

TRUSTEE CONFERENCE REPORT

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

Name: Ben Wahl

Date Submitted: Feb 3, 2019

Name of Conference: Public Education Symposium

Sponsoring Organization: WRDSB

Conference Dates: January 24-26, 2019

Location: Sheraton Centre, Toronto

Workshops/Seminars/Presentations/Keynote Speeches Attended:

Don Drummond Presentation

Don Drummond's Presentation started off the Pre-Symposium, addressing the poor economic circumstances we are quickly approaching. We have a deficit larger than previously thought and there seems to be no concrete projection from the government for economic growth. Given his experience, he suggests that sustainable growth is about 1.5%, much lower than promises from the provincial government. We are approaching a time where the baby boomers will be needing large amounts of government spending in health care but the education sector will also be growing since the baby boomers grandchildren will now be going through the system. It can be boiled down to the point that there is not going to be enough money to go around but as trustees, we must think about what our priorities are, eliminate unnecessary parts of our board, and focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized students.

Education is what can solve many of our economic problems; it is a long-term investment. It is what can drive our economy, but economists need to realize it will take time. As trustees, we should do as much as we can to ensure our students are getting what they need and keep a calm but firm stance while negotiating with the government.

Managing Polarization in Public Consultation

A key idea in running public meetings and consultation is that the more questions per unit of time, the better one can be at communicating with the public. In fact the worst thing to do is to talk *at* an upset group of the public without having a two-way conversation. The key is to listen and answer questions more than anything else.

There are only three acceptable responses to a question: "yes, I have the answer, here it is," or "No, I do not have the answer but I will get it," or "Yes, I have the answer but I can not provide it for reasons of confidentiality." This is the best way to remain transparent and does not allow for the person to be unhappy with you about the way you answered them.

Some defensive strategies in answering questions will help you significantly with being productive and maintaining control of the process. The first strategy is to pause, answer concisely, then stop talking. This will make sure there is not confusion and makes sure time is being used efficiently. If the question is difficult, a strategy is to clarify language. The example use was if a reporter asks a industrial plant if they pollute, the manager could respond by saying, "what do you mean by pollute?" in order to leave less room for interpretation. These can

help ensure that you are in control of the process and will not say things that could reflect negatively upon the organization.

The final conclusion of the talk was that as trustees interacting with the public we must remain in a cooperative spirit, approach issues logically, and be ready to listen to what others have to say.

Parliamentary Procedure

This section will be written in bullet points which is a more appropriate format.

- Fundamental principles of rules of order
 - Order
 - Equality
 - Justice
 - Minority and Absentee Rights
 - Majority Prevails
- Governing documents
 1. Law
 2. Corporate Charter
 3. Bylaws/Constitution
 4. Special Rules of Order
 5. Rules of Order
 6. Standing Rules
 7. Customs
- Steps in Handling a Motion
 1. Member makes a motion
 2. Another person seconds the motion
 3. Chair states the motion
 4. Body debates the motion
 5. Chair puts the question
 6. Chair announces results
- Chair should only vote if it makes a difference (e.g. if it will break or create a tie)
- Rules of Debate
 - Debate must be germane to the pending motion
 - Address all remarks through chair
 - Refrain from questioning a member's motives
 - Avoid using members names
 - Refrain from speaking adversely on a prior action not pending
 - Debate within the limits as prescribed by the parliamentary authority of special rule of order
- Chair should generally not speak in debate as they are chosen with their ability to preside and impartiality is key to this
- Point of Order
 - Calls attention to chair to breach of assembly rules
 - Conflict of rules

- Allowed motion that was out of order
- Disregarded motion that was out of order
- Lack of quorum
- Member made unparliamentary remarks
- Appeal from decision of the chair
 - Majority most vote that decision is wrong

Teamwork Speech by Michael “Pinball” Clemons

This speech was very broad and had little specifics about being a trustee. The general theme was that we all must trust one another on the board to be working in the best interests of students and this will greatly improve teamwork. Our role is to serve other and ultimately to leave the system better than it was when we started our term of office. It was a very inspirational talk and was engaging for everyone there.

Indigenous Trustees and Education

This was an excellent workshop run by the director for the Keewatin Patricia DSB about indigenous voice and involvement in the education system. The biggest takeaway from this presentation was issues faced by indigenous populations in the North are generally greater than those in the South. Some of the things that boards have autonomy for when it comes to indigenous issues include IEACs (Indigenous Education Advisory Committees), inclusion of indigenous trustees, Indigenous Education Action Plans, Aboriginal Advisors, workshops for staff, protocols and land acknowledgements. Terminology was discussed and essentially the terms Aboriginal, Native, and Indigenous are the best to use. Important pieces of legislation and government were explained including the Indigenous Education Office (IEO), Grants for Student Needs (GSN), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and Regulation 462/97: First Nations Representation on Boards. Additionally, Education Service Agreements (ESA) and Reciprocal Education Service Agreements (RESA) are often used with indigenous communities. Lastly, we discussed “Jordan’s Principle” which ensure that government bureaucracy and jurisdictional issues cannot get in the way of services or safety of youth. Overall, I found this presentation very informative and I learned a lot about some of the issues being faced by indigenous populations in the education system.