

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, May 16, 2012 at 18:00 hours.

Members present:

Rick Williams, Chair
Steve Kavanagh
Sue Lawton
Suzanne Nurse

Trustees also present:

Stan Cameron
Beryl Ford
Jeff White

Member absent:

Meredith Johnson
Harinder Malhi

Also present:

Brian Grandy, OSSTF

Administration:

Shawn Moynihan, Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services
(Executive Member)
Wendy Dowling, Superintendent of Education
Patricia Rossall, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs
Pam Tomasevic, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

IP-23, moved by Jeff White, 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, March 21, 2012

IP-24, moved by Beryl Ford, that the Minutes of the Instructional Programs / Curriculum Committee Meeting, held March 21, 2012, be approved.

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4. Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – April and May 2012

IP-25, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the reports re Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder – April and May 2012, be received.

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5. Presentation: Students from Williams Parkway Public School “Project of Heart”

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, welcomed and introduced the staff of Williams Parkway Public School, Principal, Ozma Masood, teachers Leslé McKay and Lise Laroche and invited them to present on Project of Heart.

Lise McKay reported that the project was initiated after implementing First Nation, Métis, and Inuit curriculum in Peel. Students were interested in being part of a project for change. Students Marissa Robinson and Hinal Bharavda were introduced and invited to speak about the project. The students explained that Project of Heart is a way to create awareness and honour children who have died in residential schools in Canada. Using a PowerPoint presentation and video clip, they explained about the mistreatment and physical, mental and sexual abuse of aboriginal children, by members of the clergy in residential schools. At Williams Parkway Public School, two Grade 8 classes participated in the project representing one of the residential schools, Mohawk Institute, nicknamed the “Mush Hole”. Students decorated tiles representing the death of aboriginal children due to residential schooling experience. After completing the tiles, Elder Garry Sault blessed the students with the traditional blessing of Aboriginal Elders, and he related his brothers’ experiences at the Mush Hole. In response to a trustee’s question, Lise McKay confirmed that 125 tiles had been decorated, each tile represented a student that died. A trustee praised the presentation and commented that incidents of prejudice and discrimination are mirrored in Canadian history.

IP-26, moved by Beryl Ford, that the Presentation by Students from Williams Parkway Public School “Project of Heart”, be received.

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6. Guidelines for Implementing Full Year Mathematics

Superintendent Shawn Moynihan advised that guidelines for acting on the report entitled “Evaluation of Full Year and Semestered Mathematics” were developed and have been shared at secondary principal’s meetings in April and May 2012.

IP-27, moved by Steve Kavanagh, that the report re Guidelines for Implementing Full Year Mathematics, be received.

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7. Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee Meeting Dates 2012-2013

Superintendent Moynihan advised that steps will be taken to ensure that meeting dates will not coincide with Arts events.

IP-28, moved by Stan Cameron, that the report re Instructional Programs/Curriculum Committee Meeting Dates 2012-2013, be received.

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8. Update: Implementing Ontario’s First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework

Shawn Moynihan introduced Instructional Coordinator, Ian Pettigrew, who is responsible for implementing the First Nations’ strategy. Ian Pettigrew provided a progress update on the 2007 Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy (The Framework) with respect to three areas: aboriginal community engagement, outreach and partnerships; building awareness and understanding through staff and student learning opportunities resources; social justice, advocacy, and action.

Regarding aboriginal community engagement and outreach partnerships, Ian Pettigrew advised that an Aboriginal Advisory Committee was established in October 2011 with the creation and first meeting of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Advisory Circle. This Circle or committee includes board representatives as well as Aboriginal community members. The preliminary task was to provide a forum for FNMI students in Peel region which was strongly encouraged by the Framework and Policy Document. He expressed appreciation for contributions of Trustee White on the Committee, and noted that Peel DSB has continued to forge new partnerships and ties. These included attending monthly council meetings in the past year and recently in the Credit River Métis Council, actively participating in Peel Aboriginal Steering Committee, the Senior Leadership Team visit to the Peel Aboriginal Network, a visit to the Council of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation regarding a writing project ‘A Sacred Trust’, and engaging in community conversations and interacting with First Nations Métis and Inuit. Ian Pettigrew also mentioned that Peel DSB has received a rare invitation to visit the territories in the company of an Elder, which is indicative of the hard work and partnerships with aboriginal communities.

8. Update: Implementing Ontario's First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (Continued)

Ian Pettigrew drew attention to two concerns raised by teaching staff, with regard to ways in which to infuse a FNMI perspective in the classroom in a respectful fashion, and finding authentic and credible resources to accomplish this challenge. He described how teachers and administrators have received support over the past year, some of which included: professional learning opportunities for staff, multi-board team visits to teach First Nations, launching A Sacred Trust at the 'Partnerships for Success' conference, participation in regional symposia, subsidizing some of the costs for Aboriginal and Environmental Education (AEE) Circle trips to reserves, and school visits for educational programs. A 90-minute visit by Darren Thomas of Six Nations to Stephen Lewis Secondary School to raise awareness about First Nations' experiences was organized, and a collection of educational materials was added to Peel DSB's library. In early June an FNMI Teaching Kit for Early Years will be distributed to Peel schools, and on June 23, 2012 a full day free public celebration of FNMI culture and heritage will be held at Chinguacousy Park. Students' learning opportunities included: attending Aboriginal Education Day in Toronto, inviting aboriginal elders to visit Peel schools, and organizing events to create awareness of FNMI history and culture. In addition, Peel DSB has supported development and access to learning opportunities for people involved in supporting teachers engaged in this work through ministry-sponsored training, effective practices and attending the 2011 Circle of Light Conference.

Ian Pettigrew referred to the housing crisis in Attawapiskat, and advised that more schools are working on social justice initiatives. He outlined some of the projects such as 'Project of Heart' at Williams Parkway Public School, with elder Garry Sault and advised that five schools will be pioneers in Peel, offering Native Studies courses starting September 2012.

Trustees expressed appreciation and thanks to Ian Pettigrew on his presentation and the work being done. A trustee commented on provincial funding for education of aboriginal children, aboriginal trustee representation at OPSBA, Peel staff visits to the aboriginal schools and her hope for progress and support of the community.

IP-29, moved by Sue Lawton, that the oral report re Update: Implementing Ontario's First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, be received.

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9. Early Development Instrument (EDI) 2010

Superintendent Shawn Moynihan invited Chief of Assessment and Accountability, Paul Favaro, to present on the Early Development Instrument 2010 report. Paul Favaro noted that EDI is used in most parts of Canada, except Quebec, and in some of Alberta. The international tests are now used for all children in Australia, and a pilot project is being done in Chile and a number of other countries. He explained that EDI assesses school readiness and is comprised of 104 core items on the development of kindergarten children on five domains of development: physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; and communication skills and general knowledge.

9. Early Development Instrument (EDI) 2010 (Continued)

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Paul Favaro presented some of the key findings and main elements of the EDI 2010 report. Reviewing the data, he indicated that 28.8% of students in Peel DSB were vulnerable compared to 28.1% in Peel Region, in 2010. 31.2% of Peel DSB students were vulnerable compared to 28.5% in the province of Ontario, in 2010. Paul Favaro reviewed the results of Vulnerability over Time and indicated that the tests are done over three years. Vulnerability decreased by 3.3% in Peel DSB from 2007 to 2010, and by 1.3 % in Peel Region from 2007 to 2010. He advised that British Columbia has a strategic policy to reduce vulnerability in their province, aiming to reduce it by 15% by the year 2015, and Manitoba will be doing the same.

Paul Favaro drew attention to the five domains and sub-domains, highlighting five most challenging sub-domains as: pro-social and helping behaviour; communication skills and general knowledge; gross and fine motor skills; advanced literacy skills and interest in literacy/numeracy and memory. EDI results by gender showed that females are more ready than males to make the transition to Grade 1. With regard to English Language Learners and Non-English Language Learners, two areas showing a notable difference were Language and Cognitive Development, and Communication Skills and General Knowledge, with a difference of 0.81 and 2.31 respectively, between the two groups.

Referring to a graph on Relationship between Vulnerability and Social Risk Index (SRI) Paul Favaro highlighted the key findings. He explained the correlation, indicating a small to moderate relationship between the two variables. He noted that as SRI increased, vulnerability increased, and stated that even in highly vulnerable communities the schools may be successful in getting students ready to transition from Kindergarten to Grade 1. He then reviewed a chart showing Vulnerability by Family of Schools for 2011-2012 showing how school readiness is distributed across the Region of Peel with each individual school result.

In response to a trustee's question about the data used in the report, Paul Favaro advised that there is a 3-year funding cycle, it takes more than one year to obtain the data from McMaster University and follow process and procedures to prepare the report. The trustee commented that by February/March 2013 it will be mid-way through the Half versus Full Day Kindergarten program and significant improvement is expected. Paul Favaro responded that EDI results are produced as a result of pre-natal activities and a sum total of all experiences of the child and parent, and cannot be attributed to one specific factor. However, partnerships in communities, such as Success by Six, can help to improve the results.

IP-30, moved by Steve Kavanagh, that the report re Early Development Instrument (EDI) 2010, be received.

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10. Alternative Programs – Peel Alternative School

Superintendent Shawn Moynihan welcomed Pat Rossall, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs, Sharon Stevens-Lay, Principal, Alternative Programs, and Craig Caslick, Vice Principal, Peel Alternative School (PAS) North.

Pat Rossall explained the role of PAS in supporting students who are challenged at their home school and are given an alternative to succeed outside their classroom. Some students are unsuccessful in spite of programs like Counting on You, intervention, and other strategies. However, with the help of a referral made by the home school to PAS, school success teachers provide an option for the at-risk students, based on their needs. Students who are successful at PAS can obtain a few credits and return to their home school, but many of them graduate from PAS.

Sharon Stevens-Lay read an excerpt from a parent's letter showing appreciation for the program. A video, demonstrating PAS students' positive experiences, highlighting the program flexibility and caring relationships, was shared. Craig Caslick advised that there are currently 1600 students at the school consisting of students who are challenged in the conventional student setting, on account of bullying, teen pregnancies or mental health issues. He highlighted the calm, flexible environment, close contact, attachment, highly skilled staff, and caring and supportive adults provided by the PAS program.

Sharon Stevens-Lay reviewed the PAS programs with the help of an interactive activity for members. Craig Caslick expressed pride in the students achievements and individual stories noting that the data underscores their success. With the help of slides, the enrollment and achievement data for PAS was reviewed from 2005-06 to 2011-2012. 301 students participated in a school climate survey published in May 2011. With regard to feeling safe in their school, 88% of students agreed or strongly agreed. Only 0.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. With regard to whether the alternative setting has helped their needs, 82.9% of the students agreed or strongly agreed, only 5.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Sharon Stevens-Lay read a thank you letter from a parent of a student in the Temporary External Learning Link (TELL) program, who successfully worked at one credit at a time. The letter expressed thanks for a safe and caring environment, which provided them with the dignity and confidence to accomplish their goals academically and in life.

A trustee commended the presentation and shared her experience of the program stating that parents consider it a valuable program with its compassionate and communicative staff. Another trustee praised the comprehensive outline of programs provided, and inquired about the \$ 25 fee. Craig Caslick clarified that it is a program enhancement fee for every student who registers at PAS, which goes towards engagement activities offered. It is a one-time fee per year and is waived if needed. The students do not pay for field trips, learning materials, bus tickets, and language programs. The trustee commented that in this report the fee is paired only with the Teen Educational Motherhood Program (TEAM). Sharon Stevens-Lay and Craig Caslick will look into it.

10. Alternative Programs – Peel Alternative School (Continued)

Associate Director of Instructional Support Services, Pam Tomasevic, expressed appreciation for the caring staff and administration as well as the work done at PAS. In response to a trustee's question whether the total number of 1600 students were equally distributed over the three sites, Sharon Stevens-Lay clarified that the largest sites are in the north. She drew attention to the list of sites in the report and explained about programs dispersed at other Peel facilities. Pat Rossall noted that students aged 16 and over attend the TELL program which is needed more in the north.

IP-31, moved by Steve Kavanagh, that the report re Alternative Programs Peel Alternative School, be received.

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11. Update: Gender-Based Instruction

Superintendent Moynihan introduced Gale Solomon-Henry, Principal of Dunrankin Drive Public School, Joan Hamilton, Principal of Roberta Bondar Public School, and Dawn Addison, Principal of Morning Star Public School, and invited them to provide an overview on gender-based instruction which is being piloted in some schools in Peel. A flyer titled 'Single Gender Classes' was circulated, illustrating results of a Student Feedback Survey.

Joan Hamilton advised that there are five school sites in Peel exploring single gender learning, Calderstone Middle School, Cheyne Middle School, Dunrankin Drive Public School, Morning Star Middle School and Robert Bondar Middle School. She highlighted the current practices, and goals. Dawn Addison spoke about the program advantages which included comfort and ease, willingness to discuss, strong sense of community, competitiveness, decreased behavior concerns, and fewer distractions. Disadvantages such as excessive talking in girls classes, and space required for of the program were highlighted. She noted the achievement level for boys, and improvement in all five schools.

12. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

13. Adjournment

IP-32, moved by Sue Lawton, that the meeting adjourn (20:00 hours).

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