

Greater Essex County Parent Involvement Committee

GECPIC EXECUTIVE 2018-2019

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GECPIC Committee Representatives

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GECPIC Community Representatives

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Kim Johns	jkimberly@hotmail.com	Indigenous Education Advocacy Committee

Greater Essex County Parent Involvement Committee (GECPIC) Meetings for 2017-2018

Time: 7:00pm Location: Published with each agenda

Tuesday, October 23, 2018 - Board Office

451 Park St. W., Windsor

Tuesday, November 27, 2018 - Tecumseh Vista Academy

11665 Shields St., Tecumseh

Tuesday, January 22, 2019 – Board Office

451 Park St. W., Windsor

Tuesday, February 26, 2019 – Massey Secondary School

1800 Liberty St., Windsor

Tuesday, April 23, 2019 – Board Office

451 Park St. W., Windsor

Tuesday, May 28, 2019 – Sandwich West Public School

2055 Wyoming Ave., Lasalle

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR:

Our Parent Involvement Committee had a challenging year, as we struggled to connect with our purpose and build on the structure which we had previously established last year. We welcomed many new members into our group and were happy to see a boost in engagement from those new parents. Some of our new members took on larger roles as

chairs of our subcommittees, and many continued work in the subcommittees that they had begun last year.

This year the Parent Involvement Committee was happy to support the board in hosting the first annual GECPIC PLUS conference, which hosted guest speaker Dr. Karyn Gordon. We partnered with our Elementary Principal Representative, Principal Laura Bates, and our Secondary School Principal Representative, Principal Dina Salinitri, to bring this conference to life in just a few short weeks. They were able to do the bulk of the work along with a team of their own volunteers and our committee member, Lisa Renaud, from our Parent Outreach subcommittee. Many of our members expressed an interest in supporting this event in the future with greater parent involvement.

Dr. Karyn Gordon, a regular on CityTV's Cityline as well as a guest on Good Morning America, was the keynote speaker at the symposium on Saturday, April 6th at Tecumseh Vista Academy. Her discussion of "Teaching Empathy and Gratitude in Your Kids and Teens" was well received by all who attended. The "PLUS" in GECPIC PLUS stands for Parents Learning and Understanding Strategies. During the remainder of the day, until 2:00 p.m., participants attended a number of workshops including: Supporting Students in Elementary Mathematics; Cybersafety; Supporting Students with Anxiety and Secondary School Pathways.

The School Council subcommittee is looking forward to hosting a Parent Council Toolkit event next year that will bring resources to our new Parent Council members in the fall.

Another focus of our subcommittee groups was a project which we're tentatively calling the Library Card Challenge - an initiative to put library cards in the hands of all students of the board by the end of 2020. Windsor Public Library is onboard and very excited about this partnership. Next step will be to have a meeting with GECDSB and the Windsor Library to finalize rolling out plans for September 2019. We may roll out with a digital library card first and then go to actual card at a later time due to the volume that would be needed. We are working on a plan with Windsor Public Library that fits within their timeline as well due to the location change of their main branch being their main focus at the moment.

Overall, our parents have expressed that they are looking for more ways that they can engage with the work that takes place at the board. Several of our members did volunteer for events but felt left out of the process. Some joined the committee hoping to make an impact, but didn't know where to apply their talents. We lost a member this year who felt that her contribution as a parent and as an expert in her field was not supported by the work that she was doing at the committee level. The structure of GECPIC and its subcommittees allows for parents to focus their efforts in ways that speak to them, and could be of great assistance to the board in very specific ways.

A great example of this is in our Special Education subcommittee, whose members supported the STRIVE conference once again this year by presenting at the conference and connecting with parents there. The special education subcommittee put a proposal to the STRIVE committee chairperson Mr. Younan regarding having an artistic exhibit to

showcase the exceptional learners who will be attending. The result was a beautiful artistic display of the diverse talents of our students, which we were able to put on display once again in a gallery at our final meeting of the year.

Our committee this year brought together some exceptionally bright, vocal, and engaged people. It is our challenge in the coming years to continue bringing in these highly motivated, highly engaged parents. These parents want to connect with the work that is already being done at the board level and help to support the efforts of our board in breaking down the barriers to parent engagement and supporting the education and well-being of our students. In the two years since GECPIC was restructured, we have been able to begin to carve out what that might look like, but there is still a great deal of potential stored in this committee that has yet to be harnessed.

As we go forward, we will continue to look for those opportunities to improve communication between the board and parents, and to continue working to break down those barriers to parent engagement to help everyone in the school community feel that they have a voice.