

## 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 14, 2016 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Rick Williams, Chair  
Stan Cameron  
Kathy McDonald  
Suzanne Nurse

Members absent (apologies received):

Robert Crocker (on Board business)  
Sue Lawton (on Board business)

Administration:

Poleen Grewal, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services  
(Executive Member)  
Joy Uniac, Superintendent of Education, Early Years (Executive Backup Member)  
  
Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

### 1. Approval of Agenda

Chair Williams welcomed everyone back in the new school year. He acknowledged Harjit Aujla, newly appointed Coordinating Principal for First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) and Equity, who was present at the meeting.

IP-32, moved by Stan Cameron, 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 18, 2016

IP-33, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held May 18, 2016, be approved.

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**4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – October 2016**

IP-34, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – October 2016, be received.

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**5. EngageMath – Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy: Work Plan for 2016-2017**

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Poleen Grewal, stated that the Board's comprehensive numeracy strategy, EngageMath, is in its third year and is aligned with the Ministry's Renewed Math Strategy. She introduced School Effectiveness Leads, Soni Gill and David Jack, to present on the work planned to support schools and student success. The presenters referred to the 2016-2017 comprehensive numeracy strategy work plan included in the report, and provided information using PowerPoint slides. Soni Gill stated that the Kindergarten to Grade 12 strategy is based on three foundational drivers which are, instructional core, instructional strategies, and assessment, with a renewed focus on support for students with learning disabilities. David Jack reviewed the professional learning content, based on school effectiveness framework, which includes deepening of content knowledge, intentional instructional practices, cross-curricular numeracy, and assessment for learning. The presenters also provided information on: supports such as instructional coaching and training programs; professional learning structures for elementary and secondary panels; communication through messages to the Peel system, meetings and websites; resources published on the EngageMath website. Stating that the strategy is purposeful and about understanding the mathematical content, Superintendent Grewal explained that a Differentiated Instruction approach is being adopted and networks are being organized by Families of Schools to support learning structures.

Superintendent Grewal responded to trustees' questions of clarification with regard to: instructional practices and the effectiveness of using games with teaching methods; possible reasons for low EQAO scores in mathematics; co-relation between EQAO scores and how Kindergarten students fare in the first test; training for teachers; feedback from instructional coaches. She suggested reviewing the EQAO test once the results are released, considering the amount of independent time given to students for problem solving, assessing gradual release of responsibility, reviewing the organization of mathematics classes, and introducing 60-minutes of uninterrupted mathematics. Responding to the query as to whether colleges are increasing training for teachers, Poleen Grewal advised that the Board is in contact with the Ontario College of Teachers and is also looking into offering Advanced Qualification (AQ) courses internally, to continue to build capacity. With regard to parent engagement and the need for parents to portray mathematics positively to children, Poleen Grewal advised that schools offer Math Night for parents and students, and invite speakers as part of the outreach for parents. Superintendent Grewal responded to further questions of clarification with regard to cross-curricular activities and assessing whether rote learning, such as multiplication tables, is helpful. She provided clarifying information on the process for arriving at solutions to mathematics problems and the importance of understanding concepts. She indicated that Board staff work closely with the Ministry on concerns and will continue to provide feedback on EQAO and evaluation.

**5. EngageMath – Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy: Work Plan for 2016-2017**  
(Continued)

IP-35, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Engage Math – Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy: Work Plan for 2016-2017, be received.

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**6. Early Literacy Plan 2016-2019**

Superintendent Grewal welcomed Joy Uniac, who has been recently appointed as Superintendent of Education for Early Years, and will also be the Executive Backup Member for the Instructional Programs and Curriculum Committee Meeting. Joy Uniac spoke on key areas of focus of the Early Literacy Plan 2016-2019. She advised that the Early Literacy Plan is in the initial stages of development and will integrate numeracy and literacy. She provided an overview of the Early Literacy Strategy which will focus on: instructional core, in which Kindergarten to Grade 2 educators will engage in learning experiences that integrate the understanding and creation of texts; instructional strategies, such as a gradual release of responsibility; assessment, using a combination of observations, conversations and/or representations including diagnostic testing as part of assessment for learning tools. Superintendent Uniac reviewed the content, structures, supports and communication of the Early Literacy Plan as outlined in the report. She commented that the plan will include involvement of special education, early years, and instructional coaches.

Trustees' questions of clarification were responded to regarding: relationship of literacy levels to EQAO scores and related concerns; whether there is an expectation for Kindergarten children to use printing devices and their capacity to use digital tools; if nap times are dictated by the curriculum, or based on practicality.

IP-36, moved by Stan Cameron, that the report re Early Literacy Plan 2016-2019, be received.

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**7. Question Period**

Trustee Cameron recalled that, at the Physical Planning and Building Committee meeting last week, he had raised the topic of having a balanced calendar school for the community in the South Fields Village area in Caledon. Responding to the trustee's query about proposals for balanced calendar schools, Superintendent Grewal advised that reports for balanced calendar schools have been brought to Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee in the past. She provided history and background information on Roberta Bondar Public School and Ray Lawson Public School which have balanced calendars.

**7. Question Period (Continued)**

Poleen Grewal outlined the considerations for balanced calendar schools as: communities with a high social risk index, where regularity of school helps year-round student engagement; a high population of English Language Learners; a new community, as it is difficult to shift an existing school community from the regular school calendar to year-round calendar; ease of transition to schools in the area. Indicating that some of the considerations mentioned apply to the South Fields Village area, Trustee Cameron expressed his interest for a balanced calendar school in Caledon and his hope for Board support. The trustee suggested that Planning department consider the possibility of a balanced calendar school in Caledon, along with provision for air-conditioning.

Trustee Nurse commented that teachers are appreciative of the balanced calendar school schedule for various reasons, including travel plans. She noted that from an equity standpoint, existing schools should also have the opportunity to move to a balanced calendar model, if desired, and Trustee Williams commented on an analysis done which indicated significant additional costs involved.

Trustee McDonald inquired whether a parent can choose to send a Kindergarten child to school for half day. Superintendent Uniac replied in the affirmative, but explained that the student will not have the same school experience as other students in the class.

Superintendent Grewal added that the school works closely with the parent on setting modified timings to accommodate the child and have minimal impact on the classroom.

Trustee Cameron commented that according to the Education Act, children must attend school at age six.

**8. Public Question Period**

There were no public questions.

**9. Adjournment**

IP-37, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the meeting adjourn (19:25 hours).

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