

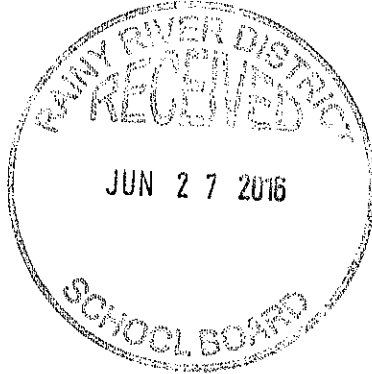


REPORT

CORRESPONDENCE

- Letter from the Peel District School Board to the Honourable Mitzie Hunter requesting the Ministry of Education add coding to the Ontario curriculum in JK to Grade 8, supportive of this change request from Thames Valley District School Board.
- Letter from the Peel District School Board to Bruce Rodrigues, CEO, Education, Quality and Accountability Office, advocating that they reconsider their response to the Peel District School Board request to refrain from assigning a “zero” mark to exempted Syrian refugee children’s EQAO testing results.
- Letter from the Waterloo Region District School Board in support of a review of the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) Transfer Policy.
- Letter from the Waterloo Region District School Board encouraging the Province to engage in meaningful dialogue and to seek input from parents with regard to the recent proposed changes to Autism Services.
- Letter from the Waterloo Region District School Board to the Honourable Mitzie Hunter requesting the Ministry of Education add coding to the Ontario curriculum in JK to Grade 8, supportive of this change request from Thames Valley District School Board.

June 22, 2016



The Honourable Mitzie Hunter
Ministry of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Hunter:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Peel District School Board, I am writing this letter to bring to your attention the following motion that was passed at our Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees on June 15, 2016:

Resolved, that the Board send a letter to the Ministry of Education requesting that they update the Kindergarten to Grade 8 curriculum to embed the skill of coding into instructional programs.

This motion was motivated by the May 24, 2016 letter to the former Minister of Education Liz Sandals from the Thames Valley District School Board which outlined a recommendation to include coding as part of the Kindergarten – Grade 8 curriculum.

Coding is an important skill in the context of 21st Century learning, especially for elementary students. Like our colleagues in Thames Valley, Trustees in the Peel District School Board believe that coding is an essential skill that prepares students for citizenship and employment in a global society. Increasingly, classrooms throughout the Peel District School Board, as well as in many other jurisdictions in Ontario, nationally and internationally, include the teaching of coding as one in a series of important skills taught to students, not only in the specific context of “computer science” but more broadly throughout the various curricular areas.

Peel teachers, in embedding coding as part of the teaching and learning process, capture the interests of students and integrate this engagement into learning goals and significant skill development. *Embedding* coding as part of the larger skill of computational thinking in the curriculum is one significant way to achieve this. The key in teaching coding/programming is *integration* of this computational thinking throughout curricular areas. We believe that coding as a stand-alone unit or skill does not achieve this desired integration of skill development. Coding must be seen as supporting other interests and goals.

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Trustees

Janet McDougald, Chair
Suzanne Nurse, Vice-Chair
Carrie Andrews
Stan Cameron
Robert Crocker
Nokha Dakroub

David Green
Sue Lawton
Brad MacDonald
Kathy McDonald
Harkirat Singh
Rick Williams

Director of Education and Secretary
Tony Pontes

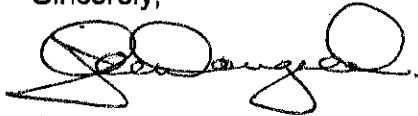
Associate Director,
Instructional Support Services
Scott Moreash

Associate Director,
Operational Support Services
Jaspal Gill

As such, the Peel District School Board recommends that the Ontario Ministry of Education update curricular documents to include recommendations regarding the skill of coding in the introductory, overview sections of each of the documents. For example, curricular documents now contain "Considerations for Program Planning", and we would recommend that coding be embedded as one of these considerations.

Student success and well-being remain the unwavering commitment of everyone in the Peel learning community, and it is our hope that this motion and recommendation, once implemented, ensures even greater student achievement and preparation for our global society.

Sincerely,

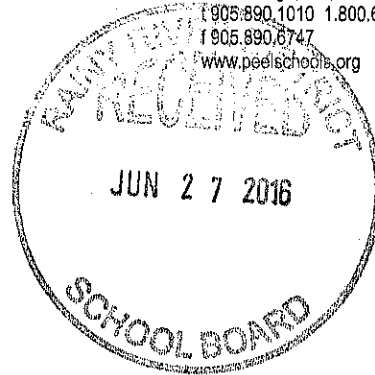
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet McDougald", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Janet McDougald
Chair of the Board

- c. OPSBA
Ontario School Board Chairs

June 22, 2016

Bruce Rodrigues, CEO
Education Quality & Accountability Office (EQAO)
2 Carlton Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2M9



Dear Mr. Rodrigues:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Peel District School Board, I am writing this letter to bring to your attention the following motion that was passed at our Regular Meeting of the Board on June 15, 2016:

Resolved, that the Board write a letter to the EQAO office advocating that they reconsider their response to the Peel District School Board request to refrain from assigning a "zero" mark to exempted Syrian refugee children's EQAO testing results as this would be unfair to students and schools.

As the Chair of the second largest school board in Ontario, a board where student achievement and well-being remain an unwavering focus for all members of our learning community from Mississauga to Brampton to Caledon, I am very disappointed in the decision of EQAO regarding the writing of the current assessments by our refugee students, both from Syria and from other countries around the world.

The Peel District School Board has welcomed over 500 refugee students from Syria and beyond since December 2015. As you are aware, some of these students arrive in our region with little or no English language skills, sometimes so traumatized by war and other atrocities that they are unable to speak their native language. Many have never attended formal schooling and are coping with a new country, a new language, a new culture, a new school system – an entirely new life. Of course, under these circumstances, Peel District School Board schools are, in many cases, exempting these students from writing the current assessments, but further to your telephone conversations with our Director of Education Tony Pontes, I understand that it is the decision of EQAO that these students will nonetheless receive marks of "zero" on the assessments, thus affecting the overall scores of the school that they attend.

While we appreciate your offer to Director Pontes to ensure that there is a special notation for schools where refugee students attend in high numbers, I submit that this could potentially have unintended negative implications for our refugee population who could mistakenly be "blamed" for the lowering of scores in a particular school.

.../2

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Director of Education and Secretary
Tony Pontes

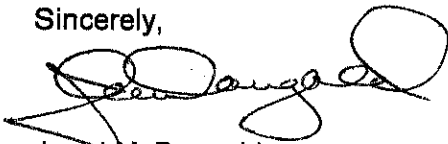
Associate Director,
Instructional Support Services
Scott Moreash

Associate Director,
Operational Support Services
Jaspal Gill

Refugee students from Syria and beyond have become an integral part of the student population at schools like Thornwood Public School, Brian W. Fleming Public School, Dixie Public School and T. L. Kennedy Secondary School. Staff in these settings, and indeed in all Peel schools, are working tirelessly to ensure they feel safe, welcome and successful as they begin to rebuild their lives in our region. We strongly recommend that EQAO reconsider and join us in supporting the achievement and well-being of these new Canadians. Rather than assigning marks of "zero" to them, we respectfully request that their exemption not be included in the calculation of the overall results for the school.

In Peel, members of the Board join our staff in living our mission statement of inspiring success, confidence and hope in all students, and on behalf of the Board, I urge you to reconsider your decision and support our refugee population by not assigning marks of zero for their exemption on EQAO assessments.

Sincerely,

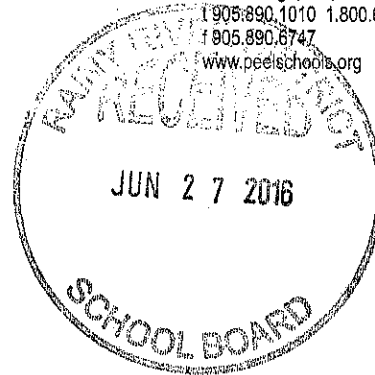
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Janet McDougald
Chair of the Board

c: OPSBA
Ontario School Board Chairs
Peel MPP's

June 22, 2016

Bruce Rodrigues, CEO
Education Quality & Accountability Office (EQAO)
2 Carlton Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2M9



Dear Mr. Rodrigues:

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As the Chair of the second largest school board in Ontario, a board where student achievement and well-being remain an unwavering focus for all members of our learning community from Mississauga to Brampton to Caledon, I am very disappointed in the decision of EQAO regarding the writing of the current assessments by our refugee students, both from Syria and from other countries around the world.

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While we appreciate your offer to Director Pontes to ensure that there is a special notation for schools where refugee students attend in high numbers, I submit that this could potentially have unintended negative implications for our refugee population who could mistakenly be "blamed" for the lowering of scores in a particular school.

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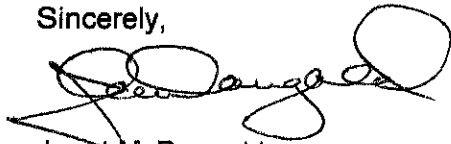
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In Peel, members of the Board join our staff in living our mission statement of inspiring success, confidence and hope in all students, and on behalf of the Board, I urge you to reconsider your decision and support our refugee population by not assigning marks of zero for their exemption on EQAO assessments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janet McDougald', written over a horizontal line.

Janet McDougald
Chair of the Board

c: OPSBA
Ontario School Board Chairs
Peel MPP's



**Waterloo Region
District School Board**

51 Ardelet Avenue Kitchener ON N2C 2R5
(o) 519 570 0003 (f) 519 570 9007 www.wrdsb.ca

June 15, 2016

Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA)
3 Concorde Gate, Suite 204
Toronto, ON M3C 3N7

Attention: Ms Donna Howard, Executive Director

Dear Ms Howard:

Re: OFSAA Transfer Policy

Recently, the Thames Valley District School Board and the Bluewater District School Board provided correspondence requesting that Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) undertake a review of the Transfer Policy which deals with the transfer of student athletes between schools.

At the Board Meeting of May 30, 2016, The Waterloo Region District School Board approved the following motion in support of a review of the Transfer Policy:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board direct the Chairperson to send a letter in support of a review of the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSSAA) Transfer Policy.

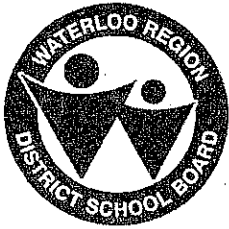
The Waterloo Region District School Board is requesting that, by receipt of this motion, OFSAA undertake a review of the Transfer Policy and to include the input from school boards, parents and students in the review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kathleen Woodcock'.

Kathleen Woodcock
Chairperson

cc: Ontario School Board Chairs
Ontario School Board Directors of Education



**Waterloo Region
District School Board**

51 Ardelt Avenue Kitchener ON N2C 2R5
(o) 519 570 0003 (f) 519 570 9007 www.wrdsb.ca

June 20, 2016

Honourable Mitzie Hunter
Minister of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Hunter:

At the June 20, 2016, Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board, Trustees approved supporting the following motion:

Whereas the Ministry of Children and Youth Services plan on "improving supports for students with Autism while they are in school; and are partnering to improve transitions for children moving from community autism services to school and transitions within school; and improving outcomes for students through collaborative and aligned service delivery among autism providers and educators."

Therefore Be it Resolved that the Waterloo Region District School Board direct the Chairperson to write a letter to the Ministers of Child and Youth Services and Education, requesting meaningful, reciprocal round table discussions with parents of children with autism, including those removed from IBI Waitlists, SEAC autism representatives, and educators concerning the new Autism Advisory Committee of parents and professionals and the development of the new enhanced Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention/Applied Behaviour Analysis services for students with autism in schools; and

That the Ministers of Child and Youth Services and Education also develop an on-line survey that will provide parents and educators with an opportunity to provide information around the development and implementation of the new enhanced EIBI/ABA in schools; and that a copy of the letter be sent to all school Boards in Ontario.

The Trustees of the Waterloo Region District School Board encourage the Province to engage in meaningful dialogue and to seek input from parents with regard to the recent proposed changes to Autism Services.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Woodcock".

Kathleen Woodcock, Chairperson
Waterloo Region District School Board

cc: Honourable Michael Coteau, Minister of Children and Youth Services
Ontario School Board Chairs



**Waterloo Region
District School Board**

51 Ardelt Avenue Kitchener ON N2C 2R5
(o) 519 570 0003 (f) 519 570 9007 www.wrdsb.ca

June 15, 2016

Honourable Mitzi Hunter
Ministry of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Hunter:

At the May 30, 2016, Board Meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board, Trustees unanimously approved supporting the following motion as originally recommended by the Thames Valley District School Board:

That the Board of Trustees ask the Ministry of Education to add Coding to the Ontario Curriculum in JK to Grade 8; and

That a letter be sent to all school boards in the province asking them to support this request; and

That a letter be sent to the Ontario Public School Board Association requesting their support and advocacy for this change to the curriculum.

At the Waterloo Region District School Board, we support providing our students with the required skills and knowledge to prepare them for employment in the competitive field of technology.

Many jurisdictions have already added coding to their curriculum and we request that our students be provided with the same opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Woodcock".

Kathleen Woodcock
Chairperson of the Board

cc: OPSBA
Ontario School Board Chairs ✓