

November 2022



Welcome to The PIC Connection, the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)
Newsletter for School Councils.

A Message from Mike:

On behalf of the Parent Involvement Committee and Amanda Lloyd, Vice-Chair of PIC, I am pleased to share the first edition of the Parent Involvement Committee Newsletter. School Councils can use the information to support their work as council members. Please feel free to share the information with your school community as you deem appropriate. It is our goal to provide you with answers to questions we often receive; keep you informed about upcoming events and more. Our mission is to provide councils with all the tools they need to function proficiently. We welcome all feedback: what do you like; what should we add; are there questions we can answer that you believe may apply to other school councils. This newsletter is for you, help us make it the best it can be.

As the Chair of the Parent Involvement Committee, I hope to provide opportunities for School Council Chairs and members to feel connected. This includes holding five in-person sessions at schools throughout the year and one at the board annually.

Parent involvement is so important! This work is very rewarding but also can be challenging. It is time well invested, statistically, students thrive when parents, guardians, and caregivers are involved.

Please feel free to reach out to Amanda or me anytime. pic@hwdsb.on.ca.

Mike Palma Chair of the Parent Involvement Committee

Sharing the knowledge: *Parent Engagement Grant*

Each school council receives \$500 to assist with parent communication and other parent engagement efforts. The Ministry provides this money to the school board, which in turn gives it to the school principal to give to the school council. This normally takes place in September. Guidelines state that this money is to be used for "mobilization and outreach" activities such as "broadening the number of school events that include parents" and "diversification of communication tools" used to reach parents. School councils are expected to "seek out the advice and ideas of other parents and partners" about how best to spend the money. The school council must approve all the expenditures for activities funded with this money.

Please remember that this money must be spent on parent communication and other parent engagement activities.

Some ideas for the Parent Involvement funding include:

- Guest speaker or parent workshops; pooling of funds from multiple schools is an option and encouraged;
- Translation services or interpreters for parent resources, events and interviews;
- Purchase computer software for school council activities or parent/teacher evenings;
- Door prizes for contests to increase parent engagement (ie: survey participation);
- Parent resource library (ie: books and electronic resources for parents);
- Creating a 'Welcome Package' for new families to the community;
- Volunteer appreciation events and activities (ie: volunteer lunch, volunteer recognition gifts, food and refreshments for school council meetings or during volunteer activities);
- Proud Volunteer T Shirts
- Child care while parents attend events or meetings at the school
- School agendas
- Police reports
- Year end dinner
- School events
- Parent Engagement Handbook for our families – lists all the places you can get information (accessible with multiple languages online) 15 pages – for printing, and other costs associated with getting it loaded onto the website in different languages
- Should you wish to use your funds for events and activities after the due date (ie: end-of-year socials), we recommend discussing advance payments with your vendors.

These funds cannot be spent on the following:

- Payment of HWDSB staff for presenting at workshops;
- Computers, iPads, Chromebooks;
- Textbooks for Students;
- LCBO, Beer Store and OLG items and gift cards;
- Donations and support for families that may require financial or monetary support (ie: gift baskets and gift cards).

Recommended Guest Speakers:

Paul Davies; Perdity Felician; Michael Lansberg; Clara Hughes; Elizabeth Fry United Way; Ann Douglas; Aimee Reid; Telling Tales to name a few.

Have you had a great speaker at your school?

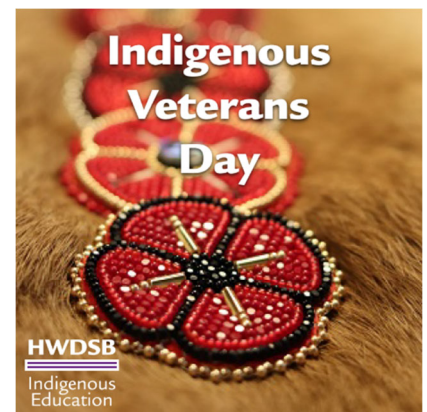
Please send their names and we will add them to the list, thank you.

PIC Meeting Highlights: *November 8, 2022*

Indigenous Veterans Day, November 8: PIC members recognized Indigenous Veterans Day, which was the same day as their meeting. Learn more about Indigenous Veterans Day.

Indigenous peoples never surrendered nationhood sovereignty and therefore were not recognized as Canadian citizens during WWI and WWII. This means that they could not be conscripted (drafted) to serve. Every Indigenous soldier that served in both Great Wars did so voluntarily, as allies. Many were enfranchised as a result, meaning that they were stripped of their legal right to be registered as a status Indian. These veterans could not return to their home communities to live, as they were no longer band members. [Read more:](https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/blog/treaties-recognition-week-indigenous-veterans-day/)

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Breakout rooms

PIC members broke into groups to discuss best practices in parent engagement, fundraising, parent school events, and barriers to engagement. These results and more will be shared throughout the year in The PIC Connection

Communications Update: *Volunteers*

Amber Aquin, Engagement Officer, and Shawn McKillop, Manager of Communications and Community Engagement attended PIC to signal that they will be reviewing and updating the Volunteer program at HWDSB. The following resources: Volunteers in Schools; Volunteer Policy and Volunteer Procedure are being reviewed and more information will be shared throughout the year.

Questions related to Volunteers at HWDSB and feedback

related to challenges and opportunities are welcome.

Please email communications@hwdsb.on.ca.

Trustee Update:

Trustee Becky Buck, Wards 8 & 14, joined Mike in saying goodbye to Penny Deathe, Trustee, Ward 15. Penny has served for two terms (8 years) and has been a dedicated member of PIC as Trustee representative. She was always a strong advocate for parental voice and will be missed.

On November 7, Trustees held their last Board meeting of the 2018-22 Term. The Inaugural Board Meeting will be held on November 21, 2022 to welcome the new slate of Trustees for the 2022-26 Term.

Board Highlights:

Highlights at the Board meeting include topic related to electronic participation

In the Director's Update to Board, Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini said farewell and happy retirement to Superintendent of Student Achievement, Laura Romano. Laura has been at HWDSB for 31 years.

Up and Coming:

- Pro Grant Information will be going out to school Principals soon.
- Next month The PIC Connection will share: What is the Pro Grant; How do you apply; How much can you apply for; What can it be used for and more.
- December 6, 2022 PIC will hold its first of 5 training sessions to be held in selected schools centrally located in each of the 5 families of schools. More info will be sent out soon.
- Our next PIC meeting will be on Tuesday 13, December 2022 at the Education Centre 6:30 – 8:30 As this is PIC's Holiday meeting the agenda is less formal. We hope to have the Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC join us and have extended an invitation to the Director Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini. All PIC meetings are open to the public.

In closing, thank you for reading the newsletter written by parents for parents.

Once again please let us know how we can make it better for you.

We firmly believe working together we can make HWDSB an even better place to work, learn, play and grow as staff, parents, guardians, caregivers and students.