

Committee: **Parent Involvement Committee**

Meeting Date: **Monday, March 2, 2009**

Meeting Time: **6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

OCASC Representative at Meeting: **Anne Teutsch**

Report / Summary / Highlights:

Guest Speaker:

There was a very interesting and informative presentation by Dianne Urquhart, with the Social Planning Council of Ottawa. Her talk focused on three different studies that have been conducted by the Council over the past five years or so. The first was on Early School Leavers. The second was entitled Mixed Blessings and Missed Opportunities. The third was the Kids and Community Project.

The Early School Leavers study looked at the profile of those between the ages of 15 and 24 who are not in school and have not completed high school. The reasons for their not completing high school were broken down into two categories, student related factors and external factors (family related; community related; school related). The important recommendations coming from this are: Keep young people in school and strengthen school in vulnerable neighbourhoods; expand opportunities for young people to "change direction" or make different choices at different points in time along their transition process; increase support for the working poor; improve supports for young people facing distinct challenges such as disabilities, poverty or significant family responsibilities.

The Mixed Blessings and Missed Opportunities study looked at inclusion and exclusion of Ottawa's visible and ethnic minority residents through focus groups and interviews. There were a number of concerns for these people. Strategies to address exclusion include: improve supports for individuals, families and communities to increase their access to resources and opportunities; build inclusive environments, remove existing barriers, create new inclusive structures and processes; enhance capacity of community infrastructure to increase inclusion.

The Kids and Community Project was a 2 ½ year project to increase inclusion in recreation and the transition to the school system of families with young children who historically have experienced exclusion - low income families, aboriginal families, new immigrant families, families in which a parent has a disability.

There were handouts of the various reports, if anyone is interested in more detailed information.

Ministry of Education Governance Review:

The OCDSB PIC was represented by PIC Chair Eldon Holder and PIC member and OCASC Chair Anne Teutsch at a consultation session on February 4, 2009. Discussion at that meeting centred around who should be accountable for what at the school board level. The value of various measures of success, including EQAO results, was discussed. The suggestion of finding better measures of student success was made. Marks or graduation rates should not be the only measures of success. Another point raised was the difficulties arising in having school board trustees accountable for educational success without them having control over much of the financial aspect of the district.

PRO Grants:

Successful PRO Grants have now been announced. 41 schools in the OCDSB were successful in their applications. The OCDSB was also successful with its regional grant application, and will be hosting a seminar series - "Connected Conversations - Parents and Teachers helping Students Learn" - in the spring and fall.

Barry MacDonald will speak to parents at a two hour workshop entitled “Boy Smarts - Effective Strategies for Mentoring Boys” on the evening of Wednesday May 13. He will also conduct separate workshops for principals, superintendents and instructional coaches.

Dr. James Cummins will speak to parents during a two hours session on the evening of Wednesday, June 3. His topic will be “At Risk Students - language development and literacy development of learners of English as an additional language”.

Dr. Debbie Pushor will speak to parents about “Parent Engagement, Leadership Strategies and Parent Knowledge”. Her presentation will take place in September on a date yet to be confirmed.
