

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, November 18, 2015 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Rick Williams, Chair
Robert Crocker
Sue Lawton
Kathy McDonald (18:15)
Janet McDougald
Harkirat Singh

Trustees also present:

Suzanne Nurse
Kaustav Chaudhuri (Student Trustee)

Member absent (apologies received):

David Green

Also present:

Alka Prabhakar, Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers

Administration:

Poleen Grewal, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
(Executive Member)
Wendy Dowling, Superintendent of Education, Early Years (Back-up Executive Member)
Jeff deFreitas, Coordinating Superintendent
Adrian Graham, Superintendent of Education
Carol Speers, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs
Joy Uniac, Superintendent of Education

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

The following item was circulated:

Item 6.1 Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – November 2015

IP-61, moved by Janet McDougald, that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

..... carried
(2/3rds' majority)

2. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, October 21, 2015

IP-62, moved by Robert Crocker, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held October 21, 2015, be approved.

..... carried

4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – November 2015

IP-63, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – November 2015, be received.

..... carried

5. Report on Student Achievement on Provincial Assessment: Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) 2014-2015

Chief of Research and Accountability, Paul Favaro, stated that the report contains an information graphic and an overview of the 2014-2015 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) provincial assessment for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), for Peel DSB and the province. He advised that EQAO data for Grades 3 and 6 is not available as the primary and junior assessments were not written in Spring 2015, and that full EQAO data for Grade 9 results is not available as only students in first semester wrote the test. Paul Favaro briefly explained the requirements for passing the OSSLT, noting that students are also assessed throughout the school year on report cards and through feedback from teachers, and that EQAO testing is only a part of the student assessment process.

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Paul Favaro reviewed a graph showing OSSLT 2014-2015 results for fully participating first-time eligible students, reporting a success rate of 83% in Peel, and ranging from 82% to 84% over the last five years. In terms of gender gap, females scored 7% higher pass rates than males. For English Language Learners there was an increase of 29% over the last five years. For special education students, Paul Favaro indicated that there is a 45% success rate, which for Peel DSB is approximately 5-7% below provincial results, but is a 1% increase over the last year. There has been no significant change in special education results over the last five years. Paul Favaro advised that detailed results are available in the Parent's section of Peel DSB's website and on Peel social media sites. The administration responded to a trustee's comments on gender differences in reading and writing practices outlined in the report, noting that on average, female students spend more time reading and journaling, and that there are significant differences in the types of reading material chosen by males and females.

5. Report on Student Achievement on Provincial Assessment: Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) 2014-2015 (Continued)

Board Chair McDougald inquired about exemptions for writing the OSSLT. Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs, Carol Speers, advised that exemptions would include English Language Learners who may not be ready to write the test in Grade 10, or students who are not working towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). She noted that an OSSLT literacy course is offered to students who are not ready for the test. Board Chair McDougald asked about Peel DSB's results for special education students being lower than those of the province. Superintendent Speers explained that teachers are not allowed to provide any mediation or guidance to students on this test, and special education students are not accustomed to using technology as a daily practice. She added that teachers are working with special needs students on early language interventions, benefits of which may be seen in the future. Paul Favaro explained that the inclusion of exempted students in Peel's reporting data lowers the percentage as compared to the province. Board Chair McDougald suggested that if possible, a more detailed explanation be provided on the results.

IP-64, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the Report on Student Achievement on Provincial Assessment: Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) 2014-2015, be received.

..... carried

6. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Report on Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Poleen Grewal introduced Principal of Riverside Public School, Paul Officer and Superintendent of Education, Joy Uniac, who are Co-Chairs of the Peel DSB First Nation, Métis and Inuit FNMI Education Advisory Circle, and Krista Tucker Petrick, First Nation, Métis and Inuit/Equity and Inclusive Education Resource Teacher.

Krista Tucker Petrick began her presentation with the acknowledgement that the meeting is being held on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. Referring to the report, she provided background information on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission findings brought forward by Justice Murray Sinclair, released on June 2, 2015, which contains 94 Calls to Action, of which 11 relate to education. Using PowerPoint slides, Krista Tucker Petrick reviewed the Education Calls to Action which include: repealing Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada relating to the protection of persons in authority; closing the funding gap; building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect; identifying teacher training needs. Krista Tucker Petrick spoke about a current Twitter campaign regarding reconciliation called, My Reconciliation Includes, and a short video on Indian Residential Schools was shown.

6. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Report on Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (Continued)

Paul Officer circulated a letter of request from the Peel DSB FNMI Education Advisory Circle and asked that the Board write a letter to the Ministry of Education to support the development of learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canada, for all students. Stating that Peel DSB has led the way for equity and inclusion in the province, he spoke of the importance of reaching out to the FNMI community for resources in order to enable students understand the FNMI community, and educators to collaborate and share best practices. He shared information on student excursions to the northern region. Board Chair McDougald remarked on funding inequity and expressed the opinion that all Ontario school boards support the initiative. Coordinating Superintendent, Jeff deFreitas, commented on disparity in federal funding for reserves and noted that it should be a provincial as well as a national topic of discussion. Chair Williams and trustees thanked the presenters and Trustee Crocker for their commitment to equity and inclusion.

IP-65, moved by Robert Crocker that, the Instructional Programs and Curriculum Committee recommends to the Board:

That, as requested by the Peel DSB First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Advisory Circle, the Board write a letter to the Ministry of Education, to support the development of learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canada, and copy the letter as extensively as possible. (APPENDIX I)

..... carried

7. Recommendations of the Regional Learning Choices Programs (RLCP) Steering Committee

Michelle Stubbings, Co-Chair of the Regional Learning Choices Committee, stated that the Committee met in October 2015 to review RLCP programs. She advised that there are 31 RLCP programs, 46 Specialist High Skills Major Programs (SHSM) and 11 Explore High Skills programs and, given the high number of programs, the Committee decided to pause any new RLCP programs. Carol Speers, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs, provided reasons for recommending the pause in new Regional Learning Choices programs and explained the selection process. Board Chair McDougald inquired about transportation for Explore High Skills students, and suggested that parents are clearly informed that no transportation will be provided.

A trustee inquired whether a program for athletes has been considered by the Committee. Superintendent Grewal replied that a sub-committee will be formed and the first meeting will be held on November 30, 2015. The trustee asked about athletic programs for elementary schools. Poleen Grewal advised that information is being collected by John Uren, Resource Teacher, and the topic will be part of future discussions, for students from Grade 4 onwards.

7. Recommendations of the Regional Learning Choices Programs (RLCP) Steering Committee (Continued)

IP-66, moved by Janet McDougald, that the Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the following recommendations of the Regional Learning Choices Committee be approved:

1. That, there be a pause for one year on any new school initiated Regional Learning Choices Program applications during the 2015-2016 school year;
2. That, the Explore High Skills pilot program be included as a Regional Learning Choices Program, effective for the 2016-2017 school year.
(APPENDIX II)

..... carried

8. Question Period

Trustee McDonald advised that Dionne Wright Poulton, author of the book, It's Not Always Racist, has a consulting group, and suggested contacting her as a speaker for conferences and staff training. Superintendent Grewal will collect contact information from the trustee for future use.

Trustee Singh asked about updates on work related to marginalized youth in Peel. Superintendent Grewal advised that Superintendents of Education, Patrika Daws and Hazel Mason have met with Jewel Amoah, Manager for Workplace Equity, to review narrative data on Peel youth. An update report will be brought to a future Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee meeting.

9. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

10. Adjournment

IP-67, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the meeting adjourn (19:15 hours).

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