

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee of the Peel District School Board, held in the Brampton Room, the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario on Wednesday, June 12, 2019 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Kathy McDonald, Chair
Susan Benjamin
Robert Crocker
Nokha Dakroub (18:10)
Will Davies
Balbir Sohi

Trustee also present:

Sue Lawton

Administration:

Adrian Graham, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
(Executive Member)
Poleen Grewal, Associate Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services
Peter Joshua, Director of Education

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

IP-19, moved by Balbir Sohi, that the agenda be approved.

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2. **Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. **Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, May 15, 2019**

IP-20, moved by Robert Crocker that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held May 15, 2019, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – July, August and September 2019

IP-21, moved by Susan Benjamin, that the Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder for July, August, and September 2019, be received.

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5. Smudging Guidelines

Reviewing pertinent information contained in the report, Crissa Hill, Coordinating Principal of Indigenous Education and Equity, indicated that smudging, is a tradition common to many First Nations, and involves burning sacred medicines, such as sage, cedar, sweet grass and tobacco, as a form of cleansing or purification. Sharing examples of when smudging occurs, including when commencing professional learning or entering into new relationships, Crissa Hill noted that the guidelines provide direction regarding the practice of smudging and outline the conditions under which it can occur, including how to accommodate the practice indoors and outdoors in the school environment.

Replying to a trustee's questions of clarification regarding smudging permitted in well-ventilated rooms in a school and the use of tobacco, Crissa Hill confirmed that smudging has creed acceptance under the Ontario Human Rights Code and, as a result, is permitted as an exception to the No Smoking legislation in Ontario. She advised that sage leaves are most commonly used for smudging and, if whole leaf tobacco is used, these are not the leaves used for cigarette smoking. Associate Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services, Poleen Grewal, clarified that individuals have a right and are entitled to practice smudging in the observance of their creed under the Human Rights Code. She also clarified that the Board has a responsibility to accommodate those persons who may be affected by the burning of the sacred medicines. Adrian Graham, Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, noted that the procedure for establishing indoor smudging locations is outlined in detail in the report. Noting that the guidelines contextualize the practice of smudging, Crissa Hill advised that students or staff will not be forced to observe the practice. If smudging is done as a learning exercise, students will be informed.

Thanking the administration for the report, a trustee commented that the guidelines provided align with Peel's work on equity, and smudging is no different from a religious accommodation. She asked about the consultation process to finalize the guidelines. Crissa Hill reported that the Smudging Guidelines were developed by the Indigenous Coordinator, and reviewed by the Indigenous Education Advisory Circle. The Peel Indigenous Network of Educators undertook a line by line review and provided feedback to the Coordinator, which was jointly discussed with the Indigenous Education Advisory Circle. Associate Director Grewal added that the draft report was reviewed by the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from employee groups, and Superintendent Graham noted that the report has been vetted by the Facilities department, Leadership Team, and the senior administration.

5. Smudging Guidelines (Continued)

IP-22, moved by Will Davies, that the report re Smudging Guidelines, be received.

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6. We Rise Together – Year Two Update

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Instructional Coordinator for We Rise Together, Phiona Lloyd-Henry, reported that We Rise Together (WRT) was initiated to meet Board and Ministry equity mandates, to remove racial predictability and disproportionality in outcomes, address concerns of black students and families who report inequitable access and outcomes, and cultivate a collective confidence in public education. She stated that the We Rise Together Action Plan has an overarching purpose to identify, understand, minimize and eliminate the marginalization experienced by black students in Peel schools. She spoke of the work of the Coordinating Principal, Coordinator, Consultant, and Resource Teacher in coordinating Ministry initiatives, implementing the Action Plan, developing and embedding aspects of Action Plan, meeting and liaising with the We Rise Together Community Advisory Council, and selection of culturally responsive texts.

Phiona Lloyd-Henry highlighted and described the work in the four focus areas of community engagement, professional development, curriculum integration, and leadership and mentorship. She noted the work of the Community Advisory Council (CAC) and Student Advisory Council (SAC), the WRT website and social media, black professionals conference, and parent/caregiver conference. She spoke about anti-racism and bias awareness capacity building in SAP schools, full system WRT training, professional learning resources and opportunities. Phiona Lloyd-Henry referred to the Black History Month memo, supplementary plans to embed black experiences in Grade 10 History Course, development of the Grade 11 AC Course, and consultant/coordinator collaboration. She reported on the 2nd Annual WRT Teacher Symposium, 3rd Annual WRT Student Leadership Conference for black students, 1st Annual KUUMBA STEAM Conference for black girls, and Black Students' Associations (BSAs).

Phiona Lloyd-Henry noted that, going forward, the work of We Rise Together will be mapped on to the Student Success Plans. Commenting on the importance of small steps in creating and changing the mindset, she reviewed feedback from students, staff, Community Advisory Council, and the WRT team. She reported that staff remain committed to the work, and educators rated themselves as confident, prepared and having the necessary control to lead anti-racism work in their school. She highlighted possible directions in 2020, which will include: improving the approach to identify members to Student Advisory Councils; creating and distributing resources for March 21st, the day for elimination of racial discrimination; continue to develop relevant K-Grade 8 learning resources; continue to offer professional development opportunities for staff.

6. We Rise Together – Year Two Update (Continued)

The administration responded to several questions of clarification from trustees including: black students report that the Black Leadership Conference appears to have the most favourable outcome; providing training and capacity building for teachers to facilitate transformative outcomes; intentional and proactive approach is important in dealing with prejudices. Suggestions from trustees included: consider including Black History content in courses on American History or Ancient Civilizations; the Civics course provides opportunities for inquiry work; adding a We Rise Together component to the New Teacher Induction Program; engage with parents on school councils and at cultural fairs held in the Region; sharing equity-related resources with parents registering their students; openly discussing stereotypes.

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Trustee Dakroub retired from the meeting at 19:10 hours.

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Chair McDonald suggested that there needs to be more effort at the K-Grade 8 level, and more consistent and impactful work on parent engagement and professional development, in order to change mindsets and facilitate positive outcomes. Phiona Lloyd-Henry thanked trustees and the senior administration for their continued advocacy of WRT. Stating that a major aspect of learning is being respectful of differences, and honouring the histories, cultures and identity of others, especially in Peel with its significantly diverse student population, she spoke of the need to continue to collaborate and discuss next steps.

IP-23, moved by Balbir Sohi, that the report re We Rise Together – Year Two Update, be received.

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7. Report of the Regional Learning Choices Programs (RCLP) Committee

Superintendent of Education, Michelle Stubbings, introduced Robert Lompart, Principal, and Anthony Griffith, Vice-Principal, Judith Nyman Secondary School, who presented information on the implementation of the Regional Skilled Trades program in September 2020.

Circulating a brochure which included highlights of the program, Robert Lompart noted that enrolment at Judith Nyman Secondary School is close to 500 students, and broadening the current local Applied Skilled Trades program into a regional program has the potential to increase enrolment by up to 252 students, for which there is adequate capacity at the school. He explained that the program will provide students in the communities of Brampton and Caledon an opportunity to follow skilled trades pathways with the focus on one of the four sectors: construction; hospitality and tourism; transportation; personal services. Robert Lompart indicated that, with the SHSM-Construction program, and proposed Masonry program, the school will become a hub of applied level skilled trades and pre-apprenticeship programs for secondary students in the north.

7. Report of the Regional Learning Choices Programs (RCLP) Committee (Continued)

Commenting on the hands-on and experiential learning with a workplace focus, Robert Lompart described the program, which will provide students the pathway to achieve the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. He explained that the rationale for the program aligns with the Board's Student Success goals, and he noted that skilled and trained teachers will take the lead in supporting the different trades pathways being offered. He highlighted partnerships with several organizations who provided support with expertise, and materials and equipment donations. Explaining the experiential learning for students in the program, Robert Lompart indicated that students will learn through programming that is hands-on, authentic and project-based. The program is cross-curricular, incorporating elements of Empowering Modern Learning and STEM learning applications. He stated that, over the past several years, significant capital, vocational school funding, program grants, and industry donations have helped to establish infrastructure capable of supporting a Regional Skilled Trades program. The fees, funding and application criteria, were described.

Trustees expressed support for the program. The administration responded to questions of clarification from trustees, including: application process will be similar to other regional programs; entry into the regional program at Judith Nyman Secondary School will be only at Grade 9, unless a student is moving from the West Credit Secondary School program; program boundary recommendations will be brought to the next Physical Planning and Building Committee meeting. A trustee suggested that the program be promoted to attract female students.

IP-24, moved by Robert Crocker, that the Report of the Regional Learning Choices Programs (RCLP) Committee, be received.

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8. Question Period

There were no questions.

9. Public Question Period

Valerie Williams, representing the Conference of Black Women, referred to the We Rise Together report, and asked about anti-black racism training and the steps being taken to measure the effectiveness of training, particularly with regard to feedback from students and parents. She also asked about feedback from students regarding the Black Students' Associations. The administration responded to the questions.

10. Adjournment

IP-25, moved by Balbir Sohi, that the meeting adjourn (20:30 hours).

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..... Chair Secretary

June 12, 2019
Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee:nf