

## 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 13, 2017 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Kathy McDonald, Chair  
Stan Cameron  
Robert Crocker  
Janet McDougald (18:05)  
Suzanne Nurse  
Harkirat Singh  
Rick Williams

Trustees also present:

Sue Lawton  
Khushpal Pawar, Student Trustee North (18:10)

Administration:

Adrian Graham, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services (Executive Member)  
Anthony Edwards, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs  
Poleen Grewal, Associate Director, Instructional and Equity Support Services  
Peter Joshua, Director of Education  
Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional and Equity Support Services  
  
Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

**1. Approval of Agenda**

Chair McDonald welcomed Adrian Graham, Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, to his first official Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee meeting.

IP-36, moved by Robert Crocker, 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, May 17, 2017**

IP-37, moved by Rick Williams, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held May 17, 2017, be approved.

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**4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Charts –September and October 2017**

IP-38, moved by Sue Lawton, that the reports re Celebrating Faith and Culture Charts for the months of September and October 2017, be received.

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**5. Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy: EngageMath Plan for 2017-2018**

Superintendent Graham introduced Mary Fiore, Instructional Coordinator – Mathematical Literacy, and School Effectiveness Leads, Soni Gill and Leslie Grant.

Reviewing background information and a PowerPoint presentation, Soni Gill reported that EngageMath K-12, the Board’s comprehensive numeracy strategy, is in its fourth year of implementation. Noting that the strategy has been shared with superintendents of education and administrators, she indicated that the slide presentation details the plan with regard to supports, structures and goals, and continues work from the previous years, with some refinements. Soni Gill highlighted the components of balanced mathematics instruction, which provide students with the operational and conceptual understanding of mathematics. Areas of focus were outlined, with added emphasis this year on deepening mathematical content knowledge for teaching. Leslie Grant explained the balance between procedural knowledge and conceptual understanding that helps students make connections and sense of concepts. She then described in detail the elementary and secondary structures in place for intensive support schools and increased support schools. Intensive support schools across both panels will have an in-house mathematics lead teacher. Noting the new strategy of secondary increased support schools working with feeder middle schools, Leslie Grant reported that, with Grade 7-10 release time, middle and secondary school teachers can meet, collaborate, review data and set goals.

Describing the K-12 professional supports available for mathematics teachers, Soni Gill shared information on work of the instructional coaches, new centrally hired student success teachers, school effectiveness leads, Ministry student achievement officers (SAOs), mathematical coordinator and resource teachers. She described the K-6 numeracy networks, piloting the digital resource, MathUp, and the winter numeracy network. In conclusion, Soni Gill advised that EngageMath is purposeful and intentional, facilitates deepening of content knowledge, and aligns structures and supports with the Renewed Mathematics Strategy.

**5. Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy: EngageMath Plan for 2017-2018 (Continued)**

A lengthy discussion followed, and several questions of clarification were responded to by the administration, including: the plan is to monitor impact rather than to monitor implementation; intensive support schools are identified by the Ministry based on EQAO results for the past few years; mathematic lead teachers at intensive support schools bring more expertise and are content coaches; SAOs are employed by the Ministry, and are an additional resource with the benefit of bringing forward ideas and strategies through networking with other school boards. Board Chair McDougald asked whether there was any information following the Ministry's comment about undertaking a refresh. Mary Fiore remarked on the expectation that the mathematics curriculum and EQAO assessments will be reviewed, and generalizations made to focus on the needs of modern learners. Associate Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services, Poleen Grewal, confirmed that the Ministry usually consults with experts and leaders in the province, when undertaking a refresh.

Referring to the recent decline in Grade 6 EQAO mathematics results in the Board and across the province, Chair McDougald spoke of the significant amount of time and resources directed to numeracy, and the considerable amount of professional work being done with respect to numeracy. Remarking that students are doing well with literacy and social skills, she asked if there was any understanding as to the reason for the decline in mathematics scores, and whether students are being taught and measured at the correct, age-appropriate level. She queried whether the EQAO has considered if students are ready for the assessment levels, and whether the measurement of students' learning should be based on these assessments. Associate Director Grewal confirmed the Ministry's announcement that, along with the refresh of the curriculum, EQAO tests will be reviewed. EQAO has issued a statement that an assessment program will be undertaken to better understand pedagogy. Stakeholders, including school boards, educational leaders, and parents will be consulted, and patterns and trends will be reviewed. Board Chair McDougald expressed uncertainty about the review being truly comprehensive, and she noted that she would like the Board to pursue the matter and contribute, once more information is available regarding the refresh. The administration confirmed that Peel is moving forward in connecting with experts and resources. It was noted that most school boards are facing challenges with achievement in numeracy, and that Ministry staff had commended Peel DSB on the implementation and monitoring of the numeracy strategy.

Remarking that parents would like to be assured and confident that their children are learning mathematical skills, Board Chair McDougald suggested that the Ministry suspend EQAO assessments until frank discussions are held, and a determination is made, with regard to age appropriate curriculum and assessments. In response to a comment regarding the anxiety of mathematics teachers as a result of the declining numeracy scores, Chair McDougald reaffirmed the Board's confidence in Peel's teachers and expressed support for the work they do in schools.

IP-39, moved by Robert Crocker, that the Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy: EngageMath Plan for 2017-2018, be received.

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**6. Empowering Modern Learners Conference**

Coordinating Principal – Modern Learning, Lawrence DeMaeyer, shared information regarding the annual Empowering Modern Learners Summer Conference, held at Cawthra Park Secondary School on August 21-23, 2017. He reported that the Curriculum and Instruction Support Services department has held several conferences over the years, and the summer conference is one of the key initiatives of the goal, “Achieve High Expectations”.

Lawrence DeMaeyer explained that the empowering modern learners vision brings together literacy, numeracy, equity, and assessment. He reported that the summer conference was well attended, with approximately 300 people present, and included teachers, teaching assistants, members of the administration and Leadership team, as well as some trustees. There were several speakers, and a wide range of sessions and workshops were offered. The focus was on student voice and choice, which is a shift from content delivery mode, and enables students to become deeply engaged in determining and identifying questions in discovering curriculum and demonstrating their learning. A video clip of highlights from the summer conference was shown, and Lawrence DeMaeyer indicated that planning for next year’s conference has commenced. Noting that the conference is one component of the vision document, he stated that other plans being considered include professional learning opportunities for staff, and posters for every school location which will encourage parents and students to ask questions to bring the vision into action in each school. The intranet page has been refreshed with a wide range of resources for school teams.

Responding to questions of clarification, Lawrence DeMaeyer confirmed that the summer conference was open to all schools, and that another location will be chosen to host next year’s conference. The agenda for next year’s conference will be co-created, and Peel Students Presidents’ Council and student trustees will be invited to future conferences. It was noted that a few other school boards also host summer conferences.

IP-40, moved by Rick Williams, that the oral report re Empowering Modern Learners Conference, be received.

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**7. Ministry Memorandum: Multi-Year Strategic Planning – A Guide for School Board Trustees (2017)**

Associate Director Grewal noted that trustees will have received the email from Director of Education, Peter Joshua, on the Multi-Year Strategic Planning, a guide for school board trustees. The guide addresses the importance of aligning the strategic plan with operational and improvement plans, and provides more information on monitoring and reporting to trustees on the plan.

IP-41, moved by Janet McDougald, that the Ministry Memorandum re Multi-Year Strategic Planning – A Guide for School Board Trustees (2017), be received.

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**8. Question Period**

Trustee Williams asked for a status update report on the student mental health strategy. Associate Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services, Scott Moreash, recalled that the Board's strategic plan for mental health was developed five years ago, and is now in its second iteration. Recognizing the need to review and refresh the goals, stakeholders were consulted once again to discuss the components of the initial strategic plan with regard to which aspects need to be retained, and those that need to be refreshed. Associate Director Moreash stated that Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, will bring forward the revised strategic plan for mental health to the Leadership team.

Trustee Nurse recalled discussions on de-streaming that were held before the summer break, and she asked for a status report. Associate Director Grewal stated that a report was brought to the Board on this topic, which focused on the literature review, and a more detailed report will be brought in October or November 2017. The next phase is connecting with other school boards and schools where de-streaming is being offered, following which the administration will bring forward some recommendations. Noting that Peel has 16.5% of its secondary students in applied courses, Associate Director Grewal explained that this percentage is low compared to other school boards. She stated that, in considering whether students are moved to the academic stream, a significant aspect is equipping teachers with instructional practices to enable them to teach the range of learners.

Committee Chair McDonald reported that this is Associate Director Moreash's last Committee meeting, as he is retiring, and she thanked him for his work and contributions to students in Peel.

**9. Public Question Period**

There were no public questions.

**10. Adjournment**

IP-42, moved by Stan Cameron, that the meeting adjourn (19:35 hours).

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..... Chair ..... Secretary