Thursday, January 29

1) Setting the Climate for Student Achievement & Well Being - Panel Discussion Between Board Chairs & Directors
   - The relationship among trustees and with the Director is key to supporting the work of the Board
   - Respect and trust is key among trustees but also between staff and trustees
   - Imperative that all you do as a Board relates back to the start plan
   - Need data to show how things are working
   - If you don’t have personal leadership – you don’t have professional leadership
   - How are we doing at implementing the strategic plan to ensure student achievement in our District?

2) Making Connections – Strategic Plans and Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario – Table Discussion
   - Important to have clarity, leadership, excellence in governance and governance practice and accountability – all four are imperative to providing excellent education in your District
   - What parts of the vision statement will direct the Board
   - Need a work plan for the Board of Trustees that comes from the Strategic plan
   - Need to ask yourselves
     i. Are you doing things because you have always done them
     ii. Doing things because they are the right thing to do

3) Aligning Resources to Priorities: What Do you Need to Know? What do you need to Ask? – Gabriel Sekaly
   - It is important that you listen to what your community needs and wants
   - Your school district should reflect your community (for Waterloo Region – that is Innovation & Entrepreneurship – we need to start reflecting that)
   - Select activities and priorities that will get you to your goals – then go about allocating budget dollars to implement those things
   - What evidence do you use to make decisions?
   - It is okay, as trustees, to shake things up, to be innovative – Trustees should set direction, Trustees know the community the best
   - We need great ideas that get us to our vision more frugally and more quickly – but we need to be selective in our innovation
   - Trustees need to utilize the flexibility in the budget
• Make decisions that fit your Board and your vision – it may mean stopping something you have always done – but may mean better results
• GSN are released at end of March – start in the fall with a build up and plan – don’t leave it until the last moments

4) First Nations Trustee Council Meeting
• Meeting of the First Nations Trustee Council welcoming new First Nations Trustees who were elected in the municipal election as well as those appointed by Band Councils
• Update on status of inclusion of First Nations history in general History curriculum

Friday, January 30

5) Mark of a Leader (series of presentations) - Doug Keely
• [http://Buckashave.com](http://Buckashave.com) believing in possibility
• The possibility of doing anything
• All you need is a mission and the desire to just do it
• 5 levels of leadership – Spirit Level (idea that is better than us); Right Brain (imagination); Left Brain ( intellect); Heart; Hands
• Change or shape the lens through which you see the world
• Story of Diamond Shreddies – whether you think you can or you can’t you are right
• Roger Banister running the 4 minute mile – used the team to break the record – not just Roger Banister’s success
• What is your 4 minutes mile – what is your team’s 4 minute mile?
• Nothing great was ever done alone – you have to surround yourself with great people
• Always be aware of the word you use and how they inspire or limit
• The power that we have at our disposal is the words we use

6) The Power of Why - Amanda Lang
• We are going through a period of rapid change and innovation
• But we are not getting more and more prosperous
• We have a crisis of productivity in our country
• We need, as a country, to be innovative, to do things better than anyone else
• Innovation and productivity are the flip side of one another
• 2 year olds ask why for a living, we stamp out the curiosity in schools and in kids
• Best thing to do for our education system is to “blow it up”
• You can foster an innovative culture by using processes that foster innovation
• Brainstorm with people who are irritating – we find them irritating because we don’t think the same way
• Give yourself permission to make changes to how you learn, how you answer, when you laugh
• A timer on a toaster is a reminder every day about the fact that innovation is important

7) How Do We Keep School Boards Relevant – Panel discussion
• The strategic plan is the key base upon which to build your Board – it is imperative that it reflect your community
• The value added from trustees is what you bring to the board from the community
• We need to embrace innovation
• Make sure you answer the question
• If you can’t explain it simply – you don’t understand it well enough
• Make sure that you are more bottom up than top down
• Employ evidence based decision making
• Create team work among trustees and with staff and trustees
• Foster risk taking
• What is your moral compass? What are your values?
• Never compromise your values or personal beliefs – but be sure you know what they are

8) School Boards Collective Bargaining Act – Panel Discussion
- Last time we were together was to discuss bill 122
- Government had put together something to include all parties
- Result is SCBCBA
- Main purpose is to enhance student achievement and well being

9) Changing Role of Trustees – Panel Discussion
- Diminishing management rights
- Directors now have two masters to whom they report
- Trustees are about leadership, relationships and the art of the possible
- Must have a relationship of trust and candor
- Remember to listen more, speak less (2 ears, one mouth)
- Changing only one trustee has a significant change to a Board – more new trustees, more change – need to work together to build relationships
- Be sure that you have clear job descriptions for trustees, directors and for the Chair within your Board

10) The Whole Child and Student Well Being - Panel Discussion
- School mental health assist
- Accepting schools, system transformation
- Equity, well being, confidence
- If we don’t measure, we can’t show that kids have not only achieved but are also successful and healthy
- For first nations, we want teachers to be trained to understand the culture and, where possible, be first nations teachers
- Each board has had the opportunity to receive more funds to provide better educational opportunities to First Nations students attending their schools
- For many schools on reserve, there are notiprc, which must be changed
- Utilize student voice activities

Saturday, January 31

11) School Board Governance – Setting the Conditions for Effective Management – Michael Hines
- In schools, P/VP play the role of HR managers
- When a new administrator arrives at a school – they have to learn the labour, relationship culture of that school
- In some cases, the federation rep has more experience in the school and more influence than the P/VP
- Supervisory officers are rarely, if ever on site
- Collective agreements are managed by the P/VP – imperative that be part of their leadership training
- You must have consistency; empowerment; engagement and ownership & control for a P/VP to meet with success in their school
- Over time, Principals and Vice Principals have been treated like well behaved children with little support from the senior official of the board – important that they be given as much (if not more) attention than the teachers have received from school boards
Canada & Canadians in a Changing World - Peter Mansbridge

- Peter Mansbridge shared several delightful stories about how travel helps you to understand how Canadians are perceived in the world
- He suggested that you get out of Toronto (or wherever you live) to gain a better perspective on the world
- He started his career at 19 as a baggage handler and being in the right place at the right time got him a job on CBC in Churchill Manitoba after a CBC executive heard him announce a flight

Take-aways

- Important to develop relationships between trustees – respect & trust is key
- Also develop respect and trust between staff and trustees
- Changing one Trustee on a Board makes a significant change to operations (we have three new trustees)
- Media training session should be provided to all trustees
- Strategic Plan should drive direction of the Board (not BIPSA) – important that Strategic Plan reflect the needs of the community
- Innovation is imperative in the education of all
- Budget planning should start with trustees in September – should have discussions over dinner with senior staff and trustees to get to know priorities – discuss community needs
- What lens are you using when you are wearing your trustee hat?
- What is my 4 minute mile in education? What is our team’s 4 minute mile?

Actions for our Board (in my opinion upon reflection)

1) Work on developing trust and respect among Trustees and with staff – we have 3 new Trustees who we need to help to feel part of a team
2) Provide media training by Trained Professional for all Trustees (perhaps OPSBA’s Jeff Sprang)
3) Strategic Plan must be updated ASAP and provide a better strategic direction for the Board as a whole.
4) Innovation and entrepreneurship need to be incorporated into our Board Vision so that we better reflect the community in which we provide education.
5) Budget planning should be a year round process with far more integration into the strategic direction that comes from the revised Strategic Plan.

Full notes are available upon request. Kathi_smith@wrdsb.on.ca