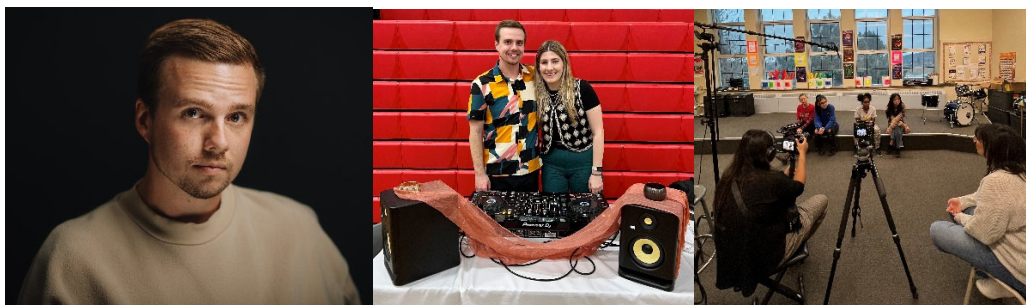


**May 2023**



**Nick Benner**

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

**A Message from Mike:**

Welcome to your May edition of the PIC connection. May has already shown us how crazy weather can be in southern Ontario. Record breaking heat one day and last night frost warnings. In May's edition we are happy to introduce an often behind the scenes, creative Nick Benner. He works as a HWDSB Communications Officer. Sharing the knowledge will look at ways to recruit new school council members. This tends to be a topic that pops up often while visiting with School Councils. A reminder if you are using a council created email for your school council, please share it with Shawn McKillop [smckillo@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:smckillo@hwdsb.on.ca) to ensure you receive all info pertaining to school councils.

*Please feel free to reach out to Amanda or me anytime. [pic@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:pic@hwdsb.on.ca).*

*Mike Palma* Chair of the Parent Involvement Committee

**A Message from Nick:**

Hello to HWDSB's School Council community! As someone who likes to spend most of his time behind the messages, screens, and cameras, it's a huge honour to be featured in this edition of The PIC Connection.



As a Communications Officer at HWDSB, my job entails many different things! If I had to summarize the role in a few words, it's my duty to ensure that information gets to the people who need it. Many days, this role means typing away at my computer to finish a message to families about a change for the system. Some days, this role means heading out to an elementary or secondary school to help support an event organized by staff. Other days, this role means packing up our camera gear to shoot a video about an awesome student story. There's never a dull moment in Communications and Community Engagement!

I also try to take every opportunity that I can to bring J-O-Y into my J-O-B. One of the best ways I've been able to do this is by bringing my love of music and DJing to various HWDSB events! If you've found yourself at Prom Project Hamilton, Celebrating Diversity Inclusion 360, and more, you might've seen me spinning a couple tunes. There's nothing better than combining your professional and personal passions.

As someone who first pursued a career in teaching before pivoting to public relations, working in education communications has truly been the best of both worlds. In my previous teaching life and my current comms one, the importance of parent involvement has remained throughout. The work that you do in your school and district communities means more than you'll ever know! Never forget your impact.

**Nick Benner**

## **Communications & Community Engagement Update:**



### **Trustee Update**

Trustee Elizabeth Wong shared an update on behalf of the Trustees. She reinforced with PIC that if they were looking for a specific update in the Trustees Reports to reach out. Trustee Wong provided an overview about the school-year calendar, which received Board of Trustee approval. The next step is to take the HWDSB approved calendar to the Ministry of Education for their approval. A note is that the one day allocated for a PA Day is designated for teacher/parent interviews.

Strategic planning consultations are underway. An online survey is also available. There will be a student leadership summit on June 9. A local agreement was reached between HWDSB and CUPE, representing maintenance workers and caretakers.

Trustees are currently moving through the budget development process. The Grants for Students Needs were released in April. This is the funding that the Ministry of Education releases to school boards. Also, the School Naming Policy and the Modern Learning Policy were approved.

### **Tobacco Control Program**



A Public Health nurse attended the Parent Involvement Committee meeting to discuss youth vaping prevention. HWDSB and the Tobacco Control Program have history parting on youth tobacco/vaping prevention.



- In Ontario, data shows that 1 in 6.5 Ontario grade 7 – 12 students have vaped in the past year.
- In Hamilton, 2019, 1 in 3 students vaped in the past year. 1 in 2 students had tried vaping by Grade 12 and many students felt vaping is not harmful.
- Less than 5 percent of students reported smoking cigarettes, which is down.

Public Health supports Comprehensive School Health, which supports teaching & learning, social & physical environment, health school policy, and partnership & services.

Risks included nicotine dependence, other substance use, and health effects. Nicotine affects brain development and vape use is associated with mental health symptoms. Youth have lowering odds of vaping when parents have higher relatedness scores, mutual trust and open communication.

Public health came to validate a proposal for HWDSB families and PIC members as well as gaining input from families on youth vaping prevention.

## Parent Input

### Slido Survey

- Go to Slido.com and enter Pin # or use the QR code
- 5 question anonymous survey



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## Trustee-School Council Engagement

Shawn McKillop, Manager of Communications and Community Engagement came to PIC to gather input on ways that Trustees and School Councils can connect in support of students and families.

The goals of the presentation included:

1. Trustees wish to continue to build a relationship with School Council Chairs within their Wards. Serving students and families is one of many common features between the roles.
2. Create a resource of best practices to support Trustee-School Council relations in the School Council Handbook shared next October at the School Council Start up session.
3. Create conditions to annually support School Council Chairs and Trustees.



Shawn McKillop shared an overview of Trustee-School Council relations since the start of the new Board:

- Intro message from Trustees to school communities – January
- Emailed Trustee contact information with School Council distribution – February
- “Our Trustee” – School website section – March
- New Trustee Newsletter – March and June
- School Council engagement – May
- Trustee posters in schools - June

PIC members engaged in feedback about the following questions:

1. What are ways that Trustees can support School Councils?
2. How Trustees can best participate in School Council meetings?
3. How should School Councils best reach out to Trustees? How best can we share contact information between School Councils and Trustees?
4. What is the role of the principal in facilitating Trustee-School Council connections?

## **School Council emails**

School Councils can reference [Email Overview for School Council Chairs](#) to learn about the emails that are provided to School Councils by HWDSB. A [School Council Email Directory](#) is also available but does not include School Council chairs who choose to use their own personal email address.

## **School Council Handbook**

The [School Council Handbook 2022-23](#) was shared to the committee for review. Any input can be shared with [communications@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:communications@hwdsb.on.ca). Tell us what's missing and what can be added?!

## **Feedback from PRO Grants**

Superintendent Goodacre and Chair Palma provided feedback from Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grants. Feedback included value of existing school council events, ways to include other groups that re connected to parents, guardians, caregivers, and schools, and a desire to see PIC/System-level parent events.

## **School Council Annual Report**

Near the end of every school year, School Councils are asked to report on the successes, accomplishments, and challenges they had during the current year. School Councils are asked to provide this information by completing the following annual report survey due **Friday, June 16, 2023**.

Access the survey here: <https://ca.research.net/r/2022-2023SCAR>



## PIC Connects

The next and final session for PIC Connects is on Tuesday, May 23, 2023, at *Viola Desmond Elementary School* (50 Secord Drive, Hamilton) from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Click here to access the flyer: [PIC Connects](#)

These sessions are hosted by Mike Palma, Chair of PIC, Amanda Lloyd, Vice-Chair of PIC and with support from Shawn McKillop, Manager of Communications and Community Engagement. Join us!

## Volunteer Certificates

April was National Volunteer Month. And to celebrate, HWDSB is pleased to recognize volunteers for the 2022-23 school year by offering a certificate program. Principals can submit names with the Communications and Community Engagement team who will send the school certificates.

Volunteers are so important and we haven't been able to truly celebrate them during the pandemic. The certificates are a way to provide recognition and say thank you. We look forward to building off from this and do more for our volunteers in the future.

**\*\*\* Check out The PIC CONNECTION Newsletters and other support for School Council members at \*\*\* <https://hwdsb.info/SchoolCouncil> \*\*\***

**Sharing the knowledge:** Recruiting School Council Members

### Best Practices:

- One of the most powerful words in the English language is: Hi ! When you are dropping off your child/children or picking them up at school be friendly. Take the first step and say hi to a stranger. You may be surprised at how receptive they are. Eventually mention school council as a great way to meet new people and become involved in their child's education and school community.
- When council holds events hand out pamphlets explaining what school council is and does. Include councils contact info along with the words "New members are always welcome".
- Add always looking for new members to all school council advertising for events and info sent by council to parents.
- Kindergarten Orientation Day. Ask your principal to participate in this event by having the school council chair provide a short presentation to the new parents. Ask for emails of those interested in joining or being updated when events are happening.
- The school council chair is responsible for sending a year end report (June) to all school parents on everything school council has done for the year. Events; fundraising; purchases... Include council contact info on the bottom of the report. Along with "Always looking for new members" and a reminder the first meeting of the year and elections will be held in the up-and-coming September. **(Sample Below)**





- When holding an event have a member handing out free candy, cookies, fruit... and ask for interested parents to provide their contact info. The better the free stuff the more parents you will interact with.
- Teacher/parent interviews, hand out post cards to parents as they come in.
- School open house in collaboration with the school principal hold a BBQ for parents to purchase supper before attending the event. Have posters up indicating sponsored by your school council. Like to be involved in the next BBQ contact us at...
- Have council members volunteer to help out at school events: track & field; swimming meets; field trips, concerts, plays... Ask in return to have school council sponsored event added to the forms being sent home to the parents along with the council email.
- School council monthly newsletter. Only needs to be one page and can be included with the school newsletter with principal consent.
- School website advertising asking for new members.
- Social media sites add a banner or poster sharing the benefits of being a school council member.
- Use part of your \$500.00 parent engagement grant to offset the cost of Vulnerability Checks for parents not in a position to pay it.
- If your school has a billboard or electronic sign ask to advertise on it. Post events on it.
- As with any advertising, positive word of mouth is free and by far the best and easiest form of getting the word out. Successful events lead to parents wanting to be involved in the next one.
- The only secret to recruitment, is patience and friendly positive persistence.

### **HWDSB School Council Events:**

1. **Happy Parents, Happy Kids:**      **Ann Douglas**  
Cootes Paradise Elementary School  
900 King St W, Hamilton, ON L8S 1K6  
Thursday, June 8, 2023    6:30 pm to 7:30 pm
  
2. **Mental Health Film Educational**  
24th May 2023 at 6:30 pm  
Sir Allen McNab Secondary School 145 Magnolia Dr, Hamilton, ON L9C 5P4

We are thrilled to present a special screening of a short film produced by Cine-Psych, a team of mental health advocates who are passionate about using film to educate and raise awareness about mental health issues. Cine-Psych was formed in 2017 by Dr Nadeem Akhtar, an Associate Professor in Psychiatry at McMaster University, who saw the potential of film to break down the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Dr Akhtar, will be moderating an audience-panel discussion following the screening drawing on a cinema and psychiatry lens. This is a unique opportunity to learn as well as connect with other parents in your community who are faced with similar concerns.

Childminding, light refreshments and door prizes will be available.

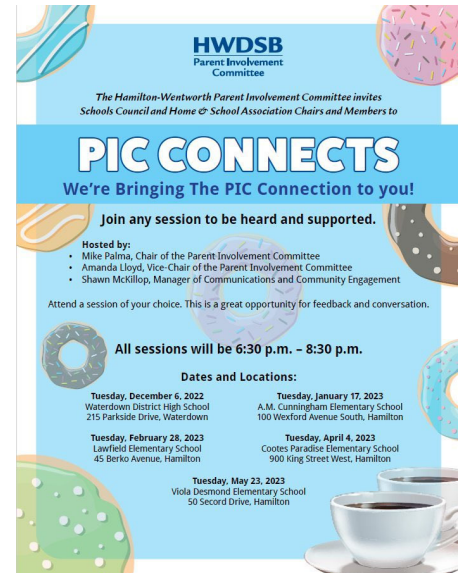
Space is limited so please register right away by clicking here:

<https://movieandpaneldiscussion.rsvpify.com>



## Up and Coming:

- **PIC Connects** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 Viola Desmond Elementary School 50 Secord Drive, Hamilton 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. An information evening for all school council members.
- Next month The PIC Connection will share School Council start up dates.
- Our next PIC meeting will be on Tuesday 13, June 2023 at the Education Centre 6:30 – 8:30
- All PIC meetings are open to the public and held in a Hybrid Format.



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

Have a topic you would like added or clarified,  
drop us a line and let us know. Email [pic@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:pic@hwdsb.on.ca).

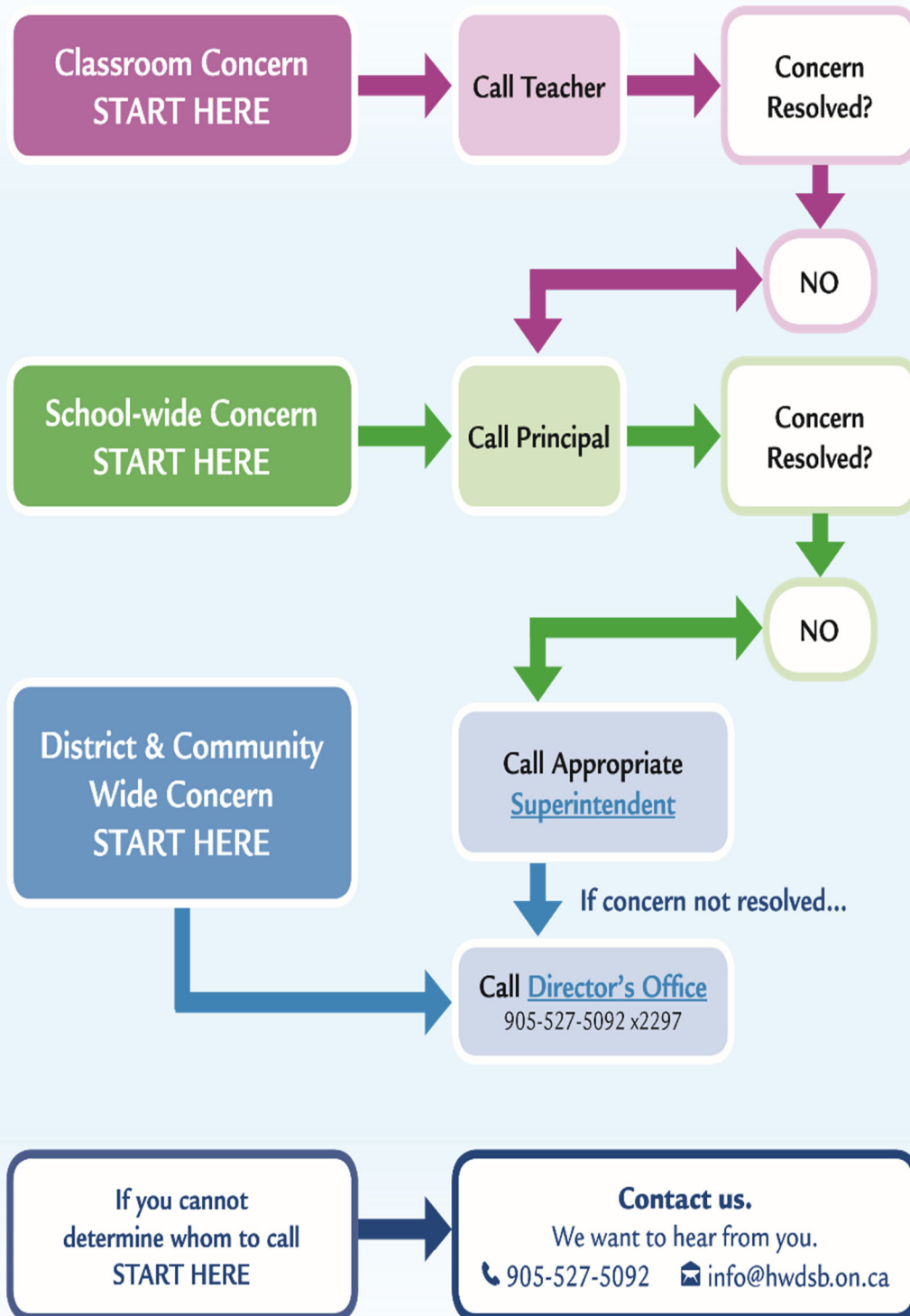
*We firmly believe working together we can make HWDSB an even better place to work, learn, play  
and grow as staff, parents, guardians, caregivers and students.*

## Addressing Concerns @ HWDSB

*(It was requested we share this at one of our PIC Connects Road Shows)*



## Addressing Concerns @HWDSB



Your [Trustee](#) can guide you through this process.

Find your Trustee and/or Superintendent by calling the Officer of Trustee Services at 905-527-5092 x2279, or go online to your school's website:

[www.hwdsb.on.ca/yourschoolname/contact](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/yourschoolname/contact)





# HOLBROOK SCHOOL COUNCIL 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## THE VALUE OF SCHOOL COUNCIL



School Council allows for parents and members of the community to support the school and students. This allows for parents to be engaged in their school community and have a voice in school events. Any parent of Holbrook can join - we welcome any and all parents to join school council!



## RAISING FUNDS TO SUPPORT CLASSROOMS

We have completed 4 fundraisers this past school year:

- Krispy Kreme donuts
- Pizza days
- Mabel's Labels
- Factory Shoe store

In total, we have raised over \$4,000 to support classroom materials and end of school field trips & transportation!

## ONGOING FUNDRAISERS



### FACTORY SHOE FUNDRAISER

Factory Shoe will provide \$8.00 to Holbrook for every pair of shoes\* purchased! Simply tell the cashier that you have a child attending Holbrook at checkout! \*shoes must be valued at \$38.00 or more\*

## MABELS LABELS FUNDRAISER

Ongoing fundraiser offering labels for your children's items  
20% of all sales goes to Holbrook!

Visit <https://mabelslabels.ca/>  
Select 'Support a Fundraiser' and search for Holbrook before placing your order

## HOLBROOK EVENTS SCHOOL COUNCIL SUPPORTED



School Council has supported 5 events for students and parents in the community this past year:

- Holiday Market
- Peace Breakfast
- Pizza days
- Parent Reaching Out Grant- Two evening events with a focus on mental health supports for children and families



## WE WANT YOU TO BE A PART OF SCHOOL COUNCIL!



To stay connected to school council, or to find out more information about becoming involved please email our School council lead at [holbrookschoolcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:holbrookschoolcouncil@gmail.com)



## THANK YOU!

We appreciate everyone who has participated in fundraising events, volunteered at school events, attended school council meetings, or connected with school council members.