

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, May 17, 2017 at 18:15 hours.

Members present:

Kathy McDonald, Chair
Robert Crocker
Suzanne Nurse
Harkirat Singh
Rick Williams

Member absent: (apologies received)

Stan Cameron

Administration:

Joy Uniac, Superintendent of Education, Early Years (Executive Backup Member)
Jeff deFreitas, Coordinating Superintendent
Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

IP-28, moved by Rick Williams, 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, March 29, 2017**

IP-29, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held March 29, 2017, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – June, July, August and September 2017

IP-30, moved by Robert Crocker, that the reports re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder for the months of June, July, August and September 2017, be received.

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5. Kindergarten Program Document 2016

Superintendent of Education, Early Years, Joy Uniac, introduced members of the Early Years team, Tracy Finch, Assistant to Superintendent of Education, Catherine Roper, Coordinating Principal, Elizabeth Ugolini, Instructional Coordinator – Early Years, Valerie Cunningham, Vice-Principal – Early Years, and Jess Grewal, Principal of Queenston Drive Public School. Using slides, Elizabeth Ugolini presented highlights of the Early Years Conference, 2017, including the key aspects and four frames of the Kindergarten Program Document 2016. Reporting on content in the document, she stated that it provides guidance, and includes tools and resources for educators to help children learn through play and inquiry in Kindergarten. The focus is on creating a positive and flexible learning environment where children feel a sense of belonging, and develop the confidence to question, collaborate, and problem solve. Elizabeth Ugolini spoke about the educator’s role as researcher, co-learning with students, challenging and maintaining an increased learning stance, and communicating and collaborating with families to enhance student development and progress. Responding to a question of clarification, Elizabeth Ugolini confirmed that children in Junior and Senior Kindergarten are exposed to a number of tools and Apps that encourage the skills required for decision making, functionality, and cause and effect situations.

IP-31, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the report re Kindergarten Program Document 2016, be received.

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Trustee Singh retired from the meeting (18:30 hours)

6. Kindergarten Communication of Learning

Catherine Roper reported on the Kindergarten Addendum to the Ministry’s Growing Success document, which was sent to schools in the fall of 2016. She stated that, while there are ongoing opportunities for educators to communicate with parents about their child’s development and progress, the Kindergarten Communication of Learning document outlines the formal process for parents to receive a Communication of Learning: Initial Observations report and two Communication of Learning reports on their child’s learning needs and growth in relation to the expectations. She noted that the purpose of these reports is to provide parents with clear and meaningful information that is specific to their child’s learning during the course of the school year. Circulating copies of the Ministry’s handout on “Understanding Your Child’s Reports,” she advised that an online version of the parent guide is available on the Ministry of Education website.

6. Kindergarten Communication of Learning (Continued)

Catherine Roper reviewed the definition of terms that will be used in kindergarten reporting, such as key learning, growth in learning, and next steps in learning. She also provided details of the professional learning provided to educators, with an emphasis on the positive aspects of a child’s learning, and the need for clear asset-based descriptions about growth in relation to overall expectation in each of the four frames, namely, belonging and contributing, self-regulation and wellbeing, demonstrating literacy and mathematical behaviour, and problem solving and innovating.

Trustees speaking expressed appreciation for the work of the Early Years team. Associate Director Moreash thanked team members for their dedication to commencing implementation of the program in January 2017, and serving 1600 educators, many of whom were new to the program. He also thanked teacher employee groups for their positive response to program implementation. Responding to a trustee’s query, staff confirmed that parents and educators have commented positively about the program.

IP-32, moved by Rick Williams, that the report re Kindergarten Communication of Learning, be received.

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7. Start With a Smile

Recalling the “Start With a Smile” gift bag presented to trustees a few weeks ago, Superintendent Uniac invited Principal Grewal to speak about the “Start With a Smile” initiative in Peel. Jess Grewal reported that this Peel event welcomes and introduces families and students to a Kindergarten program that focuses on play-based learning, and developing skills that are integral to success in the modern world. She advised that educators create accepting and safe learning environments that support creative and complex thinking in a culture of high expectation, respect, trust, and empathy, and are reflective of Peel’s commitment to equity and inclusion. Jess Grewal described the materials selected intentionally by the Early Years team for the “Start With a Smile” gift bag to support and continue inquiry and play-based learning at home. She highlighted that a strong relationship between families, educators, children and the school, play a major role in the learning and success of a child. Committee members then viewed a video of children reading together the “Let’s Play” book.

Trustees speaking expressed appreciation for the video and the work of the Early Years team, and noting some parent concerns with play-based learning, suggested promoting success of the program on social media. Jess Grewal explained that some parents who are new to Canada have questioned the play-based learning program in contrast to traditional methods of teaching and learning, but appreciate its value when the program is described to them and they witness learning in the classroom. Elizabeth Ugolini commented on the readiness of children entering Grade 1 with additional confidence, identifying themselves as leaders with critical thinking and modern learning skills.

IP-33, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the report re Start With a Smile, be received.

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8. Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee Meeting Dates 2017-2018

IP-34, moved by Robert Crocker, that the report re Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee Meeting Dates for 2017-2018, be received.

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9. Question Period

Chair McDonald asked about the next meeting date with Faith Leaders. Associate Director Moreash, advised that a meeting has been scheduled on May 24, 2017.

10. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

11. Adjournment

IP-35, moved by Robert Crocker, that the meeting adjourn (19:20 hours).

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