

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, February 17, 2016 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Rick Williams, Chair
Robert Crocker
Kathy McDonald
Janet McDougald
Suzanne Nurse

Trustee also present:

Harkirat Singh (19:00)

Members absent (apologies received):

Stan Cameron
Sue Lawton

Administration:

Poleen Grewal, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
(Executive Member)
Wendy Dowling, Superintendent of Education, Early Years (Executive Backup Member)
Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

IP-09, moved by Robert Crocker, 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,
January 20, 2016**

A trustee referred to Item 6 in the Minutes, Systemic Supports and Practices to Facilitate Student Engagement and Success for Black Students. She asked that the Minutes include suggestions made during the discussion regarding exploring a budget and hiring a person or resource teacher, collaborations with parents and PAACE, and reviewing of black students in applied programs. Board Chair McDougald advised that the Minutes are not written verbatim, and do not reference every comment or question of trustees.

3. Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, January 20, 2016 (Continued)

IP-10, moved by Janet McDougald, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held January 20, 2016, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – March 2016

IP-11, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – March 2016, be received.

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5. The Future We Want Refresh Project: Phase 1

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Poleen Grewal, recalled the Starting Point address on equity and inclusion by Director of Education, Tony Pontes, and the work done by Mary Samuel on The Future We Want (TFWW) project. She stated that with a view to refresh the project and continue to support the Board's aim to achieve equity, the TFWW Refresh Coordination Team has identified the scope of work for the first phase. Poleen Grewal introduced the presenters, Samir Chawla, Instructional Technology Resource Teacher, Soni Gill, School Effectiveness Leader, Hiren Mistry, Instructional Coordinator, Krista Tucker-Petrick, Acting Vice-Principal of Streetsville Secondary School, Melissa Wilson, Acting Resource Teacher - FNMI/Equity. She also acknowledged the work of Patrick McQuade, Instructional Coordinator, who was not present at the meeting.

Hiren Mistry spoke of the upcoming 7th Annual You are Not Alone–Make Peel Proud Conference, in support of LGBTTIQ students and their allies, and distributed lanyards depicting the rainbow symbol, representing the spectrum of identities. Soni Gill stated that the team members, have been meeting since September 2015 on a monthly basis and offer their own narratives and experience to the team. She stated that the work is student-focused, to challenge individual and systemic discrimination and barriers, and noted that re-visioning is important as equity is a changing field. She spoke of the legacy of TFWW which includes self-awareness, developing an inclusive curriculum, and inclusion of voices not heard. Samir Chawla stated that relevant resources will be retained, existing content will be updated and expanded to an online platform and later, he demonstrated easy access to printable resources.

Using PowerPoint slides, Hiren Mistry reviewed reasons for the refresh and re-launch of the project as, 21st century teaching and learning, change of language around equity from specific anti-bias to supporting student success, expanded understanding of student diversity around gender, ethnicity, race, culture, etc., creation of resources with common vision and access, and the audit conducted last summer. Melissa Wilson reported that using the updated Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, Peel's equity resources were audited to identify strengths, gaps, and alignment to guide future work.

5. The Future We Want Refresh Project: Phase 1 (Continued)

Krista Tucker-Petrick spoke about the writing team, made up of Peel teachers, principals and/or vice-principals selected to work on refreshing strategies to develop the Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment section of the TFWW website. She described the scope of work and reported that the writing team is expected to complete its work between February and May 2016, after which a summer writing team will work on strategies and next steps. Hiren Mistry highlighted resources to support teachers and principals, and listed eight areas of focus for equity as, instruction and assessment, classroom and school culture, community-school relations, school leadership, professional development, student voice, policy and guidelines, and religious accommodation.

Board Chair McDougald referred to the TFWW document developed in 2000 and noted that some of the 'isms' are confusing to parents. Recalling a Board meeting discussion about using simplistic language in communications to parents, she supported incorporating the intent of 'isms', but asked to consider whether all the 'isms' need to be listed in new resources. Hiren Mistry indicated that 'isms' are part of the setting for equity work, and explained that this year the writing team has been developing a new framework related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Part of their task is to recognize the entry points for teachers, as well as consistency with the Ontario Human Rights Code and alignment with legislation. Janet McDougald expressed appreciation for TFWW as a guiding document and suggested that in the spirit of systemness, Journey Ahead action plan should also be incorporated in TFWW. Superintendent Grewal stated that the Journey Ahead is also related to a culture of equity and inclusion, and TFWW can support the work included in the Journey Ahead action plan. She added that projects such as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) identification and systemic supports for black students are also equity related. There was further dialogue on systemness. In response to a question, Hiren Mistry explained that the focus of the writing team is to explain the content and one of the goals is to develop front matter for the curriculum and assessment section.

IP-12, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re The Future We Want Refresh Project: Phase 1, be received.

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6. Home Schooling - Update

Home Schooling Liaison Officer, Terry Gordon, referred to the report which outlines the framework for home schooling and the Ministry policy PPM 131 that governs it, and advised that he and Liaison Officer Paul Jones work with principals, vice-principals and Heads of Guidance departments. Circulating a document on home schooling trends, he reviewed the data for 2015-2016 and noted that: 476 families had children who were being home schooled and there is an increase every year; secondary school males to females ratio is fairly even while elementary school males to females ratio is consistently higher; 467 new students have been admitted to home schooling this year, generating an increase of 197 students over the last year, and 270 students have been withdrawn. He noted that in 2007 there were 194 students home schooled and the number has increased to 776 this year. Terry Gordon advised that 100 of the 776 home schooled students have not registered in a Peel school and are not in Peel's Student Information System.

6. Home Schooling – Update (Continued)

Terry Gordon advised that some reasons for children being home schooled are to pursue alternative curriculum or religious studies, or due to special needs, attendance, mental health issues, and bullying. An acknowledgement letter is sent to parents who notify the board about home schooling and a copy of that letter is placed in the OSR. Some students use Independent Learning Centres (ILC) or American online courses. He advised that four written inquiries have been received regarding the revised Health and Physical Education curriculum. He stated that parents are receptive to suggestions and are aware that their children are welcome to return to the public school system.

Questions of clarification from trustees responded to by Terry Gordon included: that some parents home school children in elementary and send them to school from Grade 8 onwards; perceptions that some students move to the coterminous board because of school uniforms; EQAO test is optional for home schooled students and material is sent to parents if requested; Kindergarten is not mandatory but if a parent registers a child in Kindergarten and then decides to keep him/her home, the child is considered home schooled and tracked; there may be children in the province who are home schooled that school boards are not aware of; no survey or questionnaire is used to keep track of reasons why students leave the school system; students registered with ILC are monitored for 40 hours community service, physical education, and Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) requirements. Terry Gordon indicated that once the parents make a decision to home school, the responsibility lies with the family. He provided an explanation to further questions of clarification from Board Chair McDougald with regard to follow-up regarding delivery of curriculum at home, conducting investigations on third party concerns, acknowledgement letter is not sent if evidence of detailed teaching plans is not received, involvement of Children's Aid Society. Chair Williams asked about students' performance when they join school at secondary level. Terry Gordon indicated that those students may be a little behind, particularly ESL students. He suggested a study to review student performance in such situations, as there is no data available right now.

IP-13, moved by Robert Crocker, that the update report re Home Schooling, be received.

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7. Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum Implementation - Update

Superintendent Grewal advised that the Health and Physical Education Curriculum will be implemented in elementary schools and as part of the implementation plan, Board staff have met with faith leaders to discuss their concerns, and visited faith centres, Buddhist temples and mosques. She stated that 120 parents had registered to talk about the HPE curriculum and the Parent Guide was used to debunk some of the myths related to the HPE curriculum. Discussions also took place on religious accommodations process. Poleen Grewal described the roll out sessions as helpful with respectful conversations, and useful information was provided to parents. She stated that the sessions are usually held after school, with one or two teachers per school released to attend, and cover issues outlining curriculum expectations and religious accommodations for Grades 1 – 8, building capacity in teachers, and clarifying that the curriculum is about narrative and identity of students and not teachers.

**7. Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum Implementation – Update
(Continued)**

Poleen Grewal advised that controversial parts of the revised HPE curriculum will be delivered after March Break. Superintendents of education will work out plans for religious accommodations, notification letters will be sent home two weeks prior to teaching the curriculum and community meetings will be held when requested, and resources will be provided at school council meetings. Responding to a trustee, Superintendent Grewal clarified that it will not be possible to release all teachers for roll out sessions, adding that administrators and principals have attended and are aware that strategic plans need to be in place.

IP-14, moved by Janet McDougald, that the oral update report re Health and Physical Education Curriculum Implementation, be received.

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8. Question Period

Trustee McDonald referred to an article in the Toronto Star regarding exclusion of a special needs student, which also indicated that some students can be excluded for two months but not considered expelled or suspended. Superintendent Grewal indicated that exclusion is not done on a regular basis. She suggested that Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, be contacted for more information on students with special needs.

Vice-Chair Nurse asked about French Immersion (FI) registration for a Kindergarten student in a school that has FI. She inquired whether the school that they are applying to for flexible boundary is their FI school, or if the home school is their FI school. Poleen Grewal advised that once a student is admitted under the flexible boundary policy, that is their school for K – Grades 5, 6, or 8. However, for FI, admission is based on their address which will determine where they apply. Coordinating Principal, Cathy Roper will provide further clarification to Suzanne Nurse. Board Chair McDougald commented that when students drop out of FI they cannot stay in the school where they were admitted on flexible boundary, they will go back to their home school.

9. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

10. Adjournment

IP-15, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the meeting adjourn (19:50 hours).

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..... Chair Secretary