

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 Tuesday, February 17, 2015 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Nokha Dakroub
David Green
Sue Lawton
Kathy McDonald
Janet McDougald
Harkirat Singh

Trustees also present:

Carrie Andrews
Suzanne Nurse

Member absent: (apology received)

Rick Williams, Chair

Administration:

Jeff deFreitas, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
(Executive Member)
Wendy Dowling, Superintendent of Education, Early Years
Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services
Jerry Powidajko, Superintendent, Leadership Development and School Support Services
Carol Speers, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

In the absence of the Chair, Rick Williams, Trustee Green assumed the Chair.

IP-20, moved by Janet McDougald, 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 21, 2015

IP-21, moved by Sue Lawton, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held January 21, 2015, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – February 2015

IP-22, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – February 2015, be received.

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5. Day of Pink at Peel District School Board

Superintendent of Leadership Development and School Support Services, Jerry Powidajko, reviewed the handouts circulated, and highlighted the Board's values for building nurturing environments in Peel that are caring, cooperative, honest, inclusive, respectful and responsible. Day of Pink is the international day against bullying and discrimination as it relates to homophobia and transphobia in schools and communities, and is being recognized on April 8, 2015 in Peel. He noted that a variety of age and grade appropriate support material has been developed to facilitate classroom conversation on gender discrimination and inclusivity. These include: communication materials and tools; lesson plans; videos; books; websites. Superintendent Powidajko advised that teachers can access the Board's Equity and Inclusive Education Resource site online for sample material, and he acknowledged the contributions of the Make Peel Proud Steering Committee.

A trustee asked about an individual school's choice of participating in Day of Pink activities. Superintendent Powidajko advised that they have a choice, and most schools participate on the designated day. However, he noted, some schools have moved beyond the Day of Pink and have incorporated a significant amount of resource material into daily classroom instruction as a way of inculcating inclusivity and non-discriminating values. Referring to the letter to school families, and the potential for discussions about gender discrimination, Chair McDougald suggested also informing parents that discussion on such issues may happen as a part of the daily instruction, and that parents should discuss any concerns they might have with the principal of their school. In view of the sensitivity of this topic with some families, a trustee suggested due care be taken when delivering or discussing related content in the classroom. Jerry Powidajko highlighted the importance of bringing awareness of diversity in Peel, and the need to make families and students feel included. He will send electronic copies of the handouts to trustees.

IP-23, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the report re Day of Pink at Peel District School Board, be received.

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6. Homework Policy #70

Kristen Clarke, Instructional Coordinator of Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction, and Auni Boghossian, Instructional Coach, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, reported on the revised Homework Policy #70. It was noted that, with significant changes in teaching and learning, the guidelines provided in the Ministry document, "Growing Success", and the increased use of technology in the classroom, the homework policy should allow for consistency across the Board.

6. Homework Policy #70 (Continued)

Kristen Clarke and Auni Boghossian reviewed homework guidelines, including that it will: be differentiated to reflect the student's learning profile; reflect the student's grade level, pathway and obligations in other classes; not be punitive, but supplement and support in-school experiences; prepare, practice, and consolidate learning. Questions of clarifications from trustees were responded to, including: homework assigned through technology would take into consideration student access to technology; there is no specific research on the link between the quantity of homework and impact on learning; parent concerns about homework need to be brought to the school principal and resolved through consultation between the parent, teacher and student. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Jeff deFreitas, highlighted information in the report about the teacher's responsibility to clearly communicate homework expectations, taking into consideration the need to balance school, social and emotional well-being, and family life.

IP-24, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the report re Homework Policy #70, be received.

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7. Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) Program – Operating Procedure

Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs, Carol Speers, reported that the Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) program was introduced by the Ministry of Education to support children between the ages of 14 to 17 years who are at risk of leaving school before completing graduation. She indicated that, in most cases, there are other factors that make it difficult for these students to be at school, and noted that the program provides flexible alternatives, as outlined in the report, to continue education at their home school or a Peel Alternative School (PAS). Superintendent Speers described specific learner profiles of potential SAL candidates, and she spoke about the referral process, the Supervised Alternative Learning Plan, School Social Worker Report, as well as SAL Committee representation, and the hearing and decision-making process. Principal of Peel Alternative Programs, Sharon Stevens-Lay, advised that approximately 39 – 47 students are referred to SAL programs in the hope that they will return to their home school. She highlighted some of the success stories of students in the program, noting the close monitoring and caring support provided to help the student re-engage educationally.

Responding to a question, Superintendent Speers stated that community member appointments to the SAL Committee are through invitation, and that the necessary training is provided to members. She clarified procedure regarding the referral of students to SAL programs, persons advocating on their behalf, and individuals required to be present at the hearing. Information was also provided regarding students not returning to the system. Trustees speaking expressed appreciation to all the support staff involved in the SAL program for their dedication and focus to students.

IP-25, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) Program – Operating Procedure, be received.

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8. Curriculum and Instruction Support Services – Department Overview

Superintendent deFreitas stated that the report is part of the ongoing Trustee Information series, and indicated that further questions may be directed to him or his Office Manager and Assistant, Marie Colthart. An organization chart and PowerPoint presentation were circulated. Jeff deFreitas provided a descriptive overview of the Curriculum and Instruction Support Services department and its interaction and collaboration with other departments. He highlighted key staff positions and the support provided to elementary and secondary schools in the areas of: curricular focus and instruction; the Engage Math initiative; 21st Century Teaching and Learning; commonly referred to policies and operating procedures. He spoke about the guiding principles and goals of the Board Improvement Plan and Report Card for Student Success, that determine school success planning and the enhancement of student achievement. Jeff deFreitas reported on professional learning supports and resources available, and he noted the shift in instruction to focus on student understanding based on inquiry, critical thinking and collaboration. A trustee asked for an update report on home schooling. Jeff deFreitas will bring a report to a future Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee meeting.

IP-26, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the oral report re Curriculum and Instruction Support Services – Department Overview, be received.

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9. French as a Second Language Advisory Committee – Parent Representation Selection Process

Superintendent deFreitas stated that a query was raised at the last meeting regarding the selection process for parent representation on the French as a Second Language Advisory Committee. He indicated that the proposed revised process, which involves applications from interested parents, will be reviewed by staff and trustees on this Committee to identify 8 parent representatives from elementary and secondary panels that include geographic representation across the Board. Jeff deFreitas reviewed the selection criteria outlined in the report, the timelines involved, and parent member application form. A trustee suggested including expected frequency of meetings of the Committee. Regarding online application forms, Superintendent deFreitas responded that the form can be emailed, on request.

IP-27, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the report re French as a Second Language Advisory Committee – Parent Representation Selection Process, be received.

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10. Question Period

There were no questions.

11. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

12. Adjournment

IP-28, moved by Nokha Dakroub, that the meeting adjourn (20:00 hours).

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