



SD No.23 EARLY YEARS PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

Summary of Discussion

Tuesday, February 16, 2016

3:45-5:15 pm

School Board Office

Attended: Lela Ross, Myrna Kalmakoff, Rob Zoppi, Catherine Disbery, Rhonda Ovelson, Donna Kozak, Cheryl Fralick, Caroline Noga, Nicole Crane, Sue Bergen

Regrets: Rolli Cacchioni, David Widdis, Tami Ruhr, Vivian Hughes, Lee-Ann Tiede

1. Welcome and Introductions

- No discussion from the review of minutes from our January meeting
- Rhonda did a quick update of the discussion for those who weren't able to attend our last meeting by making the following points:
 - This is an opportune time for changes to our transition process with the new redesigned curriculum from the Ministry
 - There is pressure from parents for teachers to teach the same way that they themselves had learned so they can help their children at home
 - The re-designed curriculum honours the social emotional learning of the child, his/her linguistic development as well as his/her creative and critical thinking skills
 - It focuses on what we want our children to "know, do and be" and empowers them with voice and agency in their learning.

2. How might we re-imagine transition from home to school?

- Next step is to go out and scan early learning families as we need to know what families want/need
- What does research tell us regarding the transition process and talking to parents?
 - Donna has provided more research papers (see attached papers).
- Current early learning school district committees that exist in this ecosystem:
 - **Think Little to Think Big** steering committee comprised of Administration, Principal/Vice Principals and Teachers
 - **Early Learning Network** – Kindergarten and Kindergarten/Gr 1 teachers, (will include Gr 1 and 2 teachers in the future)
 - At the meetings held in January, teachers revisited their beliefs around early learning and then discussed how they could align their practices
 - **StrongStart Team** – 8 Facilitators, Administrator, Early Learning Coordinator and Early Learning Helping Teacher
 - **Early Years Partnership Committee** – school district and community
 - **Preschool Partnership** – school district and community
 - **Early Years Centres** – Pearson Road Hub and Westbank First Nations Hub to be opening now that funding was granted
 - Common among all of these committees is the transition from home to school

- Caroline reminded us to not forget to include group daycare from this ecosystem as they are most often not included and we are missing the families that attend only daycare programs
- Transition events currently held at the school – ELFF events and kindergarten orientation
- There is frustration from families of children who are special needs regarding the transition from home to school:
 - the support that they have received through child development agencies doesn't necessarily follow them into the school system
 - must find a better way to continue existing services and share information between the child's specialist and school district
- More work needs to be done with MCFD regarding our vulnerable children
- While each agency (School District, Interior Health, MCFD, Child Development Centres, etc.) have their specific policies, our EYPC group can influence changes to the transition process for these children and families through the building of relationships with these agencies
- There is a lot we can do that is in our control – we can make changes

3. Transition Timeline

- **Feb to June**
 - Schools will be inviting those families who have registered into their school through their ELFF event and kindergarten orientation
- **September** – gradual entry – first 2 weeks into the school year

4. How to reach out to families so we could hear their voice (Scanning process of the Spirals of Inquiry)

- Through a survey/questionnaire
 - Targeting families of children aged 3 and 4 and also those that have gone through the transition process
 - Make it about process and structure – not personal so it must be worded so that it does not target a specific teacher
 - Need personal interviews and not focus groups
 - How we frame the questions will help families understand education system
 - Systemic view – from different schools, make it more general – anonymous
- Conversations with families during school events and in the community as talking to people one on one is the best way to gather information
- Meet families where they are at out in the community (housing complexes, etc.)
 - Caroline said that the Clubhouse could arrange an opportunity to meet with families from their 5 early learning programs and could compile the information and forward to the committee
 - When the PALS program was done in daycare centres the information shared by parents was quite different than from parents' whose children are attending preschools

5. Possible questions designed by the committee

New Families with 3 and 4 year olds

- Parent questions:
 - i. Do you know how to register your child for kindergarten?
 - ii. What do you want the school to know about your child? (Socially, emotionally, physically, artistically, intellectually)
 - iii. What are your child's gifts?
 - iv. What would you and your child want to know about us?
 - v. Have you ever visited your neighbourhood school?
 - vi. To what extent do you feel prepared for your and your child's transition to school? Somewhat Ready? Ready? Very Ready?
 - vii. What helped you prepare for the transition?
 - viii. What could we have done more of to better support you and your child for transition?
- Child questions:
 - i. What do you think school is for?
 - ii. What are you excited about?
 - iii. What would you like to learn?
 - iv. What do you know about school? Wonder?
 - v. Where do you go to learn?
 - vi. What are you curious about?
 - vii. Are you excited or nervous about beginning Kindergarten? What could we do to help you be more excited than nervous?
 - viii. What questions do you have about school?

Current Families with 5 and 6 year olds:

- Parent and Teacher Questions:
 - i. To what extent is the Kindergarten orientation (in its current state) helpful? Somewhat Helpful, Helpful, Very Helpful? Explain.
 - ii. What aspects about gradual entry worked for your family? What aspects would you like to see us build upon?
 - iii. What aspects about transition (registration through to today) have been the most helpful for your family? Challenging?
 - iv. What questions did/do you have about transition to school that we could answer for new families?
 - v. How could the transition experience be enhanced or improved for families?
- Child questions:
 - i. What do you remember about the first time you came to school?
 - ii. Did anything scare you?
 - iii. What makes you happy when you are at school?
 - iv. Who are the adults you know in the school?
 - v. How do you feel about going into Grade 1?

NEXT STEPS:

Caroline to use questions to talk with parents/children/ECEs at daycare and preschool.

Donna to use questions to talk with parents/children/facilitators at StrongStart and preschool.

Nicole to use questions to talk with parents/students/teachers at diverse sample of elementary schools.

Information will be collated and sent out to Early Years Partnership Committee, through email, prior to final meeting.

Our last meeting will be held on June 14th at the Young Parent Education Centre and will include a dinner. More details will follow.

REMINDERS:

Meeting dates: 2015-2016

~~Oct 20~~

January 26

~~Feb 16~~—

June 14