

Report of the Durham District School Board
Standing Committee Public Session
October 7, 2019

The regular meeting of the Standing Committee of the Durham District School Board was held this date in Room 1017, Education Centre, 400 Taunton Road East, Whitby:

1. Call to Order:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Members Present: Trustees Patrice Barnes, Michael Barrett, Chris Braney, Paul Crawford, Donna Edwards, Darlene Forbes, Niki Lundquist, Carolyn Morton, Ashley Noble, Scott Templeton, Christine Thatcher, Student Trustees Sally Meseret, Arlene Wang, Tyler West

Officials Present: Director Lisa Millar, Associate Director David Visser, Interim Associate Director Anne Marie Laginski, Superintendents Mohamed Hamid, Margaret Lazarus, Jamila Maliha, Jim Markovski, Andrea McAuley, Heather Mundy, Stephen Nevills, Silvia Peterson, Communications Manager Peter Blake, Communications Officer Charles Senior

Recording Secretary: Karen Douglas

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

3. Motion to Approved the Agenda

2019:17

MOVED by Trustee Christine Thatcher

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

4. Community Presentations

There were no community presentations at this time.

5. DDSB Presentations

(a) The Friend of Health Award

Superintendent Georgette Davis introduced Steffanie Pelleboer, Mental Health Leader who provided trustees with information about the Durham Region Health Department recognition of the Talking About Mental Illness (TAMI) coalition through the Friend of Health award. A presentation was made to Heather Hawco-Grey, Chair, of the coalition.

Trustee Carolyn Morton, Chair Michael Barrett and Director Lisa Millar participated in a photo opportunity with Heather Hawco-Grey.

Trustee Carolyn Morton stated that it has been an honour and privilege to work with Heather Hawco-Grey and noted that she will also be recognized for her work nationally on November 5th. She thanked her on behalf of the Board for her efforts on behalf of DDSB students.

(b) Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL)

Superintendent Stephen Nevills provided Trustees with information about Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) programming from September 2018 to June 2019.

Nicole Rands, SAL Facilitator shared a PowerPoint relating to SAL which is governed under Regulation 374/1- to provide students from ages 14 – 17 who have difficulty with regular attendance at school with an individualized plan and alternative learning experience that supports the student in achieving success and progressing towards their Ontario Secondary School diploma and their personal goals. The program provides extra support in a specialized and flexible learning environment and through targeted interventions, focusing on well-being and mental health with caring adults, peers and the community at large. Activities in the classroom are as varied and diverse as the students. Several videos of student voices who participated in SAL were included in the PowerPoint presentation stating their pride of gains made, being taught to believe in themselves again and restoring hope for the future.

They also answered questions of trustees.

(c) Leveraging Digital Update

Superintendent Jamila Maliha introduced David Rule, Chief Technology Officer, and Tim Ralph, Innovative Education Officer who provided Trustees with information relating to the current state of the DDSB Leveraging Digital initiative within the Innovative Strategic Priorities. The Board is currently embarking onto the third year of the Leveraging Digital initiative in providing modern, collaborative, student centred tools and learning spaces.

David Rule, Chief Technology Officer stated that in 2019/2020, the Board will complete the rollout of the Chromebook deploying over 42,000 units to students. Teacher training is continuing and deepening. In a survey in 2018 of over 6,000 students, teachers and administrators, 91% of participants stated that the Chromebook technology is making a positive impact on their learning. 80% of teachers and 90% of administrators have met with the Educational Technology Coach.

Tim Ralph, Innovative Education Officer stated that Educational Technology coaches have been deployed throughout the Board to work with teachers to plan with them and show them how to leverage digital in their learning spaces. Learning spaces, hallways and furnishings have also been redesigned to allow for more collaboration. In the survey conducted, 91% of respondents reported positive impacts on student wellness, 77% on student self-regulation and 91% on a positive impact of engagement and time on task

David Rule stated that many tools, including Google Read and Write were deployed for students which has been a great tool for students. They have also been supports for EQAO and test writing, removing barriers. Over 12,000 books have been signed out of the DDSB central depository.

Tim Ralph stated that the D2L/Brightspace Learning Management environment was launched for professional learning. More than 3,000 staff will complete online learning in the areas of Health and Safety and Cyber-Security.

David Rule stated that through strong partnerships between departments, the Board is able to leverage resources in innovative, positive and effective ways for student learning. A video produced for use in principal training relating to leveraging digital was shown.

David Rule and Tim Ralph also answered questions of trustees.

(d)

(e) Mental Health and Well-Being Update

Superintendent Georgette Davis introduced Steffanie Pelleboer, Mental Health Leader, and Angela Davis, Facilitator – The Arts and Health and Physical Education and they provided information on the year one (2018-2019) implementation of the DDSB Well-Being and Mental Health Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The year one priority of welcome and inclusion was focused on intentionally and explicitly creating school and classroom-based environments where all students feel welcomed physically, socially and emotionally.

Steffanie Pelleboer stated that the project they were focusing on for the purpose of this presentation was the “Mentor Text” project. It was piloted at Norman G. Powers PS. When students are preoccupied with emotional concerns, it can make it difficult to learn. The Mentor Text project allows for meaningful conversations about mental health and well-being essential to maintaining positive mental health.

Angela Davis stated that Mentor Texts can be used for many different purposes, exposing students to new ideas and experiences. They provide an excellent opportunity for building social and emotional learning skills to build resiliency. A video was shown about the pilot project at Norman G. Powers PS.

Nazneen Dindar, Principal, Norman G. Powers PS, Matt Taylor, Erin Zaffino and Jenn Bayford, Teachers, Norman G. Powers PS outlined feedback from the pilot project for Mentor Texts at their school. Teachers developed a deeper understanding of being culturally responsive, and the program offered tangible resources in which to put their commitment into every day practice. The project enabled conversations around mental health in a comfortable environment and allowed students to tell their stories. Discussions are continuing to reinforce the importance of well-being, and it has been an effective and powerful tool.

They also answered questions of Trustees.

(e) Trade Mission

This item was deferred to the November 4, 2019 Standing Committee meeting.

7. Recommended Actions

There were no recommended actions at this time.

8. Information Items

(a) Student Trustee Report

Student Trustee Tyler West advised that on Friday, September 20th, the Board hosted the Annual Student Senate Leadership Symposium which gives student leaders an opportunity to improve their leadership skills and to be effective leaders in the Board. Posters and information on “Student Voice” were distributed and this has been well received.

Student Trustee Arlene Wang stated that earlier that evening, the first Student Senate meeting for 2019/2020 was held. Over 30 Student Senators attended and elections were held. They were very pleased with the discussion and enthusiasm exhibited and are working towards positive change through the school year.

Student Trustee Sally Meseret restated that they are looking forward to building on the work from last year.

(b) Parent Involvement Committee Report – 2019-2020 Committee Representatives

Superintendent Heather Mundy presented the membership for the DDSB Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) 2019-2020 for the Board’s information.

(c) Graduation Rates

Superintendent Stephen Nevills presented the provincially recently released graduation rates for the 2013-2014 Grade 9 Cohort. He noted that due to the collective efforts of students, parents, teachers and our strategic priority of success from Kindergarten through Grade 12, the DDSB graduation rate has risen above the provincial average. This data relates to the cohort of students entering secondary school in 2013-2014 and it showed that 82% graduated with four years. Of the students who continued into a fifth year, 88% had graduated the following year. The Board is very proud of these rates.

(d) Release of EQAO and OSSLT Results

Superintendents Silvia Peterson and Chris Conley, Manager, Research and Assessment, presented Trustees for their information the results of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessments for 2018-2019 Primary (Grades 1 – 3), Junior (Grades 4 – 6), Grade 9 Mathematics (Academic and Applied) and Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). Students at the DDSB were at or above the provincial average in all areas of the assessment. Educators and support staff are committed to student success and are working hard to improve every year.

They also answered questions of Trustees.

Director Lisa Millar stated that Superintendents will be setting up meetings with Trustees to review demographic information, EQAO assessment data and monitoring plans, tailored to schools in their respective areas to allow for Trustee voice.

(e) Ontario Ministry of Education Released Updates

Superintendents Silvia Peterson and Stephen Nevills presented Trustees with an update on the recent announcements made by the Ministry of Education including an addendum to the Kindergarten Program, the revised Grade 10 Careers Curriculum and changes to the elementary report card. The changes are relatively minor in the larger scope of curriculum reform.

They responded to questions from Trustees.

(f) Capital Approval Update

Associate Director David Visser provided Trustees with an update regarding Ministry of Education approval of the following two new school construction projects: Unnamed North Ajax French Immersion PS and Unnamed North Whitby PS. The Board now has approval to proceed to tender for these projects. If the tenders are successful, the projects will continue.

In response to a question from Trustee Carolyn Morton, Superintendent David Visser stated that advocacy will continue with the Ministry of Education for the Beaverton PS/Thorah Central PS rebuild, particularly given subdivision growth in the area.

(f) Dress Code Policy Update

Superintendent Georgette Davis provided Trustees with the process and timelines to be used to revise the Policy and Regulation *Student Dress Code*. Each school in the Board is responsible for establishing and annually reviewing a Dress Code for students that promotes a safe and respectful environment for teaching and learning. A Dress Code Policy Flowchart/Critical Pathway has been established, and input will be requested through a consultation process from two Trustees and Student Trustees.

In response to a question from Trustee Patrice Barnes, Superintendent Georgette Davis stated that she would add an online component for community input, in multi languages. This will also be added to the flowcharts.

Trustees Ashley Noble and Patrice Barnes volunteered to serve as the Trustee representatives on the Dress Code consultation.

Superintendent Davis responded to questions from Trustees.

(b) OPSBA Report

Trustee Donna Edwards advised that the Policy and Programs Committee met on September 20th and EQAO representatives attended the meeting to discuss the future of the EQAO and potential changes to the denominator. Students who are new English language learners may be excluded from the test. The Student Trustee Association was also present. Sam Oosterhoff, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education spoke about future directions.

At the Director's meeting, the Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce presented his vision for education; unfortunately there was not an opportunity for questions.

In addition at the Director's meeting, there were discussions relating to labour, staffing issues and upcoming legislation, regulation around Education Development Charges as well as PPM 128, the Provincial Code of Conduct and road safety through speed enforcement. Discussion also took place relating to ensuring that the role of Trustees is known. Typically the third last week of October is local government week. Because of the federal election, we have not heard from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs about Local Government Week. This week typically also runs into municipal election periods so there was some talk about rescheduling the week to ensure that local schools and boards can invite Trustees to visit Grade 5 and Grade 10 civics classes. A package around electoral messages was developed to ask questions of federal candidates.

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9. Committee Reports

There were no Committee reports at this time.

10. Correspondence

There was no correspondence at this time.

11. Other Business

12. Adjournment

2019:18

MOVED by Trustee Christine Thatcher

THAT THE MEETING DOES NOW ADJOURN.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Chair

Secretary