

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, November 20, 2019 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Kathy McDonald, Chair
Susan Benjamin
Robert Crocker
Nokha Dakroub (18:15 hours)
Balbir Sohi

Trustee also present:

Sue Lawton

Member absent:

Will Davies

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

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

IP-41, 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, October 16, 2019**

IP-42, moved by Susan Benjamin, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held October 16, 2019, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – December 2019

IP-43, moved by Robert Crocker, that the Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder for December 2019, be received.

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5. Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 162 - Update

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Adrian Graham, advised that on August 21, 2019, the Ministry of Education released PPM No. 162, Exemption from Instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health Expectations for Grades 1 – 8. He introduced Joe Grdisa, Coordinator of Health and Physical Education / Athletics, Cathy Roper, Coordinating Principal, and Lawrence de Meyer, Superintendent of Leadership Development and School Support Services.

Joe Grdisa referred to the report on PPM No. 162, which outlines the purpose and process for implementing the exemption mentioned above. He reviewed the minimum requirements to be included in school board exemption policies and procedures which include notice and communications, process, and supervision of exempted students. Highlighting the sample Exemption Form and the Notification Letter which offer three options to parents, Joe Grdisa advised that the notice is sent 20 school days prior to the start of the study unit and must be returned 5 days before the start of the unit. He noted that exempted students will not receive a mark for the study unit missed, but no penalty will be applied. A Tip Sheet has also been developed to assist and guide administrators with providing accommodations for exempted students. The administration responded to Chair McDonald's questions of clarification with regard to the increase in notice period from 3 weeks to 4 weeks, and supervision for exempted students.

IP-44, moved by Sue Lawton, that the update report re Policy/Program Memorandum No.162, be received.

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6. Indigenous Action Plan Presentation – Thomas Street Middle School

Superintendent Graham stated that Thomas Street Middle School was selected as part of the inaugural 15 schools in the Board's Indigenous Education Strategic Action Plan. He commented that November is Native American Heritage Month. He invited Tanya Tymkiv, Principal, and Adam Clarke, Teacher at Thomas Street Middle School, to present information. The presenters used PowerPoint slides to display a series of photographs taken, to document Thomas Street Middle School's experience in learning about Indigenous peoples' history in Canada.

6. Indigenous Action Plan Presentation – Thomas Street Middle School (Continued)

Adam Clarke advised that, four years ago staff of Thomas Street Middle School engaged in learning with First Nations Elders to better understand the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action, particularly action 62 and 63 for educators. He stated that the learning was offered to all staff, including teaching assistants and office staff, and included using the blanket exercise to learn about the history of colonization in Canada. The school worked with the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres and participated in readings and viewings of books written by Indigenous peoples. Tanya Tymkiv spoke of using ways to build staff capacity, showing an interest in Indigenous culture and music, listening to Peel Aboriginal Network speakers and conducting field trips to Indigenous related places of interest. Other activities included: curriculum mapping; land acknowledgements; Ministry review of the revised social studies curriculum; partnering with elders and knowledge keepers; support for Indigenous students; art and story-telling; shoe boxes sent to children on the Reserves; capacity building outside of the school; recognizing Indigenous history and heritage months. A learning exchange was sponsored by the Ministry to record a video of a Grade 8 teacher with students studying data management in a variety of ways, and Indigenous learning is incorporated throughout the year.

Trustees speaking thanked staff for the work done and expressed interest in continuing the work in classrooms. Responses to trustee's questions of clarification included that: one student has recently self-identified and the work has helped her to learn her culture; books written by Indigenous peoples are available at the GoodMinds Bookstore. Associate Director of Instructional Support Services, Poleen Grewal, offered to have a bibliography of all the related texts used in professional learning sent to trustees for information. With regard to training to include trustees, Poleen Grewal will forward the request to the Equity department. Responding to Chair McDonald about plans to extend the learning to other schools, Crissa Hill, Coordinating Principal, Indigenous and Equity, explained that 15 schools were selected in the initial action plan, this year 29 schools and approximately 100 staff have participated. Poleen Grewal commented that Indigenous learning is part of the curriculum and centered around the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action.

IP-45, moved by Nokha Dakroub, that the report re Indigenous Action Plan Presentation – Thomas Street Middle School, be received.

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7. Entry of Kindergarten Students in September

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Adrian Graham, invited Sergio Pascucci, Instructional Coordinator – Early Years, and Coordinating Principal, Catherine Roper, to speak about the change in entry of Kindergarten students in September.

7. Entry of Kindergarten Students in September (Continued)

Sergio Pascucci stated that according to the Education Act children have a right to attend school at age four. He spoke about past practices of site-based staggered entry into Kindergarten during the first week of school. A review of these practices aligned with the Board's equity and inclusion goal, the Socioeconomic Vulnerability Index, and the Focus on Poverty Report, was undertaken. Sergio Pascucci reviewed the considerations for elimination of staggered entry outlined in the report, which includes: marginalization of children and families; children with diverse needs require varying amount of time to transition to school; stress on families of Kindergarten children with siblings in school; challenges with childcare arrangements. He described some of the supports provided to school staff, such as, flexible scheduling for the first two weeks for students facing transition challenges, welcoming caregivers to spend time at school with the child, and considerations on how the learning environment and daily activities may support the child. He added that, removing the practice of staggered entry contributes to welcoming learning environments and sharing in the responsibility of inspiring success, confidence and hope in students. In response to a trustee's question as to why children cannot enter Kindergarten upon turning four, it was clarified that continual entry of children throughout the year will affect staff allocation and may involve re-organization and adding staff during the school year.

IP-46, moved by Balbir Sohi, that the report re Entry of Kindergarten Students in September, be received.

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8. Question Period

There were no questions.

9. Public Question Period

There were no questions.

10. Adjournment

IP-47, moved by Nokha Dakroub, that the meeting adjourn (19:00 hours).

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..... Chair Secretary