

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, September 17, 2014 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Rick Williams (Chair)
Beryl Ford
David Green
Sue Lawton
Janet McDougald
Suzanne Nurse

Trustees also present:

Meredith Johnson
Jeff White

Member absent: (apologies received)

Jagdeep Mann

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

Carol Speers, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

Chair Williams welcomed the newly appointed Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Jeff deFreitas, as Executive Member to the Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee meeting.

IP-41, moved by Janet McDougald, 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, June 11, 2014

IP-42, moved by David Green, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held June 11, 2014, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – September 2014

IP-43, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – September 2014, be received.

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5. Reports on Student Achievement on Provincial Assessment

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Jeff deFreitas, highlighted documents in the report on Student Achievement on Provincial Assessment: an information graphic on 2014 EQAO results; highlights of assessments of primary and junior divisions in reading, writing, and mathematics; highlights of Grade 9 assessment of mathematics and Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). He referred to the information graphic developed by EQAO, which identifies increases in reading and writing results for Grades 3 and 6, and stated that those results are replicated in Peel region. Superintendent deFreitas remarked that the decrease in Grades 3 and 6 mathematics results are a concern and the response to that is a comprehensive numeracy strategy. Grade 9 mathematics results showed a 3% increase in academic courses and a 7% increase in applied courses. Jeff deFreitas commented that the level of achievement in applied mathematics courses, of less than 50%, is concerning, and that more work is required as part of the comprehensive numeracy strategy.

Reporting that the provincial OSSLT results for first-time eligible students is 83%, which is a 1% decrease from last year. Referring to the charts in the report, he drew attention to the co-relation in the cohort analysis of both EQAO and OSSLT results, which indicate that students who met the standards in Grade 3 were also successful in Grade 6. Superintendent Jeff deFreitas advised that, Chief of Research and Accountability, Paul Favaro, will bring a detailed presentation to the October meeting.

IP-44, moved by Beryl Ford, that the reports on Student Achievement on Provincial Assessment, be received.

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6. Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy

Superintendent Jeff deFreitas advised that work has been done over the past few months on the Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy, which has a number of components, and is a long-term strategy.

Instructional Coordinator, Numeracy, Mary Fioré, reported that there has been a decline in Grades 3 and 6 mathematics scores in Ontario. Using a PowerPoint presentation, she explained that the Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy is expected to address challenges such as attitude to mathematics, making student thinking visible, effective teaching practices, applying technology to support collaborative inquiry, and engagement in professional development. Mary Fioré advised that, to support thinking and engagement, Peel has created EngageMath, which is a commitment to improving mathematics instruction. A poster on Balanced Mathematics Instruction K-12, was circulated, which outlined six components: attitudes to math; approaches to instruction/assessment; teaching through problem solving; basic facts and operational skills; purposeful practice; purposeful use of resources. Mary Fioré stated that the goal is to change attitudes towards mathematics, use of effective instructional strategies includes applying a 3-part lesson framework and focusing on assessment for learning.

Mary Fioré listed professional development opportunities which included a recently hosted mathematics camp with 150 participating teachers, a mathematics retreat for secondary school teachers scheduled for October 2014, and hosting Numeracy and Beyond, a Parent Conference scheduled for April 2015. Mary Fioré advised that Peel DSB schools will engage in professional development which will focus on numeracy networks, effective mathematics instruction and how it supports numeracy. She added that, a Numeracy Work Team is being developed with the aim of aligning thinking and focus over the next three years, as identified by Director of Education, Tony Pontes at Starting Point. A video on Growth Mindsets was shown, which spoke of how the brain works, the fixed mindset practice, growth mindset in a mathematics class, assessment and growth, celebrating mistakes, and developing a growth mindset.

Board Chair McDougald expressed appreciation for the update on how Peel DSB will focus on improvement in teaching and learning mathematics and improving mathematics scores. In response to her query regarding cost of printing the Balanced Mathematics posters, Associate Director of Instructional Support Services, Scott Moreash, advised that 700 posters were printed in-house, at a cost of \$ 350. Comments were made regarding the adverse effect that negative comments from parents can have on children while learning mathematics, and the importance of consistently reinforcing positive encouragement through parents and teachers to improve scores.

IP-45, moved by Janet McDougald, that the oral report re Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy, be received.

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Trustee Lawton retired from the meeting at 18:30 hours.

7. Your Voice Counts

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Jeff deFreitas, stated that this survey is designed to collect data from staff, students, and parents, and will be done once every two years, the next one being in Spring 2016.

Aimee Wolanski, Research Officer, Research and Accountability, provided background information on the 2014 Your Voice Counts survey and noted that changes were made based on a pilot project launched in Fall 2013 in eight schools at elementary, middle, and secondary levels. She stated that this version of the survey has six key areas outlined in the School Effectiveness Framework of 2010, and includes sections on mental health and well-being, as well as student assessment. She advised that the survey consists of 47 questions which are similar for all three audiences, and this is the first time the survey was offered to all three groups consisting of staff, Grades 4 – 12 students, and parents, as per Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act. Bill 13 requires that the survey is conducted at least every two years.

Aimee Wolanski reported that the survey was translated in top 10 languages of the Board and all schools participated. Referring to the information graphic in the report, she stated that the survey was developed in-house, the questions were grouped under eight domains and almost 85,000 people participated. She commented on the varying degrees of responses in the three groups of participants, with 93% completing it in English, approximately 2% in Mandarin, and the balance in other languages. Reviewing the results in the report, Aimee Wolanski highlighted similarities and differences in responses between the three audiences.

Board Chair McDougald commented that parent engagement needs to be increased, and suggested better advertising and incentives to encourage participation in the survey. She commented on the differences in student and staff reporting on bullying, on defining bullying, perspectives from the three audiences, and promoting character attributes. In response to a trustee's comment that many parents may not have the ability to respond to an online survey, Aimee Wolanski advised that efforts were made to enable parents to answer the survey by inviting them to use school computers in the evenings, engaging interpreters, and providing one-on-one support. Referring to a question in the survey, a trustee noted that over 30% of responding students who may have problems are not sharing feelings with anyone, and she inquired about addressing that issue. Associate Director of Instructional Support Services, Scott Moreash, advised that Peel DSB is introducing the mental health strategy in all schools.

IP-46, moved by Meredith Johnson, that the report re Your Voice Counts, be received.

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8. Ministry of Education Memorandum re Revisions to the Elementary Provincial Report Card Templates

Superintendent deFreitas stated that the largest change is the inclusion of listening and speaking to replace oral communication in French. He noted that the current elementary provincial report cards did not allow for identification of the four strands in the Arts, that may be taught in French. These four strands now appear on the report card along with options for teachers to indicate if any of the four strands were taught in French Immersion. He added that, for history and geography curricula, the names of strands have been changed to Heritage and Identity, and People and Environments. The changes are a reflection of the revised curriculum documents of 2013.

IP-47, moved by Jeff White, that the Ministry of Education Memorandum re Revisions to the Elementary Provincial Report Card Templates, 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-48, moved by Meredith Johnson, that the meeting adjourn (19:05 hours).

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September 17, 2014
Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee:lf

..... Chair Secretary