

## 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 21, 2015 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Rick Williams, Chair  
Robert Crocker  
David Green  
Sue Lawton  
Kathy McDonald  
Janet McDougald  
Harkirat Singh

Trustees also present:

Stan Cameron  
Suzanne Nurse

Administration:

Poleen Grewal, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services  
(Executive Member)  
Jeff deFreitas, Coordinating Superintendent  
Wendy Dowling, Superintendent of Education, Early Years  
Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services  
Tony Pontes, Director of Education  
Brian Woodland, Director, Communications and Community Relations Support Services  
  
Marina Amin, Board Reporter

**1. Approval of Agenda**

IP-56, 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, September 16, 2015**

IP-57, moved by Sue Lawton, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held September 16, 2015, be approved.

..... carried

**4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – October 2015**

IP-58, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – October 2015, be received.

..... carried

**5. Curriculum Requests for Religious Accommodations**

Copies of the Parent Guide on the revised Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum were circulated.

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Poleen Grewal, stated that today's meeting will focus on potential requests for religious accommodation with regard to the healthy sexuality component of the revised Health and Physical Education curriculum. She thanked Brian Woodland, Director of Communications and Community Relations Support Services, and the Communications department for their work in revising the operating procedure on religious accommodation to reflect current process and practice in Peel schools in alignment with the Ontario Human Rights Code. She also thanked them for developing a comprehensive parent guide on the revised HPE curriculum, template letters to the community, resource material, and the process to be followed for religious accommodation requests. Superintendent Grewal explained that the parent guide has been translated into the top ten languages spoken in Peel, and schools have been asked to identify which language and number of copies required to the Communications department.

Hubert Brard, Coordinator for the Arts and Health and Physical Education, reviewed the template for administrator guided conversation and next steps when a curriculum request for religious accommodation is made. He highlighted the importance of discussing with the parent specific and overall learning, expectations, and exploring alternate means for demonstrating expectations. It was noted that if the lesson is on inclusion, or any of the protected grounds in the Human Rights Code, no accommodation will be provided. Assessment Coordinator, Kristen Clarke, reviewed the process for a religious accommodation of full withdrawal, noting that in the event there is insufficient evidence of learning because of the exemption, the student will not be penalized. Instead, teachers will attempt to elicit learning by differentiated instruction and assessment, and other alternative means of evaluation. Hubert Brard reviewed the Request for Student Religious Accommodation Form, explaining the process to be followed, by using an example of an accommodation provided for exemption from the music curriculum. The importance of open communication with parents, pursuing further clarification and consultation, if required, as well as looking for alternative ways to support the learning expectation was highlighted. Coordinating Principal, Catherine Roper, reviewed the Tip Sheet that would be shared with elementary principals with the goal of ensuring that all students requesting a religious accommodation would be accommodated at school. Superintendent Grewal reviewed information in the Parent Guide about the revised HPE curriculum, and what students will learn at each grade level. The goal is to provide the necessary supports and adjustments to ensure maximum number of students are learning in the classroom.

Expressing her appreciation for the Parent Guide, Chair McDougald thanked staff for their work in developing such an informative resource for the community. Superintendent Grewal thanked Communications Officer, Ryan Reyes, for his work and collaboration with all involved in the development of the Parent Guide.

**5. Curriculum Requests for Religious Accommodations (Continued)**

IP-59, moved by Janet McDougald, that the report re Curriculum Requests for Religious Accommodations, be received.

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**6. Question Period**

There were no questions.

**7. Public Question Period**

There were no public questions.

**8. Adjournment**

IP-60, moved by Robert Crocker, that the meeting adjourn (18:35 hours).

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