

## **Upper Grand District School Board**

### **Program Committee**

#### **Minutes**

**Tuesday, November 2, 2021**

The Program Committee of Upper Grand District School Board met on Tuesday, November 2, 2021, virtually and in the Board Room commencing at 7:00 p.m.

The Vice-Chairperson Trustee Lustgarten Evoy presided, and the following Trustees were present: Campbell, Edwards, Foley, MacNeil, Ross, and Topping together with student Trustees Emilie Hill and Vikasni Kuganesan. Also in attendance were Director of Education Sovran, Executive Superintendent McDonald, Executive Officer of Human Resources Pyke, and Superintendents Hamilton, Heaslip, Lindsay, McCutcheon, Van Ooteghem, and Zen.

#### **Agenda**

Trustee Topping 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 MacNeil moved that the minutes of the meeting held on October 5, 2021 be approved as printed.

**The motion carried.**

#### **Report from Student Trustees**

Student Trustees Emilie Hill and Vikasni Kuganesan acknowledged that it was Treaties Recognition Week and reported that work continues at schools to honor the importance of treaties, which helps students learn more about treaty rights and relationships. It was reported that on Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup> the second virtual Student Senate meeting was held with 11 student senators attending with 7 secondary schools represented including the Remote Program. Not all senators are able to attend each meeting, an email distribution list was developed to share information with the students from all 12 schools.

For the October virtual meeting, Mental Health and Addiction Lead Jenny Marino presented a mental health moment with the senators surrounding the concept of systemic stress and stress students feel related to school matters and in their personal lives. Relationship Manager for United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin, Holly Freeman, gave a presentation on what United Way exactly is and its role in the community. Ms. Freeman covered the values that United Way and senators share which included having mental health support systems and working in collaboration with community organizations. The Student Senate Celebration Booklet was shared with the attendees and is due November 25<sup>th</sup>. At the end of the meeting senators had conversations surrounding the topic of equity in Upper Grand schools, more specifically surrounding the celebration of Halloween, and how all school celebrations were optional for equity reasons. The student trustees also met with Jenny Marino to go over the response in dealing with student deaths at schools as Student Leaders, and what they can do during these crises. In November the Student Senate looks forward to welcoming Jessica Rowden for a presentation on the board's work on equity that ties in with the changes to celebrations and spirit days that senators had many questions about. The student trustees also mentioned how students have been looking forward to having food services return to the schools, and as a board with strong equity and inclusion values, to acknowledge the variety of diets, and provide more diverse menu options.

### **Recommendation # 1**

Trustee MacNeil 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 a verbal update on Upper Grand DSB mental health supports, which included: increasing needs at Upper Grand DSB and beyond; Substance Misuse Prevention and Early Intervention, Parent Webinars Series; Wellness Works Update; and Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders/Student Mental Health article.

Ms. Marino shared this year has had an unprecedented number of mental health needs and situations in the community as well as in Upper Grand DSB, increasing pressures on front line mental health staff due to the frequency and intensity of mental health needs in students. Positions across the board, as well as provincially across sectors, are difficult to fill leaving gaps in an already taxed system particularly in mental health

positions. Ms. Marino reported that regional data shows high levels of heavy drinking, opioid use, and overdose. She expressed needing a systematic, planful approach that considers upstream prevention through awareness, mental health skill building and education, a harm reduction focus, equity and trauma informed, and stigma reducing that is created and delivered through an anti-racist, anti-oppressive framework. As the Mental Health and Addictions Lead, Ms. Marino is beginning the work to develop this framework and will be including it in the work for the next Strategic Planning term (2023-2025).

Ms. Marino shared that work has been done with a community group of various agencies including parents for children with mental health and are engaging in a series of webinars for the community which builds on the Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) framework. HOPE looks at four frameworks: relationships, social and civic engagement, social emotional growth, and safe and inclusive spaces.

A Wellness Works update was provided by Ms. Marino and she acknowledged all the people who are supporting this wonderful work. Office hours are beginning in November for educators and other work has also continued with parent newsletters and website, and many great opportunities to celebrate, discuss and champion kindness in the work on the schools and classrooms over the course of November.

Ms. Marino was pleased to inform the Board of a focused article in the Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (O.A.F.C.C.D.) newsletter which focused on children's mental well-being during the return to school. Mary Ann Schouten, editor, SLP, and Upper Grand DSB Supervisor of Speech, Communication and Language Services interviewed Ms. Marino and the article received great uptake and was shared to the Ministry Representative for Upper Grand DSB to share and celebrate the work. Trustees expressed thanks for the Mental Health update.

### **Recommendation # 2**

Trustee Topping moved that the verbal update on Mental Health be received.

**The motion carried.**

### **2021/22 Annual French Review Background Report**

Manager of Planning Angrish presented the 2021/22 Annual French Review Background Report, together with Manager of Elementary Staffing and Recruitment Crandall. The 2021/22 Annual French Review Background Report was prepared to

review the experiences of the 2021/22 application process, enrolment, retention, staffing, and cap related information in order to present recommendations to the Board with respect to the 2022/23 school year. Information was shared from the 2021/22 JK French Immersion (FI) application process, enrolment projections and projected space in schools, availability of French Qualified (FQ) teachers, feasibility of new FI program(s), review of the JK FI application, selection and waitlist process; and, review of JK FI enrolment caps. Trustees asked questions and expressed thanks for the report.

### **Recommendation # 3**

Trustee Topping moved that:

1. Memo PLN:21-27 entitled “2021/22 Annual French Review Background Report” dated November 2, 2021 be received.
2. The JK FI on-time application window will open at 9:00am on Tuesday, January 4, 2022 and close at 4:00pm on Friday, January 21, 2022.
3. No new FI programs be established in 2022/23.
4. The JK FI enrolment caps not be adjusted.

**The motion carried.**

### **Annual Accessibility Report**

Executive Superintendent McDonald was pleased to present the Annual Accessibility report, a multi-year Accessibility Plan in its third year of implementation, which is updated regularly throughout the year to ensure that the goals of the plan are met, prioritized and compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). Executive Superintendent McDonald acknowledged and thanked Superintendent Van Ooteghem who prepared the report detailing the work she oversaw during the 2020-2021 school year, Superintendent Zen and his staff who ensured the work presented in the report was implemented in Upper Grand schools and buildings, and Superintendent Lindsay and her staff who provided support to ensure that students had what they needed from an accessibility standpoint.

Principal of Equity and Indigenous Education Gerard Walker provided an update on the Board’s progress over the previous year. Areas highlighted were:

- Training
- Education
- Accessible System Embedded Curriculum Program
- Building an Accessibility Culture and Leadership
- Procurement
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Built Environment, Outside Play Spaces
- Review and Monitoring Process

Trustees expressed thanks for all the work done on accessibility.

#### **Recommendation # 4**

Trustee Foley moved that the verbal Annual Accessibility Report for 2020-2021 be received.

**The motion carried.**

#### **Re-Engagement Supports**

Superintendent Hamilton, Secondary Principal of Program Wendy McIntosh-Clodd, and Elementary Re-Engagement Lead Britni Scott presented information on what has been happening in secondary program to start the school year.

Secondary Principal of Program Wendy McIntosh-Clodd shared that the Ministry of Education provided one year funding to support grades K-12 learning recovery to address impacts of the learning disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A portion of those funds were focused on re-engaging students for the 2021/2022 school year, with focus on students connected to the margins. Upper Grand DSB allocated funds to hire two re-engagement leads, Britni Scott for Elementary and Kaley Kowaluk for Secondary, who looked at students not attending or who are disengaged from school and the goal is to connect them to a network of supports and re-engage the students to learning.

Since this is a new role to the board, Elementary Re-Engagement Lead Britni Scott shared the importance of consulting with various board representatives and community supports. They met with social workers and administrators to determine how they could best support students who were not attending and created a process for administration

to access additional support from the re-engagement leads. In addition to creating the process they recognized the importance of learning about all areas of supports available within the board and community and building relationships with them. Ms. Scott also shared the Elementary and Secondary process created that the administrator must go through for requesting and accessing additional re-engagement support. Both Re-Engagement Leads ran pilot projects in order to work through the process and determine any changes before opening it up to all schools and through that process have identified the necessity of working more intensely with a couple of students at one time, to ensure full focus and support in addition to accessing the appropriate interventions. Upon completion of their pilots they were able to open it up to all schools and since then have received numerous requests from administrators.

Grade 7/8 Guidance Counselor Catherine Andrews shared an update on guidance roles in Upper Grand DSB. The guidance counselors teach in elementary schools and work in partnership with the perspective high schools to ensure that every grade 7/8 student has a guidance teacher appointed to them. Each guidance counselor believes that every student has a unique pathway that should be honoured and valued, and teach whole class lessons for grade 7/8 students across the board, as well as remote lessons, to help empower, guide and support the students plan for their future.

### **Recommendation # 5**

Trustee Campbell moved that the verbal Re-Engagement Supports report be received.

**The motion carried.**

### **OPSBA Report**

Trustee Topping took the Chair for the consideration of this item.

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy read the OPSBA report as follows: The Regional OPSBA meeting sent Trustees material and link to the virtual meeting. Two main items for OPSBA consultation sessions: governance and strategic planning process and GSN input to OPSBA submission to the government.

**Recommendation # 6**

Trustee MacNeil moved that the verbal OPSBA report be received.

**The motion carried.**

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy returned to the Chair.

**Other Business – nil report**

**Adjournment**

Trustee MacNeil moved that this Committee adjourn at 8:19 p.m. to report to the Board.

**The motion carried.**

**This document is available in alternate formats upon request.**