

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, December 19, 2018 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Kathy McDonald, Chair
Susan Benjamin
Stan Cameron
Robert Crocker
Will Davies
Balbir Sohi

Trustee also present:

John Marchant

Member absent: (apologies received)

Nokha Dakroub

Administration:

Adrian Graham, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
(Executive Member)
Peter Joshua, Director of Education
Joy Uniac, Superintendent, Superintendent, Social/Emotional Learning and Early Years

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

Chair McDonald welcomed Jay Sengupta, newly appointed as the Board's Human Rights Commissioner.

IP-01, moved by Robert Crocker, that the agenda be approved.

..... carried

2. **Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, November 21, 2018

IP-02, moved by Robert Crocker, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held November 21, 2018, be approved.

..... carried

4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – January and February 2019

IP-03, moved by John Marchant, that the Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder for January and February 2019, be received.

..... carried

5. EngageMath Plan for 2018-2019: Focusing on the Fundamentals of Math

The Ministry's Focusing on the Fundamentals of Math – A Teacher's Guide, and the Peel DSB poster on Balanced Mathematics Instruction, K-12, was circulated. Leslie Grant, School Effectiveness Lead, acknowledged Soni Gill, School Effectiveness Lead, Ryan Tackaberry, Instructional Coordinator of Mathematics and Numeracy, and the Mathematics Resource Teachers for their work on the EngageMath Plan.

Leslie Grant noted that EngageMath moves into Year 5 of implementation, and embeds the fundamental concepts and skills outlined in the Ministry's new resource, Focusing on the Fundamentals of Math – A Teacher's Guide, which has replaced the Renewed Math Strategy 2018. Professional Learning (PL) days for the new resource were held on October 5, 2018, for elementary teachers, and on November 15, 2018 for secondary teachers, to comply with Ministry directive. The areas of focus in the new Guide are: deepening mathematical content knowledge for teaching; utilizing intentional instructional practices; supporting modern literacies; engaging in assessment for learning. Leslie Grant explained that the plan for Year 5 of EngageMath is to refocus on two key components, Purposeful Practice, and Basic Facts and Operational Skills, as these directly connect to fundamental concepts and skills relating to number sense and numeration.

Ryan Tackaberry highlighted that the key concepts and skills categorized in the Teacher's Guide focuses are: working with numbers; recognizing and applying understanding of number properties; mastering math facts; developing mental math skills; developing proficiency with operations. He explained the importance of exploring the distinction between memorization and mastery at the elementary level, stating that memorization of math facts is essential to the student's ability to engage in complex problem solving. Learning strategies improve over time with content becoming more intuitive, and mastery and automaticity over content can be achieved by applying multiple strategies and critical thinking. Leslie Grant listed the elementary and secondary schools receiving intensive support and increased support, and advised that these schools will participate in their choice of professional learning sessions and receive additional on-site release time. She described in detail the professional learning plans for K-Grade 8 and Grades 9-12, and the professional supports for K-Grade 12. She then summarized the Parent's Guide to the Fundamentals of Math.

5. EngageMath Plan for 2018-2019: Focusing on the Fundamentals of Math (Continued)

Trustees' questions of clarification were responded to by the administration, including: new students enrolling in higher grade are assessed and placed based on a central assessment system, and tracked in case adjustments are needed; designated mathematics classes for English as Second Language students; multiple strategies to solve math questions are valued as it builds underlying conceptual understanding; need to ensure that use of games not only provide appropriate assessment of procedural knowledge and skills but also an assessment of conceptual knowledge; list of schools receiving intensive and increased support is set by the Ministry and no change will be made for the time being, irrespective of whether there has been some improvement in achievement; rotation of classes require specialized math teachers at the elementary level; Years 4 and 5 of EngageMath are focused on deepening teachers' mathematical content knowledge; in house training is offered for elementary teachers to become more proficient in teaching math; Ministry will be introducing mathematical proficiency testing for new elementary teachers.

A trustee asked as to whether there has been observable improvement in student math achievement as a result of EngageMath, and he commented that there needs to be an appropriate measure to evaluate the success of the initiative. Adrian Graham, Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, advised that EQAO results for math for Grades 3 and 9 academic are steady, but Grade 6 and Grade 9 applied math students across the Province are not progressing as expected. Stating that students in Ontario and the Board fare well on international tests, Superintendent Graham indicated that the question had been raised whether the Grade 6 EQAO math test is grade appropriate. He added that EQAO is now moving to review the tests. Board Chair Cameron noted that revised Ministry funding will result in fewer resources to support students, which can affect achievement levels.

IP-04, moved by Balbir Sohi, that the report re EngageMath Plan for 2018-2019: Focusing on the Fundamentals, be received.

..... carried

6. Focus on Poverty: Action Plan

Director of Education, Peter Joshua, introduced Kim Bennett, Research Officer, Assessment and Accountability, Jaspreet Pabla, Workplace Equity Partner, and Craig Caslick, Principal of Lorne Park Secondary School, and he acknowledged Superintendent Adrian Graham, Joy Uniac, Superintendent of Education - Early Years, Harjit Aujla, Acting Superintendent of Education, and Jim Van Buskirk, Chief, Social Work, all of whom worked on the Focus on Poverty initiative and provided different perspectives in developing the Year One Action Plan.

Director Joshua reported that the complexities of student poverty and poverty amelioration were carefully reviewed during the work on the Poverty Indicators Report and the Socioeconomic Vulnerability Index (SVI), which uncovered many existing practices to support students. He noted, however, some practices need to be changed to provide students in poverty every opportunity to achieve success, in line with the goal of equity and inclusion outlined in the Board's Plan for Student Success.

6. Focus on Poverty: Action Plan (Continued)

Highlighting that 12.8% of Peel Region’s population is living in poverty, Jaspreet Pabla and Craig Caslick spoke about their attendance at meetings of the Peel Poverty Reduction Committee (PPRC) over the past two years, to ensure that the Peel DSB’s perspectives are included in discussions. They reported that the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2018-2028 is focused on three priority areas: income security; economic opportunity; well-being and social inclusion. A strategic action plan of the PPRC is to partner with Peel school boards to develop and implement school community-based programs that increase the level of achievement and success for students of marginalized and equity seeking backgrounds.

Describing the work of supporting students and families living in poverty, Craig Caslick and Jaspreet Pabla noted four categories: early years – Camp SAIL (Summer Adventures in Learning; school years – mentoring program; strategies to engage parents/guardians – Parent Reaching Out (PRO) grants; strategies to encourage community involvement – Peel Newcomer Strategy Group. With regard to measuring the effectiveness of these programs, Kim Bennett described the eight indicators that were outlined in the Poverty Indicators report to track and monitor the progress and effectiveness of poverty amelioration programs and interventions. Introducing the Action Plan, Director Joshua spoke about the importance of maintaining the dignity and respect of students in poverty. He highlighted the five action areas of the Action Plan: awareness and understanding the impact of poverty; support for families living in poverty; equitable allocation of human and material resources; equitable participation in programs; student success and well-being. The Logic Model outlining the actions and activities, short-term, intermediate term and long-term outcomes, and ultimate goal for each of the action areas, was described in detail by the presenters.

Responses to trustees’ questions of clarification included: working in collaboration with community partners is an important aspect of this initiative; launch of the Peel Learning Foundation will also support the removal of financial inequities to some extent; timelines for the action plans are being finalized; between 15% to 18% of Peel students live in poverty. Chair McDonald thanked the presenters for the report. She remarked that courageous decisions need to be made with regard to equity-based resource and material allocation, and she spoke of the need for bias awareness and being explicit in setting high expectation for all students. Remarking that the information contained in this report intersects with other aspects of student achievement, a trustee suggested that this report be brought to a Regular Meeting of the Board. Director Joshua confirmed that the report will be taken to Special Education Advisory Committee, and pertinent sections will be brought to the Physical Planning and Building Committee meeting. Chair McDonald suggested that the report can be brought to a Trustee Information Session.

IP-05, moved by Susan Benjamin, that the report re Focus on Poverty: Action Plan, be received.

..... carried

7. Question Period

There were no questions.

8. Public Question Period

Catherine Soplest reported that the Peel Poverty Action Group is represented on the PPRC, and she expressed her gratitude for the information presented in the report. She asked for a screenshot of the membership of Peel DSB's Working Group. Director Joshua responded.

9. Further Business

1. Next Meeting

Superintendent Graham noted that the Committee will not be meeting in January 2019, and the next meeting will be in February 2019.

10. Adjournment

IP-06, moved by Will Davies, that the meeting adjourn (20:15 hours).

..... carried