, or having a form that would be filled out by people. Further discussion on this matter will take place at the next meeting to figure out the specifics.

Who is responsible for what?

The Communications group needs to be established and parents and schools need to be informed that committees, such as Faith Formation and Parent Outreach are available.

Faith Formation and Student Achievement need to be worked on. The programming sub-committee will continue as is. Roxanne Horwitz has been in contact with the groups and they are willing to get involved. They just need to be made aware of the meeting dates and be included.

Any ideas about the types of presentations that would like to be seen should be presented to the Chair or DCPIC executives.

With regard to the budget sub-committee, a conversation must be had with Gerry O'Reilly and Ryan Putnam surrounding the budget. The committee needs to be accountable, responsible and be sure that the budget is looked after properly.

A spreadsheet framework has been discussed, so such a thing can be done without difficulty. This will be ready for the quarterly report. The expenditure of program funds needs to be monitored and can be an executive function.

Past money is able to be carried over according to Ryan Putnam. It is important that the DCPIC does not carry money over into the next fiscal year and discusses its expenditure as a group. The Ministry can take what is left if it is not spent. The cost of various items needs to be identified and properly factored into the budget in order to contribute to the surplus funds.

With the structure of the work in place, what is needed is an allocation of commitments. That needs to be established within one week.

DCPIC Sub-committees

The newly formed sub-committees and their Members are listed as follows. Commitments to be locked down in one week.

1) **Communications**

Nancy Carpenter (Chair)

Trevor Aitcheson

Kim Beatty

Sharmaine Doyle

Monique Forster

Roxanne Horwitz

Ronald Rodrigues

Jennifer Bastarache

2) **Parent Engagement**

Tricia Chapman (Chair)

Dyan Cato

Sharmaine Doyle

Roxanne Horwitz

Tina Newth

3) **Faith Formation**

Beth Hawkins (chair)

Rose LoPresti

Connie Samson

Margaret Stack



4) Anniversary

Connie Samson
Dyan Cato
Theresa Corless
Sharmaine Doyle
Beth Hawkins
Roxanne Horwitz
Tina Newth

5) Budget

(DCPIC Executive)
Roxanne Horwitz, Chair
Tina Newth, Vice-chair
Rose LoPresti, Secretary
Jim McGrorey, Past Chair

6) PRO-Grant

Kim Beatty
Connie Samson
Jim McGrorey

DCPIC's next steps

1. Enlist remaining DCPIC members for Sub-committees
2. Sub-committees to meet and hold efficient meetings. They must have a specific agenda and be managed well (an information link that will be passed on by Chair Horwitz that pertains to how to run an efficient meeting). The first function of every meeting is to pick a chair.

The September 12th, 2013 DCPIC meeting will commence at 6:00 pm to progress with today's efforts in establishing the working sub-committees. Sub-committee tasks to be completed include:

- Selection of a Sub-committee Chairs

DCPIC Planning Discussion – August 27th

- Review task lists and prioritize the undertakings
- Set future sub-committee meeting dates
- The sub-committees are to present to the entire DCPIC at the 7:00 PM meeting.

Board members should be attending at least one of the pre-meeting time slots:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 6:00 PM to 6:30 PM | 1. Anniversary Sub-committee |
| | 2. Communications Sub-committee |
| 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM | 1. Parent Engagement Sub-committee |
| | 2. Faith Formation Sub-Committee |

Summary thoughts about the day's planning session

It is important to be as inclusive as possible. The committee should include those who were unable to attend today's meeting. The suggestion of another committee members retreat later this year was brought forth by Chair, Roxanne Horwitz. An idea is to look into Manresa in Pickering.

An expression of gratitude is given towards the board for its donation to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Superintendent Mitch LePage states that he considers his time with the parents and the advisory committee as highly significant and is elated to have been a part of the DCPIC. He further states that he believes the group is on a positive course.

The planning discussion meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.