LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE
June 2, 2026– 6:30 p.m.
Chatham Regional Education Centre – Thames Room, Sarnia Education Centre – Huron Room, and via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Gary Girardi – Chief Executive Officer
Bonnie Gotelaer – Administrative Assistant
Lisa Tetrault – Chatham Kent Public Health
Deborah Furlan – CKSS
Stephanie Dries – Indian Creek Road P.S.
Malinda Little - Trustee
Pamela Abbas- Akl – Zone Township Central
Lisa Clark – Lambton Public Health
Jason Nantais – H.W. Burgess P.S.
Melinda Hazen – High Park P.S.

Regrets: Angela Richards, Angie Baresich, Nicole Hopper, Jessica Fritz, Julie Robinson, Karlie Henderson, Alex Moor, Nicholas Sitter, Heather Drouillard, Shafquat Alam, Tara Guy

Guests: Todd Harrison, Josh Fullan – Maximum City
Superintendent of Education Eryn Smit; Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice System Coordinator Denise Helmer-Johnston; EDIJ Consultants Chantima Oliviera and Gillian Scott
Associate Director Brian McKay

Welcome and Introductions – Chair Pamela Abbas Akl
Pamela Abbas-Akl welcomed everyone with introductions of members, guests and presenters completed.

Land Acknowledgement
Chief Executive Officer Girardi read the Territorial Acknowledgement.

LKDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan – Chief Executive Officer Girardi, Todd Harrison, Josh Fullan

- Chief Executive Officer Girardi explained that the Board is undertaking the development of a new Multi-Year Strategic plan, noting the process is completed every five years
- Todd Harrison and Josh Fullan, Maximum City consultants, introduced the Mutli-Year Strategic Plan, noting their roles as facilitators during consultation to gain feedback from students, staff, parents, community members, and LKDSB Board committees including the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). The process started in the classroom with students in January. While student voice has been a key component of consultations, the process includes background review and research, analysis and reporting and the drafting, development and approval of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.
- Participants discussed Board priorities related to student achievement, inclusion, equity, and parent engagement.
- Prior to the PIC members completing consultation process, the facilitators clarified that the purpose of the session was to gather stakeholder priorities and perspectives and that discussion will be facilitated on specified priorities for the collection of the perspectives of the PIC.
- Chief Executive Officer Girardi shared that the Multi-Year Strategic Plan will guide LKDSB priorities and objectives that support student achievement and the implementation of provincially mandated curriculum.
- PIC members discussed items that may contribute to the measurement of success within the LKDSB could include EQAO achievement data, graduation rates and student achievement indicators.
- Chief Executive Officer Girardi referenced the LKDSB School Climate Survey and the LKDSB Equity Audit when asked how diversity and equity measures are assessed.
- The PIC members was asked to discuss and record responses to two questions:
    1. What is working well for you as a parent, caregiver, staff member, or community partner?

2. What would make your experience better, and how can the Board support you?

- Strengths identified by the PIC members indicated that the LKDSB has caring and supportive school communities, strong partnerships between schools and community organizations and there is opportunity for parents to utilize established communication channels.
- Areas for improvement identified by the PIC members indicated the desire for continued improvement in communication and consistency of messaging, a greater focus on student achievement and the interest in understanding Board performance data, including EQAO results.
- Discussion was facilitated regarding some challenges that students may face over the next five years including:
    - Academic and learning challenges such as concern about balancing technology use with traditional learning approaches, decreasing attention spans and increasing distractions related to technology, maintaining strong literacy, numeracy and foundational learning skills
    - Parent and community concerns such as ensuring students feel included and supported, maintaining strong attendance and engagement and helping students navigate a rapidly changing social and technological environment
- Discussion provided insight into supports the LKDSB could provide, including a focus on core academic achievement, clear communication and transparency with families, support student wellbeing while protecting instructional time and consideration of research-based approaches to technology use in schools.
- The PIC members completed the paper feedback forms, and the online responses were collected and were advised that all written comments would become part of the formal consultation record.

Draft Dress Guidelines for Students – Superintendent Eryn Smit, System Coordinator Denise Helmer-Johnston

- Superintendent Smit shared the LKDSB Dress Guidelines Draft to the PIC members indicating that it was drafted with the intention of establishing a consistent approach and providing a framework for appropriate student attire.
- Superintendent Smit noted historically, schools maintained individual dress codes with varying expectations and enforcement practices and that there are inconsistencies between schools and classrooms. Concerns have been identified regarding disproportionate impacts of traditional dress codes on female students, students with larger body types, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and students from diverse cultural and religious communities.
- The draft guidelines aim to promote equity and inclusion, respect student identity and expression, reduce lost instructional time due to dress code enforcement, provide consistency across schools and clarify expectations for students, staff and families.
- Questions were raised about wording related to visible faces and the accommodation of certain religious garments.
- Superintendent Smit noted that religious and cultural attire is protected and permitted under the proposed guidelines.
- System Coordinator Helmer-Johnston noted some students may not have choices to wear clean clothing or clothing that fits their body and some aspects of a dress code could result in the student choosing not attending school.
- Discussion occurred regarding references to cultural appropriation and concerns regarding challenges related to enforcing.
- Superintendent Smit indicated that guidance would be provided to staff and that discussions would focus on relationship-building, understanding, and respectful conversations rather than punitive responses.
- Feedback from PIC members indicated that clarification of the language would help avoid misunderstandings.
- Implementation support would include professional development for educators and administrators focusing on maintaining student dignity, avoiding student shaming, keeping students in class whenever possible and supporting respectful conversations to be completed with a goal for implementation with targeted for September 2027, including both elementary and secondary versions.

- PIC members were thanked for their feedback and advised that comments would be considered in future revisions.

2026-2027 Budget Information Session – Associate Director McKay

- Associate Director McKay reported the 2026 -2027 budget timeline:
  - Trustee Budget Session May 12, 2026
  - Stakeholder groups sessions included the Student Senate on May 11, 2026; Indigenous Liaison Committee on May 27, 2026; Special Education Advisory Committee on May 28, 2026 and the Parent Involvement Committee on June 2, 2026.
  - Board approval of the 2026-2027 budget to occur on June 23, 2026.
- Associate Director McKay reported further notable timeline dates:
  - March 2026: 2026-2027 school budgets developed by principals
  - May-June 2026: 2025-2026 March reporting to Ministry of Education completed and the 2026-2027 board budget estimates developed and funding released
  - June 2026: 2026-2027 Board budget approved by Trustees
  - September-October 2026: 2025-2026 Financial Statements prepared for Trustees' approval
  - November-December 2026: 2026-2027 Revised Estimates prepared
  - March 2027: 2027-2028 school budgets developed by principals
- Associate Director McKay relayed the Student Enrolment Preliminary Projections:
  - Elementary 2025-2026 enrolment estimates - 14,657.00; 2025-2026 revised estimates – 14,815.50; 2026-2027 enrolment estimates - 14,464.00.
  - Secondary 2025-2026 enrolment estimates – 6,894.50; 2025-2026 revised estimates – 6,916.00; 2026-2027 enrolment estimates – 6,830.00 which represent the average between first and second semester.
  - Student enrolment, which is the primary driver of provincial funding is projected to decline in 2026-2027; junior kindergarten registrations are lower than previous years as the Board continues to experience changes related to migration patterns and demographic shifts.
- Associate Director McKay provided information on the Core Education funding projection for 2026-27:
  - Core Education Funding pillars include: Classroom Staffing Fund, Learning Resources Fund, Special Education Fund, School Facilities Fund, Student Transportation Fund, School Board Administration Fund (excluding DEA) and the Declining Enrolment Adjustment (DEA) Allocation.
  - Total Core Education Funding: 2024-2025 Actuals - $301,767,236; 2025-2026 Revised Estimates - $308,175,638; 2026-2027 Projections - $312,730,039.
  - 2024-2025 Actuals - $14230; 2025-2026 Revised Estimates - $14,699; 2026-2027 Projections - $14,916.
  - Key updates included a new classroom supply funding allocation, curriculum resource funding enhancements, continued targeted funding for literacy and mathematics supports, special education funding streams being incorporated into core funding models and ongoing support for student achievement initiatives.
  - Financial pressures include declining enrolment, supply staff coverage costs, statutory benefit increases, transportation and operating costs, collective bargaining implications and ongoing provincial moratorium on school closures.
  - CUPE, ETFO and OSSTF contracts are ending in August 2026 and will be in negotiations.
- PIC members asked about movement between public, separate and private school systems, factors influencing family school choice and the availability of childcare and before/after school programs as factors in enrolment decisions.
- Associate Director McKay advised that there is some movement that occurs in both directions between systems and that private school enrolment continues to grow provincially and confirmed that school programming, transportation, extracurricular activities, particularly at the grade nine level, and childcare availability can influence family decisions.
- Chief Executive Officer Girardi relayed that families may choose to enrol students in new school

builds such as the Blue Coast District School.

- School consolidations and capacity were discussed noting there are approximately 8,000 unused pupil spaces and that school consolidations are challenging due to provincial restrictions.
- Trustee Little responded to a question regarding the provincial moratorium on school closures stating that many school boards across Ontario are facing similar challenges, particularly related to operating deficits and changing population patterns in rural communities.
- Chief Executive Officer Girardi confirmed that the Board has reached out to the Municipality of Chatham-Kent to explore the possibility of establishing a daycare at Zone Township Central School. He noted that a key concern is whether there would be sufficient student enrolment to support and sustain a daycare program.

Chief Executive Officer Update

Blue Coast District School

- Chief Executive Officer Girardi reported that LKDSB Trustees voted in favour of supporting the tender for building the K-12 school and has been approved by the Ministry of Education to be named the Blue Coast District School.
- Chief Executive Officer explained that the Blue Coast District School will consolidate students from Aberarder Central School, Bosanquet Central School, Kinnwood Central School and North Lambton Secondary School. The facility will also include a two-room Child and Family Centre and a one-room child care centre, providing 24 new child care spaces. The school will be located west of the Shores Recreation Centre in Forest in the Municipality of Lambton Shores
- Chief Executive Officer Girardi provided information regarding the sale of properties once approved by the Ministry of Education.

School Ambassador Film Festival – June 10, 2026 at Great Lakes Secondary School

- Chief Executive Officer Girardi described the School Ambassador Film Festival noting that Student Senate members organized a Board-wide film festival inviting schools to submit videos highlighting their school communities. The event will take place on June 10 at the Great Lakes Secondary School Auditorium.

PIC Funding Update

- Bonnie Gotelaer reported that School Council funds continue to be spent and with final month of school underway, there will be even more expenses paid.
- This year, the most frequent expenses included parent engagement evenings such as family fun nights, supplies for parent/guardian-teacher interview sessions, open house supplies (posters), meet the staff nights, Kindergarten registration items, STEAM nights, social media presentations for families, fall fun fairs and guest speakers.
- Bonnie Gotelaer relayed that some administrators have questions surrounding how they may spend funds. She explained that administrators are provided with a list of ideas to help plan events.

Other Business/ Future Agenda Items

PIC Planning for 2026-2027 - Membership

Bonnie Gotelaer explained that early in the fall of 2026 she will reach out to confirm membership for the 2026-2027 school year.

Next Meeting – Fall Date and Location

- October 20, 2026 at 6:30 pm via Teams

Adjournment: 9:02 pm

Bonnie Gotelaer, Recording Secretary