

Upper Grand District School Board

Program Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

The Program Committee of Upper Grand District School Board met virtually and in person in the Board Room on Tuesday, January 5, 2021, commencing at 7:00 p.m.

The Chairperson Trustee Topping presided, and the following Trustees were present: Bailey, Busutil, Campbell, Edwards, Foley, Lustgarten Evoy, MacNeil, and Ross, together with student Trustee Kim Tran. Also in attendance were Director of Education Rogers, Student Success Lead Zen, and Superintendents Heaslip, Lindsay, McDonald, Slater, and Van Ooteghem.

Agenda

Trustee MacNeil requested that the agenda be amended to include an In Camera session.

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy moved that the agenda be approved as printed.

The motion carried.

Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest.

Approval of Minutes

Trustee Campbell moved that the minutes of the meeting held on November 3, 2020 be approved as printed.

The motion carried.

Report from Student Trustee, Kim Tran

Kim Tran reported that, on Tuesday November 17th and Tuesday December 15th the student senate meetings were held virtually, with a good turnout of 15 students from 8 schools. At the November meeting, Mental Health Lead Jenny Marino presented the School Mental Health Ontario booklet "No Problem Too Big or Too Small", which is a help-seeking resource for students by students. Jenny shared the Umbrella project and the focus for November was gratitude. She reminded students of the power of gratitude

and the importance of seeking support in times of stress. IT Liaison Bill MacKenzie, presented interesting facts that are especially relevant to the shift to online learning. At the December meeting, Curriculum Lead Ian Macpherson presented "Post Secondary Financial Literacy". His interactive presentation helps students understand the responsibilities of moving into adulthood including the significant task of budget, money management, spending, and saving. Thanks were expressed to Administration Officer - Communications Megan Sicoli for updating the student senate webpage.

Recommendation # 1

Trustee Bailey moved that the verbal update from Student Trustees be received, with thanks.

The motion carried.

Mental Health Update

Mental Health and Addiction Lead Jenny Marino provided an update on Mental Health initiatives under the Umbrella Project, the topic for November was Gratitude, for December, the topic was Empathy, and the topic for January, was Self Compassion. Teachers are encouraged to use these monthly themes to engage in equity based conversations. In January, Mental Health and Addiction Lead Marino challenged everyone to take compassion inward. An annual donation was received from the Learning Foundation in the amount of \$18,000 which will be used to help fund the Mental Health initiatives. Student engagement, parent and family engagement, support during and after isolation, and suicide training were all highlighted.

Recommendation # 2

Trustee Ross moved that the verbal update on Mental Health be received, with thanks.

The motion carried.

Trustee Community Building

Trustee Ross commented that the role of a Trustee as a representative of the Board is not just specific to a particular community, but is responsible to the whole geographic area of the Board. Considering the responsibility to make decisions that affect all communities represented by the Board, she questioned the best avenue for Trustees to gain more information. Staff reports provide important information, but the community perspective is often missing. Trustee Ross believed that Trustees would benefit from

perspectives of various communities. It was suggested that school newsletters, long-term accommodation plans, parent council minutes and Twitter tweets would be good avenues to explore.

Recommendation # 3

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy moved that the Trustee Community Building verbal report be received.

The motion carried.

First Nation Métis Inuit Updates

Superintendent Van Ooteghem, noted that the purpose of this item was to provide Trustees with an update on the work that the Upper Grand DSB has been engaged in, with relation to First Nation Métis Inuit education. She noted that students and staff will be offered new learning on Colonialism in education and rights of Indigenous peoples, with the hope to challenge past learnings on the subject.

First Nation Métis Inuit Curriculum Lead Colinda Clyne, presented a very in-depth presentation on the current and future education plans. She noted that although there was job action in November and then COVID-19 restrictions, she was amazed at how much work had been done in the area of First Nation Métis Inuit education. She mentioned tours and lodges attended by teachers, as well as cultural centers. One of the student focused highlights included an elder in the community who spoke to Indigenous youth regarding Indigenous knowledge and math. This particular math project is a research project, highlighting relationship and reciprocity and the connection with math. Drawings were used for world-wide environmental awareness. Another project addressed bringing children home, to address the high rate of Indigenous youth in child services. During COVID-19 restrictions, through collaboration with communities and Principals, care packages were sent to families in need. Professional development support for teachers and community partners was provided through live streaming. At the Board meeting in June of 2019, the Board made a commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression, which provided a solid chance of moving things forward, and that community partners felt the same. In order to provide assistance during COVID-19 restrictions which resulted in isolation, students created artistic masks. These masks will be displayed at either the Guelph Civic Museum or the Art Gallery of Guelph, so that others can view the work done. It was hoped that this year, people will get a better understanding of this land; understand colonialism and the ongoing impact on current communities; recognize anti-racism, relationships and reciprocity; recognize how we are we building relationships with community partners to guide and lead the work in the

system, and how we are giving back to community members. Mrs. Clyne noted that if Colonialism is the only system that people have ever known, then people cannot recognize it. We need to relearn how we behave and change our habits. In regards to Truth and Reconciliation, the United Nations declared that Indigenous peoples have the right to be reflected appropriately in public education, and initiatives. Trustees expressed thanks for the very in-depth report. Trustee Busuttil suggested that the advisory committee make recommendations to the Board, noting that the committee had conversation with the community and ask the Provincial government to act on some situations, and to be politically active and stretch voices and awareness.

Recommendation # 4

Trustee Busuttil moved that the First Nation Métis Inuit Updates verbal report be received.

The motion carried.

Board Improvement Plan

Principal of Program Jonathan Walker shared this year's Board Improvement Plan. He stated that, the core function of school is to optimize the outcomes for students including both academic achievement as well as student wellness. It is for this reason sections on well-being, equity, and academic excellence were included. This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was evident that it was necessary to take a new approach to the BIPSA as this year was not 'business as usual'. The goal was to lessen the expectations for educators to allow them to focus on the new realities of their jobs. To meet this goal the BIPSA underwent a revision and continues to focus on well being, equity as well as curriculum and assessment.

The mental health and well-being information will focus on the safety and well-being of both students and staff. The focus of the equity and inclusive education section will provide relevant and responsive resources for staff to ensure that students are provided with a positive climate in all schools. The curriculum goal is to highlight the importance of all curriculum subjects from kindergarten to grade 12 with a focus on literacy and numeracy and to ensure that educators continue to provide students with the appropriate and necessary supports to be successful in school. With the time away from school last year, due to COVID-19 changes in teaching platforms, it is important for teachers to perform diagnostics and other academic assessments to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their students. Mr. Walker noted that it was hoped that schools will use the BIPSA as their school's School Improvement Plan (SIP) for this

year. All four areas highlighted in the plan are relevant in all elementary, secondary, French Immersion, rural, and remote schools. Mr. Walker advised that The BIPSA was shared with Principals in both elementary and secondary panels to highlight the changes and to seek feedback for the next edition.

Trustees asked questions of clarification and expressed thanks for the report and global digital competency. Trustee Busuttil requested that, at a future meeting, a comprehensive presentation on the overview of data collection would be very useful. Superintendent Van Ooteghem reported that every two years the Board is required to do a climate survey. However, last year it was caught up in COVID-19 chaos. She noted that a comprehensive report would be coming in the very near future.

Recommendation # 5

Trustee Edwards moved that the verbal Board Improvement Plan report be received.

The motion carried.

OPSBA Report – nil report

Trustee MacNeil moved that this committee move In Camera.

The motion carried.

In Camera

Adjournment

Trustee Ross moved that this Committee adjourn at 8:50 p.m. to report to the Board.

The motion carried.

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