

## 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 30, 2016 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Rick Williams, Chair  
Stan Cameron  
Robert Crocker  
Sue Lawton  
Kathy McDonald  
Suzanne Nurse

Trustee also present:

Nokha Dakroub  
Harkirat Singh (18:40)

Administration:

Poleen Grewal, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services  
(Executive Member)  
Wendy Dowling, Superintendent of Education, Early Years (Executive Backup Member)  
Adrian Graham, Superintendent of Education  
Hazel Mason, Superintendent of Education  
Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services  
  
Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

Also present:

Lucy Wolverton, Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers' Local

**1. Approval of Agenda**

IP-16, moved by Nokha Dakroub, 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 17, 2016**

IP-17, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held February 17, 2016, be approved.

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**4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – April and May 2016**

IP-18, moved by Sue Lawton, that the reports re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – April and May 2016, be received.

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**5. Report of the Regional Learning Choices Program**

Reviewing the report in detail, Superintendent of Education, Adrian Graham, highlighted the discussions and recommendations arising from the meeting of the Regional Learning Choices Program Committee, held on February 9, 2016. He updated members regarding the randomized selection process for regional programs, and noted that the number of offers mirrored the number of available spots. \*\*Regarding low enrolment in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Glenforest Secondary School, Adrian Graham stated that boundary change proposals will be brought to a Regional Learning Choices Program Committee meeting. As an interim solution, students offered an IB spot at Turner Fenton Secondary School will be given an option to attend the IB program at Turner Fenton or Glenforest Secondary Schools\*\*. Providing an update report on the Flex High Performance program, Adrian Graham advised that the proposed location for the program is Mississauga Secondary School, with Dolphin Senior and Britannia Public Schools proposed for the middle years program. The program is anticipated to be implemented in September 2017. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Poleen Grewal, confirmed that a proposal for the Flex High Performance program will be taken to the Director's Office and Executive Committee.

Responses to trustees' questions of clarification included: Roy McMurtry School students work on packages that could be used for the Flex Performance program; waitlists are maintained for the IB program; a report on enrolment and waitlists at the IB schools will be presented to the May 2016 Regional Learning Choices Program Committee meeting.

IP-19, moved by Robert Crocker, that the report re Regional Learning Choices Program, be received.

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\*\* At the Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee meeting, held on May 18, 2016, these statements were amended to: Adrian Graham stated that boundary change proposals for International Baccalaureate (IB) programs in Peel will be brought to a Regional Learning Choices Program Committee meeting. To address low enrolment in the IB program at Glenforest Secondary School, as an interim solution, students residing in the Lincoln M. Alexander and Mississauga Secondary Schools offered an IB spot at Turner Fenton Secondary School will be given an option to attend the IB program at Turner Fenton or Glenforest Secondary Schools.

**6. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning - Revisioning**

Lawrence DeMaeyer, School Support Officer, provided contextual information regarding the revisioning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning initiative. He indicated that the vision for the initiative was created in 2012 when the Board committed to the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) project. Since then, access to wireless technology has contributed to support and leverage teaching and learning among students and teachers. Lawrence DeMaeyer spoke of the intention to now pause and consolidate the experience from the initiative, and begin the process to revise the Board's vision for 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning.

Lawrence DeMaeyer noted that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning Sub-Committee is tasked with framing questions to gather input from stakeholder groups as to what they feel are the most important components to influence changes in the learning. He referred to information provided by George Couros and Will Richardson, and a video of a TEDx talk given by Will Richardson was viewed by trustees. Explaining that the earlier vision of the initiative was designed to gather technology and systems, for example, WiFi, equipment, digital capacity, etc., Superintendent of Education, Hazel Mason, stated that the aim of the revisioning exercise will be to provide learning that aligns with the 21<sup>st</sup> century global competency age. Lawrence DeMaeyer confirmed that global competency is the main focus of discussions at teacher conferences, and the Ministry has recently released new documents entitled, "21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Competencies", with the plan to initiate dialogue on the implications for teaching and learning in schools. Presenting the question, "What are some of the key changes to learning outcomes that are required to prepare students to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?", he asked trustees to discuss in groups and provide input.

Feedback included: teach subjects relevant to students' interests and lives; recognition of multiple ways of learning, and the learning styles of boys and girls; learning should lead students to discover interests; flexibility, adaptability and how to deal with continually changing technology; find ways to motivate disengaged students; accountability; create a database of identifiable learning choices and update as required; capture more student voices in the classroom and make connections between students and teachers; ratio of male to female teachers; consider inclusion of black history and aboriginal history and culture into the curriculum.

IP-20, moved by Nokha Dakroub, that the report re 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning - Revisioning, be received.

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## **7. Perspectives of Black Male Students in Secondary School: Understanding the Success and Challenge - Literature Review and Student Focus Groups**

Explaining the context for the above-noted project, Superintendent Grewal stated that achieving equity and reducing the gaps are some of the goals of the Ministry's Achieving Excellence vision, and one of the goals of the Board's Report Card for Student Success is achieving equity for students and staff. She referred to the FACES (Facilitation Access, Change and Equity in Systems) of Peel Collaborative report, the Voices report of Spring 2015, and the interim report presented by the sub-committee struck to consider the recommendations contained in these reports within the context of equity and inclusion initiatives in Peel schools. She noted that a superintendent collaborative inquiry was held with 18 at-risk black male students, and she recalled a trustee's suggestions that focus groups should include not only at-risk students but also black students who are successful, and who attend a variety of schools in Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga.

Research Officer, Elana Gray presented information on the purpose of the project and the methodology to be used for the literature review. She provided details regarding the ten focus groups that will be conducted with black male students in Grades 11 and 12, which will be five groups of students currently disengaged and/or struggling academically in school, and five groups of students experiencing academic success in school. Student participation will be voluntary and she highlighted information on proposed schools, and selection criteria for students. Elana Gray reviewed the report with regard to focus group questions and proposed timelines. Superintendent Grewal outlined the resource support, noting that an Equity and Inclusive Education resource teacher will lead the project.

The administration responded to comments and questions of clarification from trustees. A trustee queried the absence of activities or questions to the focus groups related to systemic bias or racism, and she put forward specific suggestions regarding stakeholder consultations and focus group questions. She commented on differing standards among schools and referred to enrolment of black students in the SciTech program and secondary school applied courses. Chief of Research and Accountability, Paul Favaro, explained the rationale for designing broad questions for focus groups. He noted that, with 10 focus groups, information is usually validated by the groups and there is coverage of issues being researched. Acknowledging that there is ample data on the issue, he advised, however, that the information gathered by the focus groups will be specific to the Peel DSB and provide a current demographic profile. He noted that this specific, accurate and reliable data will help to create targeted strategies.

Some trustees expressed concern about the November 16, 2016 timeline for an action plan, given the significant amount of research that is available. Superintendent Grewal described the review, based on research already available, of curriculum areas that are open to including different perspectives, and she referred to the ongoing work on The Future We Want and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning. Scott Moreash outlined personnel resources and the inventory of equity-related training resources that are currently available. A trustee remarked on racial comments made by a few teachers, and another trustee spoke of the need for sensitivity training. In response to a trustee's question about plans to encourage students to participate in focus groups, the administration described past experience with student focus groups when comfort level with a homogeneous group, and being given a voice, were seen as strong motivating factors.

**7. Perspectives of Black Male Students in Secondary School: Understanding the Success and Challenge - Literature Review and Student Focus Groups (Continued)**

IP-21, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Perspectives of Black Male Students in Secondary School: Understanding the Success and Challenge – Literature Review and Student Focus Groups, be received.

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**8. Question Period**

There were no questions.

**9. Public Question Period**

David Hanley expressed disappointment to hear some of the challenges faced by black male students, and he stated that negative comments by some teachers speak of ignorance. He highlighted ancient history with respect to the introduction of education in Europe by African people, and the origins of the word ‘education’. Rather than measure academic excellence, he suggested that black male students be measured on character development. He recalled that, in 2009, the Ministry of Education recognized that character education is an inherent part of education and contributes to higher performance across all levels of learning. He remarked that best practices and research confirm this notion.

Sharon Austin, who works at The Learning Place, stated that many black males who fail in the school system, attend programs at The Learning Place. These are adults who may have many other responsibilities with work and family. She spoke of the lack of self-confidence, frustration and shame felt by many of them, and she expressed the hope that some action is taken soon, as the crisis is expanding.

Madeline Edwards, a member of the Congress of Black Women, stated that black males are an “endangered species”.

Christine Ross Cargill asked as to whether there is a contingency plan if Black male students do not volunteer to participate in the focus groups. She stated that some students do not attend class or school. Paul Favaro responded.

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IP-22, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the meeting continue beyond 20:30 hours.

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**9. Public Question Period (Continued)**

Ms Williams expressed her opinion that the manner in which students will be asked to participate in the focus group through guidance counsellors and school administration, is problematic. She remarked that students will not be as open in their dialogue. Querying the need for focus groups, she stated that evidence is currently available, and she commented that action needs to be taken now. Superintendent Grewal responded.

Alison Brown, a Registered Nurse, suggested that predecessor research and evidence be relied upon in formulating an action plan for a pilot project now that will help to improve the current educational experience of black male students, rather than waiting for one more year. She also spoke of the need for performance management for teachers who comment negatively about black male students.

Donna Rutty, a school bus driver, spoke of her experiences driving students to school. She expressed the opinion that many of these students have been marginalized by teachers and parents. She reported that she has observed students being dropped off at school, but many of them do not go into school to attend class. She asked as to how these disengaged youth can participate in focus groups, and she commented that those who volunteer may not be ones most in need of help.

Ryan, a City of Mississauga Community Development Team member, suggested asking how community centres and libraries can help and support black male students. He asked whether there would be trauma counsellors present, as the questions to the focus group students may cause distress. He also asked whether youth workers, the African Canadian Legal Services, and the Black Experience Project, can be included in stakeholder consultations.

**10. Adjournment**

IP-23, moved by Stan Cameron, that the meeting adjourn (20:40 hours).

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..... Chair ..... Secretary