

GREATER ESSEX COUNTY PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (GECPIC)

Tuesday, January 28, 2014 - 7:00 p.m. - Tecumseh Vista Academy

MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Sheet was distributed for sign in.

7:10 pm AGENDA: Motion to accept agenda made by Trudy Richards and seconded by Michelle Hedge.

PREVIOUS MINUTES: Motion to accept previous minutes made by Michelle Hedge and seconded by Armand Matte.

Student Success Presentation: Student Success Team

- The focus for us this year is the "At Risk" children.
- How do we support kids when things don't go according to plan? That's their mission and they use many programs and tools to accomplish this.

Individual Pathway Plans (IPP): This program is used for all students from grade 7 to 12. Students do a lot of work on this in Grade 10 in their Career Studies class. However, they start working on this IPP in Grade 7 and work more and more on it as they progress through High School.

- **Knowing the Learner:** How do we best teach each child? We make sure we evaluate each child carefully and plan their education with the best fit they can. In helping children choose their future career paths, our goal is to try to learn each child individually and explore what they might want to be even from a very young age; what they want to become when they are older and guide them to their best choices and redirect their path if need be. This happens all the way from JK – Grade 12.

- Our school is trying to make career studies information and help more accessible to all families. However, they recognize that parents have much more influence over their children when guiding them to a certain career than the guidance counsellor. We would like to remind parents to keep in mind that this is THEIR (the student's) journey and not their own (parent's). Please let them find their own way and direct them back to us and our programs for help. We have many programs and information that can be extremely useful for the children to map out their own future.

Career Pathways Document – A new version is going to be released, updating it to be relevant to today's work force as it relates to education and will be available soon.

Transitioning:

- We start children thinking about their transition to high school in grade 7 because we feel it is that important.
- There are many "fun" days that high schools put on to invite our intermediate children into the high schools and get them comfortable with the building and get them excited about going to high school.
- We also have Grade 9 days at high schools as well to help students gain a sense of belonging once they've started high school.
- There are many opportunities/programs for children when finishing high school to get them used to the transition to University/College too. They can access these through their guidance department.
- **Career Cruising** is an online program that students can go and do assessments and journals that guide them towards future career plans. They can access this from our school board's website and use their student ID and passwords. (insert link)
- This Electronic platform is used for their future school planning as well. Grade 8s use it to select their electives for Grade 9, high schoolers use it to do assessments for possible career choices, choosing electives, etc. It's a great resource for all sorts of post-secondary education information as well.

Specialist High Skills Majors:

- This program enables children to better figure out what they might be interested in doing in the workplace and accommodates all four levels of learning.
- Bundled Credits (incl co-op), certifications and training, experiential learning and Career Exploration Activities and more are included in these majors.
- Our board is currently offering 11 of them right now, more to be added in the fall. Not all of them are available at all schools.
- Benefits of this program is that it taps into all interests of all students, hits all levels of all education styles, and provides real work experience (co-op) for children to be more marketable once they graduate.

OYAP:

- Grade 11 kids can do co-op
- They can do a co-op in a trade and then it's called "OYAP"
- It's industry driven to try and help the unemployment rate of our area and train for jobs that are needed in this area, designed to fit this school board. Mostly a trades style program.
- The first semester of Grade 11, they are in class, work the second semester, all thru the summer, as well as the first semester of grade 12. They are then back to class for the second semester of Grade 12 and proceed to graduate with all of their friends.
- Some of these OYAP placements are even paid working positions (one student made \$35,000), they also have the opportunity to become licensed in their trade which launches them more easily into their career once they graduate.
- An organization has recently offered our board a grant specifically with the goal of getting more female students to examine careers in under recognized careers for women. (ex: trades, auto shops, etc) they are working with St. Clair College in this area.
- One event they are organizing is a field trip only for girls that will drive them around the local area and investigate tool and die shops, auto mechanic shops, etc with the goal in mind of educating these students considering these possible careers.

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Great to Excellent Program:

- The idea is to encourage academic students to choose more "Hands on Learning" courses, to encourage them to widen their scope of learning, using their hands.
- They are focusing on Grade 9 and 10 academic students that are focused mainly on math, science and English.
- Teaching them some of these skills broadens their educational experience and ultimately benefits their life long after graduation. Showing the students that there is a whole section of learning opportunities that they are missing in high school by avoiding the "tech classes".

Co-Operative Education:

- This is a great way for students to "test drive" their potential career choice.
- They may work part of or an entire day.
- The students either love it or hate it and this program is a great way for them to figure these things out before their parents spend thousands of dollars on university/college tuition all for them to change their mind and realize they are in the wrong program.
- There are many opportunities to co-op around our local communities in hundreds of different working environments.

Student Safety Net Program:

- This program is for students who have left the system and we want to bring them back.
- Essentially this is the last "safety net" to catch drop outs and direct them back to school to finish and attain their high school diploma.
- There is a wonderful program we have partnered with in a local community kitchen that is helping these students finish their education not in a standard classroom environment, but by "working" for this kitchen.

SWAC (School within a college)

- SWAC is a concurrent program that students can enter where they would be taking classes in the college and the high school simultaneously. Students still have to pay their tuition, but it gives them a jump start to their post-secondary education, while finishing off their high school diploma too.
- Great for students interested in becoming pastry chefs, trades, etc.
- The program was a great success for its first semester that it was offered. We had 17 students graduate and will now proceed towards finishing their college programs.

7:50 pm JK Registration: Kris Marentette, Shawn Dufour and Nick Arundine

- February 12 - Open House at all of our schools
- February 13 – “A Day in the Life of...” Event (An open house for 2 hours during the day beginning at 10 am for parents to observe and actual kindergarten program in action)
- Early Years Teams organize the open house event, but it is important to know that schools involve the entire staff, because these registrations of these young children are our future.
- Our public relations, Scott Scantlebury is spreading the word as well as having a lot of advertising around the community. We have signs all over the district and advertising in media throughout our area. Some school secretaries even make personal phone calls to families and follow up. We are also using Synervoice to send a message to existing families already registered with us.
- The open house is a very exciting evening and every school has its own theme to make it very special for the families and children in that community.
- Sometimes we have a photography company come in and take pics of the children
- We have some schools set up with the technology in the classrooms (using tablets and iPads) and show families how they are integrated in our learning environment.
- Some schools use a mass email system to guide families through the different activities throughout the school.
- School councils play a critical role in the evening. We invite you to be part of this special event. Often they will help with: directing families/tours, give information to parents, give reassurance from a fellow parent that has been there already, provide a snack for the kids, drinks, and collect parent contact information to invite the new parents to your next parent council meetings.

8:05 pm Principal Report - Chris Mills (from Glenwood Public school)

- Homework Help: It is accessed through the board website (Go to “Students” tab) and offers tutoring help to students from Grades 7 - 10 with math homework. It is a Live Chat format with real certified Ontario Teachers and is open Sundays to Thursdays from 5:30 - 9:30 pm. (Go to: www.homeworkhelp.ilc.org)
- Some students chose to use questions right out of their text books, others just type in their questions and the tutors take it from there and help the student understand that concept better.
- There are different "classrooms" that the children can view before choosing one. Once they do, they wait in line in that room until a tutor is ready to help them.
- Some rooms are available as "audio" rooms and the tutor can actually talk with the student using a microphone and headset.
- There is also whiteboard where the student and/or the tutor can draw out their questions and explanations.
- To register they just need their OEN (Ontario Education Number – which can be found on their last report card or by calling the school) and their birthdate. From there they create a user name and password and they are good to go and get help. All names of students and tutors remain confidential and hidden behind their user name for security.
- There are many curriculum based tutorials, videos and resources also on this website that students can access for extra help as well.

- The students can go in and find resources by searching by their grade or strand of education (academic vs workplace) as well.
- Coming to the system soon is: Grades 1 - 6 carousels of all the subjects of learning. Soon there will be an area that all grades 1 - 6 students can log in and find different activities that can help them in any subject they may need help with. This is a system that will work from everyone's computers at home, so that IEP students will no longer have to have their school issued computer at home to use these resources.

8:15 pm Chair's Report: Katrina Elchami

- Thank you to Tecumseh Vista, Paul and Amy for your hospitality hosting us tonight
- I attended the last board meeting - two things that came out of this meeting were: the new name of the west end elementary school - which has been sent back for reconsideration to the naming committee and the other item was the director's report, which was fabulous and I highly recommend all parents to take the time to watch it (see board website)

School Council Training: Principal Profile:

- Every school council needs to be submitting one every year to the board (email to: Melissa Leboeuf, Assistant to the Director at melissa.leboeuf@publicboard.ca) by March 1st.
- We submit our hopes and wants of an ideal principal or vice principal specific to your school.
- This gives school councils a voice in the type of administration that they would like to have when an admin change must occur.
- The report does not have to be fancy, just point form....do one for your principal and one for your vice-principal.
- It is the community's opportunity to report directly to the board what works and doesn't work in your community school.
- It is important to be working on this by January/February each year and submit by March 1st.

8:25 pm Director's Report: Ben Kelly

- The board has more important things to be bargaining ahead of us, we're hopeful that that goes smoothly.
- There is a concern for reduced funding for education within Ontario, so budgets will be a concern in the near future and we'll be focusing on this.
- Enrolment is an ongoing issue provincially especially in the secondary panel.
- Good news, we are getting great feedback on Math success within our board, see the recent article in The Windsor Star.
- We have a new school board song...thank you to those that worked on this. They selected a student from Masey that wrote and will be producing this new song for us.
- Westview Freedom Academy will be having some renovations for this new amalgamated secondary school in the west end.
- We "spiced up" the director's report at the board meeting and it is posted on the website for all to see with the goal of making this report more accessible to everyone to see and hear.

8:30 pm Budget Report: see back of agenda

- We have two workshops coming up in March and May, more details to come.

8:30pm Q & A:

- There is a challenge being put out to all School Council Chairs to call a colleague and get another school out to the GECPIC meetings to get more information out to our schools.
- There is a press release being prepared on our behalf too to try and get more parent council members out to our workshops.
- Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, the organization that prepares taxes for free for underprivileged areas is looking for volunteers to help with their program....all training is provided, must be 16 years or older, please contact Armand Matte 519-252-6184 or armand.matte-scc@publicboard.ca. Community hours can be collected for volunteering for high school students. More information is on the GECPIC Facebook page as well. www.cra-arc.gc.ca/volunteer

Motion to adjourn at 8:37 pm (Gene/Jamie)