

Organizational Meeting of the Board

Speaking notes for Peter Joshua

December 4, 2017

- Thank you, Chair McDougald. As many of you know, in July, I was honoured to return home to lead the Peel District School Board as your new Director of Education. And I had big shoes to fill. I am thankful for the mentorship provided to me by retiring director Tony Pontes before he handed over the baton.
- And I'm still on track with no finish line in sight just yet.
- At Starting Point on August 30, I had the opportunity to meet and welcome back staff. There I shared how, together, we will engage, embrace and empower during the 2017-18 school year and beyond.
- I also shared our commitment to our theme for this year, which is "We Inspire," and we do that in every role, in every department, in every school and worksite, in all that we do.
- When our 154,600+ or so students walk through our doors, they deserve to feel like something big is happening. That they are entering not just a building, but a place of inspiration—staff and volunteers make that happen—WE make that happen.
- Before I can tell you where we're headed, I want to recognize and celebrate where we have been. This year's Annual Report, which will be released in January 2018, will capture this work, and other initiatives that took place during the 2016-17 school year.

Plan for Student Success

- After extensive consultation with staff, unions and federations, trustees, faith leaders, parents and students, the board introduced its new strategic plan, our Plan for Student Success, at the start of the 2016 school year. This plan focuses on four important goals that guide the work we've done and continue to do to inspire success, confidence and hope in each student.

Under the goal of "High expectations for achievement" in our Annual Report, you will find many examples of how we set high expectations for staff and students to ensure all students achieve personal excellence.

- We will share highlights of the board's five-year comprehensive numeracy strategy called *EngageMath*, which includes our work towards adapting our teaching methods to help students achieve success.
- One of the ways we've done this is through our vision for 21st Century Teaching and Learning called *Empowering Modern Learners*. As a board, we recognize that we have a shared responsibility to inspire our modern learners to be active, critically engaged, global citizens.
- The report will also include mention of the opening of four new schools – James Grieve, Jean Augustine, Countryside Village and McClure.

Under the goal of "Safe, Positive Healthy Climate/Well-Being," we will detail how we build safe, positive, healthy climates for learning and working to nurture student and staff well-being.

- We will include our commitment to providing inclusive washrooms in all secondary schools and the HJA Brown Education Centre, an overview of our #ChooseAction anti-bullying initiatives, and details on our review of staffing supports in Special Education Support Services.

Under our goal of “Equity and Inclusion,” we will outline our focus to achieve inclusion for all through our continuous progress on equity. Projects we will reference include:

- the successful completion of our first workforce census, *Count Me In Peel!*, with responses from more than 11,000 staff members
- the important and necessary steps we are taking to improve our school system with the release of *We Rise Together*, the Peel board’s action plan to support black male students
- this board’s just and courageous stance to continue to support religious accommodations because it is the law, but more importantly, the right thing to do
- and our commitment to building a better understanding of our Indigenous communities among staff and students. One way we’ve done this is through the daily acknowledgement of the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation in schools and at public meetings.

The annual report will also recognize how our commitment to equity and inclusion aligns with Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)’s Calls to Action.

Finally, under our goal of “Parent, Community and Staff Engagement,” you will find many examples of how we engage staff, parents and communities to support student success in our Annual Report.

- Included will be the board’s unanimous approval of the Britannia Farm Master Plan Refresh, and our public consultation process.
- Here we will also demonstrate our dedication to the community in our support of United Way of Peel Region, the Terry Fox Foundation, famine and disaster relief through Unicef and Red Cross Canada, and many other fundraising campaigns.

I’m incredibly proud of what our staff and students accomplished last school year and the work we’ve already accomplished in the first few months of 2017-18.

This school year, we’re again guided by our Peel board mission statement. We will continue to inspire in many areas, including:

- developing and launching our student census
- continuing to create safe, positive and healthy climates through our Mental Health Strategy
- remaining committed to achieving inclusion for all through the continued support of marginalized students
- implementing our Year 1 accountability plan in the four areas of the *We Rise Together* action plan
- promoting the neighbourhood school advantage—essentially, helping our students and families discover all of the exceptional programs and opportunities offered at their neighbourhood school.

When we work together, anything is possible. Our commitment to inspiring success, confidence and hope in each student is what makes Peel schools the very best place for children to learn and grow.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update to the board.