



REGION 3 PARENT REPRESENTATIVE ANNUAL REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE REGION 3 PARENTS' COMMITTEE 2015-2016 & HIGH SCHOOL NETWORK PARENTS' COMMITTEE 2015-2016



REGION 3 PARENTS' COMMITTEE

The Region 3 Parents' Committee is comprised of parents from schools in Administrative Region 3 of the LBPSB. These parents are elected at their schools' AGAs by fellow parents, to represent them at the Board level. The purpose of the Region 3 Parents' Committee is to influence decisions at the School Board level that affect all students; and advise the School Board on the needs of students and parents; and its ultimate goal is to ensure that the voice of parents is heard. Alternates are elected along with the Regional Parent Reps at each school and they are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings with their Regional Parent Rep.

The Parent Committee structure that was put in place two years ago was followed again this year. Regional meetings were held monthly at the School Board from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Elementary and High School Network Committee meetings immediately followed the regional meetings from 8:00-9:30 p.m. The Region 3 Parents' Committee (R3PC) met nine times this year and the meetings were well attended, with Alternates present for many of the meetings. Three times this past year, joint Regional PC Meetings took place where all three regional PCs came together for one Joint Regional meeting. This format was favoured when discussing global issues and Board and/or Consultations. As the R3PC Chair, I was asked to preside over these joint meetings. Dave Meloche, Region 3 Director, was the Board Administrative Liaison for the R3PC and always ready and willing to answer any and all questions. He reported Region 3 news to parents at every meeting keeping parents abreast of all Region 3 happenings at the Board level. Mary-Ann Davis, one of the delegated Commissioners for Region 3, attended the meetings regularly and reported Council news to the committee every month with a written report (even when she was unable to attend).

Along with the Consultations considered and topics discussed, there was an exchange of ideas through the "Input from Schools and Parent Communities" item on the monthly Agenda. During this part of the meeting, members were able to share interesting news from their individual schools, as well as discuss any other matter or concern they wished to address. Due to the time constraint placed on meeting nights, there was not always sufficient time to accomplish this every month. Therefore, this was missed by most members as this portion of meetings were always a favourite in past years as it enabled members to gain valuable insight from each other while offering their support and advice; and even though solutions were not always identified, members had the added benefit of having valuable input from the Commissioner and administration present at the meetings.

R3PC ISSUES/TOPICS DISCUSSED

Besides several Consultations that the committee was asked input on, some of the other important issues that were brought to the table and discussed by the R3PC this year were:

- Region 3 Parents' Committee Rules of Internal Management & Budget
- Parent committees structure
- Allocation to parents' committees
- LBPSB Email Accounts for Reps & Alts
- Major School Change Consultation - concerns with process
- Major School Change Reconsiderations
- "Work-To-Rule"
- Action Plan for the year - provide input to CPC on the following focus items:
 1. Improve COMMUNICATION to/from the entire parent population for all issues
 2. Governing Board training at the schools (for ALL members of the GB, not just parent members)
 3. Collaboration with EMSB
 4. Marketing
 5. Regional Parent Reps & Alts training
- Bill 86
- IEP parent position on GB

- Transportation plan & new Bus Tracking system pilot program
- Delay of Enrichment Exam Acceptance/Refusal Letters
- School Success Plan
- Fire Drills
- Allergy Committee & Concerns regarding severely allergic children and the practices put in place at those schools
- Payment of school fees by someone other than a parent
- Surveys carried out by individual schools as a marketing effort
- School Budgets
- Simplifying Parent Communication
- CPC Website
- Conny Held Award
- Concordia Workshop - Embracing Imperfection

R3PC PRESENTATIONS

The R3PC parents attended all the presentations arranged by the High School Network Parents' Committee (see below).

R3PC CONSULTATIONS

The Lester B. Pearson School Board and/or the Central Parents' Committee consulted this committee on the following:

- ✓ "Enrollment Criteria"
- ✓ "Major School Change"
- ✓ "2016-2017 Budget Priorities"
- ✓ "LBPSB 2017-2018 Youth Calendar Options"
- ✓ "2016-2019 Three-Year Plan for the Allocation and Destination of Immovables"
- ✓ "LBPSB Strategic Plan 2015-2020"
- ✓ "By-law 1 (2016): A By-law to fix the day/time/place of regular meetings of the Council of Commissioners"
- ✓ "By-law 1E (2016): A By-law to fix the day/time/place of regular meetings of the Executive Committee"

HIGH SCHOOL NETWORK PARENTS' COMMITTEE

The High School Networking Parents' Committee (HSNPC) is a sub-committee of the Central Parents' Committee made up of regional parents from all high schools of the LBPSB. It promotes parent participation and communication. Parents on this committee discuss and tackle issues that specifically affect high schools and their students as well as the needs of parents. This committee believes in open dialogue and on-going communication and encourages all parents to become more involved in their schools and/or other parent committees at the Board while working hard to ensure the dissemination of information to parents at large. The time slot of the HSNPC meetings posed more challenges this year than last; a couple of the regional meetings ended later than expected, so there were a few months when HSNPC meetings could not take place. Nevertheless, the HSNPC still managed to meet six times this year (even if only for presentations) and the meetings were well attended. Commissioners Danny Olivenstein and Nan Beaton attended regularly and Regional Director David Meloche was present at most of the meetings.

Although arranging presentations at certain times was difficult due to the tightly scheduled meetings back-to-back in one evening, five presentations were arranged for members nonetheless and I was pleased to have been able to organize three of these including two very powerful presentations: 1) The showing of a movie on "Bullying" which took place during a first-ever 'Joint Regional Dinner and Movie Night' - it was a huge success. Parents were most touched by the film which was produced by Westwood students and intense dialogue ensued thereafter; 2) The second powerful presentation was given by Alvin Powell from "Saving Station". Alvin Powell is known throughout Canada as a drug educator and activist; and is particularly concerned about the proliferation of street drugs that are readily available to our children. Parents had a unique opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of how drugs ruin the lives of young people and about the work Alvin Powell does with young people; thus prompting them to go back to their own school communities and share what they had learned. Since this issue affects children of all ages, parents from the Elementary Network Parents' Committee were invited to join the high school parents for this presentation.

While a few Consultations were discussed at the table, it was once again decided by the HSNPC to defer the responding of Consultations to the Regional Parent Committees so as not to duplicate any responses (and work)

amongst the parent committees. The Major School Change consultation was the only one that this committee felt the need to respond to. High school parents continued to gain valuable insight from each other while offering their support and advice through an ongoing exchange of ideas and concerns at meetings. But this year, it became clear to the parents that the structure in place was not enabling this particular committee to conduct itself in a way it has in past years.

HSNPC ISSUES/TOPICS DISCUSSED

Some of the important issues that were brought to the table and discussed by our members this year were:

- High School Network Parents' Committee Rules of Internal Management
- Parent Committees Structures as they pertain to this committee
- "Work-to-Rule"
- Strikes & Negotiation
- Major School Change
- The impact of Major School Change (MSC) on Students writing Entrance Exams
- Entrance Exam Results being sent to students before MSC Decisions are announced
- Lock-Down Procedures
- Sex Education Pilot Program
- Sec IV & V Final Exams
- Bill 86
- Bullying
- Drugs
- Vocational Pathways & Adult Education

HSNPC OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE

A "Major School Change Consultation" response was the only outgoing correspondence to Council from HSNPC this year.

HSNPC PRESENTATIONS

During the year, the following presentations were arranged; all regional parents were invited to attend:

- ✓ June 2015 Sec IV & V Exam Results and Summer School 2015 - Tom Rhymes, Director of Educational Services
- ✓ "Silent Majority" Movie
- ✓ Bill 86 Information Session - Central Parents' Committee
- ✓ The impact of Drugs on the Youth of today - Alvin Powell, Founder of *Saving Station* (ex-NFL Football player & drug educator)
- ✓ LBPSB Vocational Roadshow - Ashley Daniel Foot, LBPSB Transitions Consultant, Adult and Vocational Training

FINAL MESSAGE FROM YOUR REGIONAL PARENT REPRESENTATIVE

I cannot tell you what an impact my involvement on the various parent committees over the last several years has had on me. I only hope that my contribution has helped other parents along the way. I have always said that parents must work diligently together on behalf of their children; and as long as we do that, they are sure to achieve all the success they deserve! Over the years, I have served each of my three children's school communities, on School Committees, Orientation Committees as well as Governing Boards, PPOs, Sector/Region & Central Parents' Committees; and learned a great deal from students, parents, teachers, administration (both at the school level and at the Board) and Commissioners along the way. One of the most important things I have learned over the past 21 years is that it takes a great deal of parental involvement to help enrich the lives of our children, and to help make our school community more vibrant and successful. However, I fully understand and can appreciate that it is not always feasible given the work/time constraints we all face. That being said, I firmly believe that we, as parents, must continue to advocate for our children within the school system and be actively involved whenever possible, even though this can often be quite challenging and take up a great deal of our time.

As parents, when we volunteer, we offer a huge resource and support-base to our schools while being role-models for our children; showing them the importance of participating in the larger community. Volunteering and becoming involved in our children's schools is as beneficial to the children as it is for us. Parents are pieces of a much

larger puzzle and together with our children and other partners (school administration, staff, school boards and board committees, etc.) we all serve to strengthen our school communities. It has always been clear to me that it is what lies within a school that gives it true life and its identity. It takes hard work, commitment, communication, and cooperation from an entire school community to achieve greatness in a school, and it has truly been my honour to serve on all the school committees over the years, so that together...as one community, we could strive for excellence & student success at John Rennie High School. I have always reflected a parental view at the Regional level, and was most fortunate to have been elected onto many school board committees from the Regional Parents' Committees I sat on, so constantly had my 'finger on the pulse' of important issues affecting our children's school communities. I attended several weekly meetings at the Board in a constant effort to ensure that the needs of parents and students of our school communities were heard and considered. I am proud to have been part of all the various school and LBPSB parent committees over the years representing the needs of all parents and students. It has been even more of an honour to chair the Regional and High School Parents' committees for so many years; a truly gratifying experience in which I have learned a great deal from my fellow committee members. The support, respect and confidence in me as their Chair was much appreciated and enabled me to do my best for them throughout the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the John Rennie High School Community for having confidence in me as their Regional Parent Representative for the 5 years that my daughter attended JRHS. I am thankful to the parents on our Governing Board, PPO and H & S who provided me with their input and concerns so that I could always bring these important issues to the tables at R3PC and HSNPC meetings. Their support for me as their Regional Parent Representative is most appreciated; and my respect for them is immense. Recognition and thanks needs to go to all volunteer parents of the JRHS community, for their commitment to JRHS, and ultimately, to its students (our children). Their dedication to parent committees as well as their efforts at the school level must not be overlooked. Despite the busy lives they lead, these parents still find the time to give of themselves in order to make our schools the best they can be for our children! To all "graduating" or "resigning" parents, I wish you much success in the future! Special thanks to Shirley Ross and Mari-Rose Thompson for their contribution to the JRHS School community for so many years - Rennie will not be the same without you! Farewell to GB Chair Mike O'Hara, who is also leaving Rennie. To those who will return next year, I am confident that you will continue to give of yourselves as you have in years past - our children are surely "richer" because of parents like you! I wish you all a most productive 2016-2017 school year!

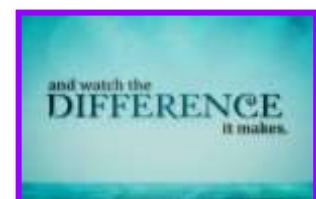
As I prepare to leave this year, I would like to express to all parents, administration, teachers and support staff I have come to know over the past two decades - it has been a pleasure and privilege working with you all on the various parent committees! Our children's education, safety, happiness and sense of self-worth have always been extremely important to me and since I was elected onto the School committee at my eldest child's elementary school 21 years ago, I made a promise to all parents who voted for me: to always make decisions in the best interest of the students and ALWAYS put their needs first; and, to work together with our school communities to help our children have a fulfilling student life and achieve/maintain academic excellence. Now that the time has come to say goodbye...I look back and sincerely hope that I did not let my fellow parents down and that I carried out my promise right until the end as I worked hard to be their 'voice' and that of our children! My years at Bishop Whelan Elementary School, St. Veronica's Elementary School, Dorval Elementary School, Lakeside Academy High School and John Rennie High School have been both rewarding and fulfilling and I sincerely thank the parent populations of each of those schools for having trust in me as their Governing Board Rep and Sector/Region Parent Rep for every one of those years. It has been an amazing 'ride'...one that I will not soon forget...and although I am leaving it all this year, I will always be ready and available to help all parents (those I worked with and those who are new to the system) by imparting the knowledge & experience I have gained these past 21 years - they know that I am just an email away...

To all the volunteers at John Rennie High School, I have included a short video clip I found online which I believe exemplifies how special you are in the lives of all our children! As the video says, **A good life is not lived by chance, but by choice!** I could think of no better way to say **Thank you for choosing to be involved...and for making a difference!** Please click on the image (or words below it) to the right...and ENJOY...

Good bye and good luck!

Lorraine da Costa

JRHS Region Parent Representative (2011 to 2016)



...watch the DIFFERENCE it makes.