

TRUSTEE CONFERENCE REPORT

Name: Kathleen Woodcock Date Submitted: August 28, 2015

Name of Conference: OPSBA Annual General Meeting

Sponsoring Organization: OPSBA

Theme (If any): Networking and Trustee Professional Development

Conference Dates: June 11, 2015 to June 14, 2015

Location: Westin Trillium House, Blue Mountain, Ontario

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

June 11, 2015

Welcome Reception

- Networking opportunity with no formal program

June 12, 2015

Opening Ceremonies – John Ralston Saul, Keynote Speaker

- Ralston Saul touched on a number of topics interwoven with the theme of the importance of public education in a democracy. Ralston Saul suggests we need to include teaching a shared history between aboriginals and non-aboriginals in the curriculum. He went on to explain that the public school system is the key to inclusion of 'real Canadian' history in the curriculum. Now is not the time for a utilitarian view of education; now is the time for thinking, inclusion, flexibility and imagination in a public education system. "Rethinking the way we describe ourselves" will lead to better understanding of a non-European history. The narrative about Canadian history needs to change from a Eurocentric view to include aboriginal influences.

Update on Labour Relations - Deb McFadden and Penny Mustin

- A status update on labour relations with all groups in current bargaining was provided

OPSBA at Work – Update on Finance, Education Policy, Education Program & Communications and Media Relations

Wayne McNally (Education Financial)

- Advocacy work continues regarding the public education funding model. Additionally, OPSBA continues to advocate for a full review of the funding model especially in transportation funding and special education. Bottom line, the whole model needs to be reviewed and revised.

Judith Nyman (Education Program)

- Topics being worked on include full child and well-being, new generation learners, EQAO position paper, and building relationship with Deans of Faculties of Education.
- Attendees were reminded of the upcoming Summit on Children & Youth Mental Health on April 7 & 8, 2016

Jennifer MacIntyre (Education Policy)

- Topics on the radar include oversight on school boards of the Ombudsman Office as of September 2015, Ryan's Law template has been circulated and procedure will follow, pending Rowan's Law for second injury impact, Bill 115 Electoral Boundaries Act, Municipal Act review, the erosion of role of trustee and school boards in other provinces and Ministry of Labour inspections on tech shops, art classrooms with kilns, etc.

Jeff Sprang (Communication and Media)

- Communications Officers at school boards have been great to work with during the complicated negotiations. Referred the group to the OPSBA Annual Report found on the web site at www.opsba.org.

5 minute sessions

- Presentations provided were *Aboriginal Peoples in the Superior-Greenstone Region: An Information Handbook for Staff and Parents* (Superior-Greenstone DSB), *Beyond the Classroom Walls* (Simcoe County DSB), *The Limestone Learning Foundation: Creating a Margin of Excellence* (Limestone DSB), *Employability Skills Certificate* (Halton DSB), *Math CAMPPP (Collaborative Actions for Mathematical Professional Learning, Precision and Personalization)* (Trillium Lakelands DSB) and *The Digital Historian Project – Where Inquiry Meets Numeracy* (Upper Grand DSB)

Towards an inclusive model of special education for students with exceptional learning needs – Presentation by Avon Maitland DSB

- *"All students can learn but not always on the same day and not always in the same way."*
- Presentation provided insight into the goal of Avon Maitland DSB to have no self-contained classrooms in three years. One of the premises of the program is that more students in regular classrooms will lead to more success in life. The program is one of social inclusion AND academic inclusion. The program facilitates a rights-based inclusion, not charity-based inclusion philosophy
- The program uses resources from The TeachAble Project, a joint project of OPSBA and OESC to support schools and school boards in their role in creating a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. This project has been made possible through the EnAbling Change program of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, a key partner in this endeavour
- The AMDSB is putting this program into action by putting a face on every student, using research, using 'experts' as critical friends, following a credo of "communicate, communicate, communicate", setting directions and staying the course, capacity building (supporting staff) and being responsive. Additionally, they are supporting trustee learning and building relationships with allies in the community. The coaches in the program are actually coaching the teachers, not the kids; they work with the teacher who has former self-contained class kids in the regular classroom
- The results so far include more students in regular classrooms, more of the time engaged in high quality learning opportunities, fewer behaviours, and more students earning credits

Annual general meeting

- Michael Barrett acclaimed as president; Laurie French and Mark Bailey elected as vice-presidents
- Minutes from last year approved; presentation of annual report; financial report approved; OPSBA Priorities approved; all reports approved as presented

June 13, 2015

A Truly Unique Perspective, David Chilton, Author

- Chilton provided some interesting and humorous observations about life, business, and people, emphasizing that experiences are what makes us happier in life and possessions and 'stuff' have taken on too much importance in our lives

School Closures – Legal Do's and Don'ts, Presentation by Michael Hines

- Hines reviewed the 2009 MOE guidelines for accommodation reviews
- A need for change arose due to issues regarding length of process, the process being divisive, political and partisan, a reliance on subjective information, a diversion of resources, a lack of clarity regarding the ARC's role, general frustration, feelings of isolation and the expertise of staff was not prioritized
- Hines provided an overview of the 2015 MOE guideline. Highlights include increased reliance on staff expertise, use of less subjective data, flexibility regarding PARC's role, emphasis on municipal/governmental input and coordination, a shortened process with a modified process alternative, Board decides about membership, mandate, terms of reference, for the PARC, quantitative orientation re: data and number of public meetings required has been lessened
- In light of these changes, Hines suggested Boards review their school closure policy and procedures to ensure these changes are included. The revised process is intended to be a matter of dialogue and communication

Materials Taken Away:

__ General Distribution

__ Trustee Distribution

__ Staff Distribution: Name of Staff Member: _____