

TRUSTEE CONFERENCE REPORT

Please attach to your Professional Development/Conference Expense Reimbursement Form. Thank you.

Name: Laurie Tremble

Date Submitted:

Name of Conference: Summit 2020: The Future of Public Education

Sponsoring Organization: People for Education

Theme (If any):

Conference Dates: November 16-17, 2020

Location: online conference

Workshops/Seminars/Presentations/Keynote Speeches Attended:

Keynote: The Future is Here - Are We Ready?

Mark Beckles - Senior Director, Youth Strategy and Innovation, RBC

- How to build a thriving, change-ready and equitable system that prepares students to participate fully in our world
- Increased demand for foundational skills like problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity
- Young people need to understand how to position their skills - Not what do you want to be but what do you want to do; focus on transferable skills
- No long a jobs-based economy, but skills based
- Important skills include digital fluency, cultural awareness, adaptability, judgement, management of people
- Need to help teachers understand the world of work: teacher co-op placements
- Need to help employers hire for the new economy: skills-based resumes, different methods for resume screening, help for small businesses to offer co-op and internships
- Ideas for education:
 - 1. launch national initiative on GPA for transferable, soft skills to present on student transcripts
 - 2. credit transfer system so students can study across the country
 - 3. national high school exchange program
 - 4. creating co-ops for teachers
- Ideas for business:

- 1. hire more liberal arts grads and train for specific skills
- 2. reduce barriers toward integrated learning opportunities in small business
- 3. develop training to expand digital fluency in non-tech managers

Preventing a Generational Catastrophe

Prachi Srivastava - Assistant Professor, University of Western

- COVID is amplifying inequities within countries and between them
- learning loss, mental health, physical violence, not graduating
- three assumptions being made during our COVID response in education:
 - 1. we're in a new reality and we need new info: but we have data and info that's still valid
 - 2. COVID is the great equalizer: but it does discriminate, some populations hit harder
 - 3. having evidence will inform policy action: but the action is political and often couched in resource constraints
- pragmatic steps we can take:
 - 1. plan for multiple interruptions
 - 2. plan for next year
 - 3. mobilize the knowledge of education we have now and adapt curriculum, introduce supplemental programming, consider new calendar, reconsider automatic promotion, prioritize groups most affected by COVID, boost system resources

Breakout Session - How Do Systems Move from Coping to Thriving in a Time of Crisis

- make equity and access a priority
- don't rush to reinstate the status quo
- document what you're doing so it can be shared
- more teacher education and training for everyone in the school who's not a teacher
- consider different ways to assess student learning

A Rights Lens on Education - How would it make a difference?

Pat Case - Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Equity Officer, Education Equity Secretariat of the MOE

- discussion of the development of human rights in Canada and Ontario
- rights law is largely based in anti-discrimination: not rights 'to' but the right to be free 'from'
- what are we doing well in rights-based practice in education and how do we share that
- assemble data we can use to inform change, make the data public so boards can be held accountable
- use the data to have conversations with communities about disproportions and how to address them
- must accept that children have rights balanced with the responsibility of adults to design an education system to enhance their experience

Defining and Claiming Educational Rights: A Framework Reviewed

- People for Education is developing a Rights to Education Framework
 - Right to Quality, Access, Accountability and Respect
- discussion of what this could look like

Anti-Black Racism and Learning - Public Education as a Place for Change

Desmond Cole - Journalist, Activist, Author

- the School Resource Officer assumes we need police in schools because kids, particularly black kids, need to learn how to have better relationships with authority, but to the black kids, it feels like they are feared and need to be managed
- white guilt and allyship leads white people to say it's not my fault, talk about the person or country that is worse
- #1 thing we can do in education to help black students is end SRO programs - they give kids police records, disciplinary records, call immigration and people in the school don't stand up to the police as they are afraid
- need to end discipline that takes kids out of schools - no police, no suspensions or expulsions
- other changes that could be made include end streaming, look at ESL placement, curriculum changes, meal programs, more support staff

Public Education as a Place for Change

Karen Murray - TDSB Principal

- we have to be anti-racist not just non-racist, action is needed
- own our impact as well as our intent
- can't build the critical consciousness of others if we haven't done the work ourselves
- black community doesn't need allies, need co-conspirators, use our privilege and power to help make change
- need to have grassroots push from the community in addition to having co-conspirators at the table
- we are 'silent' not 'silenced', silent is a choice
- 3-step plan to do this work
 - 1. build a learning plan for yourself & then create a plan to take action
 - 2. find a friend to support you - you can't be in this work alone
 - 3. it's about action - what am I doing tomorrow? don't worry about next month, next year

Talking Across the Continuum

S. Brenda Small - VP Negahneewin Research Centre, Confederation College

Jane Bertrand - Program Director, Margaret & Wallace McCain Family Foundation

Leyton Schnellert - Assistant Professor UBC

John Malloy - San Ramon Valley Unified School District

Prieyya Kaur Kesh - Founder & CEO, Our Wave Hub

Annie Kidder - Director, People for Education

- Annie - we need a continuum of learning
- seamless movement through early learning, elementary school, secondary school, post-secondary
- Jane - throw out the idea of hard shifts and transitions and think of continuity instead; continuum should be supported by pedagogy, curriculum & assessment to track each child's learning journey without abrupt disruptions
- Brenda - indigenous learning journey concept includes family, community, nation in the journey with the learner, a life-long journey
- Leyton - competence/mastery is built over time; going from system to system we don't always recognize what children come with and instead focus on what they are missing; switch from a deficiency approach to a competency approach
- Prieeyya - in education we sometimes value the credential and not the process of learning
- John - we make boxes and try to fit kids in e.g., grade 1, 2 etc., the boxes are for the adults in the system; the structure shouldn't impede the ability of the student to succeed; standards are important but we have to broaden our understanding of skills
- how do we support all kids across the continuum
- John - each part of the system sets its own policy, should focus the policy on the child instead of on the system
- Prieeyya - incentivize employers to hire underrepresented groups, recognize non-traditional educational backgrounds, support specialized training programs especially for underrepresented groups
- Leyton - look at how and what we are assessing
- Brenda - allow students to craft their own learning journey linking interests and gifts - interdisciplinary, connected to the world of work
- Jane - make it a child's right, not obligation though, for access to ECE and include families, communities

A 'Canadian' Education: Is it time for a national view?

Sharif Mahdy - Executive Director, Students Commission of Canada

Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux - 1st Indigenous Chair, Truth & Reconciliation in Canada

Caroline Alphonso - Education Reporter, Globe and Mail

Annie Kidder

- we have a national health plan, why not a national education plan?
- education is in a silo itself and within that silo, many smaller silos
- we aren't learning from each other
- Cynthia - where you live has a lot to do with what kind of education you get; very extreme for indigenous students
- we have fed-prove education agreements regarding official language education with shared funding, can we build on that?
- Sharif - students are concerned about lack of national standards in education; should money from federal government come with some common standards, guidelines, targets?
- need data linked to demographics including invisible differences
- Annie - need a federal task force on education during this crisis

- Cynthia - hard to organize and run a task force like that; we also need to encourage change at the local level
- we need to build connections between the provinces
- Sharif - we need to make space for student voice and for people not in education like the community organizations that are filling gaps in education
- Annie - we need the federal government as they have the resources