



PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, January 12, 2021
5:30 pm – M.S. Teams
AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Business Arising from the Minutes
4. New Business:
 - DSBN Academy Presentation.....Helen McGregor & Lisa Nazar
 - Technology Program Update.....Leanne Smith
 - Menstrual Equity.....Leanne Smith
 - Secondary Programming Update.....Leanne Smith & Helen McGregor
5. Other Business
6. Adjournment
7. Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.



DSBN Academy Update Program and Planning January 12, 2021

Background:

DSBN Academy opened in 2011 and was founded by DSBN Trustees and designed by a committed group of educators to help first generation students in Niagara overcome barriers to academic achievement and personal challenges.

Prior to DSBN Academy's opening, statistics indicated that Niagara Region as having one of the highest unemployment rates in Canada. Fewer young people in Niagara were attending university at rates nearly 10% below the Ontario average and 1 in 6 children were living in poverty. Additional data indicated that first generation students were 2.4 times less likely to attend college or university.

DSBN Academy is a grade 6 to 12 school designed to remove barriers to learning and create opportunities that are often only afforded to more affluent students. Key strategies include a mission, vision and core values shared by all members of the school community.

OUR MISSION

DSBN Academy is committed to fostering a culture of high expectations where each student is encouraged, supported, and empowered to distinguish themselves academically and to become competitively eligible for admission and future graduation from a post-secondary institution.

OUR VISION

DSBN Academy's Vision is "**Achievement through Opportunity.**" Programming decisions, instructional practices, extra-curricular experiences, post-secondary connections, and resources are focused to remove barriers and create opportunities for each DSBN Academy student.



OUR VALUES

DSBN Academy staff and students are committed to a process of teaching and learning in an environment that embraces and instils our set of **C.O.R.E. Values**: Commitment, Optimism, Respect, and Excellence.

Implementation of key strategies centre upon a single-track program, school uniform, mandatory after-school enrichment program, advisory program, parent engagement, community partnerships, and school consistency with transportation being provided to students from all 12 Niagara municipalities. Community partnerships are integral and include Education Foundation Niagara, Brock University, Niagara College, Big Brothers Sisters Niagara, and Niagara Nutrition Partners.

Impact:

To date, four classes have graduated with a total of 182 graduates. Student success reflects the impact of DSBN Academy strategy with the graduation rate being consistently higher than the DSBN overall graduation rate.

DSBN Academy Graduate Data:

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Potential Graduates	47	57	41	45
4 Year Graduation Rate	96% (45 students)	98% (56 students)	88% (36 students)	96% (43 students)
Adjusted 5 Year Graduation Rate	96% (45 students)	98% (56 students)	90% (38 students)	TBD
Potential Grads - Application & Acceptance to Post Secondary	100%	100%	100%	100%
College Applications	51%	62%	34%	56%
University Applications	49%	38%	66%	44%

The DSBN Academy supports students throughout their school journey as they encounter successes and challenges while attending DSBN Academy. When preparing for their transition to post-secondary education, staff assist students to apply for bursaries, awards, and scholarships. Students often express their appreciation for the support they received in their scholarship applications and through thank you letters. Here are some examples:

My classmates and teachers gave me all the support I needed to get through high school. They helped me find a passion and build skills and have dreams that I know I can achieve.
~ Graduate of 2017

When I moved to the DSBN Academy everything changed. What made a big improvement in my life about coming to this school, is how much the teachers showed they cared. Also, how much time they took out of their own time to help us with school-work.
~ Graduate of 2017

The DSBN Academy has completely changed my life and has felt like less of a school and more of a second family. I've been going here since Grade 6, this has allowed me to grow and develop relationships for 6 years, that's a third of my life. My hopes are to take all of the life skills DSBN Academy has taught me such as Commitment, Optimism, Respect, and Excellence, and apply them throughout my life in order to grow and achieve.
~ Graduate of 2018

Choosing to leave my home school and apply to the DSBN Academy was an important life-changing event for me. It was difficult for me to willingly choose to switch elementary schools after already having to change three times before second grade. I knew that I would need extra support while trying to find my way to a post-secondary institute. Growing up, there was no elder figure in my family who had attended a post-secondary institution so coming to the Academy relieved a lot of my stress. I knew that being at the Academy would provide the support and guidance I needed.

~ Graduate of 2018

My experience at the Academy has been life altering for I went from someone thinking I had no potential to thinking there's potential in everyone and everything. I believed I was limited by my home life and that I wasn't going to accomplish anything anyone would be proud of and now I'm accomplishing everything I put my mind to and am making myself proud. Overall I would say the biggest aspect at the Academy that influenced me was the amazingly supportive staff. All the teachers at the Academy believe in their students and push them to be their best selves, they care and they show it. I'm thankful I had the Academy staff to push and believe in me because I wouldn't be where I am without it.

~ Graduate of 2018

When I first came to the DSBN Academy I was a struggling student. I was someone who was quiet, shy, and did not really enjoy school or participate in school life. This school pushed me to grow as a young individual. I have become a leader not only amongst my peers but also with my Indigenous background. I strongly believe that the goals and aspirations I have today would not exist if it were not for the DSBN Academy.

~ Graduate of 2019

The DSBN Academy has influenced me to be a dedicated and hard-working role model, and a confident member of society. The faculty might be aggravating and annoying to many students by being on their case to hand in work. The reasoning for this is because every single teacher in this school genuinely cares for their students like we're their children. Having a variety of disruptions throughout my duration at DSBN Academy I have always had a teacher reach out to ask if I need someone to talk to. Teachers make sure that we are taken care of no matter the circumstance which I will forever be grateful for.

~ Graduate of 2019

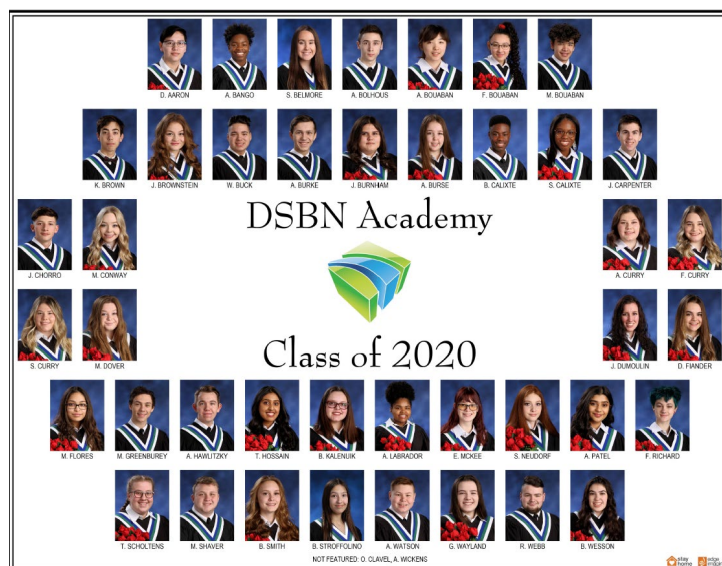
This school has influenced me to be the best version of myself and to always know that the sky's the limit. Moving on to the future, I hope to become an amazing kindergarten-grade 1 teacher and inhabit all of the skills and characteristics of all the staff at the DSBN Academy. I want to be able to support my students in the ways that I have gotten support from the staff since grade 6.

~ Graduate of 2020

DSBN Academy has given me countless opportunities for enrichment and academic support that most schools fail to offer. The Encore program, which makes our school most unique, has allowed me to participate in activities that are of interest to me. It has also helped me to improve on many skills such as communication and leadership, which are very important for post-secondary. I can confidently say that Encore has encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and benefitted me extremely, as I am able to use my experiences in my senior year and in the future to build on my personal profile.

~ Graduate of 2020

The school continues to support students with post-secondary processes after they graduate. Graduates regularly connect with the school to update staff on their progress.



Current Year Updates:

This Fall, as a result of student voice feedback, the DSNB Academy Creed was updated to better reflect society today. Students and staff recite the creed each morning.

WE BELIEVE!
 WE ARE DSNB ACADEMY.
 WE HAVE A FUTURE FOR WHICH WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE.
 WE WILL BE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY GRADUATES.
 WE ARE COMMITTED AND OPTIMISTIC.
 WE STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE, NOT BECAUSE WE SAY IT,
 BUT BECAUSE WE WORK HARD FOR IT.
 WE SEE OBSTACLES AS OPPORTUNITIES TO PERSEVERE AND GROW.
 WE MAKE NO EXCUSES.
 WE RESPECT OURSELVES AND EMBRACE DIVERSITY.
 WE STAND TOGETHER AND ADVOCATE FOR WHAT'S RIGHT.
 WE BELIEVE IN OURSELVES.
 WE BELIEVE IN EACH OTHER.
 WE BELIEVE IN DSNB ACADEMY.
 WE ARE THE ARGONAUTS.
 WE BELIEVE AND WE WILL ACHIEVE!

Although the pandemic prevented a formal graduation opportunity, The Class of 2020 graduates were able to come to the school in October and individually receive their diploma outdoors from their Principal and Vice Principal. Their teachers attended online and were cheering for them! We are extremely proud of the perseverance of "The Class of 2020".



On November 30, secondary students returned to in-person learning. Several students were challenged with the adaptive model of learning but were able to make great gains in December.

Upon their full-time return, students told staff:

- *They were hopeful that they would get back on track academically with their courses*
- *They were thrilled to spend time in classes five days/week again because they could work directly with teachers and see their friends from the alternate cohort*
- *It was easier to get up in the morning because they had a regular routine*
- *They were relieved because they found it challenging to complete work when they were learning remotely*
- *Student Council was excited and could plan spirit activities with all in-person learners present.*

On December 9, DSBN Academy held their annual Post-Secondary Application Day and 40 students applied to post-secondary schools. Financial support was provided for application fees. This is a celebratory event for staff and students as it is the culmination of goals students set for themselves when they entered the school. As each student completed their application, a bell was rung, and they were cheered by their peers and staff. This year, a very special moment occurred when an elementary teacher brought several groups of Grade 6 students to the cafeteria window to show them the excitement taking place and reminded them that they too would be applying as the Class of 2027.



Respectfully submitted,

Helen McGregor

Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Achievement (9-12)



TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMMING UPDATE PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE January 12, 2021

Rationale:

Technology including Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (OYAP) continue to be an important programming option for students in the DSBN. Students have been learning online more than ever this past year and we continually look at creative ways to adapt and promote technology and skilled trades to our students.

Overview:

Our Board has very generously supported Technology in DSBN and in 2018-19 school year infused one million dollars to update and expand technology available to students. Each year, we have expanded SHSM programming, won medals at both the provincial and national Skills competitions, and encouraged more students to pursue a career in the skilled trades.

With the return to learning this year in an adaptive model, we have launched several virtual opportunities for students to learn more about technology and skilled trades. Some of these new activities include:

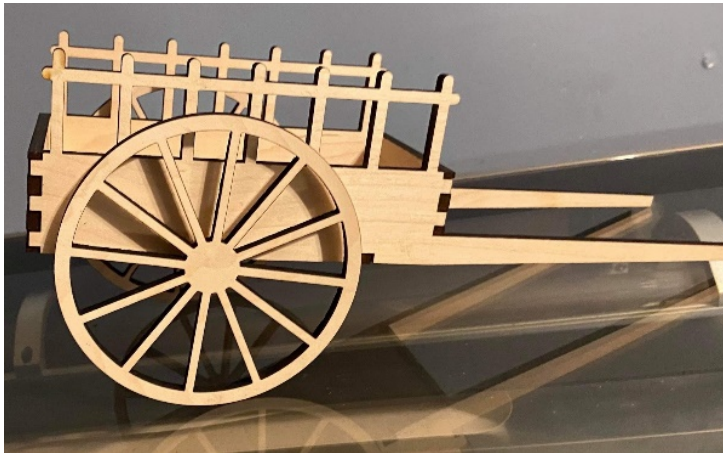
- DSBN Tech Talks which engages students and brings technology and guest speakers from a variety of sectors into the classroom.



- Young Women in Trades transitioned to a virtual four-part series including sessions on construction (below), motive power, industrial and service sectors.



- Exploring Your Future while learning about the Metis, a virtual event to explore the skilled trades while building a model Red River Metis cart



Our regional programs -- DigIT and Home Build have continued with the return to school in September. Last year, students at both the Home Build and DigIT programs also earned a Dual Credit. This opportunity will continue in Semester 2.

Thank you for ongoing support of technology programs in the DSBN.

Respectfully submitted,

Leanne Smith
Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Achievement (9-12)



MENSTRUAL EQUITY REPORT TO PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE January 12, 2021

Rationale:

Menstrual equity aims to remove the barriers faced by people who are unable to access or afford hygiene products. Readily available menstrual products in schools should not only be viewed as an issue of economic access. Rather, it is also very much about helping remove the stigma surrounding periods.

Background:

In this year's budget, the Board supported providing free menstrual products in every DSBN school. Free menstrual products are now available in every elementary and secondary school; however, students must ask or come to the office for them. Our goal is to provide at least one location (ideally a single occupancy washroom) in each school where free products are readily available.

Communication:

The communications team with input from the Student Senate finalized the advertising posters and labels for schools. The "Free products, period." posters and labels are now posted in our schools to help students identify the washroom(s) that contain free product.

Timelines:

We have ordered the free dispensing units. These are expected to be installed in every school by the end of January. Until they arrive, schools have selected an appropriate washroom location to provide free menstrual products (items placed in a basket, for example).

Thank you for supporting this important initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

Leanne Smith

Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Achievement (9-12)





Secondary Programming Update Program and Planning January 12, 2021

Overview

DSBN developed a plan to adapt the programming in secondary schools for Semester 1 to meet both the framework provided by the Ministry of Education and all health and safety protocols. Throughout the semester, we continuously reviewed our programming and gathered feedback from various stakeholders. Our goal was to regularly review how we to provide the best possible environment for student learning in the circumstances we were facing during a pandemic.

DSBN believes that in-person learning is best for student achievement and well-being. Face-to-face instructional time allows students to ask questions in real-time, complete hands-on activities and projects, and also provides important social opportunities with their peers. Attending school in-person allows students access other school-based supports including breakfast programs, mental health and well-being supports etc. Every small step toward returning to conventional learning is important in these challenging times.

Our schools have been striving to make the secondary school experience as engaging as possible in the current conditions. Great effort has been taken to implement a variety of student events and activities; both in-person and virtually e.g. musical concerts, art shows, movie nights, food drives, students' council and student senate participation.

Consultation

Similar to our preparations to reopen schools in September; to develop our plan for Semester 2, we gathered feedback to inform our decision making from students, families, administrators, staff and union groups. Meetings were regularly held with Niagara Region Public Health to receive input on our proposed plans. These ongoing consultations were very valuable in creating and refining the DSBN Semester 2 plan.

Semester 2 Details

The goal is to increase the in-person learning opportunities for each class and make school as normal as possible while maintaining the required health and safety protocols. The adjustments being made for Semester 2 increase the in-person learning time for every student in every class by 20%. For those attending non-cohorted classes, their in-person learning time will be doubled. Through the addition of more eLearning courses, the plan will also decrease the number of online students that teachers will need to support. We are again obtaining input from Niagara Region Public Health to explore the safe return of some extracurricular activities.

In-person Learning

What Stays the Same?

Our students will continue to attend school on a compressed school day schedule; taking one course a day. Students will also continue with the alternating week schedule that started in late November; with periods 1 and 2 in the first week and periods 3 and 4 in the next week. Students participating in SSTC and Alternative Programs will continue to attend school daily. Also, three schools became fully non-cohorted in November and they will be continuing with this model.

What is Changing?

We have flipped the cohorts for semester 2; with B cohort students attending at the beginning of the week and A cohort students attending in the later part of the week. Smaller in-person classes in all schools may run in a conventional non-cohorted model in order for students to attend classes every time they are scheduled; rather than in two cohorts.

Online Learning

What is Staying the Same?

All students who have elected for online learning remain enrolled as a student in their current secondary school. Students in SSTC and Alternative Education programs who have selected online learning will continue to be connected to their classroom teachers.

What Is Changing?

We have increased the number of DSBN eLearning courses for Semester 2. These courses are taught by DSBN teachers but may include students from various schools in the same class. Students selecting online learning for Semester 2 may be centrally assigned to an eLearning course and will not have a choice to return to in-person learning for that course during the semester. Similar to Semester 1, if a student's course is not assigned as an eLearning course, they will be attached to their home-school teacher and course as a Cohort O student, and have the option to return to in-person learning for that course during the semester

Respectfully submitted,

Leanne Smith, Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Achievement (9-12)
Helen McGregor, Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Achievement (9-12)