

PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE



Tuesday, September 15, 2020

5:30 p.m.

Virtual - MS Teams

MINUTES

Present:

Trustee Committee Members: Dave Schaubel (Chair), Nancy Beamer, Kevin Maves, Shannon Mitchell, Alex Bradnam for Jonathan Fast.

Trustee Guests: Sue Barnett, Student Trustees: Karina Tavernese, Keelee Hollowell, Salomy Sharma.

Administration: Warren Hoshizaki, Director of Education
Helen McGregor, Area 5 Supt. of Curriculum & Student Achievement (9-12)
Marian Reimer Friesen, Area 4 Supt. of Education, Curriculum & Student Achievement (K-8)
Mary Anne Gage, Area 4 Supt. of Education, Curriculum & Student Achievement (K-12)
Kelly Pisek, Area 2 Supt. of Education – Elementary
Lora Courtois, Superintendent of Human Resources

Guests: Pratima Burton – SAL Mental Health & Well-Being, Inclusion and Anti-Racism
Zakia Hamdani – Consultant Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism
Stacy Turner – Former Consultant Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism
Lorne Gretsinger – Principal, Oakridge Public School

Recording Secretary: Debra Dinga, Administrative Assistant

Regrets: Jonathan Fast, Trustee

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dave Schaubel called the meeting of the Program and Planning Committee to order at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Trustee Beamer, seconded by Trustee Bradnam

“That the agenda be approved as presented.”

CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes.

NEW BUSINESS

DSBN Equity Audit

Superintendent Courtois introduced some members of the Equity Audit Group: Pratima Burton – SAL Mental Health & Well-Being, Inclusion and Anti Racism, Zakia Hamdani – Consultant Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism, Stacy Turner – Former Consultant Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism, Lorne Gretsinger – Principal, Oakridge Public School and Gary Parker – Indigenous Education Co-ordinator.

The Equity Audit's supporting documents were referenced, and attendees were directed to the Equity Audit Action Plan which is a blending of the other two reports in the package.

Superintendent Courtois introduced Director Hoshizaki, who has been a guiding force for Equity and Inclusion.

Director, Hoshizaki introduced the DSBN Equity Audit Report acknowledging that racism, bias and discrimination are part of our history that still exist today. DSBN is committed to ensuring it's an inclusive organization where students and staff feel safe, are supported to achieve their full potential and have a voice. The plan is the board's commitment to being part of the positive change. This is the beginning of an on-going organizational journey which will take time and persistent effort.

Superintendent Courtois explained that the Equity Audit began in 2018 as the start of a three-year undertaking; now currently beginning year three. The Audit consists of three components: The Employment Systems Review (ESR), Workforce Census and Student Census.

A working group was formed from representatives of Equity groups to provide input and insight into each element of the Equity Audit. The committee met regularly throughout the last two years.

DSBN partnered with Turner Consulting Group from Hamilton Ontario to support the Board in creating a diverse and inclusive workforce, ensure compliance with employment equity legislation, advise on policy development, help create surveys, conduct focus groups and reviewed all of DSBN's Human Resources practices and policies.

The Student Census component of the Audit is scheduled for completion later this year and will provide the demographic make-up of DSBN students and identify areas of need and the gaps requiring support. Community consultation is also a component to the student census. The student data will be collated with the potential to illuminate gaps in equity and inclusion.

As a starting point, Niagara Region statistics have been used to identify any gaps in staff representation.

Superintendent Courtois reviewed the Workforce Census completed in November 2019 which gathered demographics about the composition of the DSBN workforce and helped us to better understand who DSBN employees are and identify gaps in representation which will inform and support the development of programs, hiring and resources.

Pratima Burton noted the data shows that the racialized population of the DSBN, as a whole, is comparable to the racialized population of the Niagara Region and highlighted the Teacher Diversity Gap of 10% in the DSBN while the Niagara Regions is 26%.

Superintendent Courtois shared details of the Employment System Review (ESR) which focused on Human Resources practices. In 2018-19 Turner Consulting Group reviewed approximately 21 policies and procedures and hiring reviews for teaching, administration and support staff positions. There were 65 recommendations which are included in the Action Plan.

The ESR identified four Key Priority Areas:

Priority #1: Educate Staff about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – *presented by Stacy Turner, former Consultant*
Stacy highlighted the importance of measuring an organization's current understanding as a starting point for additional education on equity and diversity. She shared an example of working with a Secondary School in meeting the needs of teachers in their understanding of inclusion by providing a professional learning opportunity. Following their professional learning, staff shared with one another how they would use their new equity literacy in awareness of bias, inclusive language and in teaching critical literacy in the classroom.

Priority #2: Create a More Inclusive and Respectful Organizational Culture – *presented by Pratima Burton, SAL*
One of the Equity Action Plan's recommendations was to update policies and procedures to be consistent with guidelines from the Ontario Human Rights Commission. DSBN responded by developing an Equity Statement about accommodation that will accompany DSBN job advertisements

Another recommendation is to foster an inclusive and safe workplace for employees who identify as LGBTQ+. The Board responded by posting Safe Space Posters in all workplaces and providing training for managers and administrators about their roles and responsibilities to create inclusive and welcoming spaces for all employees.

Priority #3: Embed Equity Throughout Human Resources Policy and Practices – *Superintendent, Lora Courtois*
Superintendent Courtois shared what the DSBN has accomplished to embed equity within policies and procedures. The following policies and procedures have been created or updated: Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure, Police Criminal Record Check Policy, Ontario Human Rights Code Discrimination & Harassment Procedure, Disability Support Procedure and Police Criminal Record Check Procedure. As well, under development are Transitioning at Work Policy: gender non-conforming employees, Hiring and Selection Policy, Staff Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and Accessibility Standards for Employment Policy. Additionally, DSBN has embedded the principles of equity throughout Human Resources as well as educating and training Board Office Managers and Human Resource Department staff on the duty to accommodate persons with physical and mental disabilities. Administrators were reminded when hiring to prioritize teachers from diverse communities.

Priority #4 – Diversify the Workforce at All Levels – *Principal, Lorne Gretsinger*
Principal Gretsinger acknowledged the importance of having DSBN staff who are reflective of the community we serve to strengthen community relationships. DSBN is working toward addressing the Teacher Diversity gap and have started by working through partnerships in recruitment of indigenous communities.

In closing, Superintendent Courtois focused committee members' attention to the recommendations at the back of the Action Plan that have been completed. To date, two-thirds of the 65 recommendation have been implemented and on page 18 the remaining recommendations, that will be completed this year and beyond, are listed.

Next Steps: *Superintendent Pisek, Zakia Hamdani, Consultant and Pratima Burton, SAL*

Superintendent Pisek shared the future intention of sharing goals at an upcoming Program and Planning Meeting related to the portfolio of Equity and Inclusion as their work partially aligns with key priorities discussed in the ESR report as connected with students, curriculum and DSBN school communities.

The focus of Equity and Inclusive education will be to understand, identify, address and eliminate biases, barriers and power dynamics that limit students' prospects for learning, growing and to allow them to bring their full selves to school.

Pratima Burton commented that collaboration with the Student Trustee Senate will be a key partnership in providing input to inform decisions made that directly impact students' education and their connections to their school community. As well, the Equity and Inclusion material on the DSBN webpage is currently being updated to share our commitment to equity work with the community. Additionally, Pratima will be providing equity support as DSBN reviews working documents and guidelines.

Superintendent Pisek informed that the next steps will include listening, learning and working collaboratively with all stakeholders, reviewing and re-evaluating existing practices, professional learning at all levels and creating goals that reflect the best thinking of the DSBN community.

Director Hoshizaki provided closing comments reminding everyone of the importance of this project that covers DSBN policies and procedures, community and curriculum. This is the beginning of an on-going organizational journey that will take time and persistent effort. DSBN is committed to positive change for students and the wider community.

In response to a question, Superintendent Courtois informed that the information will be publicized along with the Action Plan on the DSBN website after full board approval is received. Additionally, DSBN's Communications department will liaise with media as related to the Action Plan.

Moved by Trustee Barnett , seconded by Trustee Bradnam

"That the June 2020 DSBN Equity Audit Action Plan Report be received."

CARRIED

International Education Protocols during COVID - Superintendent, Marian Reimer Friesen

Superintendent Reimer Friesen stated that DSBN has a vibrant International Education program that welcomes fee-paying students from around the world to DSBN schools; to experience life in Canada while being offered excellent educational opportunities.

Due to COVID 19, DSBN protocols for welcoming international students needs to be adjusted to align with Canadian and Provincial guidelines for travel as well as DSBN board guidelines to adhere to Ministry of Education parameters.

Adaptations have been made by providing support to international students to learn from home by connecting them to DSBN Virtual Schools learning opportunities; support to international students who wish to defer or cancel their commitment to learn in DSBN and also provide support to international student who wish to come

to DSBN for in-person learning. Clear pre-arrival guidelines are presented in the International Student September 2020 Pre-Departure and Arrival Guide which includes self-isolation for two weeks and the requirement to obtain a negative COVID test submission prior to in-person learning.

DSBN wants to welcome International Students to the DSBN by offering a safe way to connect to learning whether virtually, in-person now or in-person later in the school year.

In response to a question, Superintendent Reimer Friesen responded, that should test results be taking too long to obtain DSBN would look at how we can assist, but DSBN's priority is safety. Waiting for the confirmed negative test, even if it takes additional time, is important.

Moved by Trustee Beamer, seconded by Trustee Bradnam

“That the Board of Trustees approve the changes to the DSBN International Education Protocols during COVID and continue to welcome international students to DSBN using the revised guidelines”

CARRIED

In closing, Chair, Schaubel extended his sincere thanks and appreciation for the extensive amount of time and effort that has been put forth to prepare and present these reports.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

NEXT MEETING

The next Program and Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 6 at 5:30 p.m.**

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Beamer, seconded by Trustee Bradnam

“That the meeting of the Program and Planning Committee adjourn.”

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.