

## **GREATER ESSEX COUNTY PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (GECPIC)**

**Tuesday, November 26, 2013 - 7:00 p.m. - W.F. Herman Secondary School**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE:** Sheet was distributed for sign in.

Introduction of new GECPIC Executive: Katrina Elchami – Chair, Armand Matte – Vice-Chair, Kim Beneteau – Secretary, Jaime del'Eveille - Communications, Gene Myers – Workshop Moderator, Michelle Hedge and Cindy Mitchell – Members at Large

**AGENDA:** Motion to accept agenda made by Cindy Mitchell and seconded by Mary Lynn Biggley.

**PREVIOUS MINUTES:** Motion to accept previous minutes made by Cindy Mitchell and seconded by Mary Lynn Biggley.

Health and Wellness Presentation: Vickie Komar & Mary Lynn Biggley

- GECDSC is working hard to improve awareness and reduce the stigma of mental illness
- A steering team has been created to assist the needs of schools through a focus group of principals. This focus group will report back to the steering team shortly to help them determine how they can help students in our schools.
- They are creating videos to explain what it's like to be admitted/assessed for a mental illness to help ease the anxiety and explain the process students might need to go through.
- They will be hosting Mental Illness Seminars in the evenings for the entire community to attend. The steering team has invited all services to come to the December 4th event.
- A Student Senate has also been established to gather the voice of the students on the subject as well.
- Educating our "Student Success" teacher has also been a goal. Educating them as to the services available for them to access and how to initiate this help.
- Suicide Prevention Training: (Administrators and Student Success Teachers)
  - What to look for?
  - What to say and not say?
  - Services to access quickly to help students.

#### **Mary Lynn Biggley: Nutrition Portion of the Presentation**

- PPM 150 – School Food and Beverage Policy that was introduced in January 2010 has brought up many questions as to how it relates to Food Revenue generating and fundraising.
- The overall goal of this policy to create a healthy food environment within our schools.

- It only applies to food that is offered in cafes, special food days, etc. It does not apply to anything that is sold OFF school grounds...so therefore “chocolate bar” fundraising is still permitted and does not fall under these guidelines.
- Currently 25,000 children in our school board participate in our breakfast, lunch or snack programs.
- The Ministry of Education along with the Ministry of Agriculture are trying to work on a fundraising campaign for school councils to use that would be PPM 150 compliant and would generate competitively what other companies offer in profit margins (typically 30 – 40%)
- You can always contact Mary Lynn Biggley (marylyn.biggley@publicboard.ca) at any time for a current approved food supplier list and their menus. That list should be accessible by your principal as well.
  - It was requested by the SAC chairs to have the list emailed out to us by the board if possible each September.

**Chair's Report:** Katrina Elchami

- Fall GECPIC Workshop went very well.
  - The \$300 prize was won by a representative from M.D. Bennie Public School.
  - Jacqui Strahn from People for Education was our guest speaker and did a fabulous job giving many tips on becoming more engaged with your student and had helpful handouts for all attendees as well.
- At the Board Meeting the Tecumseh Family of Schools PARC reported.
- Reminder 101 is being recommended to many school councils as a great way to keep parents in touch with happenings or even for emergencies at your schools. It is a “Push” texting system. The parents would have to request to sign up to your school’s account, the authorization happens, and then texts may be sent out without personal cell numbers/information being revealed. Text messages may be generated on mobile devices or from a computer. It is one way communication only. Has been used in many of our schools already and is a great success.

**Director’s Report – Erin Kelly**

- GECPIC – Fall Workshop was excellent, great math focus. Thanks to the team for their hard work.
- My focus this year is to find out more about the system. (surveyed the principals, unions, other groups) I have visited many of the schools so far this year, 45 in total. I have enjoyed my time touring all of our wonderful facilities.

**Reflections on what we do well:**

- Huge level of pride in our area for our schools
- Focus on high performances
- PA development in our system (fine work in our system for educators)
- Autonomy is utilized in our board
- Lots of community partnerships are enjoyed in our schools
- Physical resourcefulness, great use of money
- Special needs attention, including commitment to mental health
- Lots of programming for students that are ESL
- Respect for diversity in our board
- Pride in our properties (cleanliness)
- Great branding on our board

**Challenges that we face:**

- Parent engagement in their children's education
- Funding for Special Education
- Declining enrollment (province wide issue)

I am feeling very welcomed in all areas of our schools and at the board office. She really enjoyed that many students were able to talk about their learning and why they are learning in many areas of our board. One thing we have to realize is that we have a lot of media attention around here and we need to utilize that. When Superintendent Lyons said to her "You're going to love it here!" he wasn't too far off....Director Kelly announced that she fully agrees!

**Question and Answer:**

- Is there IT support board wide to keep up with all of the iPads and other technology being purchased by school councils?
  - Yes. They are working hard to keep up with this area. There doesn't seem to be a known problem at this time with support.
- How are we doing with internet access? Capacity? Is there going to be a "cap"?
  - There are 2 levels of access: The staff/students use 95% of the usage and the administration used the other 10%.

**Motion to Adjourn at 8:27 pm by Michelle Hedge, seconded by Cindy Mitchell.**