

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, March 29, 2017 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Kathy McDonald, Chair
Stan Cameron
Suzanne Nurse
Harkirat Singh

Trustees also present:

David Green
Sue Lawton
Ranbir Singh, Student Trustee North (18:15)

Members absent: (apologies received)

Robert Crocker
Rick Williams

Administration:

Poleen Grewal, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
(Executive Member)
Joy Uniac, Superintendent of Education, Early Years (Executive Backup Member)
Patrika Daws, Superintendent of Education
Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services
Gale Solomon-Henry, Superintendent of Education

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

IP-20, moved by Stan Cameron, 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, February 15, 2017

IP-21, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held February 15, 2017, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – April and May 2017

IP-22, moved by Sue Lawton, that the reports re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – April and May 2017, be received.

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5. Soccer North – Clarkson Program

Poleen Grewal, Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, invited Instructional Coordinator for Health and Physical Education, Joe Grdisa, to speak about Soccer North, which is an extension of the Football North program introduced at Clarkson Secondary School last year. Joe Grdisa reviewed the report, advising that the Football North program has been successful at Clarkson Secondary School and that Peel DSB will enter into a partnership with Football North Inc., to form Soccer North. He stated that the program will provide 20-30 student athletes with a positive learning experience, and soccer players from the Greater Toronto and Golden Horseshoe areas will be registered students at Clarkson Secondary School.

Trustees' questions of clarification responded to included: at this point a maximum of 30 students will be enrolled; athletes are selected through an application and tryout process; athletes will not be allowed to compete in ROPSSAA and OFSSAA games on account of their rules; students are expected to meet academic expectations and failure to do so will jeopardize a student's ability to remain in the program; attendance and academic performance will be closely monitored by an academic advisor who will be in contact with parents; currently there is no signing on and students are free to move out of the program; Wolves North American Academy is not a holding company making a profit, but salaries are paid; the program will be run at no cost to the Board; a combination of reasons is considered in choosing the location for this program. A trustee suggested replacing the word elite used in the report. Another trustee requested that an update report be brought back to the Board after a year.

IP-23, moved by Stan Cameron, that the report re Soccer North – Clarkson Program, be received.

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6. New Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)

Carol Suhay, Coordinating Principal for Secondary, and Kelly Devenish, Instructional Coordinator, Pathways, Guidance and Career Education, presented background information on OSAP and changes proposed in phases, over the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. The presenters stated that OSAP is an integrated program funded by federal and provincial governments, offering both grants and loans to students. They advised that OSAP is an entitlement program, and there is no cap set by the governments on the amount of funds available. Using PowerPoint slides, graphs were shown indicating increased growth rate in students accessing OSAP funds. It was noted that a significant number of students did not attend post-secondary institutions due to problems associated with OSAP funds.

6. New Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) (Continued)

The presenters reviewed the report with regard to limitations in the former system and changes made to the program. Highlighting that in the past 'net' tuition was largely unknown by students due to unclear communication of costs by colleges and universities, they noted that OSAP will now partner with post-secondary institutions to provide a clear picture of total costs of post-secondary education, and families with income of less than \$50,000 will have no provincial debt. Other changes to the program include: maximum assistance level will increase by \$20 per week for single students and \$120 per week for married students; 85% of Ontario students will now receive more grants; a user-friendly website to better manage money and application status. Brochures with more information and internet links were circulated.

Trustees' questions of clarification were responded to, including: verifying accuracy of information submitted by students in OSAP applications; increase in allowance is available for mature married students; OSAP is offered for post-graduate studies. A trustee suggested adding OSAP links to myBlueprint and the Peel DSB website. Another trustee inquired whether the Ministry has indicated as to how much this program will cost tax payers as there is no cap. She expressed the opinion that, with no cap on funding for this program, it appears that tax payers are paying for grants rather than loans, and also indicates that students are entitled to a post-secondary education. Commenting on the amount of bursaries and grants available at universities, especially for post-graduate degrees, which go unclaimed, the trustee remarked that with OSAP offering more access to government grants, there is not much incentive for students to look for funds that are available through colleges and universities.

IP-24, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re New Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), be received.

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7. We Rise Together - Action Plan

Superintendent Grewal provided contextual information on the We Rise Together Action Plan and a brief update report on the work done to date, which included incorporating feedback from consultations with staff and the public. She stated that the We Rise Together Steering Committee, which consists of African Canadian principals, vice-principals, superintendents of education, teachers, and Curriculum/Instruction Support Services staff, has reviewed the outcomes of consultations, which will be shared today.

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Harjit Aujla, Coordinating Principal for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Equity, stated that feedback from 87 black male secondary school students has led to the development of the We Rise Together Action Plan, and he reviewed the aims of the action plan. Harjit Aujla reviewed the list of community consultation partners, which included students, Peel Association of African Canadian Educators (PAACE), Black Engagement Civic Action Network (BECAN), United Way of Peel Region, and Regional Diversity Roundtable, United Achievers, Malton Black Development Association, Congress of Black Women, and local places of worship.

7. We Rise Together - Action Plan (Continued)

Phiona Lloyd-Henry, Equity Resource Teacher, provided a detailed overview of feedback received from students and PAACE as contained in the report. It was noted that community consultations held in December 2016 and January 2017 were well attended, and feedback indicated a need to identify and address systemic anti-black racism, communication and barriers to black parent engagement, inclusive school leadership, accountability structures, early intervention and engagement of black students at a younger age.

Members of the Steering Committee then presented the Action Plan with regard to the four Focus Areas: Integrating the Experiences of Black Canadians into the Curriculum; Deliver Bias Awareness and Anti-Black Racism Professional Development; Engage with the Community; Inspire Black Student Leadership and Engagement. Details, as contained in the report, regarding long-term and short-term outcomes as well as aims to achieve goals were provided on each of the four focus areas. Superintendent Grewal highlighted the importance of community engagement and using 15 pilot schools in a Kindergarten to Grade12 model within a Family of Schools, to measure success and accountability. She also noted the importance of having curriculum coordinators incorporate these goals into work plans, using existing structures and adding some new ideas. Board Chair McDougald commended the work done on the Action Plan. She spoke about the importance of parent engagement and expressed the hope of exploring in detail the process of engaging parents. She inquired about how modern learning courses will be applied and the opportunity for black boys to engage in modern learning, which is a self-driven activity with guidance from teachers.

Questions and comments responded to with regard to the Focus Area on, Integrating the Experiences of Black Canadians into the Curriculum, included: action plan will be structured through an anti-racism lens; accountability for this initiative will rest with Curriculum and Instruction Support Services; assessment of students' potential for academic and applied programs; whether the curriculum will reflect the diversity within the black community; the need for community partners to work with black students; representation of black males in staffing and leadership roles; training and development to include senior leadership team, administration, school success teams and trustees; asking Federations and Unions to support training for teachers.

Referring to the Focus Area on Deliver Bias Awareness and Anti-Black Racism Professional Development, the long-term and short-term outcomes and aims to achieve goals and the action planned were reviewed in detail. Concern was expressed about negative criticism, training for teachers with regard to reporting to Children's Aid Society (CAS), and that parents be contacted before CAS is involved. It was also suggested that Neighbourhood Police Unit (NPU) officers work alongside Peel staff while dealing with black students.

Following the presentation on the third Focus Area, Engage with the Community, suggestions were made to: create a fact sheet on parent engagement; possibility of reaching out to parents through online and information meetings; the word churches be replaced with places of worship; include images of black students on school program flyers. Responding to a trustee's query on having more representation of black staff to act as role models to black male students, Poleen Grewal indicated that initiatives such as, the Journey Ahead action plan, Workforce Census, and Aspiring Racialized Leaders program will address employee representation of diverse communities in Peel.

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IP-25, moved by David Green, that the meeting extend beyond 20:30 hours to complete the agenda.

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7. We Rise Together - Action Plan (Continued)

For Focus Area # 4, Inspire Black Student Leadership and Engagement, the presenters reported that black students need respect and recognition for their achievements. Long-term and short-term outcomes were described as detailed in the report, along with aims and proposed activities. Superintendent Grewal reviewed the next steps, comprising a full day senior team planning conference to review roles by departments, sharing information and action plan with the larger community, co-led sessions with United Way, and accountability to be evaluated through student success and research through staff, students and parents to assess impact. Questions and comments from trustees were responded to regarding: a digital version of a flyer to be posted on community agency websites; challenges of first generation Canadian and new immigrant students with provincial testing; including narratives and stories of influential black Canadians in elementary curriculum. Trustees speaking commended the action plan and expressed optimism that the efforts of students, staff and communities working together will come to fruition. Chair Kathy McDonald thanked the Director of Education, Tony Pontes, and staff who worked on the report and recommendations. She expressed appreciation for the commitment of Superintendent Grewal and Peel DSB, to equity and inclusion.

IP-26, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the report re We Rise Together - Action Plan, be received.

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8. Question Period

There were no questions.

9. Public Question Period

Victoria Wright, who has a child in Peel DSB, thanked everyone for the We Rise Together – Action Plan report (Item 7 of these Minutes). She inquired whether professional development for staff will be mandatory for teachers. She recounted her visit to the Dufferin-Peel CDSB on the occasion of Black History Month held in February 2017 and asked whether Peel DSB organizes a similar event. Victoria Wright requested that the language used in report cards and Peel DSB newsletters is simple and easy to understand. She suggested that parents sign up for email communication from Peel DSB. Superintendent Grewal responded.

9. Public Question Period (Continued)

Michelle Rodriguez inquired about library resources and asked whether replacing works of Shakespeare with Lawrence Hill has been considered. She also asked about accountability for all educators and anti-black racism training for teachers and social workers. Superintendent Grewal responded.

Valerie Williams inquired about collecting data for measuring success of black students at present and in the future. Superintendent Grewal responded.

10. Adjournment

IP-27, moved by Janet McDougald, that the meeting adjourn (21:20 hours).

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