

WRAPSC Minutes – April 2nd, 2019

Meeting start time : 6:59 pm.

Motion to approve revised agenda. Motioned by Heidi Holmes, seconded by Melissa Jenkins. Motion passed.
Motion to approve February 5th, 2019 Minutes. Motioned by Lorraine Buckley , seconded by Beth Robson.
Motion Passed.

Attendance: 29 attendees, 4 Guests; representing 28 Schools.

Welcome

- Angelica Allen welcome all members of WRAPSC.

I. French Immersion Survey by Matthew Gerard

- Currently French Immersion is under review, and the WRDSB is releasing a survey, for teacher, parent, and student feedback.
- The purpose of this survey, is to look at the feedback, and the current structure of French Immersion and Core French. Some other Boards have a different arrangements, and allow delayed entry (not only in the first grade), and others offer a different structure to their FI program.
The survey should be ready for release in the next two weeks, with a survey time of 5 weeks. There will be two portions of the test; the parent portion for both FI families and Non-FI families, and the second is for teachers, both FI and Non FI.
- The purpose of the survey is to gain information from parents and teachers alike, on all sides of the topic, to voice their opinion on the matter. Topics could include why parents choose FI or why they choose not to enrol in FI. Other topics for the teachers could include challenges within the program, how they feel about the program, staffing, and even why they feel students leave FI.
- The Board is planning on a formal report prepared by a consultant with the results of the survey, to be ready by fall 2019.
- There will be focus groups that parents can join if they would like to voice their opinions. To be considered for a focus group you must fill out the survey first.
- The survey will be advertised on normal school communication sites such as Twitter, the Board website, etc. WRAPSC will also pass the information on through WRAPSC channels to all school councils.

II. Explore your future Fair (Business Education Partnership) by Scott Verhoeve and Holly Wiseman

- This not for profit organization has approximately 500 volunteers across the region.
- One of the services this organization does, is bring speakers into classrooms, and to fairs and explain what they do.
- Explore your future brings together local businesses thru fairs, class presentations, etc to help educate our children for a potential future in their respective career choice. These people often are from Human resources within the company, or the workers themselves, and can provide valuable inside on what schooling and achievements a student might need to succeed in their specific career choice.
- This organization will be holding its 3rd annual Fair, which will be held at Bingeman's on Wednesday April 10th from 5:30 to 8:30pm. If you're able to, registration is available. This will include 2 different school boards, along with 70 local businesses. You can also attend without registering in advance.
- School councils can make a request for presenters to come in for information nights.

Presenter Holly Wiseman with Junior Achievement Waterloo Region

- JA Waterloo offers financial literacy, entrepreneurship and work readiness skills to students starting in grade 4 and up to 12. These programs will help get students ready by offered gifts valuable experience and transferable skills.
- These Programs are free of charge, and can be brought into classrooms at teachers request, or students can join their after- school program.
- Many programs and resources are available, to help guide our young minds into their future.
- JA is always looking for volunteers, who are eager to help shape the minds of our future. Training will be given, and time commitments range from a few hours to a whole day.

III. Concerns over Behavioural issues in schools – by WRAPSC Members Brenda Bradley, Lorraine Buckley and Amber Doey.

- Brenda’s recommendation was the use of a generic form, similar to a lice form, for parents to be notified when their child has been a witness to an occurrence. This is especially important when it results in a class evacuation.
- Lorraine described what happens when a incident occurs with a behavioural child, and the teacher’s attention is being diverted from the rest of the class to helping that child. The classroom learning environment is interrupted every time an incident happens, causing disrupted learning to the students witnessing the outburst.
- Amber brought forth the need for improved communications between the school and parents. Speaking from the experience of having both a bullied child and behavioural child, the need for communication is crucial. Schools need more resources to help students in both situations, and the bridge of non-communication needs to be repaired so parents and students alike can assist and learn and cope.
- All three presenters agreed that communication from the school to parents/guardians is essential to help maintain a health and safe state of mind for all children. Questions/statements that occurred during the discussion include the following:
 - a. At what point does privacy trump the well being of the mental, and emotional state of the witnessing children to the incident?
 - b. The schools need to be more informative with parents, without breaking privacy regulations, so parents are able to help support their child’s wellbeing.
 - c. Members agreed that the well being of all the students and the teacher was important. They know the WRDSB is concerned, and would like to see additional policies put in place. Concern over cuts in resources due to Provincial cutbacks were also mentioned.
 - d. See appendix to minutes for specific policy suggestions

Superintendent Scott Miller on student achievement and well-being (Special Education) -Board Perspective

- Scott briefly gave us a insight to his background, from working as a elementary and high school teacher up to his current position.
- The Special Education Advisory Committee is looking into what can schools share without breaking Privacy rules, and how to communicate with the school.
- It was once thought that our schools would maintain the current level of enrolment, however the communities are growing, causing a need for more schools. This requires more teachers, EAs, etc.
- Scott informed WRAPSC as to what a parent should do, should they feel like there should be more communication.
 - a. first talk with student’s teacher, EA/ECE or other teachers involved
 - b. next step would be to talk with the Vice Principal and Principal.
 - c. At this point, if there is still a lack of communication, the next step would be to call your school

superintendent. To find your school superintendent, you can go on the Board website and look under your school name.

- On the topic of mental health, one of the Boards goal's relates to the student and teachers well-being. There is a policy around the caregiver's well-being for grade 7-12, with an anticipated policy coming for elementary schools soon.
- Bullying is a hard topic to address. Verbal bullying is harder to address as there is often no evidence to prove it, as opposed to physical well-being. There are bullying prevention plans in development within the board.
- Acts of violence are reported quarterly from schools, so the board has insight as to where more assistance needed.
- Members from WRAPSC inquired as to how the board and parents alike can help teachers and staff to know what they can say, along with what parents can do to help.

IV. Board updates

Items of interest:

1. Students are staging a walkout on Thursday April 4th, protesting the proposed new education plan. These voices can make a strong impact. On Saturday April 6th, at 10 am, a rally by the unions of schools and parents alike are protesting for the same cause.
 2. The Board produces a Student Aggression report. Can we see it?
 3. Strategic Plan – presented at March 25th Board Meeting. Basically the Board reports that they are making progress in mathematics, graduation rates, and student & staff well-being. Almost everything got a green light, meaning on track with implementation. None got full implementation checkmark. See Board package that day for full report.
 4. Communications Audit – Also presented at the March 25th Board meeting. Contains a good description of website issues and fragmentation of communication avenues, hopefully this gets fixed soon. We need to ask for an established path to get PIC and WRAPSC items distributed.
 5. Expulsion Report – Elementary suspensions increased by 10 over last year's year to date (FEB) and secondary suspensions have increased by 75. Need to follow up.
- Definition of a violent incident: the occurrence of any of the following or the occurrence of a combination of any of the following: possessing a weapon, including a firearm, physical assault causing bodily harm requiring medical attention, sexual assault, robbery, using a weapon to cause or threaten bodily harm to another person, extortion, hate and/or bias-motivated occurrences.
- Superintendent Peter Rubinshuh stated that "all behaviour has a purpose, whether it is inappropriate or appropriate: Seeking attention, power, revenge, or affiliation. The Board's plan is progressive prevention, intervention, supports, and consequences".
6. **Better Beginnings** – a charitable organization funded by the Hallman Foundation and others that serves Cedarbrae School and the Sunnyside neighbourhood did a presentation at the March 25 Board Meeting. <https://bbwaterloo.org/> Check out website, as they are hoping to expand to other schools. Provides academic support, activities for children after school, and uses many volunteers.
 7. Bylaws – Interesting possible addition is a question period for the public. This means you can either apply to ask a question of the Board, or ask during a question period at the end of the meeting. They are considering this idea, it has not been finalized.

V. Closing

- Our next and final meeting is On May 7th. All are invited to come and meet our trustees.
- If anyone has and comments or suggestions on the Changes from the Province, they are encouraged to pass them along to one of the steering committee members. End time: 9:00 pm

Appendix – specific policy suggestions provided by WRAPSC members

Board policies – 6009 and Administrative procedure 1260.

- A. Policy 6009 (bullying prevention) Section 2.3.1 talks about the importance of a positive school climate. The board defines the positive school climate they are trying to maintain as existing when “*all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted.*” The only way they can know if ALL members feel safe is if schools communicate with parents so that parents can communicate with their children.

- B. Administrative procedure 1260 (Student Discipline Procedure) need to add the step of informing parents of affected students about a violent incident, as the procedure’s language already acknowledges that behaviours have impact beyond the student themselves: 4.2 “Inappropriate behavior includes any behaviour that disrupts the positive school climate and/or has a negative impact on the school community.” Both 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 mention impact on school community (classmates) and the board’s code of conduct, which again, has suspension options for bullying which includes actions impacting positive school climate.
 - 3.2.6 Contact with the pupil’s parent/guardian
 - 3.2.7 Contact with the parent/guardians of any students directly or indirectly affected by the pupil’s behaviour or intervention (can we ask that this be added?)
(i.e. the parent/guardians of any student injured, threatened, present with others who were injured or threatened, or any students who needed to be evacuated from a classroom due to the behaviours of another student.)

Links to policies & procedures

https://www.wrdsb.ca/wp-content/uploads/6009_Student-Bullying-Prevention-Intervention-.pdf

<http://www.wrdsb.ca/wp-content/uploads/AP1260-Student-Discipline-.pdf>