September 23, 2020

TO: Bruce Rodrigues, Board Supervisor

RE: Regular Meeting of the Board – Agenda Updates

REGRETS:

REGRETS FOR LATE ARRIVAL:

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

6.1 Delegation by Mark Campbell and Susanne Perschbacher regarding the French Immersion Program – Equity of Access
8.2 Ministry Review Directives – Update
8.5 Appointment of Two External Members to the Audit Committee
Ministry Review Directives - Update

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the timeline for outstanding actions related to Ministry Review Directives, originally due up to and including November 30, 2020, be extended for review at the first Regular Meeting of the Board in December.

Background:

The Ministry of Education issued the directives and the corresponding timelines prior to the declaration of a Global Pandemic impacting Ontario. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education’s Report on the Peel District School Board (March 2020) identifies a number of urgent priorities to improve the system of education in the Peel District School Board. The report detailed serious concerns in key areas: leadership, governance, systemic inequities e.g., anti-Black racism and human resources processes all of which continue to be urgent issues impacting students, staff and communities during this pandemic.

A number of factors have slowed the implementation of the Directives including limited expertise in anti-Black racism and anti-oppression, transition to new leadership and the impact of the pandemic on re-opening schools in the PDSB. Additional time is also required to integrate feedback from The Ministry of Education on the Directives that were submitted.

Context:

Staff is proposing an initial conceptual framework to guide the implementation of the Directives by creating coherence and alignment among the actions and promote the meaningful long-term systemic change that students, staff and families demand. The framework will be further developed with stakeholders and throughout the implementation process.

The framework will be based on a set of inter-related principles to promote deep cultural change in the organization:

- Implementation of the Directives will centre the needs of students, specifically those most underserved, and have direct links to changes in school-based practices;
- The focus will be on meaningful culturally responsive and relevant practices that ensure student identity and voice is not only centred in our thinking and planning, but valued and validated in the learning process;
- The expectation that all of the actions within the Directives are to be developed through an anti-racist and anti-oppressive analysis;
- Effective policies (and procedures) are one of the important levers for creating sustainable systemic change in the delivery of education when implemented effectively. Specifically, the Anti-Racism and Human Rights policies will establish the organizational mandate to achieve equity through the elimination of systemic, communal and individual barriers to success and excellence;
- Effective governance will support public confidence in achieving the mandate for systemic change as outlined in the Directives;
• Engagement policies and protocols will ensure students, families and community members are authentically and meaningfully engaged throughout the implementation process;
• All school and system leaders share responsibility for identifying the personal, interpersonal and institutional attitudes and practices that create barriers and will assume responsibility for their removal with the goal of equity for all students, regardless of their identity;
• Fair employment and anti-oppression practices that support equitable recruitment, hiring and promotion, leadership development, professional learning and succession planning;
• Accountability and transparency are to be demonstrated through clear measures of success using data and communication to the public about our progress towards achieving equity for all students.

These principles will inform the scope and sequence required to implement the Directives coherently. The actions will be organized in a manner that supports integrated implementation and engagement of critical stakeholders.

The challenge of implementing meaningful systemic change in this context cannot be underestimated and will require new ways of working cross-functionally and additional resources to support. However, a number of actions have been taken to support achieving the overall goals outlined in the Ministry of Education's Report on the Peel District School Board.

• In accordance with Ministry Directive 19, staff from Curriculum Instruction Support Services and the newly formed Equity department are in the process of developing a professional learning plan to prepare for the destreaming of grade 9 mathematics in all Peel schools beginning in the 2021 school year. Recognizing also that academic and university level English courses are the required pathway for all post-secondary programs in university, this professional learning plan has been expanded to include the destreaming of grade 9 English, which will be piloted in schools on a voluntary basis also beginning in the 2021/2022 academic year;
• Request for Proposals (RFP) are in process to support the work of the Directives through engaging external partners in the areas of hiring for key senior leadership roles, curriculum, communication, and professional learning;
• Work has begun to establish a project team. The hiring process for the position of the Superintendent of Indigenous Education, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression & Community Partnerships has been finalized;
• The Empowering Modern Learners document is being reframed to integrate culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy through anti-racism and anti-oppression principles;
• A small working team has begun to analyze the Reopening Operating Procedures through the perspective of anti-Black racism and anti-oppression to ensure there are no barriers to students' participation and success;
• Schools were staffed through reorganization based on the Social Vulnerabilities Index data and Peel Public Health data.

Prepared and submitted by:

Colleen Russell-Rawlins
Interim Director of Education
Recommendation:

It is recommended that Pradeep Sinha be re-appointed to the Peel District School Board Audit Committee as an External Member, for an additional 3-year term commencing March 1, 2020.

It is also recommended that Aine Sachdev be appointed to the Peel District School Board Audit Committee as an External Member for a 3-year term commencing September 23, 2020.

Background:

In accordance with Regulation 361/10, school board Audit Committees are required to include two external members who have accounting, financial management or other relevant business experience. Of the two current Audit Committee External Members whose term ended on February 28, 2020, only one agreed to extend their appointment for another 3-year term.

The Peel District School Board advertised for a second External Member. There was an excellent response from a number of qualified applicants. Interviews were conducted on September 22, 2020 by a selection committee comprised of Tania Alatishe-Charles, Controller of Finance Support Services and Jaspal Gill, Associate Director, Operational Support Services.

From the interview process, the following recommended individual has impressive experience and is a resident of Peel:

Aine Sachdev is a Chartered Accountant (C.A.) with over 10 years of experience in senior financial roles of various multi-national and private organizations.

Our current External Member who is being recommended for a second term, also has a wealth of experience and is also a resident of Peel:

Pradeep Sinha is a C.A. with over 20 years of experience in accounting, risk management and internal controls.

Prepared by: Tania Alatishe-Charles, Controller, Finance Support Services
Submitted by: Jaspal Gill, Associate Director, Operational Support Services