

## 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, January 22, 2014 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Rick Williams (Chair)  
Beryl Ford  
David Green  
Sue Lawton  
Harinder Malhi  
Janet McDougald  
Suzanne Nurse

Trustee also present:

Jeff White

Administration:

Shawn Moynihan, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services  
(Executive Member)  
Pertia Bent, Superintendent of Education  
Ina Fournier, Superintendent of Education  
Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services  
  
Marina Amin, Board Reporter

### 1. **Approval of Agenda**

IP-01, moved by Suzanne Nurse, 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, November 20, 2013**

IP-02, moved by Janet McDougald, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held November 20, 2013, be approved.

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**4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – January 2014**

IP-03, moved by Jeff White, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – January 2014, be received.

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**5. Delegation by Stan Taylor re Math Instruction in Semester System versus Year-Long (Grade 9 and 10 Students)**

Stan Taylor delegated the Committee from speaking notes, a copy of which was later provided to the administration.

Stan Taylor requested that Peel consider implementing year-long mathematics instruction for Grades 9 and 10 students in semestered secondary schools. He suggested that a pilot program be undertaken, and feedback on the project be sought from the students and school community. Stan Taylor spoke about a perceived gap in mathematics instruction ranging sometimes from 7 to 12 months in a semestered system, which in his opinion, has negative results on student learning and achievement in mathematics. He commented that mathematics is a subject that requires regular reinforcement and practice to develop fluency. Stan Taylor referred to the pilot project undertaken at Rick Hansen Secondary School and by the coterminous board at Cardinal Leger Secondary School in Brampton, when Grade 9 mathematics and physical education were paired on a year-long basis. He noted that such scheduling is possible, and he highlighted the importance of promoting physical education to encourage physical fitness amongst the general population.

Stan Taylor expressed the opinion that the semester system saves money mainly by reducing the cost on text books. He recalled the administration's report on potential additional costs ranging from \$5000 to \$15,000 to implement a year-long mathematics program, and he suggested taking on the additional costs in the interest of improving student achievement. He highlighted a media article that speaks of poor mathematics skills of students at the college level, and he noted the need for immediate action in this regard. He opined that many jobs requiring mathematics skills are being sent offshore. The delegation commented that EQAO test results do not provide an accurate determination of fluency in mathematics because this test is written by students completing elementary school, where they have been exposed to year-long mathematics instruction. The concern, he noted, is when students enter the secondary stream and encounter gaps in mathematics instruction due to the schedule of a semestered program.

Responding to a trustee, Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, advised that, on the school's request, the pilot program at Rick Hansen Secondary School was discontinued, as no significant improvement in student achievement was determined by an evaluation of the pilot project. Associate Director of Instructional Support Services, Scott Moreash, reported on the Board's focus on numeracy, and highlighted the importance of building a comprehensive strategy to increase achievement in mathematics. He added that a comprehensive research study of the pilot program conducted by a third party in 2011 showed limited or no significant difference in achievement, and he reiterated the Board's decision not to mandate a Board-wide offering of non-semestered mathematics program in Peel's semestered secondary schools.

**5. Delegation by Stan Taylor re Math Instruction in Semester System versus Year-Long (Grade 9 and 10 Students) (Continued)**

In response to remarks and comments made by the delegation, a trustee expressed appreciation for and commended staff at Rick Hansen Secondary School for their dedication and hard work. He stated that staff, of their own initiative, had approached the system to introduce a pilot project for year-long mathematics instruction in order to determine its value to student achievement.

Chair Williams advised the delegation that a response will be provided at the next Committee meeting scheduled for February 19, 2014.

**6. Charter of Commitment to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education**

With the permission of the Committee, the agenda was slightly reordered to facilitate the presence of attendees.

Superintendent Moynihan welcomed community members to the meeting. He expressed appreciation for, and acknowledged the contribution made by Ian Pettigrew, Instructional Coordinator, in implementing the First Nation, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy in Peel. Krista Tucker Petrick, FNMI/Equity Resource Teacher introduced Elder Garry Sault from Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, President Richard Cuddy of the Credit River Métis Council, Sharon McBride and Scott France from Métis Nation of Ontario, Johnny Issaluk, Rita Manners, Principal of Sir John A. Macdonald Senior Public School, and Rajwant Gill, Head of Curriculum at Stephen Lewis Secondary School.

Superintendent of Education, Pertia Bent, updated Committee members on the Education Advisory Circle and Policy 81, Voluntary, Confidential Self-Identification Policy for FNMI students. She stated that the Circle includes board representation, members from the Region of Peel, as well as FNMI and other community support groups. Its mandate was to provide input into the policy to create an inclusive environment that is nurturing to student voluntary self-identification. Pertia Bent noted that awareness of the Policy was brought through the distribution of flyers and brochures to the community. She outlined some of the recommendations made at the last Circle meeting to encourage self identification, including: connecting census data to focus on schools in those areas; highlighting role models for FNMI students; designating a month for aboriginal awareness; developing a series of short videos to promote self-identification; training for office and front line staff in all schools to welcome and create an inclusive environment; creating information booths at parent events.

President Richard Cuddy, provided an overview of the Credit River Métis Council's responsibilities, noting that its goal is to obtain recognition for the Métis people. He spoke about the Ministry financed Métis Youth Conference held May 24, 2012 at David Suzuki Secondary School, where approximately 130 students from the Region of Peel attended to learn about the heritage of Métis culture and to self-identify. He also highlighted a Métis focused professional learning session hosted by Peel on May 30, 2013, and stated that work is ongoing with respect to voluntary self-identification.

**6. Charter of Commitment to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education (Continued)**

Sharon McBride and Scott France provided details regarding: Memorandums of Understanding signed with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities regarding FNMI programs; education kits containing specific training material to help teachers with the curriculum; March Break camps; school programs to build awareness of the Métis culture. Johnny Issaluk highlighted his role in helping students understand traditional Inuit values, and discover their rich and inspiring heritage and culture. Elder Garry Sault spoke about his collaboration with Peel to develop a curriculum that reflects the history and culture of the FNMI people. He highlighted the need for a strong focus on strengthening numeracy skills in order to close the gap and improve declining results in mathematics.

Principal Rita Manners apprised Committee members of the work being done on self-identification, and awareness of FNMI culture at Sir John A. Macdonald Senior Public School. Rajwant Gill spoke about her experiences at a professional learning event at Spirit Point. She highlighted the need for awareness of a great culture, and a respect for the FNMI communities for their strength, resilience and reconciliation. Krista Tucker Petrick provided details about Professional Learning Opportunities for 2013 – 2014, including: a teachers' tool-kit roll out; teacher-librarian focused PD; lunch 'n learn sessions. She concluded the presentation stating the proposed recommendation that the Board adopt the Ontario Public School Boards' Association Charter of Commitment to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education, which provides for an inclusive education for all students.

A trustee expressed appreciation for the work being done by the Education Advisory Circle and for the honour to have served with its members. He referred to the limited number of self-identifications, attributing this reluctance to historical reasons. He commented that this trend would change as students spent more time with the community leaders and role models.

IP-04, moved by Jeff White, that the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee recommends to the Board:

1. That, the Board adopt the Ontario Public School Boards' Association Charter of Commitment to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education. (APPENDIX I)

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**7. School Libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Learning Commons Approach**

Jeanne Conte, Instructional Coordinator, introduced fellow presenters, Alicia Quennell, Teacher-Librarian at Streetsville Secondary School, and Mary Jo Wheeler-Ali, Teacher-Librarian at Allan A. Martin Senior Public School.

(Continued overleaf)

**7. School Libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Learning Commons Approach (Continued)**

Jeanne Conte provided details of the learning resources available at the J.A. Turner Library, including access to FNMI kits for teachers to use in the classroom, and she described the extensive work provided by the School Library Support Services team with regard to cataloging, e-books, etc. With a PowerPoint presentation, Jeanne Conte provided an overview of the learning commons approach that promotes student inquiry, learning through diverse methods, making resources available at all times, and creating a richer, dynamic learning environment where students, teachers, and teacher-librarians work collaboratively with technology. She described the “libratory” idea for a library that provides an ever-changing space to support student learning in the moment.

Alicia Quennell described the Streetsville Secondary School Library Re-design Project, which demonstrates how a library can be used for a variety of learning activities and subjects, with a focus on collaboration, creative thinking and problem solving. She indicated that teachers and students were surveyed for teaching and learning needs, types of technology being used, comfort level of students, access to library resources and teacher-librarian support.

Mary Jo Wheeler-Ali provided details of the learning commons approach adopted in the newly renovated library at Allan A. Martin Senior Public School. She described the adaptability of the library space to include collaborative learning and easy access to resources. She spoke about the changed approach to teaching and learning where the Library Learning Commons becomes a hub of activity. Mary Jo Wheeler-Ali described the practice of some open periods at the school, where students from various grades assemble to collaborate and learn together. This has fostered added staff and student engagement across grades and subjects. She noted that superintendents from other boards have visited to learn more about the learning commons approach, and she noted that the school has become internationally known, with questions about resources coming from as far away as Australia.

Referring to the Library Re-design Project, a trustee asked whether discussions may be had with the Design and Construction department at the design planning stage for proposed new school construction projects, to accommodate design plans for a Library Learning Commons. Associate Director Moreash confirmed this practice exists when new schools are being designed.

IP-05, moved by Janet McDougald, that the report re School Libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Learning Commons Approach, be received.

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**8. Report on the Program for International Student Assessment (2012)**

Using PowerPoint slides, Instructional Resource Teacher of Mathematics, Paul Alves, provided data and information on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) Report for 2012 that assesses the knowledge and skills of 15 year-olds based on their ability to analyze, reason and communicate effectively. He noted that of the countries and economies that participated in the 2012 assessment, Canada showed high levels of performance with equity in education opportunities, and scored at 518 points above the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average of 494.

**8. Report on the Program for International Student Assessment (2012)**

Indicating that the assessment questions can be quite challenging, Paul Alves reported that Canada was more successful in this regard, because 60% of students in Canada reported that they were exposed to mathematical problems that required the use of problem solving, and critical thinking skills.

David Jack, School Effectiveness Leader, provided details of teaching and learning similarities and differences in mathematics instruction in Ontario and Quebec. Instruction in both provinces included: problem solving skills; application of the five strands of mathematics; the use of manipulatives; critical thinking tools; use of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and technology. Indicating that mathematics instruction at the elementary level in Quebec is slightly different, David Jack noted the use of concepts and processes in reasoning, and solving of situational problems. There are over 100 hours of pedagogy instruction provided to teachers in Quebec, in contrast to the 50 hours of pedagogical training received in Ontario.

Jill Ott, School Effectiveness Leader, referenced the Board Improvement Plan as a document that provides direction in regard to student support and learning, and highlighted the need for teachers to encourage critical thinking and problem solving skills. Jill Ott reported on work in progress to develop support materials and resources for teachers to use in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning which include tools to support differentiated learning and 3-part lesson plans, enquiry based and job embedded learning; creative processes and innovative learning techniques that are linked to success criteria. It was noted that Peel's students have a strong knowledge and understanding of mathematics, although critical thinking is an area that can be improved. A sheet containing a sample of a PISA 2012 assessment test question was circulated and members were asked to solve the question, and identify the skills used.

Trustee Lawton asked for a copy of the PowerPoint presentation of the report on PISA 2012. Superintendent Moynihan will forward a copy.

IP-06, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report on the Program for International Student Assessment (2012), be received.

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**9. Question Period**

Trustee Nurse queried the difference between pedagogical training hours for teachers in Ontario and Quebec. Superintendent Moynihan responded that teachers in Peel are provided with ongoing professional development, with a focus on information that may not have been shared at Teachers' College.

**10. Public Question Period**

There were no public questions.

**11. Adjournment**

IP-07, moved by David Green, that the meeting adjourn (20:30hours).

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