

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 16, 2015 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

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

Trustee also present:

Suzanne Nurse

Student Trustees:

Arunoshi Singh, Student Trustee North
Kaustav Chaudhuri, Student Trustee South

Administration:

Poleen Grewal, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
(Executive Member)
Jeff deFreitas, Coordinating Superintendent
Wendy Dowling, Superintendent of Education, Early Years
Tony Pontes, Director of Education
Brian Woodland, Director, Communications and Community Relations Support Services

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

Chair Williams welcomed Poleen Grewal to her first meeting as Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, and Soni Gill, recently appointed as School Effectiveness Leader.

IP-48, 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, June 10, 2015

Trustee Crocker noted that he was not present at the June 10, 2015 Committee meeting. The minutes will be amended.

Referring to Item 5 of the Minutes, Home Schooling, a trustee reported that he would like to contact a parent who has withdrawn children from school to ask whether documentation required for home schooling children has been completed. Coordinating Superintendent, Jeff deFreitas, reported that a tip sheet on home schooling has just been finalized, which will be provided to principals. He confirmed that the tip sheet will be shared with trustees, and he directed the trustee to contact the Board's Home School Liaisons, Terry Gordon and Paul Jones, for details on home schooling documentation.

IP-49, moved by Sue Lawton, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held June 10, 2015, as amended, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – September 2015

IP-50, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the report re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – September 2015, be received.

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5. Health and Physical Education – Curriculum Support and Teacher Professional Learning – Status Update

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Poleen Grewal, introduced Hubert Brard, Coordinator of Arts and Health and Physical Education, and congratulated him on the acknowledgement received by him from the Rose Theatre as the Arts Educator of the Year. She indicated that the report will highlight teacher supports developed regarding the revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum as well as presentations on template lesson plans for Grades 3 and 9. Superintendent Grewal advised that Curriculum and Instruction staff in collaboration with Communication staff are currently working on the operating procedure and a tip sheet for principals relating to accommodations, which will be shared with trustees at the October Committee meeting.

A package of information which included handouts of the PowerPoint presentation, template lesson plans, and letters to parents of Grades 3 and 9, was circulated. Hubert Brard reported that writing teams comprising 14 staff worked over the summer, examining curriculum documents, to develop the teacher supports. He stated that the three major strands of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum are active living, movement competence, and healthy living. Referring to the handout listing the secondary module resources, he advised that a similar module of elementary resources is being developed in collaboration with Learning Technology Support Services staff. Hubert Brard spoke of the importance of learning that helps students develop a positive sense of self, and of teaching that occurs in a supportive environment, which leads to relationships founded on mutual acceptance and inclusion.

5. Health and Physical Education – Curriculum Support and Teacher Professional Learning – Status Update (Continued)

Hubert Brard noted that the Grades 3 and 9 template letters included in the update report will give parents the opportunity for open communication with their children's teachers to share questions or concerns. Alisa McClure, Head Librarian at Silver Creek Public School, and Michael Perkins, Department Head of Health and Physical Education at Erindale Secondary School, reviewed template lesson plans for Grades 3 and 6. Alisa McClure reported that the expectations are for students to learn about healthy relationships, and how visible and invisible differences make people unique. Highlighting some of the resources that will be used, she spoke about learning goals, big question, questions for consolidation/making connections, and assessment through the student's writing and discussions on the book. She advised that the instructional support staff will provide support to teachers in developing lesson plans based on the curriculum that are differentiated to student and community needs. Michael Perkins reported that the secondary writing team focused more on resources for Grades 9 and 10. He reviewed the template lesson plan on Healthy Active Living, included in the report and referred to resources in explaining the big questions, learning goals, overall and specific expectations, student assessment, differentiated instruction, and materials and terminology. Concluding the presentation, Hubert Brard highlighted the organizations that have worked in partnership with the Board in developing resources for the curriculum, and the professional development (PD) being made available for teachers.

The administration responded to several questions of clarification asked by trustees, including: focus of the curriculum is on mental and physical aspects; classes are split by gender for Grades 5-8, as appropriate, except during discussions on basic issues such as sexting or consent; supports are provided as required to help teaching gender split classes; some students may require additional support, such as referral to the guidance counsellor or social worker. Superintendent Grewal spoke about culturally responsible pedagogy in Peel where teachers, having a good understanding of their students and their circumstances, deliver lessons based on equity and inclusion. Director of Education, Tony Pontes, remarked that Peel teachers are caring and dedicated professionals who spend significant time in getting to know their students.

On a trustee's comment that there are many instances when letters sent home with students are not seen by the parents, another trustee suggested that Synrevoice be used to notify parents that a letter has been sent home with their children. On further questions of clarification, it was noted that: grade by grade expectations in the parent guide will be posted online but template lesson plans will not; materials for elementary professional development were provided to principals to share with teachers; professional development for secondary teachers is being finalized, but PD for the elementary panel is on hold due to labour action; instances of teachers not following system directive, if reported, will be dealt with in the usual disciplinary manner. A trustee commented that the Board had indicated that teachers will receive training before they teach the curriculum. She suggested that the Board clearly indicate to the public that training for elementary teachers is on hold due to the labour situation.

5. Health and Physical Education – Curriculum Support and Teacher Professional Learning – Status Update (Continued)

With regard to a trustee's request to teach the healthy sexuality component in the last month or last couple of weeks, Superintendent Grewal explained that the last month or couple of weeks at the end of the school year is extremely busy for teachers. She remarked that the component will be taught after the March break, and teachers need the flexibility to map out their curriculum and make cross-curricular connections. She noted that the aspect of accommodations also needs to be considered. Hubert Brard responded to trustees' questions regarding children who are uncomfortable participating in an activity, or evaluation of student's responses made from cultural or religious beliefs.

IP-51, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the status update report re Health and Physical Education – Curriculum Support and Teacher Professional Learning, be received.

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6. EngageMath – Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy Work Plan 2015 – 2016

Superintendent Grewal reported that the EngageMath initiative was launched last year, and one aspect was to provide focused resources for K-Grade 12 Mathematics. She referred to the Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy Work Plan 2015- 2016 graphic, which listed resources that will support the teaching and learning of Mathematics. She thanked School Effectiveness Leaders, Soni Gill and David Jack, Mathematics Coordinator, Mary Fiore, and Coordinating Principals, Carol Suhay and Cathy Roper, for their work on the initiative.

David Jack recalled that the Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy K-12 – 2014-2017 was shared with the Committee at the start of the initiative and, since then, there have been a few amendments. He noted that the strategy is based on three foundational drivers: the instructional core; instructional strategies, and assessment. David Jack and Soni Gill then reviewed the work plan, highlighting the supports that include instructional coaches meeting on a monthly basis, PRIME training relating to number sense and Algebra, and a team of principals and vice-principals attending the Fall-Winter System Implementation Monitoring sessions offered by the Ministry. The numeracy content continues to be the same as the previous year's, with more emphasis on accountable talk and descriptive feedback in the classroom. Structures offered include, every K-Grade 2 school will have a site lead, K-Grade 6 networks will be differentiated by being school directed, 7-10 networks, and School Success Planning in the context of theory of action and collaborative inquiry. Other initiatives were listed: focus on Mathematics in ESL; primary collaborative inquiries; DREAMBOX pilot project that will cover approximately 40 schools. Information on DREAMBOX and the process of school selection were provided, and Superintendent Grewal confirmed that a report will be brought back relating to an evaluation of the pilot project. Details regarding communicating the initiative were outlined.

6. EngageMath – Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy Work Plan 2015 – 2016
(Continued)

Responses to trustees' questions of clarification included: visits by university professors to schools to highlight university level Mathematics requirements are usually arranged by schools; DREAMBOX can be accessed at home by students; complete EQAO data for this year is not available, but EQAO trend data, and achievement data such as report cards and tests by the school, will be used for assessments; focus on rich tasks to get students to understand, explain and demonstrate their thinking in Mathematics; desegregation of EngageMath evaluation data by gender, ESL, Gifted, and Special Education is possible, but not by race, as students' race data is not collected by the Board.

IP-52, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re EngageMath – Comprehensive Numeracy Strategy Work Plan 2015 – 2016, be received.

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7. EQAO Update

Superintendent Grewal advised that, due to labour action in spring 2015, the Grades 3 and 6, and Semester 2 Grade 9 EQAO assessments were not undertaken. The Ministry of Education has indicated that, for Grades 3 and 6, individual, school and cohort data will not be released. Data for Semester 1 Grade 9 EQAO will be reported but release of the data will be delayed until mid-October. The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) results will be available on September 23, 2015. Superintendent Grewal confirmed that a report on EQAO results will be brought to the Committee.

IP-53, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the oral update report re EQAO, be received.

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8. Question Period

Trustee Crocker displayed a poster with the word "Read" in numerous languages. He indicated that the poster was created by a member of his constituency, and a book accompanies the poster. Trustee Crocker stated that he is presenting the poster and book to Superintendent Grewal, and that the author is interested in contacting Curriculum and Instruction staff.

Trustee McDonald asked for a status update report regarding the sports program for competitive athletes. Superintendent Grewal confirmed that discussions are ongoing, and that a report will be brought to the Committee when there is more information.

Trustee McDonald reported that she and the principal of Sir William Davis Public School had discussed a sports competition in which students of Peel DSB and the coterminous board participate. It appears that Peel DSB students are being recruited to other school boards at this competition, and the trustee suggested that the Board's participation in the competition be reviewed. Superintendent Grewal will follow up.

8. Question Period (Continued)

Trustee Singh asked for a report on achievement of Black students in Peel, highlighting the actions being taken and whether these are helping. Superintendent Grewal noted that the theme of the November Committee meeting is equity and inclusive education, and that information on achievement, including that for the First Nations, Metis and Inuit students, will be reviewed, which will direct the future visioning of The Future We Want.

9. Public Question Period

A member of the public referred to statements made during item 5 of these Minutes, Health and Physical Education – Curriculum Support and Teacher Professional Learning – Status Update that, with the Ministry’s revisions, the curriculum now calls for some material to be taught in an earlier grade and he asked about the basis on which the revisions were made. He also asked whether teachers will be trained or will have supports to teach the curriculum in an earlier grade.

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IP-54, moved by Sue Lawton, that the meeting continue beyond 20:30 hours to complete the agenda.

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Trustee Green retired from the meeting (20:30 hours).

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The member of the public then inquired whether teachers will teach the same template lesson plans presented at this meeting. He asked what will be done by the Board when teachers do not adhere to directions given by the Board relating to teaching the revised curriculum. The administration responded to the questions.

10. Adjournment

IP-55, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the meeting adjourn (20:35 hours).

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