

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 11, 2017 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

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

Trustee also present:

Carolyn Mahr, Student Trustee South (18:10)

Also present:

Rod Marijan, Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers' Local

Administration:

Adrian Graham, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
(Executive Member)
Anthony Edwards, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs
Peter Joshua, Director of Education

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

IP-43, moved by Harkirat Singh, 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 13, 2017**

IP-44, moved by Robert Crocker, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held September 13, 2017, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Chart – November 2017

IP-45, moved by Stan Cameron, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Chart for November 2017, be received.

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5. Motion on Childhood Poverty and Student Achievement

At the Regular Meeting of the Board on September 12, 2017, a motion regarding child poverty and student achievement was referred to the Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee meeting for discussion. Trustees reviewed the motion and expressed the expectation that staff provide a report based on the motion. Director of Education, Peter Joshua, clarified that staff are working on a report which will list current programs and contain information on measuring effectiveness of programs and plans. Superintendent Graham advised that a report will be brought to the Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee meeting in November 2017.

IP-46, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the report re the Motion on Childhood Poverty and Student Achievement, be received.

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6. EQAO Assessments of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics Primary Division (Grades 1-3) and Junior Division (Grades 4-6), Grade 9 EQAO Assessment of Mathematics, and Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) Results 2016-2017

Chief of Research and Accountability, Paul Favaro, stated that this is the 21st year of presenting EQAO results, starting in 1995, and that this year the data has also been reviewed with respect to Social Risk Index (SRI), which takes into consideration social vulnerability of schools and its impact on student achievement. He listed some of the reading, writing and mathematics components of the EQAO test.

Using PowerPoint slides, Paul Favaro reviewed EQAO results for Peel DSB over the last five years. The percentage of all students at or above the provincial standard for primary division showed an upward trend of 7% in reading and a downward trend of 3% in writing and mathematics. He commented that Peel DSB results for one year and five years are very similar to that of the province. EQAO results for special education and English Language Learner (ELL) students were reviewed, along with information on results by gender. Peel DSB results for junior division percentage of all students at or above the provincial standard showed an upward trend of 7% in reading, 4% in writing, and a downward trend of 5% in mathematics, which are similar to that of the province. Results by gender gap, ELL, and special education were reviewed. Paul Favaro highlighted the significant increase in special education results, of 21% in reading, 23% in writing, and 16% in mathematics over the last five years. Graphs showing EQAO data related to SRI indicated that SRI impacts mathematics more than reading and writing. Paul Favaro commented that, while comparing the relationship between EQAO results and SRI values it was found that as social risk decreases, educational outcome increases.

6. EQAO Assessments of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics Primary Division (Grades 1-3) and Junior Division (Grades 4-6), Grade 9 EQAO Assessment of Mathematics, and Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) Results 2016-2017 (Continued)

Paul Favaro reviewed Grade 9 assessment of academic mathematics over five years. He indicated that while Peel DSB results were 1% lower than last year, they were 1% higher than the province. In applied mathematics results showed a downward trend of 6% over five years and a decrease of 1% from last year. Paul Favaro commented that provincial results have been trending downwards, indicating assessment issues related to type of items and validation of items on the test, which school boards need to review. Results related to gender gap and ELL trended downwards. There was no change in data for students with special needs in academic mathematics, while a decrease of 4% was noted in applied mathematics. With regard to the OSSLT results, the percentage of successful fully participating first-time eligible students for Peel and the province trended lower. Data for gender gap, ELLs, special needs students, and relation between SRI groups were also reviewed.

Summarizing patterns in the results, Paul Favaro noted the downtrend in mathematics for Grades 3 and 6, and Grade 9 applied mathematics at 62%, 49% and 39% respectively for level 3 and 4 students. The administration responded to questions from trustees regarding: whether results compared to the province are more important than the Board's year over year results; although more males indicate a liking for mathematics, scores are the same for both genders; a possible lack of understanding of mathematical concepts among males; reasons for significant improvement in junior division special needs students as compared to primary division. A trustee spoke about supporting students in areas with a high SRI and inquired if there are neighbourhoods in Peel, other than Malton and Dixie-Bloor, where SRI is high. Paul Favaro offered to bring back the information.

IP-47, moved by Robert Crocker, that the report re EQAO Assessments of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics Primary Division (Grades 1-3) and Junior Division (Grades 4-6), Grade 9 EQAO Assessment of Mathematics, and Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) Results 2016-2017, be received.

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7. Engaging with Culturally Responsive Texts in English Courses – Grades 9 and 10

Instructional Coordinator for Literacy, Maria Luisa Lebar, circulated handouts providing information on a collection of culturally relevant texts for English courses, and copies of the selected books. An audio clip was played of a recent CBC interview with Lynn Fillitier, Head of English Department, Jean Augustine Secondary School, sharing her perspective on changing school reading lists and offering more choices in the classroom by adding culturally responsive texts. Using PowerPoint slides, Maria Luisa Lebar explained the purpose of the skills-based English curriculum and the study of literature in secondary schools. Stating that equity and inclusion are core commitments of Peel DSB and the province of Ontario, she advised that introducing culturally diverse texts reflects a democratic society and that the Board supports programs and Ministry initiatives on equity and inclusion. She reviewed the goals of Peel DSB's Plan for Student Success to support student achievement and the means to achieve these goals. It was clarified that Shakespeare's works are not being removed from the classroom, but new texts are being added.

7. Engaging with Culturally Responsive Texts in English Courses – Grades 9 and 10
(Continued)

Maria Luisa Lebar reviewed in detail the work done since April 2017 which included: a plan of action to develop criteria and rationale for text selection; creating a list of sample texts with synopsis; providing information and professional learning for teachers; copies of the texts and price lists circulated to secondary schools; organizing a summer writing team to prepare background information on texts.

A student trustee expressed appreciation for the inclusion of authors reflecting the Peel community. A trustee shared an anecdotal experience of similar efforts in the past resulting in the inception of the heritage program and commended staff on their work. Another trustee read a verse containing sexual language from the book titled Milk and Honey, and asked if parents and the media are aware of the new texts and how complaints will be handled. The administration responded that teachers use professional judgment and age appropriate texts. Some Shakespearean texts also contain sensitive language, and complaints are handled first at the school and then go to the Curriculum and Instruction department. Discussion ensued and some trustees expressed their concerns about use of sexually explicit texts for Grade 9 students. Further comments and questions from trustees included: handling inquiries from parents about culturally sensitive texts; trigger warnings regarding offensive or explicit language; deconstructing texts; advising the authors that their books have been included as classroom texts; inviting local authors into schools and advising trustees of the visits.

IP-48, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the report re Engaging with Culturally Responsive Texts in English Courses – Grades 9 and 10, be received.

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8. Grade 7 and 8 Student Success Teachers: Model Refresh

Superintendent of Alternative Programs, Anthony Edwards, circulated a list of Grades 7 and 8 Student Success Teacher Placements for 2017-2018 and introduced Judith Beriault, Coordinating Principal, to present information on the re-vamped project. Reviewing background information, Judith Beriault stated that Ministry funding for Grades 7 and 8 to support schools with Literacy and Numeracy Coaches was received in 2012. The funding allowed for total allocation of 17.8 full-time equivalent teachers, and middle schools were initially selected based on need determined by Social Risk Index (SRI) and EQAO data.

Judith Beriault advised that over the next three years the program changed to a Kindergarten to Grade 8 model, and overall allocation to schools reduced, resulting in 16 schools receiving 0.3 allocation. Following a review of effectiveness of the plan in 2016-2017, it was determined that allocation of coaches for a number of schools was too small to make an impact and, based on feedback, a new model was considered. The new model, proposed from September 2017, recommended the following changes: change in title from Literacy and Numeracy Coaches to Student Success Teachers (SST); teachers are centrally hired and allocated; school selection is based on SRI, EQAO data and schools with a large population.

8. Grade 7 and 8 Student Success Teachers: Model Refresh (Continued)

Referring to the placement list handed out earlier, Judith Beriault explained the weekly schedule and 0.5 allocation of 18 teachers assigned to 36 schools. She advised that the new model is focused on students and building relationships, teachers being asked to stay at the same school for a two-year period, emphasis on professional learning, and individual work done with identified students to review gaps, learning needs and strengths.

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IP-49, moved by Rick Williams, that the meeting continue beyond 20:30 hours.

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A trustee's questions of clarification were responded to regarding pupil-teacher ratio and flexibility to reassign teachers based on workload. Superintendent Edwards clarified that funding is for 18 full-time equivalent teachers and the recommendation is that each SST begins with five students per site.

IP-50, moved by Robert Crocker, that the report re Grade 7 and 8 Student Success Teachers: Model Refresh, be received.

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9. Question Period

Trustee Crocker referred to the collection of culturally relevant texts for English courses and suggested that trustees obtain copies of these books from the local library.

10. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

11. Adjournment

IP-51, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the meeting adjourn (20:35 hours).

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