

TRUSTEE CONFERENCE REPORT

Name: Kathleen Woodcock **Date Submitted:** February 8, 2018

Name of Conference: Public Education Symposium 2018

Sponsoring Organization: OPSBA

Theme (If any): _____

Conference Dates: January 25 to January 27, 2018

Location: Sheraton Centre, Toronto, ON

Workshops/Seminars/Presentations/Keynote Speeches Attended:
(Include a brief Summary)

January 25, 2018

Equity and Human Rights - Ministry of Education

Patrick Case, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Equity Officer in the Education Equity Secretariat

Bruce Davis, Public Progress Inc.

A. Sidiq (Sid) Ali, Research & Evaluation Consulting Inc.

Topic - The collection, analysis and use of identity-based data is a key pillar of Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan.

Patrick Case - the 'why' of data gathering

- Provided a timeline of significant events/legislation that have led to the current emphasis on equity in the Ministry plan
- Constitution is a living, evolving 'tree'; visualize that as we see human rights evolve over time
- The Ontario Human Rights Commission came into being in 1960's and during that time, people thought of human rights as an individual issue, until the early 1980's when it was more widely recognized that discrimination can take place in policies, practices and procedures of organizations, i.e. systemic discrimination
- In 2013, the Ministry of Education issued PPM 119 which called on organizations to examine their policies, procedures etc. from an equity and human rights perspective. In October 2017, the Ministry released *Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan* which centers on key initiatives in four areas:
 - School and Classroom Practices
 - Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices
 - Data Collection, Integration and Reporting
 - Organizational Culture Change
- Stated that people/organizations have been making this plan their own and that's a good thing
- Suggests that it is a universally applicable plan to situations throughout the province and school boards can focus on aspects of the plan that apply to them.
- The full plan is available here: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/education_equity_plan_en.pdf

Bruce Davis – TDSB early data collection journey

- Ask. Lead. Change - Using data to create more equitable schools
- As a former TDSB trustee, learned he has to constantly learn and ask questions to bring about change
- Ministry can ask us to do anything but they can't do anything without trustees; school boards and local parents are the ones who push the government to pay attention to what matters
- Trustees/school boards' priority is the most important, i.e., kids
- While Ontario's public education system is the best - we have great resources and there's always room for more resources - we can do better by asking questions, and collecting data and analyzing it
- Asking questions leads to change – ““Progress is the nice word we like to use. But change is its motivator. And change has its enemies. The willingness to confront that change will determine how much we shall really do for our youth and how truly meaningful our efforts will be.” *Robert F. Kennedy (1964)*
- We need to use data to peel back the anecdotal information so we can base our decisions on actual information rather than perceptions
- At TDSB in 2004, trustees passed a motion to support at-risk students and develop solutions to counter systemic barriers that students might face and to direct staff and educational experts to, through research, identify factors in the school system that may inhibit student achievement. Examples of factors (not limited to) were differences in gender, race, ethnicity, mother tongue, income, place of residence; admitted that the results from the first census were unnerving
- Once data has been collected, the real 'wow' occurs when we can get kids at level 1 and 2 into 3 and 4 and when we can keep kids in school that are drifting away – with data in hand, we can then understand who our students are, what their experience is and by knowing who our students and their families are means we can better serve them and ensure that each and every one has the opportunity to succeed.
- Posed a question to the group: Would we change if we knew the data? Could we handle implementing this change in the face of those who object to what is being proposed? Basically, “Will you? Could you? Would you?”

A. Sidiq (Sid) Ali – led case study table discussions

- Explained that implementing the Equity Action Plan will help school boards to identify where systemic barriers exist based on data, help to determine how to eliminate discriminatory biases, support equity and student achievement and well-being and provide evidence informed decision-making
- About data collection, there is a wide spectrum of variability within groups (in-group variability = non trivial differences that are important to know and understand) and we need variation in our data collection toolkit, i.e., quantitative data on a nominal scale and have some qualitative data as well
- Referred to 'circles of collaboration' - collaboration is based on the premise that all participants function as both 'problem-framers and problem-solvers.'

Truth and Reconciliation in Inclusive School Environments

Kevin Lamoureux, Education Lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, Associate VP Indigenous Affairs, University of Winnipeg

- Indicated the best day of his life was June 2, 2015 which was the day of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Report in Ottawa

- Indicated that when a population goes through trauma, the first symptom of that trauma is 'silence'
- The Truth and Reconciliation report has broken that silence and he embraces the opportunity to find a solution in the 94 Calls to Action in the report
- Asked the group to consider 2 questions... 1) Why is this call to action made? (truth part of Truth and Reconciliation) and 2) Would our community/nation benefit from its fulfillment? (reconciliation part of Truth and Reconciliation)
- Indicated that Canada is a nation of partnerships; a treaty country
- Speaking to the Indigenous course requirement, students asked "why is this the first time I'm learning about this?"
- Inclusive education is about creating an environment that is safe for indigenous kids. Historically, school has not been safe for indigenous kids; education was used against kids
- Issued a call to the group to be part of the education used for kids, not against kids
- 'We are all Treaty people.'
- Indigenization - includes safety for indigenous and non-indigenous learners; cultural opportunities (smudging room); safety to grieve;
- United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples - minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous people
- For more information about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission click on this link: <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=890>

15 Minute Presentations

Leading with Care - Promising practices in creating a responsive environment (Renfrew County DSB)

- Peer mentorship program called DEN - Dream, Empower Nurture! – began in 2016-17
- Part of the Board's strategic plan - healthy bodies and minds and compassionate hearts
- Mental health and wellbeing strategy is a tiered approach to access to mental health services
- Schools survey helps focus where and how we apply strategies to support students experiencing anxiety and depression
- Achievement and wellbeing of our students, staff and school communities

Integrating First Nations, Metis and Inuit perspectives in Grade 3 / 4 and Grade 5 / 6 (Trillium Lakelands DSB)

- Concern expressed from teacher about non-indigenous staff teaching indigenous issues
- Led to creation of two locally developed curriculum support resources designed to integrate the FNMI perspective in a culturally and historically accurate and authentic way
- Impact has been self-ID numbers on the rise, indigenous students feel valued;

STEM: Board Well-being Strategy (Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB)

- The STEM Program 1.0 (Sleep, Think, Eat, Move)
- Believe that if students and staff aren't healthy and well, they can't achieve
- We all need to take care of our mental health
- Mentally healthy schools promote student success
- Reduce stigma, raise awareness, identify problems early and support every student's mental health and wellbeing

The Board of Trustees Inspire Awards (Halton DSB)

- Awards given monthly to recognize individuals or groups who have gone above and beyond to support HDSB students and their achievements
- Promotes inclusion, nomination process is flexible, equitable, students and student senators created the awards, celebrates ongoing improvement, morale booster, and builds relationships
- Award winners are posted on Board web site

Perils or Promises: Education in the Age of Smart Machines

Yong Zhao, Foundations Distinguished Professor at the University of Kansas/ Professor in the Department of Educational Measurement, Policy, and Leadership, University of Oregon

- Indicated that schools are pushed to produce homogenous, compliant, and employee-minded test-takers as a result of the traditional education paradigm
- Proposed a new education paradigm for the new world of technology and globalization
- Asked the group – “What is education really about?” Answered: “Defining how well has each student learned what we want them to learn”
- 21st Century Learning → collaboration, creativity, communication, critical thinking; children don’t get ready for the future, they create the future
- PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) and the curriculum was designed to be uniform
- Instead we should design curriculum by asking students “what do you have? How can I help you become your unique self?”
- People/children are driven by different things, e.g., power, curiosity, independence, order, social contact, family, status, vengeance, romance, eating, physical activity, tranquility, etc.
- Suggested reading:
 - *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life* by William Deresiewicz
 - *The End of Average: How We Succeed in a World That Values Sameness* by Todd Rose
 - *The Race Between Education and Technology* by Claudia Goldin

January 26, 2018

Indira Naidoo-Harris, Minister of Education

Recently appointed Minister Naidoo-Harris provided high level objectives of the Ministry related to student achievement and well-being and the role of school boards and trustees. **During Q & A, WRDSB had the opportunity to ask the Minister if the Ministry has any plans other than those already announced, to investigate the issue of increased violence in our schools. The Minister indicated that this is an issue of concern for her and the Ministry.** Visit <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/> for more information.

Demystifying Collective Bargaining for Trustees

Penny Mustin, Director, Labour Relations, OPSBA

Janet Edwards, Associate Director, Labour Relations, OPSBA

The session provided trustees with a detailed look at how education collective bargaining has changed with the advent of the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act (SBCBA) and its impact on their role.

Drug Use Among Ontario Students: Findings from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey

Hayley Hamilton, PhD, Scientist, Institute for Mental Health Policy Research, CAMH and Associate Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto

- The Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) began as a drug use survey in 1977, but is now a broader study of adolescent health and well-being. This presentation outlined the most recent findings on drug use behaviours and trends among Ontario students in grade 7 – 12.
- For an interactive infographic of highlights from the 2017 OSDUHS drug use report, click on this link: <http://www.camhx.ca/Publications/OSDUHS/2017/index.html>

Changes to the 2018 Municipal and School Board Elections

Lisa Reinhardt, Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services, York Region DSB

Stephen O'Brien, City Clerk, City of Guelph

Jennifer McIntyre, Director of Policy, OPSBA

The panel outlined information regarding legislative updates and new board requirements for elections. There are several changes contained in some bills recently passed by the government, for example, election calendar changes including:

- Start of nominations/campaign beginning is May 1, 2018 (moved from January 1)
- Nomination Day/close of nomination is July 27, 2018 (moved from end of September)
- Election Day is Monday, October 22, 2018
- Term start date remains December 1, 2018

Other information provided included:

- School boards must establish a policy regarding the use of board resources during the campaign
- School boards may establish a policy setting out when automatic recount will occur (in addition to a tie vote)
- Requirement to provide identification on signs and materials
- Nomination fees would only be refundable if the financial statement is filed on time
- Contribution Limits – raise the limit for contributions to a single candidate or third party advertiser to \$1,200, consistent with the provincial limit
- Updated information will be posted on the OPSBA web site soon:
<http://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org/en/>
- Local municipal clerks can also provide information about the upcoming election

Materials Taken Away:

___ General Distribution

___ Trustee Distribution

___ Staff Distribution: Name of Staff Member: _____