

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, October 15, 2014 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Rick Williams (Chair)
Beryl Ford
David Green
Sue Lawton
Jagdeep Mann

Trustee also present:

Jeff White

Member absent: (apologies received)

Suzanne Nurse

Also present:

Simone Johnson, PPVPA

Administration:

Jeff deFreitas, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
(Executive Member)

Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services

Wendy Dowling, Superintendent of Education, Early Years

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

IP-49, moved by Jeff White, 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, September 17, 2014**

IP-50, moved by David Green, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held September 17, 2014, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – October 2014

IP-51, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – October 2014, be received.

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5. Instructional Coaches – A Model for Supporting Schools

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Jeff deFreitas, reported that, since Fall 2012, the administration has been working on reviewing and revising the instructional support model provided to schools. He noted that 66 K-Grade 12 Instructional Coaches have been newly hired in 2014 to support teachers in schools, and will work in groups of approximately five coaches per superintendency. Superintendent deFreitas introduced School Effectiveness Leaders, David Jack and Jill Ott, who provided further information on the model.

David Jack indicated that ongoing professional development training will guide the work of the coaches, and help to better understand how schools can improve student achievement. Instructional Coaches, Mary Neely, Auni Boghossian, and Anne Chirakal, described their work with teachers in the classroom, including learning from exemplary practices, and providing teachers with tools to support them in meeting their goals. They explained that their work also facilitates teachers working together on instructional strategies, thereby, helping to build capacity in schools. Jill Ott reported that the role of the instructional coach is evolving, and she highlighted the ways in which instructional coaches will help, including: kindle passion for learning; support teachers in engaging their students; create growth mind sets; strengthen pedagogy; supporting educational leadership to increase student achievement.

IP-52, moved by Jagdeep Mann, that the oral report on Instructional Coaches – A Model for Supporting Schools, be received.

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6. Reports on Student Achievement on Provincial Assessments 2013-2014

Chief of Research and Accountability, Paul Favaro, stated that the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) provincial assessments are a direct measure of the Ontario curriculum, with students performing a wide variety of tasks in reading, writing, and mathematics. He noted that these assessments are one component of student assessment in schools.

Reviewing EQAO results for primary and junior divisions, Paul Favaro noted that, for the past 15 years, Peel students have scored within 2% of the provincial average for writing, and results for reading have been steadily improving. Highlighting the trend over five years, he stated that Grade 3 reading results have increased by 12%, and writing by 8%, while mathematics results decreased by 2%. The trend for Grade 6 results were: increase in reading by 9%; increase in writing by 8%; decrease in mathematics by 5%. Paul Favaro stated that the decrease in mathematics results is a provincial issue as well. Trend results for both divisions by gender, and for English Language Learners, Special Education students, and French Immersion students were reviewed.

6. Reports on Student Achievement on Provincial Assessments 2013-2014 (Continued)

In response to a trustee's question about investigating contributory factors to the decline in mathematics results, Superintendent deFreitas referred to the Board's comprehensive numeracy strategy, EngageMath, in addition to professional learning networks. He noted that the focus in Peel is on numeracy, and that Instructional Coaches have a significant role in supporting this focus. He commented that EQAO assessments trends indicate that students appear to be having difficulty in the area of thinking in mathematics, and he advised that the Ministry is reviewing the mathematics curriculum and assessments.

With regard to Grade 9 EQAO assessment of mathematics, Paul Favaro reported that Peel results are the same as that of the Province at 85% for the academic course, but lower at 43% in applied mathematics. Trends show that this is a 1% increase over 5 years in academic mathematics and 4% increase in applied mathematics. It was noted that the gender gap, evident from the Grades 3 and 6 results, is almost closed. Trends for English Language Learners, and for Special Education students were reviewed. Paul Favaro then reported on the Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), and highlighted that 84% of fully participating first-time eligible students passed the test in Peel, which is 1% higher than the provincial results. Trends over five years were noted, including for English Language Learners, and for Special Education students. Paul Favaro advised that students who have written the OSSLT twice and have not succeeded, qualify to complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC). In response to a trustee's question, he noted that he did not have the statistics on the success rate in Peel for the OSSLC assessment. Another trustee, noting that Peel results are at provincial average, asked about the comparison of results with that of other boards, and whether the administration has investigated strategies adopted by some other boards to achieve higher results. Superintendent deFreitas confirmed that the work of the instructional coordinators is to reach out to other school boards, and review professional practices and areas of research.

IP-53, moved by Beryl Ford, that the Reports on Student Achievement on Provincial Assessments 2013-2014, be received.

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7. Numeracy Professional Learning Institutes – Summer and Fall 2014

Superintendent deFreitas spoke of the Board's focus on the numeracy strategy, and explained that one component of the strategy is providing professional learning. He reported that, during the summer, approximately 150 teachers attended the Math Camp, and approximately 100 teachers have registered to attend a Math Retreat being offered this weekend for secondary teachers and department heads.

Instructional Coordinator, Mary Fiore, noted that EngageMath is one aspect of the comprehensive numeracy strategy, and she remarked that professional learning is aimed at effecting a permanent change in thinking and behaviour. She explained the focus on reasoning and assessment, with the main goal of changing the perceptions and views on mathematics. She indicated that the Math Camp held in the summer was aimed at supporting teachers with tools to engage students in mathematics and teach the curriculum.

7. Numeracy Professional Learning Institutes – Summer and Fall 2014 (Continued)

Following a brief math exercise, Tina Grandy, Mathematics Resource Teacher, and Tara Beattie, Teacher at Walnut Grove Public School, spoke about their learning experience at Math Camp, including the learning goals to help participants debrief their understanding, help students to think visibly, and determine instructional next steps. Mary Fiore reported that the Math Retreat being held on October 17-18, 2014 will be attended mainly by secondary school mathematics department heads and teachers of Grades 9 and 10 applied mathematics. In response to a trustee's question, she confirmed that the Retreat is not mandatory, but the school administration is strongly encouraged to send teams of four, including an administrator. She stated that sharing of information within the school is vital to building capacity.

IP-54, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re Numeracy Professional Learning Institutes – Summer and Fall 2014, be received.

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8. Numeracy Networks 2014-2015 – Supporting Teachers Learning Together

Jill Ott reported that the Numeracy Networks initiative involves every school in Peel, and the focus is on cross panel discussions for Grade 3 to Grade 7. She stated that the key guidelines in providing professional learning to teachers is outlined in Balanced Mathematics Instruction K-12, and the School Effectiveness Framework documents. Jill Ott noted the areas of growth, discussion, and continued growth, which will help to change student perception of mathematics. She indicated that some of the significant elements of a numeracy strategy are attitudes to mathematics and recognizing the importance of mathematics.

David Jack explained that a central aspect of the numeracy strategy is investigating the connection and impact of what students think they can do and the manner in which mathematics is taught. He stated that the Networks are the largest professional learning events held during the year, with approximately 650 teachers attending. Sessions are held separately for Grades 3-6 and for Grades 7-10 teachers, who engage in purposeful tasks and discussions on effective mathematics teaching and learning practices. The sessions are three days for Grades 3-6, and four days for Grades 7-10 for each participating teacher, and additional support is provided for priority schools, which were highlighted. Responding to a question about priority schools, David Jack advised that some higher priority schools receive direct funding from the Ministry, and are not included in this list.

IP-55, moved by Jeff White, that the oral report re Numeracy Networks 2014-2015 – Supporting Teachers Learning Together, be received.

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9. Question Period

There were no questions.

10. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

11. Adjournment

IP-56, moved by David Green, that the meeting adjourn (20:10 hours).

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