



HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD PROGRAM AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

October 17, 2011

Members present: J. Cobb, B. Danes, T. Goodfellow, Chair, L. Kyle, J. Williams, Vice-chair

Student Trustee: I. Christ

Regrets: None

Guests: None

Resource: C. DeMille, T. FitzGibbon, R. McGall, C. Portt, J. Rogers, M. Savery-Whiteway

Minutes: C. Reid, Administrative Assistant

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Delegations/presentations - None

Approval of agenda

Moved: B. Danes
Seconded: J. Cobb

That the agenda be approved.

Carried

Approval of minutes

Moved: L. Kyle
Seconded: J. Williams

That the minutes of the September 19, 2011 regular meeting be approved.

A question was raised regarding comments that were not captured in the minutes related to the textbook/novel approval item. It was noted that that the minutes are intended to be a summary of the discussions, rather than verbatim minutes. It was agreed that the information contained in the minutes accurately captured the discussion.

Carried

Business arising from the minutes - None

Information

Timed item: Children's mental health update

Superintendent Rogers introduced Julie Pohlman-Brogee and Tanya Whittaker who have been involved in the *Working Together for Kids' Mental Health* demonstration project. The Ministry of Education, Ministry of Children and Youth Services and Ministry of Health and Long Term Care have placed a huge emphasis on improving mental health for children in all school boards in Ontario. Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board was one of four organizations asked to participate in the demonstration project. As part of the project, school staff were trained to assist with the identification of mental health needs using various assessment tools. As a result of the demonstration project provincial standards and expectations will be developed for use across the province.

Child and youth counselors, resource teachers, special education department heads and guidance staff will be trained on the use of the screening tools in the schools with students and family members. Following an assessment, a referral is made to Children's Mental Health that by-passes the usual intake process and expedites the process to make it more user-friendly and accessible for families. A train-the-trainer model is being used in schools to train other staff.

It was noted that there are four assessment tools being used and copies of those assessment were circulated for committee members to review. Staff will be trained to determine the best tool to use based on the age, behaviour and areas of concern. Although these are not diagnostic assessments, they are helpful to use when communicating with parents because they provide something in writing that is not just an opinion but an actual standardized assessment.

Assistant Superintendent DeMille commented that mental health awareness and literacy is part of the AiM system plan and aligns with the provincial mandate. A number of initiatives are being planned in the areas of awareness, literacy and reducing stigma associated with mental illness. Mental Illness Awareness Week took place from October 3 to 7, 2011. To assist in raising awareness, Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board planned a community event that included a student performance by Elevated Grounds. Next steps involve bringing a focus group together to build on community connections and brainstorm initiatives, including a mental health literacy half or full day presentation, ABC's of mental health website training; and a similar production using students and involving community partners that will focus on other areas in the district.

Clarification was sought regarding the screening tools. It was noted that some involve self-assessment and some involve parent and staff assessment depending on the age of the child and the particular situation. Copies of the assessments are available and will be emailed to committee members. A question was raised regarding the number of students involved in the project and how they were selected. Approximately 55-60 students were involved school teams trained in the use of the assessment tools determined if there were students struggling with some sort of concern and obtained parental permission to do the assessments. All of the information sent to Children's Mental Health contained no names, just numbers. The information was sent from the local agency to the three ministry agencies leading the project. A full report of the results is to be received within the next month.

Mental health staffing update

Superintendent Rogers announced that through the three ministries noted above, schools are receiving mental health support workers to work in schools. Children's Mental Health Services has contacted the board and will provide a mental health support worker in the north, shared between North Hastings High School and York River Public School two days a week. There will also be one mental health support worker shared between Madoc Public School and Madoc Township Public School. Children's Mental Health completed an analysis to determine greatest area of need. In addition, Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board is one of fifteen boards in the province selected to receive \$120,000 to hire a mental health leader who will be responsible for leading the mental health strategy in the board. This position will be filled by someone who is not an educator and has expertise in the areas of social work, psychology or psychiatry. The job description is being developed and will go through job evaluation process. This position will work with local agencies and will develop a mental health strategy. In addition \$25,000 is being provided to develop the strategy and \$20,000 release time for educators to assist in developing strategy. This is a pilot project that will be rolled out to other boards in the future.

A question was raised regarding other schools being able to consult with mental health support workers. At this time, the mental health support workers will only be offering support at the schools noted above, but it is anticipated that the program will grow following the pilot period. There will still be child and youth counselors in all schools to support students. Director McGall commented that this is an encouraging announcement from the ministries. Children's mental health is a priority and the students will benefit from this initiative. The mental health leader will ensure a district wide focus that will support students throughout the board.

Superintendent Savery-Whiteway provided clarification regarding the projected timeline of the hiring of the mental health leader. The job evaluation process has begun and the job evaluation committee will meet within the next week. Following that a posting will be generated and the position will be filled as quickly as possible. A question was raised regarding the necessary qualifications of the mental health leader. It was noted that the board received a sample job description with specific requirements. The successful candidate will require a post-secondary education in a related field. Anyone, whether internal or external who has the necessary qualifications may apply to be considered for the position.

Clarification was sought regarding how this information will be shared with parents and students. Since this is a new initiative, it will be necessary for administrators, child and youth counselors and the children's mental health worker to come together to look at how this will be rolled out in the most transparent way possible.

Recommendations

Start time for Program and Human Resources Committee meetings

Superintendent FitzGibbon reviewed Report No. B-1 and noted that the Program and Human Resources Committee passed a motion at its June 2011 meeting changing the start time of its meetings to 5:30 p.m. In months when other meetings occur on the same evening that committee had suggested that start times may be adjusted accordingly. Discussion at Operations and Finance Committee meetings has occurred with respect to having a committee start time of 7:00 p.m. Such a move requires the Program and Human Resources Committee to keep their start times to 5:30 p.m. even on days when multiple committee meetings occur in the same evening.

Moved: J. Williams
Seconded: J. Cobb

That the start time of the all regular meetings of the Program and Human Resources Committee be 5:30 p.m. effective October, 2011, as contained in Program and Human Resources Committee Report No. B-1, dated October 17, 2011.

Carried

Information

Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week update

Superintendent Savery-Whiteway reviewed Report No. C-1 and stated that this is now an annual event. The Ministry of Education has designated November 14 – 18, 2011 as Ontario's Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. A meeting of the Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week Steering Committee was held on Wednesday, September 15, 2011. The committee is engaged in planning at a system and community level. Specific details will be forthcoming. Safe Schools Teams are encouraged to plan school based events to highlight the importance of addressing bullying during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. Principals will submit a list of events taking place at their schools during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week and a system-wide inventory will be compiled. Promotional information will be available through the board's website and throughout the community. Various new promotional items will be available. As a result of student feedback, those items will incorporate different colours this year. It was noted that some community agencies will also be supporting the initiative financially.

A plan is being developed to make parents and community partners aware of this important initiative. Discussions have taken place with local police forces, children's mental and safe communities to put out a newsletter to entire community that will go out to the entire community that will be inclusive

Student achievement update

Superintendent FitzGibbon and Assistant Superintendent Portt presented information regarding student achievement in a presentation entitled *Learning is the Work*. Ministry of Education goals include high levels of student achievement, reduced gaps in student achievement and increased public confidence in education. The concept of coherence and alignment with those goals was discussed and how the province, district and schools lead learning and support the instructional core. It was noted that the AiM system goal entitled Success for Each Student aligns with the Ministry direction and is further supported by the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA). The BIPSA, which was developed based on an analysis of needs, is a Ministry mandated plan that articulates how the board will support students in the four areas of literacy, numeracy, pathways and community culture and caring. The current BIPSA runs from January to December to allow schools to pick up in September where they left off in June. This allows the board time between September and December to review results, to make plans for January and work with schools to development their School Improvement Plans for Student Achievement (SIPSA).

The concept of the instructional core was reviewed, noting the importance of the quality of the relationship between student, teacher and curriculum related to learning tasks. A comment was made regarding the critical role of parents and where parents fit within the diagram and it was clarified that the learning tasks reference in the diagram is specific to in-school learning tasks. The parent involvement component is directly linked to the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) as part of the home, school and community partnerships section. The SEF outlines critical indicators that supports students and identifies effective practices that enable schools to help students learn.

The professional learning cycle was reviewed, noting that the first two steps in the cycle, which occur in the fall are observing and reflecting. The next two steps in the cycle are planning and acting. The observation and reflection of the BIPSA and the SIPSA help to determine progress and provide direction for the planning and acting. When making observations, four key forms of data are reviewed: demographic data; student achievement data; program data; and perceptual data. This data is then reflected upon to determine strengths and areas of need.

To provide an example of BIPSA goal progress program data and student achievement data in the area of primary and junior Math was reviewed. It was noted that this is only a small snapshot of all of the information that will be presented at the October Board meeting. The EQAO results for primary and junior Math were reviewed, noting that results were down 1% in primary 5% in junior. These results mirror the results across the province. In addition to the EQAO data, teams are looking at report card data and other data that is available to compare and dig deeper into the reasons for the decrease in EQAO results. More detailed reports from EQAO are being received and will be analyzed in further detail.

Comments were made regarding the EQAO test occurring only in Grades 3 and 6, which doesn't show success achieved in Grades 4 and 5. As part of the data analysis, teams are looking at comparing Grade 3 student specific data to Grade 6 data to see if students maintained, decreased, increased their results to get a better picture of learning over time. It was confirmed that the parent does not receive this cohort data but does receive an EQAO report in Grade 3 and then a Report in Grade 6. Both of these are kept on file at the school and are available for discussion with the parent if the parent wanted to see a comparison of the results.

A number of Ministry initiatives for 2010-2011 were noted that support student achievement. Specifically, the Collaborative Inquiry Learning in Math initiative was reviewed. This initiative involves collaborative inquiry in the classroom where teachers plan lessons together and then co-teach the lessons while a number of teachers observe. They then look at student work and determine what the students need next. This is considered job-embedded professional learning. There were four schools involved in this project with a lead facilitator from the Ministry. Those four schools were linked with three schools from Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board. All teachers got together eleven times during the school year with a focus on Grade 3 and Grade 6 Math. The results of this project were significant. Of the three schools involved in the Primary Math project, two showed significant improvement of 15% and 19%. In Junior Math, four schools participated and three showed improvement of 8%, 9% and 12%.

Comments were made and clarification was provided regarding the voluntary involvement of teachers in the EQAO testing and marking process. It was noted that EQAO testing is part of provincial policy but is only one tool that is used to determine the success of students. Local teacher federations continue to be supportive of the board's efforts to try to improve student achievement. The board continues to focus on early intervention strategies with a wide variety of tools, working directly with classroom teachers who give their best efforts to improve student achievement.

Trustee proposals and queries

None

Correspondence – None

The Program and Human Resources Committee moved into closed session at 7:06 p.m.