

WRAPSC Minutes – November 5th, 2019

Territorial Land Acknowledgement by Mandi Bond

Motion to approve October 1st, 2019 Minutes.

Motion approved by Ian Campbell, Seconded by .

Motion to approve November 5th, 2019 agenda.

Motioned by Christine Carmody, seconded by Melissa Jenkins.

Attendance:

I. Welcome

- Angelica Allen welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Introduction of the Museum with Guest speakers Claire and Reilly.

II. The Museum

- The Museum was opened in 1995 to community members, and revamped in 2003.
- In 2009, the museum rebranded: “We are a new kind of museum – one of ideas and experiences”
- The museum offers STEM based camps and 20 curriculum based educational programs that range from grades K-12 and are 60-75 minutes in length; New and exciting exhibitions, along with the underground studio -Maker Space “ideas transcending object”.
- Their exhibits are linked to our school curriculum, and to what is happening in the community and globally.
- The Museum is open to the public, as well as school groups.
- The Museum is trying to get this information out to the public and schools, to help promote educational based fun for school trip ideas and family time.
- Posters can be requested for school purposes at education@themuseum.ca.

III. Question Period – with Guest speaker Director of Education John Bryant, Superintendent Michael Weinert, Associate Director Lila Read, and Coordinating Superintendent of Business Services Matthew Gerard.

1. EQAO results are not improving significantly despite great effort on the part of the WRDSB. How do the following factors influence this: split classes, behaviour issues, funding cuts? What else can the Board do? What else can parents/families do?
 - We have in fact experienced improvements and we continue to invest in our strategic plan.
 - We caution against hear-say. EQAO is only 1 way to measure how the current Curriculum is working, but it’s not the only way. Out of the 10 sections of measures, 7 sections have increased. (see attached slides.)
 - To date, we have reached grade targets that were set by the board. These targets normally take 10 years to reach, and we are only in year 4.
 - This testing helps identify students who may need a little more help, a little earlier on.
 - The school board has a world-renowned researcher working on data collected to analyze what steps should be taken to help improve student’s education.
 - There are concerns around the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test results that are being looked into. The ultimate goal in education is to have 100% of our students graduate.

- Attached are slides showing the tracking of the same group of students from Grade 3, to grade 6 and again in grade 9. You can see the areas that need more improvement, and the areas the students excelled in.
 - The EQAO does have many factors that drive the data, such as student's absence – which affects the overall student rate of meeting curriculum standards, to some behavioural tendencies, and these students may or may not have a harder time in certain subjects.
2. Split classes: How does the Board decide when to have split classes? Will the change in class size levels affect this and create even more split classes?
- The ministry has established rules regarding elementary class size and boards must adhere to them and report on them at a set time in the year established by the board. For Waterloo DSB, plus size numbers were taken at the end of the first week of school in September. Over the course of the year, increase and/or decrease is based on the student population in the school. The board is not required to re-adjust during the year.
 - In March the Board starts the process by tallying the estimated number of students per school and per grade. Human Resources looks at where the students will attend and then how to distribute them across grades and classes. Final decisions are made by the administrator, ie: Principal.
 - Class sizes grade one through three are capped at 20 students per class with a 10% variance. Grades four through six are capped at 23 students with a 10% variance.
 - In mid-September, class sizes must be within the 10% variance. Over the course of the year, class sizes will fluctuate with students coming and going. There is no mandate to have a recount done of class sizes after the initial date in September.
 - Staff and administration can decide on split classes. It is up to their discretion on how many split classes are needed.
 - At this time there is insufficient evidence to determine whether or not French immersion has an affect on split classes.
3. Fundraising: What happens if the school council has fund raised for a specific cause after voting on it, told parents/families that is what they are fundraising for, and then the principal takes the money for some other purpose?
- In general, fundraising plans are to be developed jointly between the school administrators and their councils. Transparency is important.
 - Things can change over the course of the year, and sometimes the budget needs to be changed. Should this happen, there should be a conversation first with the principal and the council, and then to the parent community. If councils are having trouble with a lack of communication between their admin and themselves, councils first need to speak with their Principal. If the issue is still a problem, they can contact their schools' superintendent.
 - Board policy 4017 section 3 addresses fundraising for specific things or goals. This policy can provide insight on the fundraising goals and initiatives.
4. Given the progress in high school graduation rates, how will the provincial funding cuts affect the special programs available now to increase graduation rates?
- Attrition funding was built into the 2019/20 grants for student needs. There are regulations surrounding the class sizes.
 - The new funding model originally gave a ration of 28 students to one teacher, to be phased in over a period of time. This has not been finalized, so keep tuned – it may change. We are currently still operating at an average of 22 students to one teacher.

- There are collective agreements still in effect, that cannot be changed, until a new agreement is in effect. Class sizes will depend on the outcome of the collective agreement bargaining process.
- Specialty classes (ie. Shop class, ESL, etc) will always be staffed differently. They need to have a smaller class size compared to core academic classes.
- The board and human resources work closely with staff unions.

5. How has the Provincial Government changed the PRO and PIC grant structure?

- the PRO Grant is the same process, however it is now done through the Board and not the Ministry.
- Schools are not obligated to apply for the PRO Grant, but are encouraged to do so. Less funds will be available.
- attached are some slides with the break down of the PRO Grant over the last few years, and the expected budget for the 2019/20 school year.
- The \$500 Parent Involvement grant will still be available to all local schools.

IV. Board updates –by Tracy Jackson

Public Education in a Changing World: People for Education's Annual Conference November 2, 2019 -York University

A. Research by People for Education indicates that:

- 87% of secondary schools report having student activity fees, which can be up to \$300 per year;
- In 2018, the top 10% of fundraising elementary schools raised 37 times the amount raised by the bottom 10%, with some schools reporting raising as much as \$123,000;
- guidance counsellors used to help with career planning, but now the focus tends to be more and more on mental health issues.

B. Unicef's Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by Canada in 1989) with Keynote Speaker- Stephen Lewis.

- The convention deals with child-specific needs and rights. <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/what-is-the-convention>
- The United Nations has 17 Sustainable Development Goals to transform our world. They were set in 2015 and are intended to be complied with by the year 2030 by those countries that have ratified it. Canada has not yet ratified. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-developmentgoals/>
- Indigenous Education
- If a school board chooses to have land acknowledgements, they MUST first be capable of properly pronouncing the names of the tribes and treaty that is being acknowledged in order to avoid regression.
- In order to effectively have community outreach, you may need to meet people where they are comfortable meeting, as there can be a fear of some parents, regardless of their background, to come into the school setting.
- 100,000 students in Ontario self identify as Indigenous.
- There are Indigenous Education Leaders in each school board. You can find out who that person may be through your school board. Only 25% of these leaders self identify as indigenous.
- There are 3 ways to learn the Indigenous culture: learning about, learning from and learning through. The best practice is to learn through.
- If a teacher is not knowledgeable of indigenous matters, they can use the inquiry method- and learn together along with their students.
- Ways to assist those students in education of indigenous matters include:

1. Responsive means- cultural art on the walls, create a teacher: student ratio that is reflective of your self identifying students.
2. Create a space within your system that reflects indigenous values.
3. Community based education- discover what is available by contacting local Friendship Centres.
4. Student leadership- build spaces to promote student leadership.

- Since 2007 there has been an Ontario First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/fnmiframework.pdf>

C. Building Real Community in Schools

- This afternoon session dealt with micro aggressions and streaming in education, specifically the harm resulting from such actions.
- No solutions were presented for the harm of micro-aggression or streaming in education.
- Micro aggression means discriminatory communication that is ongoing and cumulative over the span of an individual's lifetime. They are covert, perpetual, repetitive, micro- not in the sense of the magnitude of the hurt cast, and oppressive.

V. Closing

- Questions or comments can be emailed to Angelica/Mandi at wrapsc@gmail.com, or left in the comment box at the sign in table.
- Members suggested having a presentation on specific actions parents can take to improve school success. One example would be for parents to stop denigrating their own math abilities. We don't want our children to think math is not important.
- Mandi thanked our guest speakers for joining us today.
- Next meeting will be January 14th, 2020.
- Steering committee is to meet after this meeting in concluded.

AD/12 Nov 2019

POSTSCRIPT: FUNDRAISING INFO for Music for Critters

"Music for Critters" project will run during the 1st until the 30th of April, 2020. The fundraiser features Dr. Jane Goodall, David Suzuki, Jeff Coffin (Dave Matthews Band), Antonine Maillet and more.

I am doing a national competition with schools across Canada. The school that will collect the most donations will receive a \$500 prize from Long & McQuade. Students will be able to receive musical instruments for their school with this prize. Two schools will also win \$200 from Long & McQuade as participation prizes. It asks people to donate to an animal shelter, animal rescue or environmental non-profit. In return, they will receive songs, inspirational messages by Dr. Jane Goodall and David Suzuki, and educational material about animals and the environment as a gift.

Students can participate by bringing in some supplies and donations (pet toys, blankets, pet food, litter, financial donations, etc.). Students in each school will choose which non-profit organization they want to support. To encourage recycling, if a student brings a used item as a donation instead of an item bought at a store (i.e. a used blanket or pet toy), their donation will be worth \$2. The other donations will be worth what they paid at the store.

All the other students who will participate, even the schools that will not win a prize, will receive the songs and messages of the project as a gift.

Michel Goguen
openstrum.com

Note – WRAPSC will only include non-profit fundraising opportunities as an fyi. We do not specifically recommend campaigns.