



PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

6:00 p.m.

Grimsby-Lincoln Room

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Approval of the minutes of February 7, 2017
4. Business arising from the minutes
5. New Business

INFORMATION SESSION

- Outdoor Education Update..... K. Pisek
 - Redesign of the Grade 7/8 Design & Technology Program..... K. Pisek
6. Other business
 7. Adjournment
 8. Next Meeting – Tuesday, April 4, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. – Grimsby-Lincoln Room



DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA
Report to Program and Planning Committee
Tuesday March 7, 2017

Outdoor Education Update

DSBN Walker Living Campus

Throughout 2015/16, staff at the Walker Living Campus continue to work under the leadership of Kevin Graham and Colleen Fast to expand and enhance the Outdoor Experiential Learning programs that had initially been developed for the Campus.

From September 2016 – February 2017 we have had over 5673 students from 84 Elementary and 10 Secondary schools experience various adventures at the Living Campus. Within one week of opening each booking period was full!

Our most popular programs are:

Low Ropes – great for team building, leadership and group dynamics - Grades K – 12

Snow Shoeing and Cross Country Skiing – A winter favourite for Grades 1 -12

Wilderness Survival Skills – Shelter Building, GPS and Fire Building - Grades 3-12

Wetland Exploration – Identifying a healthy wetland ecosystem, water sample collection and testing – Grades 3-12

One of the favourite activities at the Living Campus is the WildZone.

The WildZone is a natural learning environment within our forest where students can enjoy unstructured, free play. They are encouraged to splash, climb, crawl, and jump - to go where their adventurous spirit leads them. WildZone time is extremely important as it encourages students to: Rely on their own senses, assess risk and develop their strength, improvise solutions, resolve conflict, use their outside voice, get dirty and go barefoot.

Additional Programs

Our Outdoor Adventure Guides are qualified to deliver a number of the SHSM certifications and trainings. We held an SHSM certification week at the Campus in the Fall and have another one scheduled for the Spring. During this week over 300 SHSM students received their certifications in Group Dynamics, Leadership, GPS and Wilderness Survival.

For the months of October and November 2016 and January 2017 freelance cartoonist Mike Cope, recipient of the Artists in Education grant from the Ontario Arts Council inspired our students from grades 4-12 with a Drawn to Life: Cartoon Animation retreat. This was our first Artist in Residence program.

Under Mike's professional cartoonist guidance, students were able to bring their cartoon drawings to life. His fun, accessible, hands-on activities introduced animation principals and helped develop drawing skills. After classes spent a day cartooning at the Campus, Mike provided a 1 hour follow-up session at each of the participants home school.

In total 551 students from 20 elementary and secondary schools were provided with this unique learning opportunity.

The goal is to continue this partnership through an application for the next Artists in Education Grant.

In the Spring we plan to host our first annual Eco week. Earth day is Saturday, April 22nd and our Eco week will be an exciting celebration of nature to run from Monday, April 17th to Friday, April 21st.

DSBN Outdoor Adventure Campus

The DSBN's new Outdoor Adventure Campus opened its doors to our first students on Monday, January 16, 2017. This new Adventure Campus will offer Outdoor and Environmental Education programs that reflect the unique terrain of Short Hills Provincial Park.

We are currently testing our new programs at the Adventure Campus. During the pilot phase we are offering Geocaching, Orienteering, Snowshoeing, Hiking, Bio-Blitz, Nature Photography, Eco Action, Trail Running and Explore, Discovery and Adventure Packages. We have had a tremendous response to our pilot programs with great feedback from all 10 elementary schools (200 students) who have participated thus far. Our pilot programs are booked until the end of March and we hope to expand in the next few weeks by opening up the months of April, May and June.

An Outdoor Classroom has been designed and we are awaiting approval from the Niagara Escarpment Commission to begin construction.

Our new Adventure Campus was built (renovated) with the help of our SHSM Regional Construction students who spent last year working along with various tradespersons to complete this exciting project.

Our SHSM Regional Construction students will return to build the new Outdoor Classroom in the spring as well.

DSBN DIG IT and SHSM Horticulture students from Westlane Secondary school will work to design the landscaping at the new Adventure Campus as well as the interior of the Outdoor Classroom.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Pisek
Superintendent of Education

February 27,2017

For further information, please contact Kelly Pisek or the Director of Education.



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Redesign of the Grade 7/8 Design and Technology Program

Background:

The Grade 7/8 Design and Technology program has been an innovative program that the DSBN has offered Intermediate students for over 19 years. The original intent was to expose students to the opportunities Secondary Technology programs offered and to provide students with experiences at their home Secondary school.

A multiple year review has taken place of the program and its delivery model and schedule. Currently students attend for half the school year, approximately 3 period time slots, once in a ten day cycle. This equals to approximately 22 - 27 instructional periods depending on travel time. Students attend a secondary school however it is no longer their home Secondary school due to scheduling conflicts. For example, Prince Philip in Niagara Falls need to attend Eden as the NF site is at capacity and College Street students attend Grimsby Secondary School.

Rationale:

In 2017/2018, two of the current sites will no longer be available for elementary programs (Fort Erie and DSBN Academy) and two other secondary schools have requested to have their shops back for their own programming.

In reviewing the current delivery model, many principals expressed concern about supervision during the transition to and from the D and T site. As well, they reported discipline issues.

A survey done with Secondary school students found that many did not feel their experience in Grade 7/8 D and T provided them with an accurate sense of the variety of options Secondary Technology offered. Some reported it gave them a negative impression of technology and therefore they did not select Technology as an elective in Grade 9 or 10. Others enjoyed the opportunity to participate in activities different than their regular subjects at school.

While space, structure and programming challenges are reason for the redesign, the most compelling reason was based on the great things already happening in many elementary schools related to technology, maker spaces, genius hours and coding activities.

When reviewing the programs, clubs and activities happening in many elementary schools, the following was found:

- Cross curricular connections were intentional and the activities complimented other subject areas.
- In many schools grades 1 -8 participate in these hands on, open ended learning opportunities whether within the scheduled day or through extra- curricular opportunities.
- Time no longer was a constraint. Projects could be ongoing and left as "in progress". Students could access their work regularly rather than waiting until the next D and T cycle day. As well, the skills of perseverance and growth mindset were honed and students had the opportunities to run trials, revise and improve their work.
- Homeroom teachers were able to assess and observe their students in this unique learning opportunity. Many students show strength in skills related to project based work and teachers were able to comment on this in report cards and learning skills when the opportunities were at the school rather than a separate site.

Teachers are embracing these opportunities as well. During the 2016/17 school year, a “Maker Space” course was offered to teachers. This course is scheduled to run from October through May and filled to capacity within a week. 47 teachers are participating and the instructors are DSBN staff.

For our students, the goal is to provide more hands on learning, with the tools and raw materials that support invention. Being school based, this provides the time for it to be integrated into curriculum and supports all our students, especially those who learn best through hands on experience. Students can work independently or in collaborative groups.

Whether it is building with wood and basic carpentry skills, working with a circuit board to build a classroom door bell or coding and programming for robotics, providing these opportunities within our elementary schools will benefit more students than our current model.

Staffing Implications

All staffing changes resulting from the restructuring of the D&T Program would be compliant with the ETFO Collective Agreement. In particular Article 14, dealing with termination of seniority, redundancy and recall, as well as Article 19, outlining surplus to school, job postings, and redundant teachers.

Currently there are seven D&T Teachers. Five of the teachers have either primary, junior or intermediate qualifications, allowing them to teach in an elementary school in one of these divisions. One of the teachers is not currently qualified in any of these divisions, however has a degree that would allow qualification by taking a course in primary, junior or intermediate. These six teachers would be given priority status on the surplus to school list and be recalled, based on qualifications, into positions during the spring elementary staffing process.

One of the seven teachers is not qualified in primary, junior or intermediate, nor do they have a degree, but rather a certificate to teach communication and construction technology. This teacher would have the option to be placed on the Secondary Long Term Occasional list as part of the OSSTF TBU, allowing for supply teaching and long term occasional placements. Permanent secondary contract positions must follow Regulation 274 and employment offers are based on seniority. There is no provision in the collective agreement to transfer from ETFO to OSSTF and therefore seniority could not be maintained.

The option to be placed on the Secondary Long Term Occasional List, with loss of seniority would be available to all of the seven D & T teachers.

Timelines:

March – June 2017

- Create an implementation plan and small team led by Kevin Graham to support schools in the Fall. This team would continue to support schools through next year by co-planning with teachers, offering PD related to the variety of activities, support with the creation of lessons and purchase of resources.
- HR will support the current D and T teachers with placements.
- Inventory of site resources will occur and afterwards be allocated to elementary schools.
- Secondary schools will be able to timetable and plan with the inclusion of the shops that were designated for the Elementary program.

Recommendations:

That the current delivery model of Design and Technology be redesigned to be delivered at the elementary schools and incorporated into the elementary curriculum and throughout Grades 1 -8.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Pisek
Superintendent of Education

March 2, 2017

For further information, please contact Kelly Pisek or the Director of Education.