

TRUSTEE CONFERENCE REPORT

Name: Kathleen Woodcock Date Submitted: June 27, 2016

Name of Conference: 28th Annual General Meeting

Sponsoring Organization: OPSBA

Theme: Professional Development and Annual Elections

Conference Dates: June 9 to 11, 2016

Location: Ottawa Marriott Hotel, Ottawa, ON

Workshops/Seminars/Presentations/Keynote Speeches Attended:

(Include a brief Summary)

System Alignment for Deep Learning – Sandra Herbst, CEO, connect2learning

- The theme of this presentation centered on leaders employing the tenets of assessment as their leadership stance and action related to those tenets
- Video of a student demonstrated exactly what can be achieved by using these methods
- Positional leaders deliberately and publicly model the use of assessment in the service of student, adult, school and system learning
- We need to stop 'shoulding' on our teachers
- Differentiation – stop giving handouts to teachers; until they experience it and practice it, they won't get it
- Alignment – leaders have to be in alignment with teachers in the classroom; an example at WRDSB is building of the strategic plan
- Triangulate both qualitative and quantitative evidence of learning from multiple sources and at multiple levels (classroom, school and system)
- Provided an example regarding hiring process for principals and vice-principals compared to hiring process for superintendents and benefits of aligning those processes
- Feedback – frequent, ongoing feedback; make adjustments, assess; similar to the WRDSB process of 'plan – act – assess – reflect' as a continuous improvement tool
- The speaker was engaging, used visual technology/tools in the presentation, used vivid examples to make her points and wrapped her whole presentation with a sense of humour. I would recommend this speaker for professional development for leaders in the system including trustees.

Communications and Mental Health: Planning for Strategic Success – Heather Carter and Shawn McKillop, Grand Erie DSB

- Provided overview of how Grand Erie DSB built a child and youth mental health and well-being program based on commitment in the organization's strategic directions to create organizational change
- Pillars of mental health strategy: suicide prevention, mental health literacy, mental health promotion
- While there were things happening in the system i.e., learning opportunities and initiatives, the focus was on illness, not wellness
- They engaged the parents and students as well as partnerships with community members/organizations
- Decided to join forces mental health AND communications
- Used a 4 step process to get to success: research, planning, implementation, evaluation (reflects WRDSB plan, act, assess, reflect)
- 'Be Well Campaign' was the result – made the website into a contest to generate interest and to achieve their target
- Social media was used in the campaign but in a 'safe way' such that youth felt safe looking at posters; for example, it was shared that a good way to make sure youth see the posted information, they suggest you put it on a small size poster and post it beside the clocks in classrooms; that way, youth could look at the poster under the premise of checking the time
- Best practices and key learnings: be ready, be flexible, be available, be persistent but patient, be grateful
- Best advice – leverage your opportunities to communicate proactively and not be reaction; we create system change and promote well-being when we do this through partnership

Executive Officer Elections

- Laurie French, acclaimed President (trustee with the Limestone District School Board)
- Jerry Chadwick, elected First Vice-President (trustee with the Toronto District School Board)
- Cathy Abraham, elected Second Vice-President (chair of the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board)

Comments made by Michael Barrett, outgoing President, OPSBA

- In his speech as outgoing president of OPSBA, Michael included the following which sums up nicely the work of school boards:

Today

- A child learned something today.
- Today a child boarded a bus, was transported safely to school, and returned home.
- Today an ECE was successful and walked out of a school building encouraged that they had made a breakthrough and a concept was understood
- A child was comforted today.
- A Principal made a difference today in a child's life
- Today a child received another credit in our SAL program and we have inspired a child to continue their educational journey
- Today a child held hands for the first time in a school yard and felt the rush of a first love
- Today a staff member received news of additional funding that will make a difference in a child's life and in a child's education
- Today an EA helped teach a child how to tie their shoes and smiled in satisfaction for the important role they play in our children's lives
- Today we provided guidance for a family impacted by mental health issues
- Today a Lunch Room Supervisor mediated between two children and saved a friendship
- Today a teacher took yet another course, upgraded their skills and built upon their passion to give back to their students the best way they know how.
- Today we took the first steps towards a journey of reconciliation and hope
- Today we struck a dream in a child's life; we travelled to the pyramids; we nurtured yet another Picasso; we wrote a song for the first time; we blew our first note on a clarinet; we discovered Charlotte's Web for the very first time, and we witnessed the awe of learning yet again in another child.
- Today government implemented a policy that was long advocated for by school trustees that will make a difference in children's lives
- And today a Trustee created a legacy, and today a trustee left a footprint.

10 Minute Sessions, various school boards

- *Harriet Tubman Public School and Partnership with the City of St. Catharines, DSB Niagara*
- *Successful Integration of Newcomer Families, Toronto DSB*
- *Encouraging Voice – Native Student Leadership, Upper Canada DSB*
- *'From the Grassroots' – teacher innovation projects in KPR, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB*
- *Theatre Out Reach On Stage, Near North DSB*
- *Futures Forum Initiative: An Open Minded Approach to Applying Non Traditional Solutions to Traditional Problems, Waterloo Region DSB*
- *Message Maps – How we “stay on message” in TLCSB, Trillium Lakelands DSB*

OPSBA Regional Council Elections

- Donna Danielli, Vice-President/Chair, Central West Region (trustee with Halton DSB)
- Carol Anne Sloat, Vice-Chair, Central West Region (trustee with Grand Erie DSB)
- Kathi Smith, member, Education Program Work Group (trustee with Waterloo Region DSB)

Note: *The information provided in this report constitute the writer's observations/ opinions.*