

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 16, 2016 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Rick Williams, Chair
Stan Cameron
Robert Crocker
Sue Lawton
Kathy McDonald
Janet McDougald

Trustees also present:

David Green
Harkirat Singh

Member absent: (apologies received)

Suzanne Nurse

Administration:

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

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

IP-45, moved by David Green, 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, October 27, 2016

IP-46, moved by Stan Cameron, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held October 27, 2016, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – December 2016

IP-47, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – December 2016, be received.

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5. Report of the Regional Learning Choices Programs (RLCP) Committee

Michelle Stubbings, Co-Chair of the Regional Learning Choices Programs (RLCP) Committee, provided an update report on the topics discussed at the RLCP Committee meeting held on October 18, 2016. She stated that, in view of adequate revenue through corporate sponsorship, a decision was taken to eliminate the \$40 application fee for all RLC Programs at Bramalea Secondary School. She noted that this decision can be reviewed later, if the need arises. Regarding International Baccalaureate (IB) program boundaries for 2017-2018, Michelle Stubbings explained that students residing within the boundaries of Mississauga Secondary and Lincoln Alexander Secondary Schools were allowed to apply for acceptance into the IB program at Turner Fenton or Glenforest Secondary Schools. She noted that the Committee decided to maintain the status quo temporarily for one more year.

IP-48, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the Regional Learning Choices Programs (RLCP) Committee's report, be received.

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6. Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessment of Mathematics

Soni Gill and David Jack, Coordinating Principals for School Effectiveness, presented information relating to the analysis of Peel's Grades 3-9 EQAO assessment scores of mathematics for the period 2015-2016 in regard to student engagement, attitude, and approach to mathematical problems. Using a slide presentation, David Jack provided comparative details of participating student scores versus all student scores of Grades 3-9 students, noting minimal impact of students not writing the test on the overall Board scores for mathematics. Drawing attention to the mathematical scores for English Language Learners and students with Special Education needs, David Jack noted that a large number of students require English language support in Peel, and he highlighted the need for grade level proficiency in English to successfully perform in mathematics, especially at the middle and senior school level. He commented on the regular review of curriculum, and clarified that the curriculum is flexible, allowing for the use of differentiated instruction and strategies.

Soni Gill spoke about student engagement and attitudes toward mathematics, the cognitive strategies used, student feedback regarding problem solving, and creating learning environments that will support critical thinking and discussion. She reported on a shift to educators investing more preparation time reflecting on different approaches to various mathematical problems, so that student misconceptions and difficulties in understanding can be adequately addressed in the classroom. Handouts of sample mathematical questions posed to students across Grades 3 – 9, relating to knowledge and understanding, thinking, and application, were circulated for members to work on.

6. Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessment of Mathematics
(Continued)

The administration responded to trustees' questions of clarification regarding: the impact on EQAO scores at schools that have large numbers of newcomers; that the curriculum allows for teaching flexibility; setting high expectations for students is essential; number of students who avoided the difficult questions. A trustee commented that some elementary schools have dedicated teachers for music, physical education, and French. In order to improve declining scores in mathematics, he suggested that the Board consider hiring dedicated mathematics teachers for the elementary panel. In response, Coordinating Superintendent, Jeff deFreitas, provided details about the strategies implemented by the Ministry of Education to address declining scores, that included the identification of schools requiring intensive and increased supports in the elementary and secondary panels, as well as Professional Development support for core teachers to focus on mathematics. A trustee highlighted the importance of finding the right balance between rote learning and conceptual understanding, and the need to challenge students to reach high expectations in order to compete globally.

Maria Luisa Lebar, Literacy Coordinator, stated that the mathematics curriculum may be rigorous, but can help to empower students to make critical decisions. The higher level of mathematics can be addressed through differentiated instruction and enriched learning experiences. She reiterated that the shift is on the approach to teaching mathematics, focusing on basic mathematics skills and conceptual understanding. Superintendent of Education, Early Years, Joy Uniack, thanked the presenters and reminded trustees about further discussions on EQAO testing and Peel's results at an upcoming Trustee Information Session.

IP-49, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessment of Mathematics, be received.

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7. Empowering Modern Learners

Copies of the report, Empowering Modern Learners, were circulated.

Associate Director of Instructional Support Services, Scott Moreash, stated that the report is the result of work and collaboration over many months with system stakeholders, including superintendents of education, principals, vice-principals, teachers, itinerant teachers, and union and federation representatives. He introduced Lawrence De Maeyer, who will be assuming the position of Coordinating Principal of Modern Learning: K-12, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services and Learning Technology Support Services on January 9, 2017, and advised that he will be responsible for integrating this initiative in the system.

(continued overleaf)

7. Empowering Modern Learners (Continued)

Providing a brief background about the research and discussions on 21st Century Teaching and Learning that informed the development of this report, Lawrence De Maeyer stated that the document aligns with the Board's Plan for Student Success, and its goal of High Expectations for Achievement. Reviewing the report, he highlighted and clarified the six key innovative elements required to move forward with this initiative, namely, access to technology, informative assessment, learning culture, 21st century competencies, learning environments and models of learning. Reporting that he had presented "Empowering Modern Learners" at the Great Start event, Lawrence De Maeyer commented on the enthusiasm and interest shown by parents, and he acknowledged the need to include the parent community in future discussions about the work being done in the classroom.

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Trustee Green retired from the meeting (20:00 hours).

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The administration responded to trustees questions of clarification regarding strategies to support under-performing students, and staff support to implement the initiative.

IP-50, moved by Janet McDougald, that the report re Empowering Modern Learners, be received.

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8. Question Period

There were no questions.

9. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

10. Adjournment

IP-51, moved by Robert Crocker, that the meeting adjourn (20:15 hours).

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November 16, 2016
Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee:ma